1951

Forge

McGill University

25.

2009-0115.0206

Forge

McGill University

EDITOR: *MURRAY MAGOR*

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: *PATRICIA VOS*
JANE RAMSAY
KATHERINE PATERSON
HUNTINGTON SHELDON

ADVERTISING EDITOR: *ROBERT MOFFITT*

COVER DESIGN: *CYNTHIA SCOTT*

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

WILLIAM BAKER: Third year Arts student; was born in Paris, France and educated in England and Canada.

JOHN WATERHOUSE: Third year Honours English student; was educated in the United States and England.

CHARLES TAYLOR: Third year Honours History student; was born in Montreal and educated at Selwyn House School and Trinity College School, Port Hope.

LAWRENCE SOLOMON: Second year Arts student, majoring in English; was educated at Baron Byng High School; was with the Red and White Revue.

DOUGLAS G. JONES: Third year Honours English student; home is in Bancroft, Ontario; has appeared previously in Forge.

KIM JONES (Mrs. D.G.): Third year Honours English student; born in Toronto and graduated from Havegal College in that city.

CLAIRE ALLARD: Third year Arts student, specializing in geology and language; spent one year at Queen's University and has travelled extensively in Europe and America; born in Paris, France.

JANE BANFIELD: Third year Arts student, specializing in Political Science; from Vancouver and an exchange student from the University of British Columbia; expects to return there to study Law.

ADIN MERROW: Second year Medical student; home is in Nyack, New York; well-known for excellent swimming ability.

MARY JANE FERRIER: Second year Arts student; formerly from Ottawa and attended the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Montreal.

PATRICIA VOS: Second year Honours English student; home is in Lethbridge, Alberta, but went to school in England and come to this country two years ago; has appeared previously in Forge.

JOHN FALK: Received his B.A. at McGill last year and is now a Graduate student in Psychology; born and educated in Montreal; has appeared previously in Forge.

(Cont'd. page 4)

Forge

CONTENTS

Walter Ramshaw	The Warrior	6
Jane Banfield	Drop of Rain	8
Kim Jones	March Walk	9
David L'Esperance	The Door, The Woman and The Snake	10
Ethel Goldstein	Mercy Killing	12
William Baker	Sand-dunes	13
Jane Ramsay	Poem	14
John Waterhouse	The Hollow Men	15
John Falk	The Hero-King	23
Patricia Vos	To Walk Alone	24
Mary-Jane Ferrier	« Ducdame »	25
Walter Ramshaw	Man's Transcendency	27
J. Scott Rivers	Jack and « Whisky Jack »	29
Claire Allard	Inevitability	33
Michael Ballantyne	Fyrst Forth Gewat	34
Adin Merrow	Quiet Hour	35
Philip Chaplin	Night Watch At Sea	37
Charles Taylor	If I Could Sing	39
Jonathan Fraser	Tea In December	40
Lawrence Solomon	Crabbe's Village	41
D. G. Jones	The Letter	42

ETHEL GOLDSTEIN: First year Arts student, hoping to study journalism; born and educated in Montreal.

PHILIP CHAPLIN: A Graduate in Arts, now in the Library School; was educated in England and spent six years in the Royal Navy; contribution written on way to Canada after war, aboard merchant ship.

MICHAEL BALLANTYNE: Third year Honours English student; educated at Selwyn House School and Bishop's College School, Lennoxville; has appeared previously in Forge.

DAVID L'ESPERANCE: Second year Arts student; member of the McGill Literary Society.

JANE RAMSAY: Third year Honours English and Philosophy student; has appeared previously in Forge.

CYNTHIA SCOTT: Second year Fine Arts student from Montreal.

EDITORIAL

Someone once remarked that no author should write about an idea or an experience until fifteen years after it has occurred. Tempered by the passage of time, he could write with restraint and with objective detachment. Certainly, maturity is an important element in good writing, but age, in mellowing our thoughts, takes away much of their poignancy. We smile now at the fancies of our childhood and as men and women we will laugh at the seriousness with which we took the ideas and experiences of our youth. We will write of them then to show the wisdom of our age and the foolishness of our younger thoughts and passions.

Yet do we not experience the full strength of an act or thought as it occurs ? Is not today more important to each of us now than it will be fifteen years hence ? Being young, the bulk of our knowledge and experience lies ahead. We must write in the present or the very near past and use our imaginations in place of the philosophical wisdom which is the property of our elders. We must write of things not as we know them, but only as we see them.

In these pages you will find the writing of youth. Some is intensely subjective because youth is profoundly conscious of itself. Some is objectively based on past experience, but not so far removed that the writer has become a disinterested spectator. Some is cynical of life because we are so idealistically critical of the world our fathers have left us. Some is unreal because we must use our imagination where our experience fails us.

It has been our purpose not only to publish the best material we received, but in publishing these writings of youth, to encourage our contemporaries to put down in words their ideas and their experiences which are the reflections of their own selves as they are now. In so doing we hope to keep alive the spirit of those who are not afraid to make mistakes.

Walter Ramshaw

The Warrior

Directly overhead, the glaring African sun scorched mercilessly on the curly head of "Tchaka", creating a thousand globules of sweat on his dusky brow. His attention was absorbed by his labour, for he was polishing his buttons, the brass emblems of his manhood. He needed to brush hard too, for they were new and had sharp edges to the touch. So, for the fifth time, he smeared on the cream, spat on them as the 'baas' had told him and rubbed them again. With his broad back bent over his task, he gave the impression of a housewife darning socks.

His new khaki drill was spotless, stiffly starched and bleached by the sun until it looked like cardboard. He was bare-foot and coatless but nothing could detract from the glory of his uniform, so much superior to his old tribal ceremonial dress — even the battle regalia. "The King's Royal African Rifles" was a real battle force, with a great white King ruling over them from the other side of the sea, the sea that he had never seen, just as he had been told by the white missionary in his youth.

One week previously he had been in his native 'kraal' out on the 'veld', when the white baases had come to enlist his services in their war. His King had wanted him and Tchaka was proud to have been chosen for his guard. He had little experience of white men, but he longed for the opportunity of knowledge, a hunger that is difficult for Europeans to comprehend. How proud his people had been, and how they had boasted about his promise to bring them back a medal, presented by His Majesty, King George; an honour worthy of a descendant of Tchaka, the great Zulu chief.

At last he was ready and spent the remaining time before parading for drill impatiently waiting with the other troops on the edge of the parade square, his 'assegai' at the ease but his body rigid with anticipation.

"Parade!" rang out the command, and fifty pairs of feet stamped together as one. Fifty assegais flashed and fifty straight backs stiffened yet further.

"On parade!" came again, like a bugle call. With dignity, the negro soldiers marched to their positions, the dust rising in clouds, painting their ebony feet with red ochre.

"Parade, Attention!" roared the sergeant and the drill commenced.

Tchaka had special responsibility for he was 'marker', the leader of them all! He threw his head back with pride. Had not the baas-sergeant promised them that one day, when they had proved their worth, they might be given real shooting sticks, that were called 'rifles'? What an achievement that would be! Then he would get his medal.

Eventually, after the black warriors had thrown all their traditional pride into their drill, the sergeant decided that they were ready to be taught sentry drill.

"Now then," he roared, pouring sweat in the blazing heat, "I'm going to teach you sentry duty, how to be a guard, see?"

His squad nodded eagerly.

"Well, you stand at ease at your post of duty and you will let nobody pass unless he is a friend and has a permit, Verstaan?"

The instructor's job was getting on his nerves. Standing out in this blasted heat was bad enough, but having to teach these dumb nigs sentry-go was the limit! Still, he had to admit that they were keen enough. God, they were keen! That chap yesterday, for instance. He'd given the bloke 'jankers' for being a bit late — made him do extra drill. Then all the others wanted to do extra drill too! All mad! Now he had to punish them by stopping their drill!

"Then, when anyone comes near, you challenge him. Challenge him. You come to the 'Alert', and shout 'Who goes there!' Verstaan?"

"If he answers 'Friend', shout 'Advance and be recognised' and look at his permit." As if the poor devils could read anyhow, he brooded wearily.

"But if he comes on and says nothing at all, you say 'Halt, or I shoot!' And whoever he is, kill him! Have you got that? Very well, here it is again."

The exhausted sergeant continued to try to make his words sink in, his patience as impressive as the eagerness of the blacks. Finally, he dismissed them to their tents, knowing full well that they would practise what he had taught them, as they did every night before blancoing and washing for the next day's drill.

Another week later, Tchaka was on the perimeter track of an aerodrome, on guard duty. It was his first night on duty and the lights of the aircraft and flarepath fascinated him. His more educated comrades had told him that the white baases climbed inside the bellies of the monsters, but he secretly believed that they changed their shape, like his witch-doctor had warned him. His friends could laugh, but he was taking no chances. He was on the other side of the field and they didn't come near him. They went round and round, and up and down — but they never looked away from him. Not for a moment. If the green eye wasn't staring at him, the horrible red one was! They breathed fire at him, warning him to do his duty to his great king. But if he failed them . . . He shuddered to think what might happen!

Roaring and bellowing, they swooped round and round through his watch, until he could follow a sort of plan that they had — a route that they took. Then as he watched, one came snorting across the grass towards him. Why hadn't it turned and flown up that path of light as the others had done? Was it coming for him? What had he done? Was he going to be punished ? What must be do ? What was it ! Oh, yes.

" 'Alt, Oo goes dere?" Was it an enemy . . .

In the mess of the station, the aircrews were discussing the night's events. Attention was centred on a tall pilot who was addressing them,

one hand outstretched, the other holding a glass of beer.

"Well, I was just taxying round the old perimeter when I saw the blasted oil pressure. The damned thing was over-heating. So, I turned off the flarepath out of the way round the far side, to put her into wind and cool her off a bit. It was hellish dark over there, just like the infernal blackout. I was just stopping when I hit something. I was dead scared, I can tell you, knowing the Old Man's view of taxying accidents, thinking I had pranged a post or something. Well, I climbed out with my torch and had a look. It was a blasted wog sentry chap! Chopped clean in two by the prop! And his spear was splintered to matchwood! Fancy challenging a Spitfire with a spear. The poor devil deserved a medal as big as a soup-plate!"

Jane Banfield

Drop of Rain

Rain slips
greasy,
globular,
gathering grains of soot,
proceeding pensively on the glass
shilly-shallying, pausing, waiting
silky, soft.
Pushes peevishly to the pool
and squishes in a drop
to a stop.

Kim Jones

March Walk

This is the time which belongs to none
Winter is gone...
And spring not yet to come.
Slate-coloured snow clings to the street
And in hollows puddles gush beneath the feet.
Remembered now are those happy heights
Brief moments of unpremedidated flights;
And there is too, the ugly mood
Like a stone plunked down beneath the ground
When nothing is everything
As the mind curls up to brood.

And as I walk down Schutter Street
A Mr. Roberts passes quietly by
Oh, to speak and break his spell
In talk of art just he and I;
But I am the girl on the street
And they say this is not the place
For strangers to meet.
An old man stands arms akimbo
Watching boys building dams
As he dreams of days
When he was blithe and played like they;
Then like a hedgehog he turns
And stooping, steps down back into his hovel
While on the sidewalk
A youngster plays with his shovel.

Upon looking up I saw balconies
Strewn with beer cartons and launderies
Upon one hung a knitting bag
And as I began to dream
Of wrinkled age and rocking chairs
A young man walked up the stairs
And as I watched
He pulled his collar, stroked his hair
And knowing why I needed no further stare
The door opened just as I passed
And some gentle voice said, "Johnny at last."

David L'Esperance

The Door, The Woman and the Snake

The door of twenty-nine Maple Hill opened and a small boy ran out. He looked up and down the street and then started to run, as fast as his young legs would carry him. At the top of the block he stopped running and looked back at the house. It was one of many houses, all the same, but it was the one he had called home. He looked at the big, solid, walnut door. It was a wonderful door for leaning on, for sitting against in the warm sunlight.

He sighed and turned up the street again toward the mountain. He stuck his hands in his pockets and tried to whistle, but the whistle didn't come out very well. He thought that maybe it would be better not to whistle at all.

There was a stone on the sidewalk. He kicked it. This was fun! To see if you could kick the stone and kick it ahead without going out of step or sending the pebble into the gutter. He missed and the stone went into the road. A big, black car ran over it and the people stared at him. They were very unfriendly people.

Now he knew where he was going. He was going to the Hideout. He liked it up there on the hill, on the little grassy knoll in the trees where you could lie looking at the sky and thinking of nothing.

He crossed the Boulevard and went into the woods on the far side. Now he was an animal, a new kind of animal that only had two legs. It crept along the footpath toward the knoll very silently and mysteriously. Closer to the knoll it caught the murmur of voices. The animal stiffened now and became more alert, crawling on its hands and knees toward the voices. It scraped its knee on a rock and he squatted to look at it. It was bleeding and he squeezed the cut. He waited to watch the scab form. It itched.

He wriggled closer to the voices so that he could see the people. He lay in the fern and watched. His knee cracked open and a drop of blood trickled onto a leaf and congealed slowly.

There were a man and a woman lying on their coats in the grass. The woman was looking at the sky and the man was bending over her. They whispered quietly. The boy looked at the woman, her hair, her face, her legs, her breast. He looked away. He was uncomfortable and angry. They had stolen his spot. It was his, that grassy knoll, and they had stolen it.

The man was kissing the woman now. The boy thought of a girl whom he had seen at a party at home. He had often thought of saving her from drowning, from a lion, from a falling tree. She had kissed him and it had been wonderfully sweet. He had never thought of kissing her.

He got up and ran away as fast as he could. He was angry because they had stolen his secret place. He wished he were God; he would change that man into a toad and then that woman wouldn't like him any more.

The boy headed up the mountain toward the streetcar tracks and the cliffs. He came to the cartracks and started to cross them when he heard a tram coming up the mountain-view road. He fished a penny from his pocket and put it on the track. The penny would be a big, shiny, flat disc when the tram ran over it. The boy hid at the side of the roadbed. It would be terrible to be caught by the conductor for putting things on the track. The car came closer and closer and thundered over his penny. He ran to get the coin but it was gone. He looked all over but it was gone.

He sighed and started for the cliff and the animal came into being again. Nimbly it jumped to the first ledge; swung by a little tree to the next. Here it stopped, eyes and ears alert for any danger. A squirrel drew its attention. The boy made clucking noises, holding out his fist as though he had food. The squirrel came closer and closer sniffing at the closed hand. The boy slowly opened his hand and the squirrel scampered off. The boy had wanted to pat the squirrel but he hadn't been able to.

At the top of the cliff the boy sat down. He looked out over the city and hugged his knees. The city was huge. One day he was going to fly over it. He thought about his aeroplane, sleek and black. He looked at the sun, low in the trees and thought of the sun on the door at home. The door would be glowing now, so safe to lean against.

There was a little scraping noise at the boy's feet and he looked down. His gaze was met by a small snake with beady, unwinking eyes. They stared at each other. The snake was green on top and had a green belly. It never moved.

The air had a warm, pink glow caused by the setting sun. Ages ago, when the boy had been much smaller, the sun had always shone like that.

The boy picked up a heavy rock and looked at the snake. There were funny marks on its back. It was all coiled up.

The boy thought about home and the sun on the door and the woman.

The stone was very heavy in his hands.

He thought about his penny and the squirrel.

The snake's tongue flickered in the setting sun.

The boy thought of his home and his knoll.

Rage swept him. He dropped the rock on the snake. The snake's tail stuck out from under the rock and thrashed about. There was a thin ooze of black and white from its anus.

The boy put his head on his knees and cried and cried and cried and cried.

Ethel Goldstein

Mercy Killing

The house was crowded with people, stale air and grief. With the utter disregard for privacy that only tragedy can produce, people milled through the house, examining the naked rooms and the naked hearts with equal curiosity. They peered at the tiny kitchen which smelled of former Sabbath meals, and found sorrow even in the white enamel table, now covered with a tablecloth to receive the gifts of consolation.

By common consent the parlor was the centre of attraction. In its moral and sanctifying atmosphere the boy had first been displayed to the assorted uncles and aunts who comprised his mother's world, and here he was to be laid to rest. At one end of the room, the grey-haired and grey-faced mother sat on the low chair that was the symbol of her mourning, and passively received the pity of the embarrassed visitors. She did not possess the resigned and dignified grief of one who accepts death as the fitting climax of life; she seemed ashamed of her sorrow, and only cried furtively, inside her where it did not show.

But even tears did not relieve the seething and the turmoil that churned beneath the subdued black dress. Her unbearably endless hurt recalled the torture of her labour pains, but then the pains had produced a son, their first and only son, and now they resulted only in a dull emptiness.

From far away, she heard the twittering and moralizing of one of her cousins. Let her laugh; her dull lumps of boys were as coarse clay compared to the fine mettle of David. Even they would have to admit that he had been a handsome boy. Vividly, she could picture his black curly hair, his dark flashing eyes that would never rest and, above all, his fine slender hands. He did not have peddler-hands like theirs, the kind that could only count money greedily; no, his were the hands of a doctor.

David had been six month's old when, the day after her husband's funeral, she had made the vow. Sometimes, she hadn't known how she would be able to carry on, but with God's help she had managed. Often, after she had finished the sewing that supported both of them, she would tiptoe into his room late at night, carefully not to wake him. Sitting by his bed, she could dream of the time when her David wake him. Sitting by his bed, she could dream of the time when would be a famous surgeon. Yes, her David would not be a plain doctor, he would be a surgeon!

"Thank you, Mrs. Abromavitch," she politely replied to one of her

big-bosomed clients. Oh, why couldn't they go pry somewhere else, leaving David and her alone?

They had laughed at her when she had said that she was going to send David to college. A green-horn tailor's son to college? Well, she had done it; they hadn't laughed when he had graduated first in the class. How proud she had been when her David Silverburg was congratulated by the professor in the black cape!

But she mustn't think of David anymore; he was dead. Of course he was dead. Her David had died two nights ago when he had brought that blonde shikse home, cheerfully declaring, "Mama, I want you to meet my wife, Christine." She was a Jewish woman; she could not accept a Christian daughter-in-law. That was why she was sitting "shiva" for him now, as a good Jew mourns a dead son.

If only they would all go, she would be able to start on Mrs. Peterson's new dress tonight and, maybe, earn another five dollars this week. But suddenly she remembered and, at once, she felt very tired and old; she had nothing to sew for anymore.

William Baker

Sand-Dunes

(To L. H.)

It seems that solitude were one to live,
Upon the sanded hills, and yet,
Each grain of sand, seems loathe to lie
Alone, and clamours to be snatched
By windy gusts, and thrust aloft,
In imitation of the seagull.

The hoof marks in the sandy trail,
Bear out the fact that human eyes
Have seen, and loved, with Nature's love,
Things growing here in Pagan rites,
Where music from the wind strung harp,
Hums gently through an azure sky.

This calmness lies but for the day,
As Evening's herald dips the sun,
And shadows halt, to watch in awe,
The blazing furnace spread along
The topmost ridge of West lying sand ;
And Nature's cloak of studded dark
Floats low . . .

Jane Ramsay

Poem

Childlike, I chose my dreams
From silver scraps that lay
In drifts down streets of clouded sound,
And hunching by their shifting web,
Touched bright shapes of twisted air,
Shutting out the iron day.

The light was my arms' circle
And brushed by fist-hard hands,
I turned smiling to my sun,
Pulling close the shutters
To match the patterns each to each,
To shift their rounded corners
Fingering them in crouching silence.

And when the door let in two hands, a voice,
I packed all hurriedly, guiltily away
A furtive smiling child,
Clutching to its crowded cave, bright sheen, thin tinsel
Round wreath of glass spun suns.

One day you found my cave, pulled out the door,
And trembling in the winter thaw
I lost my way, saw only you.

Outside we built it brick on brick,
Grew to change the tinseled cave
To hold both you and me.
Then jealous of your knowing step,
I tried to scratch away the walls,
Pulled at windows, threw aside the chairs,
And you, laughing there, defied my hate
Reached to take my hand, your face unhurt.
The house was strong; I fell beside the path.
You took my arm, made me see it
Still, whole, waiting for our hands.
I learnt to hold your gift in my palm
Quietly, and learnt to want it still.

But your house is old, thick as rain at night,
And there was a time I did not have to learn
Twisting glistening web between my fingers
And the smile that only I saw, that only I knew.

John Waterhouse

The Hollow Men

The air smelled sharp and leafy that autumn and the mists rose from the fields in the evening. Some fields were brown stubble which stuck up awkwardly in patches like a child's hair; in others the stubble had been plowed in and the black Chernozem soil smelled simple and rich and thoughtful.

John leaned his bicycle against the bridge and broke off sticks from the hedge-row; they broke crisp and white and he dropped three of them into the water; then he crossed the road and waited for the sticks to come out. The middle one would be his, on the right would be Mary's and the long one nearest the bank would be Father's. The sticks would have been Oxford and Cambridge if there had been only two and Oxford would have won, so perhaps Father would win for Oxford. And sure enough here was Father coming out first and John leaned away over the bridge to see. John was next, though; he looked into the hollow shadows of the bridge and could hardly see Mary but she was right under the bridge, he discovered, caught up with some flotsam on the bank. He just bet that if they sailed any further he would pass Father. In fact, he was catching up now, yes, he was sure. The sticks were farther down now by the bullrushes and it was hard to see but they looked almost even before John lost them in a dark braid of weed.

He pedalled quickly up to the rectory for they were having pickelets for tea. Walking up the last steep rise of the drive, he could see his mother, his father and Mary through the lighted French windows of the lounge. Suddenly he shivered; sometimes you shiver without ever being cold, an alive shiver like music, and John shivered and ran into the house for tea.

They were all there in the lounge; John saw his mother at the table with Mary, and his father standing with his back to the fireplace, angular, tall, and thin. It was almost as though father were the chimney and the smoke should be coming through his legs and curling out of his thick, grey hair.

"You're late," said the Rev. Mr. Tollitt.

"Just a little, sir. We had a house game today."

"When you get to Harrow, my boy, you'll learn to appreciate your mother's cooking and not be so careless about mealtimes. We shall not wait next time."

They were all four seated at the table now; there was a shielded wall lamp burning but it was not strong enough to eclipse the warm, brimming firelight that flowed out over the table, burst out in the red leaves in vases and drew the very walls closer together. A delinquent

creeper beat lazily on the French window and it was good to be inside. And after all, John thought, he could not really have been so late, for the pickelets warming on the hod still had a yellow pool of butter that had not soaked in.

"Mary," said his father. They bent their heads.

"We ask thee, dear Lord, to bless this food to our use and ourselves to thy service." The 'amen' was chorused and she opened her huge, lovely, brown eyes and gazed with an appropriate reverence at the ceiling. The Vicar smiled indulgently; the dear girl was really very charming and Dr. Mills would be enchanted with her when he visited. His wife, Lavinia, made a quick movement with her serviette and John lifted up the pickelets from the fireplace.

"How did school go today, John dear?" asked Lavinia.

"Wizard," said John. "We won the fives two to one and Lucas said I was jolly sure to get my colours and old Matthews let off a firework in Latin and Codger didn't half jump. But then the smoke came out of the inkwell and Matt got the swish and Codger gave him a detention for tomorrow as well so that he won't be able to get out to burn the Guy."

"Don't let me see you doing any of those silly pranks," said his mother. "One Guy Fawkes' when your uncle Harold was young he blew off all his eyebrows with a firework." One of her large, intense, brown eyes winked just a little and he knew that she was not really cross. John wondered if Grandpa had liked Mother and decided no.

"... and Jane Forbes asked us to her party on Saturday," Mary was saying. "It's fancy dress and I can go in my little Dutch girl and may we go, please, Daddy?"

"Well, let me see," said the vicar. "The Forbes live over towards Hanley. I'm going over that way on Saturday to see the curate and I dare say I can pick you up. Mind it will be early, though. None of this galivanting around and late nights. Yes, I think you may accept Jane's card for John and yourself. Don't you think so, dear ?"

Lavinia sighed.

"It will be all right for Mary, dear, but I don't quite know what we can fix up for John, if it's fancy dress." John quickly decided that he didn't want to go and said so.

"Nonsense," said the vicar. "You must learn to escort your sister and not be always thinking whether you are enjoying it yourself. I am sure your mother will find you something to wear. These things are not usually too elaborate."

"Yes, dear, but do you really think . . . ," began Lavinia. Reverend Tollitt looked up quickly and surprisingly sternly and Lavinia sighed again and thought of pirates' costumes in the attic.

"I don't want to go to any old party."

"John, that will be quite enough. It is much better that you and Mary are able to enjoy yourselves together where we know where you are instead of your roaming all over the place with those ruffians in the village. Also, I have been meaning to tell you children that Dr. Mills has found time to come all the way down from Oxford tomorrow for

the evening and, of course, would be most offended if you were not here to greet him. If you impress him favorably, John, I needn't tell you how much he might help you when you go up for your orders."

John didn't hear the last of this; it was a tableau for John, that moment. No Guy Fawkes'. The day of days to be spent in the house with visitors and in its place a tame party on Saturday. That was the import but not the thought; he didn't think at all, everything was very still and suddenly quiet. A log rolled over in the hearth but that was the next second; the first second was awfully alone and apart. Like a jungle; thick, steaming trees, rotting, echoing; like a deep pool of loneliness. And then it was over and while the log turned in the hearth there came a hot tide of anger and after that a slow, deadening flow of hate. He heard himself protest and his father answered the correct and crushing answer and only the hate remained.

Tea went on; they ate pickelets, they ate bread and butter, and then cakes and all the way drank tea and the incident became past time. Mary ignored, Father triumphed, and Mother sympathised and these three attitudes were seen only by John who looked for them and was independent of them. He felt them like a light, warm breeze on the cheek that does not move the branches; it was in a word or an inflection and it was in the way his mother held her teacup. They finished tea soon and the vicar looked to his son for the customary final grace.

"For what we have received may the Lord make us truly thankful." They got up.

"I would like to see you in the library, please, John. Say in about ten minutes."

"Yes, sir." Mary ran up to the nursery for her tennis racquet and went outside to play against the stable wall.

"Put on your old coat, dear," called Lavinia. "We can't have that new one dirtied." Really, the child dressed up at the most extraordinary times. She turned her attention to her son, who was sprawled despairingly in the armchair.

"Never mind, dear," said Lavinia. "I'm sure your father knows what's best. We'll see if we can watch the fireworks from the terrace after Dr. Mills leaves."

"Do I really have to go to that party?" he asked.

"It would be easier if you did as your father wished," said Lavinia softly and without conviction.

John wondered why his father wanted to see him in the library. Oh, it was probably the swish for sulking. There was that cold, numb feeling of waiting. He didn't care. He was too old for the swish. The anger came back; he wouldn't take it. Why should he take the strap ? Small fists hitting tight, sinewy flesh and hitting bone, hard and inflexible. He banged his fist on the arm of the chair which was soft. He would go out tomorrow night and he wasn't going to be strapped. His father called from the library and he was almost running, not afraid any more but hating and angry and angry more than hating.

His father was sitting at the desk and looked up as John knocked

and entered.

"Sit down, John," said the vicar quietly. "I just want to have a little talk with you. It may have seemed to you that I was unduly strict with you just now. I want to explain why I had to do what I did. But before I do you must stop sulking; you are thirteen now which is much too old to be sulking. I expect it in Mary but not in you."

John changed his expression. He had not been sulking but rather taken aback by the calm, almost kindliness of his father. It checked his anger suddenly and unfairly and the anger became sterilised from want of opposition. He now drew in his lips and looked straight at his father.

"The importance of tomorrow's visit cannot be over-estimated," the vicar went on. "It is very essential when you take your orders that you are recognised by influential people as having worth. I want you to do more than manage; I want you to succeed in the church. Without your contacts you cannot. Now about the party on Saturday," the vicar went on without a break, "Mary is eleven and it is time you began to chaperone her around a little. Also I feel you have been seeing too little of your own friends and going around instead with the village boys. You must understand, John, that I have a reputation to maintain and it is all too often that a clergyman's son is dubbed bad by tradition. See that you don't justify it. Do you understand what I'm getting at? Of course you do. You will get your extra Guy Fawkes pocket-money anyway, but I can't say that I'm sorry that you won't be going out. A very pagan custom, I have always thought. All right, that is all I wanted to say to you, son."

John still sat there, bewildered by both the moderate tone and the unusual fluency of his father's speech. The vicar repeated, "You may go now, John. I have my sermon to finish." John got up and left, like a pigeon that runs into a window in the rain. The heavy hate remained viscerally; his mind was objects and sounds; the handle of the door was loose and hard and cold. Two rattles and a gentle pneumatic closing noise behind him. Five white bannisters along the landing each swollen in the middle; the sixth with black friction tape where there was a split. On the seventh stair down he tripped on the stair-rod, swore without experience and then turned and kicked the stair-rod and kicked and kicked with a static hate for the stair-rod which welled up and choked in his throat. The tears came quickly, blinded his eyes and ran down his cheeks, salty, into his mouth and he choked back loud sobs and ran back upstairs and up more stairs and shut and bolted the door of his bedroom. He hugged the pillow and sobbed until there were no more tears and his face was hot and stiff like parchment against the pillow.

Then he was tired but clearer in his mind and he opened the window. It was cool and moonlit outside and felt good on his face. He reached down and peeled a piece of moss off the roof and threw it at the cat sitting in the driveway. The moss fell in the grass and the cat leaped on it like a mad thing, primordial, black and gleaming. John shivered

because it was cold and watched the cat; the cat was sensual and amoral; the cat toyed with the moss in the grass and then took it distastefully in her mouth and ran round to the back door mewing bleakly. John thought of a trail of glazed green clots where the moss must have bled.

He turned inside and pulled the window down; his foot struck a box of hoarded fireworks under the bed and he wondered what to do with these. Maybe dash off somewhere tomorrow after the visit and set them all off by himself. Like God; making a star and then blowing it up. Like Genesis he would let them all off; the rockets, catherine wheels and row of Roman candles, dizzy greens and reds, and virgin mercuric white, blue stars and yellow, spitting discs. All at once; tomorrow was bath night; so it would have to be before; between Dr. Mills and a bath. But what glories! His eyes sparkled. Like God.

He went down to the bathroom and washed his face. Mary was playing in the nursery now; she was playing with John's blocks. John's blocks were something magnificent left by a generous American uncle. There were many of them in all different shapes and they were grooved so that you could run things like small discs and marbles down them. He never tired of building with them and with the toy train he could compile quite impressive houses and stores. He wanted to go and play with them now; it was something to do more than anything else. He felt an outcast, different since the episode at tea but nobody else seemed to act as though anything had happened.

Mary said in quite her normal voice, "Oh, it's you again."

"What you building?"

"A doll's house, silly. Can't you see?" John could see but he couldn't have known; the dolls were much too large for the proposed house and one doll stood demurely in the parlor while her eyes inspected the drainpipe on the roof. It was like Alice trying to become the right size to enter Wonderland.

"Here, that isn't right," said John and he reached for a small drawer of china dolls. "Let's start all over again."

"And have the train running up onto the back verandah?" suggested Mary, expansively.

"All right, only it's a daft idea." And so they were happy and by supper John had laid away Guy Fawkes for a time. Lavinia was happy that he had forgotten, and the vicar was pleased; there would be no more fuss.

Supper and bed passed in a glow of warmth; clean, wooly pyjamas, the tang of toothpaste, the breathless cold of the bedroom and the heavy comfort of blankets. John slept and the next morning it was blustery and sharp. A good Guy day; and then first a pang of remembering Dr. Mills and then a little consolation at the thought of his own private display came upon him. He wouldn't tell anyone at school that he wouldn't be there. Just funking it, they would think.

Breakfast was good and Mary said the grace wrong and John was in high delight and made certain that his grace was letter perfect. He coasted down to school on his bike. He was the wind and cut clean, like a knife, through the air, which was a piece of cheese. School seemed

very slow, even the lunch hour when he played fives. Everyone talked of last year's Guy Fawkes', how the Guy looked like Bishop Pratt and when it burned one of the girls had to be taken home. No girls this year, said Squires who was a fifth former and a man of authority. So it was agreed that all girls would be barred. John was asked whether he was coming and said yes, rather. Don't forget, then, six o'clock at Jenkins' barn. Everyone was sorry for poor old Matthews who had to stay in and do lines. John had suddenly to check this vicarious feeling that he was actually going to the burning and tutor himself in the glories of his private display.

The trouble was that he was feeling out of it; everybody wanted to go so tremendously and then everyone at home was curious to see Dr. Mills and he felt out of both feelings. Like God, he thought and wondered if it wouldn't be very miserable to be God. God was very like his father sometimes, it seemed. He could make you do all sorts of things but never because you wanted to, as though you were helping, but always because you had to. Hell would be a sort of red-hot funnel with people strapping you all the way down. He wanted desperately to burn the Guy with people round about; to shout and shout and never be heard because everyone else was shouting too.

He devised all afternoon; there would be an awful stink but all that could happen would be a strapping and he could tell Father he didn't want to go into the old clergy, anyway. He'd be an engineer and build and build. If he stayed in the school library until half-past five, it would be dark enough so that he could sneak off to Jenkins' barn and no one what mattered would see. The more he thought about this the better the idea seemed and his spirits rose. Caesar and the Helvetii positively ripped along and when, presently, the bell rang his heart beat a little faster but he went in and sat down in the library.

"Doing a little research, Tollitt, I see," said Mr. Hall of the classical Fifth. "Keep it up. Want you in my class next year." John scowled at his back and started the National Geographics. He got interested in an article on the igloo and then looked at the well-thumbed pages of breasty native women but still the time dragged out. Twice he studied the clock carefully for a full minute to see if it had stopped; he looked out of the window at twenty-five past five and decided that it was dark enough and he would walk slowly up the drive. Down to the cloakroom and then up the long drive to the school entrance. It was going to be a terrific night for the Guy. The moon was up already and the trees looked weird. Through the entrance; car stopping on the other side of the road; Jennings' horses with the hay cart; car door opens.

"John, you really are naughty. Father asked you especially not to be late." It was mother with the car. He thought of running but he couldn't somehow; there was no corner to turn, just a wide flat open space. So he walked over to the car with a sigh.

"Whatever were you doing all that time?" asked Lavinia. "I came down here as soon as tea was over. Your father is very cross. Fortunately Dr. Mills' train is late so you will have time to get changed."

John mumbled something in excuse about staying to get some books

but it seemed too wearying to make up a good excuse. He would have to have the fireworks by himself.

Lavinia was upset and clashed the gears. How was dinner going? It would surely spoil before the train got in; and Martha still with the forks to clean which should have been done this morning. They arrived at the rectory. "Now you go upstairs and wash, and behind your neck and ears, mind, and I have put out your grey flannel suit and a clean shirt and tie on the bed. And please, dear, do try and behave."

"Yes, mother." An automatic reply and a dash upstairs to avoid possible encounter with father.

"I say, you are late." This from Mary.

"Oh, shut up." He washed quickly and ran upstairs to the bedroom to change. The car started up outside and it was father going to meet Dr. Mills at the station. He went downstairs where the maid, Martha, shepherded Mary and himself into the lounge.

"Your mother says you are to stay in here and keep clean, whatever you do," said Martha. "She is changing and will be down in half an hour."

"I wonder what he'll be like," said Mary who was wearing a powder blue dress with a bow at the neck.

"Who?"

"Dr. Mills, silly."

"Oh, who cares?"

"You and your silly fireworks. That's all you ever think about." Silence. John played with the fringe of the chair and Mary sat on the settee.

John felt that somehow he should have run; if it had been father, he would have, he decided. Now the chance was gone and he was imprisoned in the grey suit and he realised sickeningly that he would probably never get out at all now. His heart was heavy and there was no one to help him so he was rude to Martha when she came in for the candlesticks.

Mother came down looking superb.

"I say !" said John. Lavinia smiled and straightened his tie and there was a nice, mysterious, cologny scent about her. Then Dr. Mills and father arrived and mother went out to greet them, after which the men retired to the study to talk. Dinner was soon ready; the children were paraded and presented.

"This is my daughter, Mary, and my son, John, Dr. Mills," said father looking stern for John.

"Charming, charming," said the visitor. "I shall be seeing more of the young man, I believe, when he is up at Christ's in a few years time." He beamed. He was a man of immense and all-encompassing good humour which was somehow marred by a marked weakness of his jaw. This made for a rabbity look and a rather effeminate smile. The chin was the unmaking of the evening; John was set against him from the start and Mary quickly overcame her awe and skirted the impertinent. Lavinia disliked him but covered up admirably and as for the vicar he was rather surprised with the ease with which he could sway the doctor

in conversation.

Martha brought in the soup and Mary said the first grace. John wasn't hungry and left half the soup. It was an unconscious anti-climax; somehow a person who stopped one from the only Guy Fawkes' Day in a whole year was imagined as immensely tall and with a huge black beard. John thought of the guy and imagined Dr. Mills with straw for a head and burning. Crummy to be kept in for him. He was hating his father too; there they were together and John hated the collars they were wearing, white as snow but shining unhealthily; one thin ascetic neck and one fat, prosperous neck and John hated everyone and stuffed down food and choked and begged his pardon.

He looked at the tablecloth which was starched but not shiny and then the water jug turned a sudden miraculous green. John turned around and there was a rocket bursting wonderfully down in the meadow. And another blue one and a burning white one he could see through the dining room window. Martha came in with dessert.

"Would you mind drawing the curtains, please, Martha?" asked the vicar.

"Those illuminations are somewhat disquietening." There were no more fireworks, just distant noise.

"Which pudding will it be, John?" asked Lavinia, having served the others. "Junket or rhubarb tart?"

"I don't care," said John. He was seething. Nobody would help; they all just sat there looking good like a lot of family portraits. Everybody was so polite and Martha went around on tiptoe. He wanted to shout till that chin receded into the neck and the collar snapped. He ate; jabbed with his fork and swallowed without chewing. It was getting hot in here; hotter and hotter; he squirmed on the chair and the leather squeaked. The candle flickered and John felt as though he were hanging right in the center of the flame, turning white and shiny with the heat and purity of the burning wax.

"John, may we have the final grace?" said his father and John heard his voice down a long telescoped bulls-eye of time and cried, "No, I won't say it."

Then the candle seemed to go out and the bulls-eye became two-dimensional; everyone stared and John burst into tears and ran out of the room.

"What on earth's the matter with the boy, today? Disgraceful behavior. Please accept my apologies, Dr. Mills. I must speak to the boy afterwards."

"Not at all, not at all. These little things happen, I'm sure."

"I expect he had a hard day at school." said Lavinia, softly.

John Falk

The Hero-King, His Reign and Possible Ruin

To-day is he turtle-old,
His mouth tightening into a thin
Turtle grin;
That peculiar closed in, calm cast,
The inevitable reptile smile.
A slack throat holding good and evil equally,
Like a sack of rotting grain,
Sweet in the fruition of decay — benign.

See him as he reclines there,
He has had his vision —
But he does not remember the wondrous pictures.
He is happy, for is he not a seer ?
What he related in the square that day
Made the soldiers weep,
But the children stood poised to hear
What he forgot.

The shadows flit in Plato's cave,
All manner of people are mimicing them.
Learned men plot the sun spots
Of a row of candles ;
Soon they'll roast a pig over them
And the thick fat shall inspire
The fire.
The flames leap, the fat sparkles,
The pig is done,
Now eat your muse and like it —
For here is no sun.

But long after the season
When his hooded eye requires
The grey skin of the sky
For background and necessary companion —
Then, perhaps then, may wonder wound us quietly,
Urge us out of ourselves
With a subtle gash ;
Sifted from our caves
Like so many furled smoke rings,
Egos (waxen fruit, fruit of wax)

Impaled on that cosmic tree,
Each alone and burning, weaving smoke.
Wonder, and the self is greater than itself,
Which is to say
It is completely itself.

Who can wonder when wonder is outcast
To a people grown old ?
The children old — trained in oldness.
Not the clique sitting in a circle
On bohemian coco matting,
Bawling folk songs,
Burping martinis,
And eyeing other eyes
(Oh, the new face !).

One goddess I know sells things in the afternoon
And shrieks for blood all night long —
But she dulls.

Who among you is dragon enough,
Callous, beautiful monster enough —
To wonder ?

Patricia Vos

To Walk Alone

To walk alone
Through fog
Unattended.
This is the fate
Of those who pass,
Ageless and soulless
In the genius of Mind's eternity.
Love cannot pierce their solitude,
Nor wisdom.
Theirs is a life of unattainable emotion.
Their name is ours,
But not their understanding.

Mary Jane Ferrier

"Ducdame"

The market-pace had long been empty. The boisterous farmers had left for their homes when the afternoon was on the wane. Still the echo of their shouts and laughter lingered in his ears as if they only now were packing up their carts in the square before him. Still the pangs of loneliness that had gripped him as they drove away lurked in his heart as they so often did in these moments of interlude. It seemed to him that his life was a patchwork of these interludes alone.

Matt knew the market-place as he knew no other part of the town. It was his whole world — his closest friend. Ever since anyone could remember he had sat there against the pillars of the weigh-station on market days with his two useless legs crossed awkwardly in front of him. Although he could not stand upon his feet to cry his wares, nor pace the cobblestones in search of market gossip, nevertheless Matt was an important figure among the traders. His hands were strong and skillful — well-fitted to carve the delicate wooden figures which commanded such a high price from the tourist or collector.

Joseph, who was usually so prompt to pick him up, was late this evening. This seeming neglect by his son only helped to deepen his sense of loneliness. Already the last shafts of sunlight had withdrawn down the valleys of the streets, leaving the square in the first haze of twilight. The stones against which Matt was leaning were fast losing the warmth that comforted him during the day.

For Matt the market-square had always been a stage upon which the petty dramas of small-town life played themselves out. With the years he had grown close to the place until it seemed to him a friend and confidante. It had come closer to him than even he could understand.

Now as he slouched waiting for Joseph, he let himself sink into the quiet undercurrent of the deserted place. He could hear the distant noises of families preparing for supper and dogs barking in anticipation of food. Mingled with the present noises were the echoes of the market bustle. It was often this way with him. More than ever he could not today put aside the spirit of the busy market-square. It seemed to be pounding at his ears demanding his attention. The drumming in his ears grew louder as he sat there, the shouts and laughter more wild. He seemed to be sinking into a chaotic world of discordant noise. All the familiar sounds of the market-place in full swing were distorted, jamming against one another in malicious rivalry. Gradually he perceived that the square was no longer deserted. On the contrary, it was teeming with helter-skelter activity to match the hellish noise.

At first nothing was distinguishable. Matt was helpless in the grip of this mad turmoil. But slowly he regained a measure of composure

sufficient to notice that he was no longer squatting on the steps of the weigh-station. He was walking. He was walking on his own two feet, threading his way among the stalls.

All at once the pent up emotion of years was let loose. The joy of freedom flooded through his soul, washing away for a brief moment his fear of the strange surroundings. He had never known until now how he longed to be as other men. In his life he had been denied so many of his desires that he hardly remembered what they had been. With the ease of a child he forgot the chaotic state of the familiar square. He drowned out the discord with his own delirious shouting.

On all sides distorted faces leered at him and at every step hands clutched at him trying to drag him down. At once confusion succeeded to his unbounded joy. The same mysterious force which had unshackled his limbs seemed to have let loose the devils of hell in the hearts of his late friends.

The cry was all around him.

"Grab him."

"Don't let the miserable cripple get away with this."

"Damned witchcraft, I tell you."

So on and so on throughout the crowd. They were angry at him, but for what he knew not.

Then they were moving in on him, grabbing at his clothes, trying to drag him into their stalls, their dens. He knew now that he must run — for the first time in his life — away from the square, away from its people. With a great effort he gathered himself for the break. He burst through the angry crowd, pounding his feet on the cobblestones with desperate regularity. Instinctively he headed for the weigh-station at the farther end of the square. It was familiar to him. It was a beacon in this topsy-turvy world. Each step grew more difficult as he struggled to the friendly steps. He faltered, paused and then, in one last effort, fairly flung himself at the concrete pillars.

He awoke to Joseph's strained voice. For a moment he could not tell whether he was still pursued or sat peacefully in his accustomed place. He felt the stones wet with his tears. He felt himself bruised and saw that he lay stretched at the foot of the steps. Then a wave of relief surged through him and he gave voice to a prayer.

"Thank God! Thank God! Thank God I am still a cripple."

Walter Ramshaw

Man's Transcendency

(Written upon hearing of the tragic death of children playing among the ruins of the London blitz in times of peace)

I

It seems to me when'er I pause to scan the world around
And marvel at the wonders that our modern life has found,
That man is nigh his destiny, fast gaining hand on time;
The sands are falling, ebbing fast —
The pace is frantic, cannot last —
Yet looks he forward, never past
And headlong to his doom.

The children play amid the ruins wrought by hand of war
As children have since time began regardless of the law,
But in this wreck lurks jeopardy — it was a powder store —
Smoke-blackened cases lie about, how empty none can tell,
There is a glimpse of gleaming steel that seems to be a shell —
So though they merely play at war, they play the game too well.

Thus in this light, the nations fight,
Regardless of the price,
As young folk play in light of day
And never reckon twice.

II

The forces of the earth are stripped to utilize their fire,
The hidden powers rooted out and turned to man's desire,
Exploiting all of Nature's store — her secrets for his own;
He has no reason for his zest —
He has no motive in the quest –
He merely wants to beat the rest,
To dominate mankind.

The play goes on through blasted stones that echo with their prattle,
Mar's youthful warriors charge around and mimic sounds of battle,
Those little hands now clench a gun though once they held a rattle;
They forage under rubbled heaps and dig for weapons new —
Now two small boys have found a gun that once real soldiers knew

And swing its deadly snout around to kill the rival crew.
It's but a game, life is too tame

Without a cause to win.
If there is risk, then life is brisk —
Excitement lurks with sin.

III

The hands that kindle fire are slaves that need a guiding brain
To keep them from the savage blaze and miss the searing pain,
So needs mankind a teacher, some reverend councillor;
Man has no knowledge of his plight —
Man sees no sign to guide him right —
Man has no strength of inner right —
His power has made him blind.

The untrained fingers fumble wild and clutch at strange new toys,
Push loose the rusty safety-catch that was not meant for boys,
The trigger's free and so they pull and imitate the noise;
They do not sense the horrors that lurk within their fort —
They do not think of danger, they have no time for thought —
They are too young to sit and think, to them it is but sport.

They know no rules, save those in schools,
To teach them what is right;
Worse still mankind who is too blind
To see the guiding light.

IV

There comes to me a solemn thought that stupifies my brain,
Too dreadful in its prophecy, it could not stand the strain,
That man will break the balance and shatter all the Earth:
There is no time for pause or thought —
There is no time for rest or aught —
There is no time, for time is naught
In this mad game with death.

More playthings are now brought to light from under fallen bricks
That seem to childish minds to promise even better tricks;
They've found a crate that's labelled 'Bombs' and hit them with their sticks!
Huge instruments of force exposed for them to try to break –
They tap — they strike and find the mark — then all the heavens shake;
They lived, they've gone — a thought enough to make all mortals quake.

So man is gone, he has no one
To make him ease the pace —
Someone to tell him what to do
To save the human race.

J. Scott Rivers

Jack and "Whisky Jack"

I cannot remember when it was that I first heard of one particular belief — superstition if you will — common to all prospectors in the Northland. I do know that I had never heard of it during the time in which I actually knew Jack, and that since that time it has provided the subject matter for many hours of thought concerning its possible origin. Superstitions, strange beliefs, myths, all have their origins in some strange, peculiar circumstance or coincidence which is often humorous, and I have often wondered if the person who originated the idea that the Canada Jay or "Whisky Jack" is the reincarnation of some dead prospector, could possibly have known Jack O'Grady!

The strange part about this particular belief is the fact that if ever bird did resemble man, every "Whisky Jack" I have ever seen did resemble old Jack. True, the similarity may only exist in my own mind, for I have never seen a bird of any description which wore a hat night and day, which chewed tobacco continually, and which smoked a battered old pipe the last thing before retiring as O'Grady did. On the other hand, it was something more than my imagination which has caused me to pause in my prospecting on more than one occasion, to gaze at the lone, ridiculous bird perched on a nearby branch, with its great head cocked to one side in a critical manner as it surveyed my work, and to ask aloud, "Damn it, Jack, can't I do anything to please you?"

Of all the men whom I have known, Jack O'Grady was undoubtedly the strangest. A prospector for as long as he or any of his cronies could remember, Jack was on old-timer and he belonged to an age that is past. Short of stature, with a large head and long arms, he seemed especially designed for carrying large packs through the bush. With his head eternally covered with a hat of some description — which as a last concession to society he removed while in town, and then only to eat — a thin face dyed the colour of balsam bark by the sun and the wind, and with one cheek or the other swollen by a sizeable plug of tobacco, Jack was really a colourful character.

O'Grady had the heaviest eye-brows I have ever seen on a man, and these gave him the look of a sleepy bear just emerged from hibernation. The eyes themselves, when they were visible, were of the sharpest grey, set deep within his head, and they glinted like sunshine on a newly-sharpened drill-steel. His lips were thin, stained with tobacco juice, and these gave his mouth the appearance of the merest slit across his face when his teeth were clenched. His ears were the smallest possible for the purpose and lay folded close along the side of his head in such a way that one had to look closely to see them. These features, set on that tremendously large head, perched atop a neck which

had come to resemble a tree trunk by years of straining against a tump-line, destroyed any trace of manly beauty which Jack might have possessed.

Jack must have been sixty years old when I knew him — it was impossible to estimate his age with any accuracy — and he was still one of the finest bush-men in the region. Having spent most of his life in quest of gold, like so many others of his calling, he had seen fortune after fortune slip through his fingers. He was the most skeptical of men, and doubtful of all but his own convictions he scorned all manner of society, preferring to be alone in the bush. There, he obtained his greatest pleasure from his association with the little animals whom he had come to understand, and upon whom he looked as the only creatures which could be trusted.

Jack was only satisfied with a job if he did it himself and I never knew of anyone to receive a word of praise from his lips. I was young and eager to please during the time I spent with him, yet try as I would, I could never do anything quite to his satisfaction. Whether I cut fire-wood or whether I held the steel while he swung the 14-pound sledge, I was never able to swing an axe nor hold the steel in quite the right manner for him. He would stand and watch me while I worked at some menial chore, with his head tilted to one side, slowly shifting his "chaw" from one side of his mouth to the other, and he would wonder aloud what the world would come to when his generation ceased to dominate. As he spoke he would pause to punctuate his words with a stream of tobacco juice directed at some unsuspecting insect which had the misfortune to cross his line of fire.

For all his disappointment in humanity, Jack was completely reconciled to the other forms of life with which he came into contact. He was on intimate terms with the animals who were his companions in his solitary existence, and these seemed to share his views on different subjects. Rabbits, squirrels, porcupines and even skunks showed no fear at his approach and they would sit and listen as he spoke to them like old friends. The birds which inhabited his lonely realm were his favourites, however, and he was quite familiar with all of them. Partridges would come to feed at his call; chicadees would approach within a few feet and hang upside down from a twig to listen while he spoke; the wily loon would paddle close to the shore of the nearby lake to laugh with him of a summer's evening; and the great Northern owl returned night after night to perch outside his shack while the two exchanged eerie greetings.

Of all his wild associates I never knew Jack to show partiality towards any one save the "Whisky Jack". Not only did he favour that particular bird, but he actually doted on it like a grandmother on her first grandson. When I pause to consider it, it is the more amazing to me now that I did not note the remarkable resemblance between the two when I had the opportunity to observe them together. The two had more than a common understanding, they were brothers under the skin, and I never knew Jack to be without at least one of them for a companion. Whether we worked at staking in the dead of winter,

with the thermometer hovering at thirty below; or whether we toiled through muskeg in the torturing heat of summer when it seemed that all the world was asleep, we had only to pause for a moment or two and one of that feathered clan would appear.

It was during my stay with O'Grady that I first became really familiar with that sage among birds, and it was from him that I learned to speak with them as he did. "Jack," he would say, pausing in his work as a "Whisky Jack" appeared, "you know, I think this shear has some values. If we can only find where the fault lies, I think we will have it." When the reply to his statement came, in the form of the unvarying "Peep" which Jack took to mean either "yes" or "no", whichever suited his fancy, he would set to work again, apparently satisfied that his opinion was correct. Never without his valued councillors, Jack set great store by their views, and he seldom made a decision without consulting them.

Prior to the time I spent with Jack in the woods I had never seen more than four "Whisky Jacks" at one time, nor have I since. Usually when in the wilds one or two will appear, materializing as if by magic out of the brush, but seldom more than that except under particular conditions in which I have seen as many as four together. Where Jack was, however, I have seen as many as twenty of them. Sitting about on all the branches closest to him, they would gaze at him while he worked, with their great heads nodding, emitting a few well-chosen "peeps", observing his every movement, and seemingly considering his every word as he spoke to them. In that manner they would perch for hours on end, as long as Jack worked and as long as he spoke to them. For all the world they resembled a company of honourable judges considering a weighty case, with Jack as supreme judge in the process of charging them before they should retire to consider a verdict.

To my mind, no stranger bird than the Canada Jay ever existed. In his way the "Jack" is as far removed from the world of birds as Jack O'Grady was removed from the world of men. With his great head — also out of proportion to his short body — it seems that the "Jack" too was designed for some particular purpose which has long since ceased to exist, and he spends his time merely in appearing where he is least expected. Perhaps at his creation the object was to provide company for men in the bush. Considered a good omen by trappers and an old friend by prospectors, he seems to scorn the society of his own kind and seeks, rather, to associate himself with these human counterparts of himself.

With his dull grey plumage giving him something of the appearance of an unwashed ragamuffin, the Jay is the "character" of the forest. With his strange habit of perching with his head cocked to one side as he silently contemplates some object, he has all the characteristics of a preoccupied professor. Upon watching him at times as he hopped about from branch to branch, I have found myself expecting him to begin a discourse on some weighty subject, once he attained a position suited to his taste. Again, upon noticing that "Jack" observed me with his sad countenance appearing still more melancholy than usual, I have

begun to rack my conscience in an attempt to discover what I had done, so much did he resemble a father-confessor.

In a good many respects apart from mere physical resemblance did the two Jacks appear similar. As O'Grady would answer a question with a monosyllable, or not at all, according to the way he felt; so the bird replied to any statement with his unvarying "peep" or else held his peace. As Jack would sit by the hour absorbed in his own thoughts; the bird would sit silently and often unobserved, seemingly as preoccupied as Buddha. As the aged prospector was never content with any chore of mine; so the bird appeared to be fully as great a skeptic, and would scold me violently from his lofty perch when my efforts were not to his liking. As O'Grady would eat anything which was set before him, quite uninterested in anything as dull as food; the bird would eat anything and everything which was not firmly nailed down. For all their other traits both bird and man were extra sensitive, and neither one nor the other ever forgave a slight, whether fancied or intentional.

Jack O'Grady is gone now, and although I sometimes like to think of him as prospecting in a country where there is no overburden, where quartz stringers ten feet wide extend in all directions, and where grab-samples assay a thousand dollars to the ton; at other times I doubt that such an existence would suit Jack. For still the "Whisky Jack" remains, his numbers increasing year by year, corresponding, no doubt, to the number of old-timers who yearly stake out their last claims. That the two should be separated I find it difficult to believe, and each time I meet a feathered "Jack" on the trail, as I often do, I tip my hat and say "Good morning, Jack," in my most pleasant way, just to be sure. Thus far, only the familiar "peep" has answered my greeting; but one day I am sure that the even more familiar "Hrumff" with which Jack used to answer will be heard instead. Then, I am confident that if I look closely about I will find a tell-tale mark on the snow, for though all the other old-timers might exchange their customary greetings for the "peep" of the jay when they come back, I know that Jack O'Grady never will; nor will he ever give up chewing tobacco.

Claire Allard

Inevitability

Damn it !
Leave me in peace will you.
Stupid idiots,
Herd of humans,
Animals of degeneration.

Faces on streets :
Nightmares.
Or better :
A monkey zoo
With my apologies to these innocent mammals.
Poor fools
Of all shapes,
Two arms two legs in common,
But if only these
Were decently arranged.
Blank looks,
Opened mouths
Like dead fish.
Women :
Their tongues aching with empty talk
From empty minds.
Men :
Drooling with disgusting lust
From dirty rooms.

These are the intelligent animals
Of the twentieth century.
Brains ?
They are all canned in laboratories.
The formula is ready.
The potion
Will soon be poured.
With crazed amazed eyes
The creatures of this third planet
Will gape
A split second
With incomprehensive stupidity,
Will scream, panic :
Too late.

Outburst of disintegrated atoms . . .
And all will have disappeared.
Thank God !
The dirty race
Vanished.

Come now
2,000 A.D.

Michael Ballantyne

Fyrst Forth Gewat

Fair time is now and the long hoped-for journey
safely begun. Four sheep we sacrificed, omens
considered, searched in the entrails and found there
our answer. Then launched they the slim ship
forth on the breakers prow pointing seaward
curved like the swan's neck. Oars bent in slow beat
backward and forward bore us out swiftly
into the whaleways behind us the soft beach
our dear kinsmen waving ahead stretched the salt sea
colour of iron mail and silently moving.
Then on the sixth day suddenly sea-cliffs
whiteness of combers curling in sunlight.
Strapped on our armour then flocked to the forecastle
cheered at the thought of the prospect before us
birds in the blue air the harsh voyage over . . .

Adin Merrow

Quiet Hour

. . . the very houses seem asleep;
And all the mighty heart is lying still!
Wordsworth.

It was five a.m. and a heavy mist hung over the Seine — heavy and forboding, like a London pea-soup fog. The normally dull street lamps gave off a strained amber glow that magnified the grotesqueness of the elongated shadows which crept along the walks and walls beside me. An occasional passer-by would seem to precipitate out of the fog, revealing gaunt, jaundice-like features; then dissolve again in the dark dampness behind me. The deadened scuffing of my own feet on the pavement was distracting — reminded me of some of Victor Hugo's cretinous creatures slipping along these very same streets. I hurried along, as if unconsciously trying to escape some lurking evil following me in the fog. I passed the long line of closed bookstalls along the Seine embankment — remembered a horrible Matisse I had bought from one of the indifferent old ladies who sold paintings and reprints near the Louvre. All the houses on the Quai d'Orsay were tightly sealed, their shutters closing out the world as if the morning fog were some sort of plague. The rhythmic scuffing of my feet was all that interrupted the reign of stillness.

The lights of the Pont St. Michel leading to the Isle de la Cité loomed up suddenly, and I turned off the Quai d'Orsay to cross the right branch of the Seine. Looking over the railing I could not even make out the turbid waters below. Ahead I could barely discern the massive Palais de Justice. As I neared the gray Gothic structure a small gate in the wall to one side of the building opened, and two gendarmes walked out onto the sidewalk. Three more appeared, dragging a rather clumsy contraption behind them that looked at first and at a distance like an overgrown washing-machine wringer. I abated my pace as two more gendarmes, leading a man with his hands tied behind him, appeared. A priest followed at a reverent distance. When I was within a few steps of the little gathering, the contraption began to look less and less like a washing-machine wringer, and more and more took on the appearance of a guillotine — the handy little dealer of swift, efficient justice that gained such a reputation during the days of Marie Antoinette. But this guillotine was a much more efficient model — small, light, and mobile. As I was musing over the instrument's dramatic history, the little group of gendarmes was readying the guillotine for immediate use. The law of France still demands the employment of the guillotine in capital punishment. And, too, it has to be a public execution. Of course, the great fanfare and milling, yelling crowds of the eighteenth century

beheadings were purposely avoided by neglecting to publish any of the pre-ceremonial particulars, and by holding the little ceremony at such an odd but convenient hour. So this was indeed a chance occasion, my being witness to a twentieth century beheading.

With no need for restraint the prisoner, a totally apathetic and rather insidious fellow, kneeled down before the guillotine. Behind him the priest placed his hand on the prisoner's head and mouthed a few lines in Latin. Then the gendarmes fitted the man's head into the block and clamped his neck in securely, as someone shoved a basket up directly under the condemned man's head. All was ready. It had been the work of only a few minutes. The gathering for a moment surrendered to solemnity — and almost to the enshrouding stillness of the fog, it seemed. The Prefect asked the condemned if he was ready. Then he looked at the priest who gave an affirmative nod. The prefect mumbled a few sentences in abbreviated French. Then he added a simple, significant gesture with his right hand. The executioner pulled the cord. The seventy-pound knife blade fell swiftly — surely. No crunch of bones was heard. Even the sharp, metallic sound of the blade striking bottom was cushioned in the dense mist. The severed head dropped into the basket, as casually as a head of cabbage, leaving a splattered trail of blood on the block and knife and basket. The knife had done a neat job — an efficient job — like snuffing out a candle with a quick pinch of the fingers. One gendarme gathered up the basket as two others quickly covered the stump of the neck and laid the body in a waiting coffin box. There was little conversation. Only the prefect and the priest talked in low tones. The guillotine was hastily wiped off and dragged back through the dark gateway. The officious little executional gathering soon dispersed, and I was left alone on the sidewalk. There in the singular amber glow of a street lamp I remained transfixed for a moment, staring at a small, dark, almost black spot of blood on the pavement at my feet.

Philip Chaplin

Night Watch at Sea

First Trick

Stand-by hand of the watch,
Standing by in the galley,
Nothing to do but wait.
Wait until it is time for me to take the wheel.
Wait to reach the land.
That is the real point.
That is what I am really standing-by for.
That is why I am aboard here.
I am the returning native
Soon to arrive.
There's the mate's whistle !
He wants me on the bridge.
I have under-estimated the length of my daydream.
I am late relieving the wheel.

Second Trick

"Course 237," says the helmsman,
"She's taking the wheel both ways."
So he hands over to me.
No time for dreaming now.
I have a course to steer,
A rhumb line heading 237,
(Three figures with a mighty meaning)
A chord of a great circle
(Magna est mathematica et prevelabit)
Stretched from the Butt of Lewis, across the windy seas of the Atlantic,
To an imaginary point south-east of Cape Race and east of Cape Sable.
From there we bear west, for Fundy, hoping to dodge the ice.
Charted reefs are enough danger, but ice-floes are moving rocks, not to be charted.
The ice chart shows the safest route for the season, but not where the floe-ice is.
And so I steer 237, and she yaws a degree or two as the seas take her.
I bring her head back to . . .
"Steer 241 !"
"Steer 241, mate."
Hang the man ! Can't he leave me to my . . .
"Steady on 241, mate."
He checks the magnetic compass, says :
"How's your head ?"
"242,

"241,
"241,
"241."
He closes the binnacle hood, and chalks up the courses.
The only light comes from the gyro repeater; my eyes are glued to it like a bird's eyes to a snake's.
Can't he leave me to my thoughts ?
Bring her head back to . . . 241.
(We must have been making more leeway than we reckoned on).
Bring her back to her course by the power of steam in the wheel under my hands.
My hands, swinging the wheel, swing ten thousand tons,
Swing it towards the Canadas.
Yes I am making my way there,
Working my passage.
(Lucky I was in the navy and can steer.
I would have had to wait much longer for a ship if I had been a soldier and strange to the sea,
I couldn't have signed as A.B.).
Yes I am on my way, really going.
Here's my relief : "Course 241, taking both wheels."
I hand over and report : "Wheel relieved, course 241, mate."

Third Trick

It's cold up here on monkey island.
Lucky that guy has this coat, lined with sheepskin and hooded.
Stolen from a Dems * rating of course, but he swears he bought it off one for $25.
"Look out for ice, probably on the starboard bow," the mate said.
Surely I will, I want at least to see the land where I was born.
And what will I see ?
"He has been to Delhi, and seen men walk upon their heads," says the Indian ryot, listening to travellers' tales.
But what go I out for to see ?
Why did I leave the land where I have grown up ?
The land which I have served ?
The land which knows where it is going ?
The nation which I knew,
To come to this strange, unknown native land of mine ?
Am I seeking a new sensation, or a new opportunity ?
Truly I don't know.
Was it impulse that drove me back to sea, when I hoped I had swallowed the anchor ?
Or sea fever ?
I have not the answer, but has any man ?
Shall I find out ? and when ?
Or shall I go back to my brother's farm in Lincolnshire ?

* D.E.M.S. rating: a naval rating manning a gun in a Defensively Equipped Merchant Ship.

(Little one bell),||
Not much longer now, thank goodness.
My feet are cold.
I will be glad to get into my bunk tonight.
(Eight bells; my relief)
"Chance of ice on the starboard bow, for Pete's sake see it ! I don't want to have to swim to Halifax on a night like this."

|| A light stroke on the bell, fifteen minutes before the end of the watch to warn the new watch to stand by.

Charles Taylor

If I Could Sing

The night has shaken its massive shape
Preparing a vision.
Can I read it ?
Now when the time is still
And when darkness refreshes the weary face
Of the moving world.

Internal harmonies move
In the deep waters of silence
Are lost again in those cares of movement
Which are too much with us
Woven deep into the changing pattern of our being.
Yet they move on
in changeless rhythm, like
The whirling of the gulls again
Over the lost water.

There have been moments when I have read all this
As in a pool of still water
My being a mirror reflecting the light,
Death-stillness about me,
Till I have awakened to the sound of feet
Marching towards Progress.

How should I sing ?
How explore the dream ?
How tune my hollow voice
To the broken violin
To tell you of this
When sand has swept my tracks
When wind has ruffled water
When I have lost the words ?
If I could sing this song
The frog in the rushes
Would be silent one hot summer night
And listen.

Jonathan Fraser

Tea in December

I told my story, an old tale
to a new hearer
and she, wise as a woman,
listened and occasionally remarked.
The dreary afternoon spun out its life
in slow and deadly minutes
but there was no other place
and outside it was sleeting.
She placed one slim hand in mine
"You know," she said, "how I feel
how I've always felt ; and now
it's not too late."
In her voice was the unremembered warmth
of some old familiar wine
that commanding drousy acquiescence
kindles foolish fires.
"We are old friends," she whispered,
and older, so that for us . . ."

Yes, she was older than I, who
Was older in years.
But time's corroding use
had made dim the once bright
flame ; and life, bent
around some evil twig
of goodness, having never lived
was dying.
The false prop of a mere span of hours
unreasonably lending self-righteous support.
Her hand tightened on mine and blushingly
I recalled youthful stories of young men
and lonely widows
I thought of friends and names
who would, as icebergs,
move South in my Spring
and patterns which clean
and weedless had sustained me
and life which had failed,
And now,
to take a chance which was
no chance at all
only a thing new to me but old to time.

"Yes," I murmured, "we've been
good friends, close, and I
see no reason why . . ."
Then some half anxious gleam
caught my eye ; but it was
time to go
and she whispered,
"we'll be so very happy
you and I".

Lawrence Solomon

Crabbe's Village

Come,
Yea, come ye silent sippers
Of the stealthy sea,
Ye wretched fillers of
Wastrel flagons.
Vastness that covers the canyons of
Come and view the vale of
Cain.

Why ?
Ask ye WHY ?
That ye may to HOLY HEAVEN
Come, that ye may be hurled
Headlong to HARANGUING HELL.
Come !

Come,
Yea, come ye stiff-necked scholars
Of the sanctimonious schools,
Ye wretched fillers of
Wastrel flagons.
Come and view the vale of
Vastness that hovers in the cranium of
Kane.

Why ?
Ask ye WHY ?
That ye may to HOLY HEAVEN
Come, that ye may be hurled
Headlong to HARANGUING HELL.
Come !

D. G. Jones

The Letter

It was getting warmer. The sun was half way up the sky over the farther fields. The occasional car that went by left a small cloud of dust to drift in on the field in front of the farm house.

Joe Bannister leaned on the remains of the veranda railing. He should have begun cutting the hay this morning but he much preferred to stand here and watch things happen, which in all probability would be very little indeed. There were no other houses for at least a mile in either direction along that narrow buff-coloured road. Only a small cabin down by the little lake, to the right of the house; the village was three miles away.

Joe could see the bits of the bright sheet of water from the house. Joe had the uncommon ability of appreciating his own landscape and despite the insistent tugging of his conscience, preferred to sit and look at the blue water, the trees and hills as they took on the shivering green gold of the morning sun. It was very congenial to a certain laziness in him. Though his life was pleasant in this way he was continually uneasy because of it.

That was very queer in a way Joe thought, as he looked at the water over the edge of the field. He thought of the little cabin and the man who was staying there. The fellow had come in April, had said he was a farmer, but he certainly didn't have much to farm on down by the lake. Joe had never seen him even trying to plant anything. Joe laughed to himself and thought that it might be a good thing if he did since it didn't appear as though the fellow would ever grow fat at the rate he was going.

Joe had seen him go out across the fields and into the woods, carrying as a rule a little case. He was an artist; Joe was sure of this although he had never seen any paintings. Joe had heard of people like him. They were a queer sort. In a way it was exciting although he didn't quite know how. Yet he didn't particularly like such people who didn't work.

Joe left the veranda and went over to the pump. Taking the white enameled cup off the hook he filled it with the cold water and drank. It was good and Joe went on thinking of the fellow down by the lake. He was a funny fellow. He had made an occasional visit to this same pump. Guess I'm probably the only person he knows around here. He doesn't seem to go into town much except when he has to buy food. Fellow would get kind of lonely living like he does. Sure is a funny one but seems like a nice fellow.

Joe began to worry about the hay again. He looked at the sky to see if he could find any traces of rain. Should have started yesterday

and I could have almost finished it tomorrow. Standing up from the pump he replaced the cup and went into the farmhouse rousing a cloud of flies as he swung the door.

The sun climbed higher moving more into the south. There would be no work done this morning. Soon Mrs. Bannister would be getting the dinner table set.

A layer of dust drifted in toward the house as a car stopped out on the road. Joe came out of the door and walked down the path to the road. It was the mailman, Bill Paterson.

Bill leaned on his car beside the mailbox. That's a hot day, Joe. No time to be working in the fields today.

No, I just felt like taking the day off. Joe felt a little better about the hay and extended his holiday automatically. Any mail today, Bill?

You're becoming very popular all of a sudden, Joe; I've got five letters for you.

They are probably all bills too. Joe was in a good humour.

Neither of them had noticed the artist coming along the fence by the road and now he stepped up to the car. Good morning.

Hot day to be walking the fields, the postman said turning toward him.

The artist smiled. It is very nice down where the spring runs into the lake. Nice and cool. You should see more of your country.

The postman reached into his car. In a moment he pulled his head back out and handed Joe his letters. Joe began absently to thumb through the envelopes. Meanwhile, the artist stood beside him watching him closely and staring at the letters. Suddenly he looked up and said to him, Joe, will you sell me one of those letters?

Both Joe and the postman looked at him blankly. Neither said a word. Finally Joe said, What did you say?

Will you sell me one of those letters? the man replied.

I . . . I . . . what do you think about that Bill, he wants to buy one of my letters. Joe was half grinning as he looked at the postman.

I don't know. I never heard of such a thing. The postman looked harder at the artist. What do you want to do that for anyway, Mister?

How much will you give me? asked Joe.

I will buy one letter, any letter, for two dollars. The artist was serious.

That isn't enough. There might be something important in it. There might even be a cheque. No sir, that isn't worth it. Joe was carrying on as he would in the sale of anything. It was such a queer thing that he could realize it.

Well, I'll give you five dollars if you let me take my pick.

Joe just looked at him for a moment. No one said a word. A crow cawed as it changed trees in the woods. Joe held out the letters. All right, I guess it's all right, though it is the darndest way to make a dollar that I ever heard of. Here, take your pick.

The fellow took the letters. Briefly he looked at each one. He handed them back keeping one in his hand. The artist reached into his pocket. Counting out five dollars he gave them to Joe. Replacing

the money left, and putting the letter in his pocket he turned and began to walk off across the field towards the little lake.

Joe called after him. Hey, aren't you going to let us see what you got? The artist made no reply but walked on.

Well if that isn't the queerest thing I ever seen. That fellow should be watched. Anyone who goes around buying other peoples' letters just isn't right in the head. He might be dangerous. The postman began to think of his official position and the need to do his duty in regard to guarding the sanctity of the mail.

I can't make him out, muttered Joe. Guess he's all right though. Still . . . I wonder what was in that letter.

It's your business, Joe. The postman climbed into his car. I have to get on my way, or I won't get any dinner.

Joe walked back toward the house. He heard the sound of the car changing gears. It disappeared. The artist had also gone. He was confused and began to worry about what he had done. He thumbed through the letters again. He recognized one or two but could not tell what the one he had sold was like. Sold! The idea hit Joe now with its full force. He felt the money in his pocket. The money was the only evidence of the transaction. He had sold his letter. It might have been important. It might have been about the mortgage, though he doubted that, or from his son working up north. Maybe it was from his daughter in Montreal — she might have lost her job, she might be sick! Joe's thoughts were abruptly stopped at the screen door. He opened it and went inside.

Close the door, Joe; you're letting every fly in the country in, his wife yelled from the dinner table. Any mail Joe?

Joe became wide awake. Yes . . . quite a bit today.

He went back and closed the door. Then he walked to the dining room which was merely an extension of the parlour. He handed his wife the letters and sat down at the table.

There should have been a letter from Anne. She's been there for nearly three weeks and we haven't had a word since the card she sent the night she got there. She looked at them, put them down on the printed table cloth and went into the kitchen for the rest of the dinner. She reappeared with bowls of potatoes and beans. Wasn't that the fellow from the little lake out at the mail box with you?

Yes, that was him all right, Joe hurriedly agreed. He had decided not to tell his wife what he had done. She would be terribly angry. If anything came of it he would say it must have been lost in the mail. That sort of thing did happen.

His wife sat down. What did he want? She began to fill her plate.

Why nothing — nothing at all. Just wanted to say hello and see if there was any mail for him. He could not seem to get away from this business. He decided to forget the matter and went to work that afternoon.

That night Joe tossed in his bed for some time. His wife kept telling him to go to sleep but she finally lay quiet. All sorts of things

came into his head in regard to the letter. He thought of various ways of getting to see it, and of getting it back. He was very troubled. Finally he decided that he would go down in the morning and buy it back. He would give the fellow his money and get the letter. With that thought he went to sleep.

After his restless night Joe did not wake until nine the next morning. He dressed and hurried down to breakfast. After breakfast he walked down to the cabin by the little lake. In the bright sunshine of the morning he felt better. Nothing much had happened and he would soon set it straight again.

There were no signs of life around the cottage. The wind was just beginning to stir the surface of the water into ripples. Joe felt very fine. Even if I did sleep in I still beat you up, mister. He smiled and knocked on the door.

Joe knocked several times. Still there was no reply. He looked at the brown door. Needs painting he thought as he turned the knob. The door was open and he went in. The room looked very bare. The bed was made and the fellow's clothes and case were gone.

For some time Joe had puzzled and worried over the disappearance of the artist particularly just after he had bought that letter. What had his letter to do with his leaving? What was in that letter? It must have been important. He would pause in the hay field and look up as the clouds flowed down the sky casting running shadows over the hills and wonder about the letter. He tried to avoid conversation with his wife about the artist fellow. She was frequently making conjectures about him and his sudden departure. He had left quite a bit of food in the cabin. She thought he must be coming back. However, Joe seemed quite certain he was not.

After the hay was all in the barn and the corn began to come on, Joe thought less and less about the letter and the departed artist. Neither had been heard of since. They received a letter from their son and another from Anne saying she liked her job better now and she had a surprise for them when she came home. Joe decided it was useless to worry about what was past.

But, in about a month, the artist did come back. Joe was coming in from the fields and saw him down at the cabin unloading a station-wagon. Joe did not go down to the lake but stood and wondered for a time. All the confusion and concern returned to him. In fact they were intensified by what he saw. The fellow had had no car before. He had seemed quite poor. Now he appeared unloading stacks of supplies from a stationwagon. Where did he get the money? The letter must have been important.

Joe looked down as he moved the dirt about with the toe of his shoe. What could he do about it? How could he get the letter? Did the fellow still have it? Even if he did find it what could he do then?

Putting the plates on the table his wife asked him about the morning's work, but Joe did not reply. She mentioned that the front gate should be fixed but Joe remained silent. She looked at him and shrugged her shoulders. A few minutes later she remarked that the fellow down

at the lake had returned, whereupon Joe looked up and stared at her quickly, exclaiming, Oh! Oh yes, has he? She went on to describe the arrival of the artist. He had brought a table, chairs, curtains, and big pails of paint — all sorts of things!

Joe listened with growing irritation. Once more he spent an exhausting night and resolved to see the man in the morning.

This time he did not sleep in. However, after breakfast and in the daylight, he became nervous. What would he do? He went out to the barn and listlessly rearranged the harnesses for nearly two hours. Only growing more confused he became angry with himself. He went out, across the field, walking swiftly down to the lake.

The artist was outside. He was standing on a stool painting the cabin. Joe went up and leaned on the stationwagon which had been backed close to the building.

About that letter, he began. The artist looked at him, smiled, and continued to paint.

I want to know what it said. Joe paused but there was no reply. Where did you get all this money, eh? Joe fidgeted nervously and fingered the artist's cane which leaned against the car. What are you doing all this for anyway?

The artist turned, and grinning, replied that he couldn't say. You will see, he continued.

Have you still got the letter? Joe was demanding.

Yes I have. Someday I may give it to you. The artist appeared to think it was very funny.

I want it back. Now. Will you give it back? I'll buy it back! Joe was getting angry now, not at himself this time, but at that grinning painter.

No you can't have it. The artist looked at Joe. It's worth more to me now than you could afford — Pop.

He laughed. He laughed out loud in Joe's face. Joe grabbed the cane in his fingers and swung, cutting the artist across the legs. You insolent pup. I'll get that letter yet!

The artist swayed for a second. Then the stool toppled over and he fell, all arms, legs, and paint. He smashed onto the stationwagon; his chin caught the bumper, snapping his head back. The artist lay still on the ground with his head lying far back and looking very strange. The stool rocked slowly on the ground as the white paint spread thickly into the grass.

Joe felt sick. He walked dazedly in the general direction of the house. It was getting very warm.

Just over the crest of the hill his wife met him, running joyfully, and thrust a letter into his hand. She stood still watching him. With an effort he looked at it and gradually began to read.

Dear Mom & Dad,

Just a note. I will be home on Saturday. I wasn't going

to tell you until I had gotten home but I have changed my mind. I just can't wait.

Remember the young man who took the cabin by the lake? He bought one of your letters. It was my letter. I was terribly lonely and he read it and came and saw me here. He lives here. He is a teacher and paints in the summers. He was so wonderful to me and — I love him. This is my surprise; we are to be married as soon as I get home. Oh, I'm so happy.

Please help him fix everything up as soon as he can. I know you will like him. Must run, but will see you soon.

Your loving daughter,

Anne.

NORTHERN REVIEW
OF WRITING AND THE ARTS IN CANADA

"... the *only* magazine single-mindedly devoted to the publication and criticism of contemporary Canadian writing of genuine literary value."

Earle Birney.

Subscriptions : $3.00 per year.

NORTHERN REVIEW
2475 VAN HORNE, APT. 5
MONTREAL, QUE.

Books — Stationery
Art Supplies
Pennants — Banners

THE McGILL UNIVERSITY BOOK STORE

Engineering supplies
Fountain Pens & Mechanical Pencils
T-Shirts — Sweatshirts

3480 UNIVERSITY ST.
Tel. MA 9181, Locals 400 & 440

Tailors to
Gentlemen
and their Sons
Since 1889

J. O. JACKMAN
LIMITED

- Made to Measure
- Dress Clothes
- Readymade Navy Blue Blazers
from $25.00

Mezzanine Floor
Dominion Square Building
1010 ST. CATHERINE STREET WEST

DEPOSIT YOUR SAVINGS WITH

THE MONTREAL
CITY & DISTRICT
SAVINGS BANK

THERE IS A BRANCH IN YOUR VICINITY

"SAFETY DEPOSIT BOXES"

THE ONLY
SAVINGS BANK
IN MONTREAL

VOUS SEREZ CHEZ VOUS
A LA LIBRAIRIE

FLAMMARION

1243 UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL

Tous les livres de langue française —
depuis les petits classiques populaires
jusqu'aux grandes éditions de luxe.

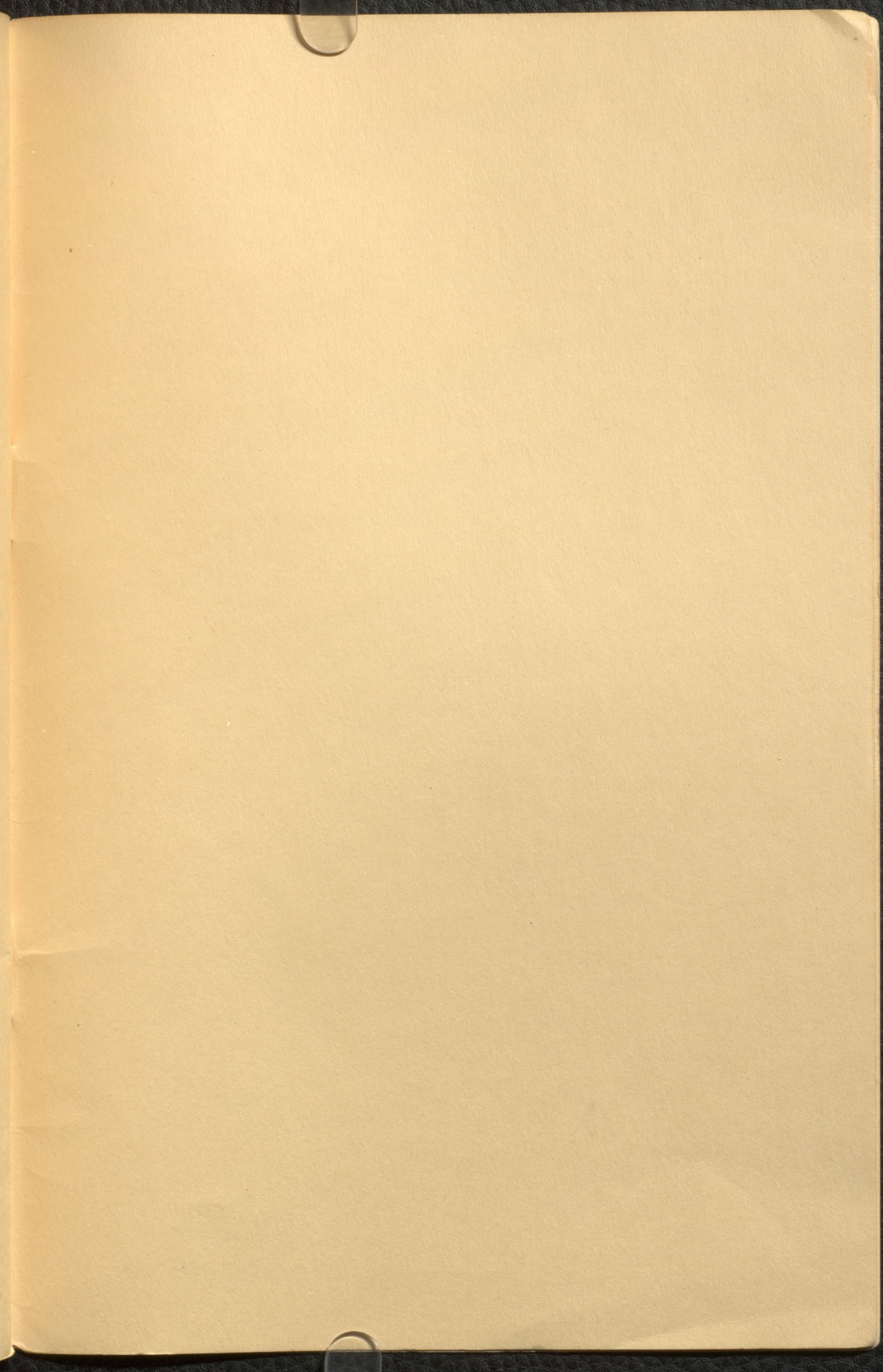
COMPTOIR POSTAL — CATALOGUES

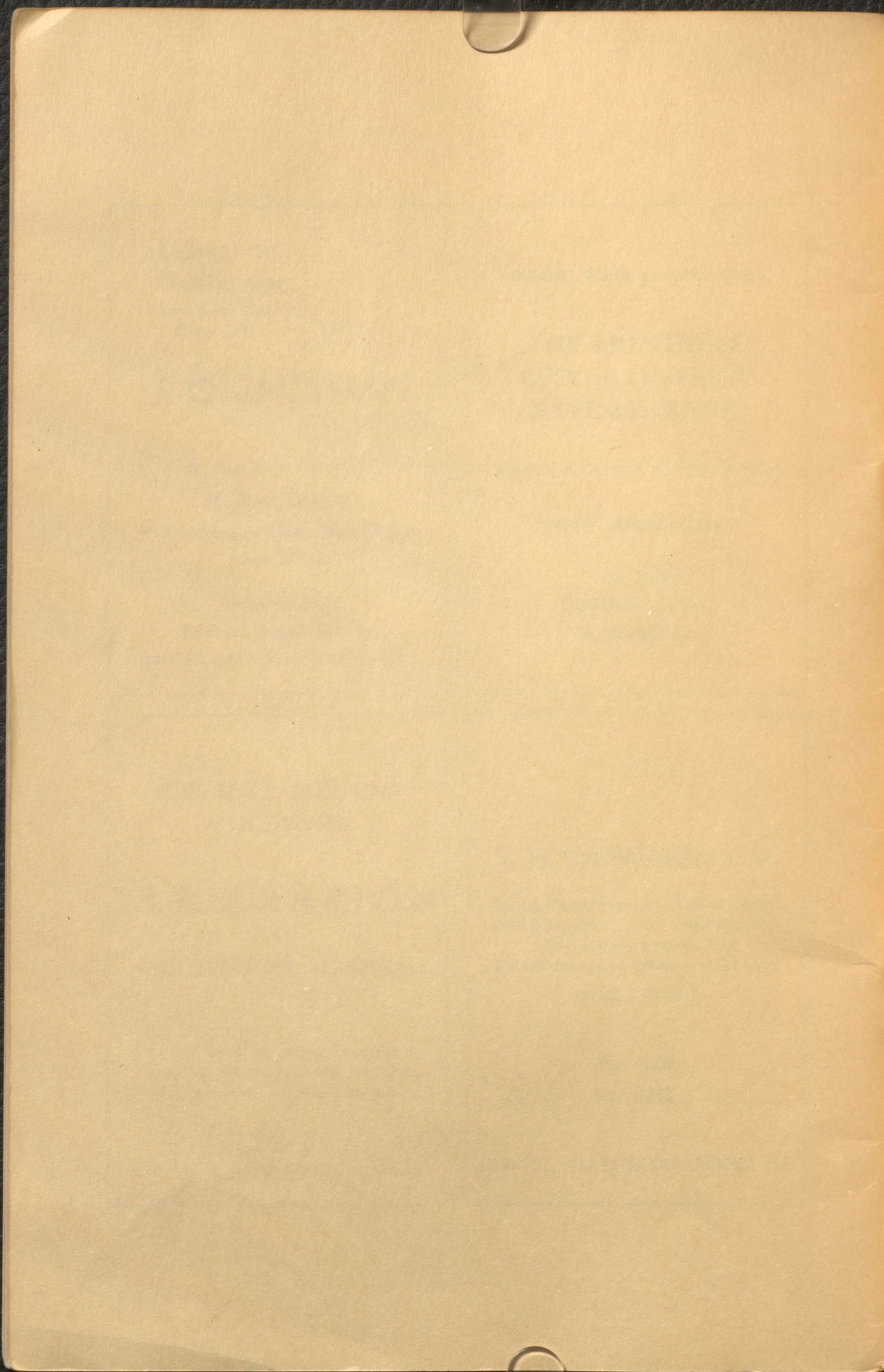
S. W. HOWARTH LTD.

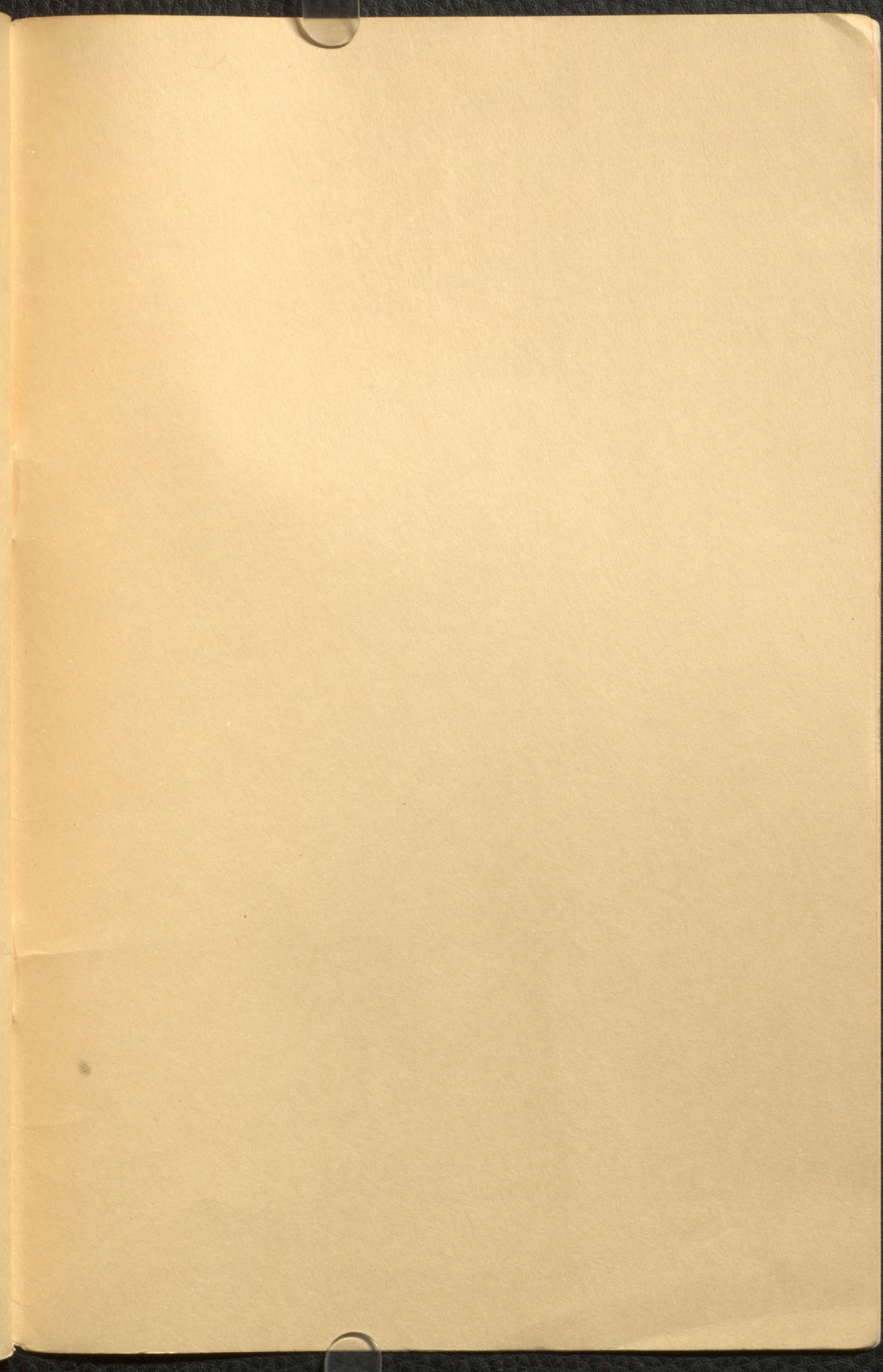
Young Men's Navy blue Flannel Blazers
Double-breasted and single-breasted
Grey Flannel trousers with
pleated pants and extension waist band
McGILL CRESTS

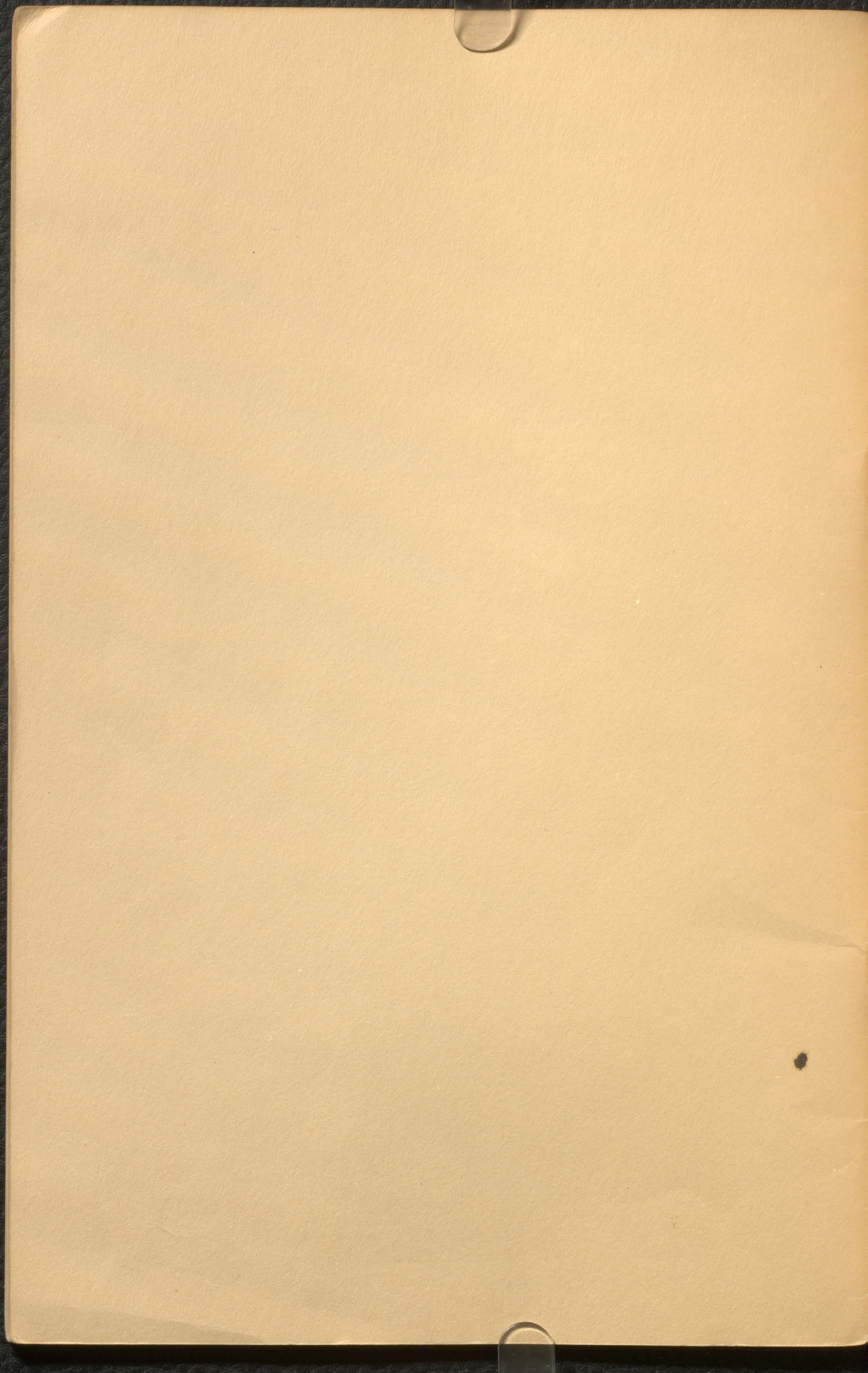
PL. 4009
PL. 5345

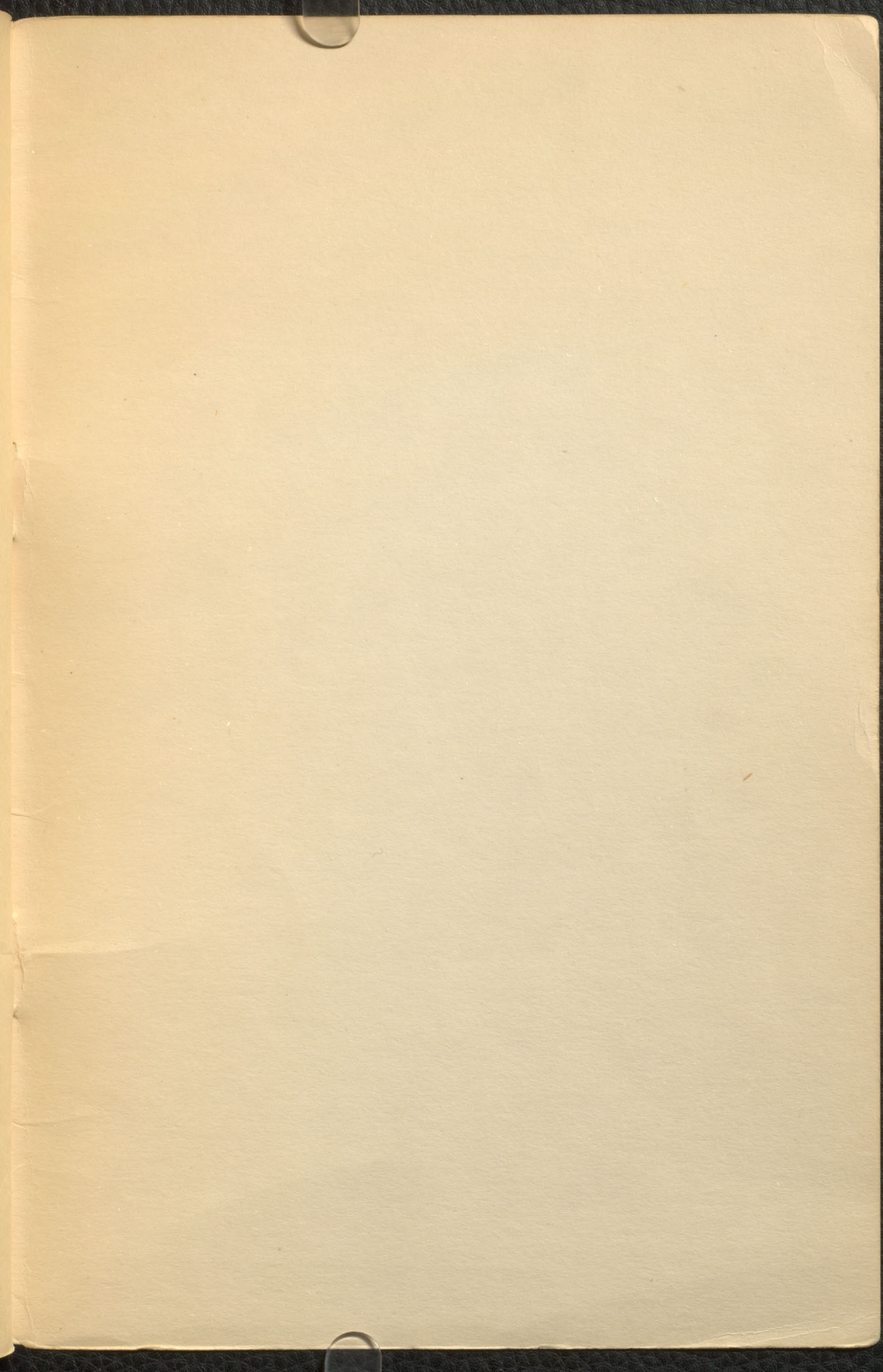
1444 ST. CATHERINE STREET W.











2009-0115.02.06