Horizons, the only fanzine that is published in a rice paddy, is upon you again. This is volume 18, number 2, whole number 69, and FAPA number 63, the winter, 1956½ issue of this irregular quarterly. The doubledoubletoilandtrouble Mimeograph does the publishing for Harry Warner, Jr., 303 Bryan Place, Hagerstown, Maryland.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: This is an eminently satisfying, thoroughly auspicious start to the new center of gravity for the organization. My only inclination to quibble involves the Wilfried Myers situation. This is not to be construed as an appeal or a request for reconsideration from me: but I can't approve a policy of making it harder and harder to get into the FAPA, then adopting the opposite attitude and retaining members when there is the slightest excuse for avoiding an expulsion. The professional material that kept Myers in the FAPA was contrary to both the spirit and the letter of the constitution. The very title of this organization contains the word "Amateur". Section 3 of the constitution plainly says "fanzines" as the means of obtaining activity credit. The fifth section calls for identical bundles, and the printed Myers contributions were not identical, because of the numbers. The same section points out that items in the mailing must be produced at the publisher's expense; the theater tickets were done at the expense of Myers' clients and the "shopper" was financed by advertisements. I might point out that under the Myers precedent, I could assure myself a lifetime of activity credits in the FAPA by the simple expedient of piling up in the cellar 68 copies of the local newspaper from the daily overrun each day for the next two months. My contributions to the newspaper are greater than Myers' contribution to that shopper, and by submitting the 68 copies of one day's edition each year, for distribution in the FAPA, my obligations would be met. Delgon: I think that the various translations cited from Proverbs show distinctly different meanings. Those that refer to a "madman" would indicate that the practical joker isn't responsible for any harm he may do; the Knox and Boothroyd translations put full responsibility on the joker. '' That metrical index to the Bible is a good example of how people get into the habit of writing bad verse where it's not necessary. Clumsy inversions are used even in lines which need not rhyme. Birdsmith: Here's another convert to my dissent on the send-a-postal-card-every-three-months idea. Welcome. '' Maybe the real truth about hypnotism against will lies deep in the subconscious. It's quite possible that there's a very deep, extremely fundamental desire in humans to be subject to the will of others, manifesting itself in daily life by submission to government and the importance of the superego. If so, it should be possible to hypnotize a person against his will, since the will is only conscious, just as an individual can be induced to kill under hypnosis, by invoking the subconscious violence that lies deep in everyone's id. '' I've always assumed that the "critical" in crifanac was a gentle self-joshing by fans. '' Since the AP teletypes have been given both upper and lower case, I'm out of practice in reading these all-caps paragraphs. Come to think of it, I wonder why teletypes originally were given upper case, when restricted to one case? All lower case should be much easier to read. '' In case anyone else mis-

took my remarks about get-out-the-vote campaigns: I do not sit home on election day. Anyone is welcome to examine my page in the books of the local election supervisors. It shows I've never missed a city, county, state or national election or referendum since I became 21. '' The increasing use of tape recorders is going to play havoc with the fine old fannish custom of introducing one guy as someone else. '' Binaural and stereophonic were lousy words to begin with, even before their meaning became confused. It's senseless to create a mongrel word from Latin and Greek sources to describe something new. "Two-channel" would be a perfectly accurate and immediately understandable means of referring to this type of reproduction. '' I think that the difficulty of switching from jazz to classical performance or vice versa can be traced to one simple thing: jazz style is an obvious way of doing what the serious musician does subtly. Usually, only a young person who has grown up in both traditions can perform convincingly both types of music. I'm afraid that your own remarks betray your failure to realize that this subtlety exists in the performance of serious (or classical) (or good) (or non-jazz) music. The latter is performed with just as many rhythmic variants, many more delicacies of tone and shadings of intensity; but those things aren't done in such an exaggerated form that they hit you in the face, as they do in jazz. Therein lies the whole difference between listening to jazz and listening to serious music: you must listen to the latter attentively to hear it properly. It's not a question of intelligence or skill as a performer or basic concept; it's the difference between pulp science fiction space operas and Stapledon. '' I assume that a television set operating in a dark room causes more eyestrain than movies because, primarily, you must try to see images that are much smaller. Even a large television screen viewed from six or eight feet is only a small fraction of the apparent size of a movie screen in a theater that is ten times farther from you. Besides, the contrast between the screen and the surroundings is much greater in the home, since the small tv set casts very little light. The level of illumination in a theater is considerably higher, because of light that bounces from the large screen. If television cameramen adopted techniques that would suit their medium, it wouldn't be so bad. But they imitate the movie techniques, rarely giving true closeups. Projection tv isn't going to be practical in the home until higher-quality pictures can be provided. You would be not more than ten or twelve feet from a picture many times larger than your present tv screen, and you can get some idea of the effect by looking at a tv screen from a distance of about two feet. Birdsmith: I don't want to take sides in the TAFF troubles, but I would like to point out that the stencils, ink, paper and postage that have been spent on the controversies would be nearly enough to pay a round trip fare to England. '' The ruckus that your "illiterate" aroused reminds me of the time that I used "abortive" figuratively in Spaceways, many years ago. Gad, the hordes of fans who rushed to their typewriters to tell me that this was a biological term, and what word did I really mean to use? '' Rousing cheers for your remarks about the South. I live only a half-dozen miles south of the Mason-Dixon Line. But even here, the old families are sickeningly "southern" in all the worst connotations of the word. I'm positive that members of these old families would vote overwhelmingly for the restoration of slavery, if given the opportunity.

You're guilty of a misdemeanor around here, if you hint that the South did not win the battle of Antietam. Nobody will take the lead in planning to celebrate the centennial of the John Brown raid, because people around here think that he started this whole integration business. '' It isn't illegal to copy records. Recordings can't be copyrighted. RCA Victor couldn't sue me for dubbing their latest recordings and selling copies of them at a profit. The record companies can use only indirect means to stop such things: court action for unfair competitive practices, suits over breach of contract with exclusive recording artists, semi-control of wholesale and retail sales channels, and the like. Seven Sonnets: I'm sure that that copyright notice has no protective value, and I suspect that it may infringe the copyright laws. '' It's hard to criticize these poems without writing a long essay. I could put their main fault into a single word: unfocused. But that adjective might not have the same connotation to most persons as it does to me, and might give the impression that I think the poems are much worse than they really are. But I see no particular merit in failure to revise and strengthen works written years ago. After a couple of years, Jack should realize that he can't get away with the syntax in the first sentence of "Even As the Night" without the genius of a Milton. Iark: The only moderately safe system of traffic control lights consists of a brief period during which all traffic is stopped by red lights, between cycle changes. It has become as traditional to proceed on yellow as to drive five miles over the speed limit. Locally, the green lights used to be on top and the red lights on bottom, until the authorities finally caught on to the fact that colorblind drivers were having a lot of intersection accidents. '' I plan to do some photography in Intercourse and Paradise soon, since they're close to Lancaster, Pa., which I must visit occasionally on business. Does anyone want any particular scenes? Lucifer: I agree with virtually everything in that article about advertising. But I fear that any substantial decline in the advertising business will cause a complete breakup of all the nation's communications, except for the telephone, mails, and possibly Western Union. It probably wouldn't take anything more unlikely than a decision among the auto manufacturers to stop advertising to end all newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and many related fields. I don't think that even book publishers would survive the smashup. Most publishing houses survive today because of the occasional smash best-seller which is largely made possible through the paid and free publicity in other communications mediums; no firm could survive on medium-sized successes. And I don't think that there's any way out of the situation, except this type of collapse of printed and transmitted communications after the first big depression or next big war. Advertising has caused things to grow so big that constantly increasing advertising is vital to keep them going. A clean break and a fresh start on a small scale from scratch is inevitable, eventually. '' I believe in democracy. However, I do not believe that a boundless supply of heaven-sent intuition automatically enters a polling place at election time, to guide the people who vote only because of the get-out-the-vote propaganda. I think that such persons will normally vote for the Huey Longs who make the most vulgar and noisiest appeal. I don't think that the person who is too unintelligent to realize for himself the importance of voting is intelligent enough to cast a vote. That's why I disapprove of

get-out-the-vote campaigns. '' Dante is responsible for the conventional Christian hell? Who turned up the thermostat, then? '' Your reproduction is degenerating at an alarming rate. Can't you type with a hecto ribbon and use a hecto carbon to create two masters simultaneously, then pull only 40 copies of each? Or if this is dittoed, write to Chick Derry for help. Phantasy Press: I wonder why the state and regional organizations of fans that were so popular just before World War Two have not been revived? They make much more sense than the NFFF. '' That cover shows the only FAPA bundle in history that split at only one side of the envelope. Remembrance of Things Past: I must have read every issue of Fanfare from cover to cover. But the only thing that I remember in this anthology is the little Swisher item regarding Poe. I recall clearly the unexpected manner in which I obtained the 35¢ to see that horror doublebill, because 35¢ was a respected, rare sum back in 1937 or thereabouts. But I'd never have guessed that I wrote that article. Bandwagon: One other way to keep the President functioning might be to elect younger persons to that office. The voters have put into office men who were 60 or older on five of the past seven presidential election days. '' The school television arrangement in Hagerstown at present consists of 45 minutes of transmission and 15 minutes of live interchange of ideas between a teacher in the classroom and the pupils. Pupils are also required to respond audibly or visually when the television instructor asks questions or demands a show of hands about this or that subject. '' Well, if Coslet doesn't perk up his contrast between paper and ink, I for one am going to visit a camera store and see if I can't get a set of filters to slip over my glasses when reading publications from Helena. Torrents: The Chicago Tribune is lucky. Jesus Christ works for the Herald-Mail Company. He's the janitor on the 4 to 11 p.m. shift. His belief about his personality, however, involves a different approach to the Blessed Virgin Mary theme, which has proven highly dangerous for some of the young ladies in the building. Isomer: After all this time, I still find it totally impossible to sort out Carr and Graham as two separate people. They exhibit precisely the same print personality, no matter what difference may exist in real life. '' Conelrad is the most outrageous example of nonsense in the entire civil defense outfit, and that's quite a difficult honor to attain. In all probability, it's been set up simply to have something to do during peace time. Enemy action would undoubtedly utilize much surer means of guidance than radio transmitters. When the system was tested last summer, transmissions kept fading out alarmingly only short distances from big cities, because of the switching among transmitters in different locations. And there's certainly no point in memorizing the frequencies which conelrad would use; it would be much quicker for anyone simply to twist the dial until he found a frequency in use. '' If man needs "some sort of image before him, to model himself after", what's wrong with the music of Mozart? Target: FAPA!: You mean that you'll put any subscription fanzine in the mailings, if the editor decides to save himself the trouble and postage of mailing them individually? '' I don't think that the kind of winter cold normally experienced in the United States is severe enough to impair one's driving abilities. Driving certainly doesn't require the coordination that you display when skiing or bobsledding on a zero day. '' I'm surprised that you don't know what a berm is. We have

lots of them around here. They have ants in them in the summer time. I don't like the soft kind. Now, go look it up. '' You wouldn't pronounce "uvoppo" as "woppo" in any Italian dialect known to me. Spelling it "uoppo" would cause the explanation of the slang to make sense. Greetings: Hey, some of us are still of draft age. Can't you think of a less nerve-shattering word to make out of that lettering guide? Null-F: The New York convention undeniably caused much bad feeling, debt, headache, and suchlike. But it seems likely to become the most written-about convention of all time. I wonder what ingredient it possessed, to inspire so many pages in the FAPA? Usually, you don't read about a convention in this organization's mailings for six or nine months. '' Those are apple trees, not lemon trees, that cause the smudge pots. What else do you think that the Appalachians were named for? '' There's pathetic quantity of confusion about names for types of roads. In this section, we usually call anything containing at least four traffic lanes a dual highway if it's free and a turnpike or expressway if it's toll. But "lane" has come to have two meanings in road construction: an entirely new road, immediately parallel to the old, is said to be a new lane that creates a dual highway, but a three-lane highway is simply a road that has been divided into three divisions to facilitate passing (and headon collisions when two drivers decide simultaneously to use that vacant center). '' A true photographer never makes prints from his negatives, any more than the true fan ever reads the magazines and books that he buys. The sense of possessing the wherewithal to make prints is the important thing; prints themselves are an aniiclimax. Phlotsam: Those Holland Tunnel people must accept things philosophically. Every law enforcement officer in two states is alerted when an auto doesn't pay tribute at the toll gate of the Potomac River bridge in Williamsport. (Literally. You're in two states after crossing the bridge, after a half-hour of driving, in either direction.) '' And around here, the bus drivers are the loquacious, accommodating guys, while the cabbies are generally surly. One of the small town advantages is the way the bus driver will often backtrack on his route to pick you up, if he knows you planned to catch his vehicle on this trip and weren't in sight the first time he passed your house, and his willingness to let you off in mid-block during a rainstorm, and his unofficial credit system, whereby you charge a trip if you enter the bus with no small change. '' I tried to talk the local press into buying Peanuts. Instead we got Dennis the Menace. This was almost as thuddish a letdown as when my campaign for Pogo ended in the acquisition of Nancy. Horizons: I wrote "Nor Any Drop To Drink" to determine if anyone in the FAPA reads attentively enough to spot the fact that it was done in iambic pentameter throughout. Nobody did. The ending was dictated solely by my desire to surprise you people. '' I note that centers are threatening to fall out of letters on these stencils at an alarming rate. Advance apologies if it causes a lot of dark circles in this issue. It's very strange, because I'm finishing up a box of stencils now which worked in perfect manner when I used part of them for the last issue. Spindizzy: You needn't wait for simplified spelling to write fotografik. That—or something very similar—is the German spelling, so you need only turn out fanzines written in German. '' Is trick-or-treat really a Hallowe'en tradition? My impres-

sion was that this sprang up only ten or a dozen years ago on a national scale. It may be fun for the kids, but it's dangerous as all getout; every year a couple of them get knocked down by autos in their mad dashes across streets around here, and it's probably only a matter of time before the annoyance triggers an adult eccentric into firing a shotgun into a bunch of them. Pamphrey: I have a horribly guilty feeling, every time I read a Willis fanzine. Here's one of the most intelligent, most likable, and most capable people fandom has ever known. And over the long years, I've never written him a letter to thank him for a production like this one. It's odd, how that sort of thing often exists between two persons who would undoubtedly hit it off beautifully together. I'm now in close contact with two or three individuals in fandom; we virtually ignored one another for many years, until some unfathomable ingredient bobbed up that caused a reaction and set us to corresponding. This is even above the usual Willis quality level. It is even educational: it has permitted me to deduce that a flex cord is what the North American colonists call an electric wire. '' I wonder if C.S.Youd would react violently, if I published his memoirs of his first dealings in fandom? He wrote them for Spaceways, then countermanded and disowned the article before it saw print. I saved the manuscript in the belief that it was some of his finest prose. Celephais: What would happen if someone tossed a bomb into the room containing all the electors in a key state just before they formally cast their vote in a closely contested presidential election? One/Fourteen: This is the first instance in my memory that / has appeared in the title of an FAPA publication. In any event, I don't recall any previous mental struggle over the question of whether I should underline that particular character in the comments. '' A correspondent who is on the fringes of fandom defined the New York convention in one phrase: "The most unfriendly convention I've attended." And he has been to a lot of them. His complaint had to do with the general atmosphere of the entire convention, not merely the isolated incidents like the banquet exclusion or the thievery. This is probably an unavoidable accessory of the growth of the annual convention: with a thousand persons around, you can't talk to everyone, so cliques inevitably develop, and some uncliqued people get lonely. All of which causes me to wonder for the umpteenth time why fandom insists on having one annual convention. The science fiction convention is not analogous with conventions of the American Legion or Rotary or Republican party. Those conventions are decision-making meetings which determine the future activities or the officers or the candidates of a national organization. Nothing is settled at the science fiction convention, except such trivia as the site of the following year's convention or a few innocuous resolutions. It would seem much more suitable from many standpoints to conduct three science fiction conventions of equal standing each year: one somewhere in the western part of the United States, another in the eastern part of this nation, and the third in Europe. Certainly enough fans and professionals are in circulation to make each of them major in scope and programming. By staggering their dates, it would be possible for the all-out conventioneers to attend two or three major conventions per year; less energetic individuals could pick the closest one, saving a lot of time and transportation. This system should solve all of the problems about convention size and much bitterness over convention sites.

Science-Fiction Five-Yearly: I thought that this was going to be one of those publications on which I suffer a sinking feeling of ingratitude, writing only three lines of comment in return for 50 pages of pleasant reading. Fortunately, this time I can think of a few things to say. Such as: I think that Mad should have had that first two-page illustration as the leitmotif for the Jim Blish pulp fiction introductions in a recent issue. I suspect that a slightly less well written version of "Magnetic Cat Tipping" might sell to Astounding; it has everything that the tongue-in-cheek articles possess in that magazine, except their deadly length and poor grammar. The article about the 1939 convention is the first contemporary reference I've seen to Marconette in years and years. Has anyone any knowledge of his whereabouts and activities? Of all the prominent fans of his day, he seems to have done the most thorough disappearing act. And about the variable nonexistence of the hyperFancyclopedia: Why should work on this project wait until an entire new edition becomes practical? It would be nice to see a 300-page volume appear one fine day, of course. But the bulk of the project frightens away everyone who starts seriously to work on a revision. In that case, I'd be almost as pleased to receive sections of a new edition, possibly covering one initial letter at a time. If the project got completed, fine; if it didn't, at least part of the lore of fandom would be permanently collected. Stellar: Here's another of the giants that usually gets badly slighted in mailing comments, for lack of inclusion of controversial material about beltbuckles. It is not pleasant to know that it will leave the FAPA bundles, but I hope that its departure will bring about White-Stark publications for the FAPA that receive a bit more response in the review columns. There's no use repeating myself about the joint-authorship serial; its faults glare particularly this time in contrast with the convincing quality of the little story by Carl Brandon, whose central character is far more believable, even if he doesn't have the name of some well-known fan. I do object to dragging Wetzel into fiction in the FAPA; why risk a lawsuit that might involve the organization for distributing actionable material? Postmailings: I rarely have time and space to review these in Horizons. But there's room to make a few sketchy remarks this time. Gemzine: The joint membership deal for married FAPA members should go into amendment form because it's an arrangement that conflicts with the constitution in several ways. It could become the source of a tremendous fuss some future day, if set up merely by executive fiat. Especially when there's been one official ruling in the past against any such arrangement. '' There would be precedent for the official editor to reject the application of an undesirable for a place on the waiting list. I did it during my term, when Degler applied. I just deliberately forgot to put his name at the bottom of the list. Sambo: The Moskowitz is an amazingly unfair article. I could fill this issue of Horizons with an explanation of the fact that damon knight was writing about influences on Bradbury and Moskowitz is writing about Bradbury's writing style, which are two entirely different things. It should be obvious that Ray's style is eclecticism personified, a mishmash of many types of writing, and I hope everyone realizes that Moskowitz deliberately hunted out unusually uncharacteristic fragments from people like Salinger and Nathan to try to discredit damon. Odd, that Saroyan wasn't mentioned as a literary godfather.

Hagerstown Journal

November 20—The local concert season moved into action tonight, with a recital by Frank Guarrera. You never know quite what to expect when a widely known musician appears in Hagerstown. One tenor from the Met arrived drunk and carried on some kind of argument with his accompanist, sotto voce, between selections all evening. Another fellow arrived deaf, stuck his head into the piano in order to hear the pitch at the start of each number, then sang divinely. Hans Kindler used to sing so loudly while conducting the National Symphony Orchestra that he was audible for a dozen rows back. Guarrera proved to be the most entertaining baritone, visually, in local memory. I don't know how many of his antics are calculated, how much is unconscious, and how much is just plain carelessness because of the hick town in which he was singing. But he makes faces, all during his recital. He screws up his eyes, he contorts first one side of his mouth and then the other, he stares pugnaciously at one particular spot in the audience, and he keeps throwing quick glances into the wings of the stage, as if he feared that Leonard Warren were lurking back there, waiting to take over. Worst of all, he tilts. In the middle of a song, he begins to tilt, not to lean, but to tilt. The spectators get the sensation that the entire auditorium is suddenly becoming off level, then realize that the ramrod-straight, tall baritone is getting out of plumb. There is no apparent muscular movement in this process; the hips, knees and ankles remain rigid, but he tilts further and further to a point at which you have an awful desire to yell timber, then he gradually straightens, just as deliberately and motionlessly. Guarrera also has a habit of beginning to walk off stage toward the final bars of the last song in a group, tossing out the last note from the wings, and he sometimes carries a glass of water when he returns to bow. He likes to pause a long time between selections; once his audience begins to titter from the strain, and he says calmly: "I'm quite all right. Someone told me that I ought to breathe deeply between songs. That's what I'm doing now." He sings everything either at the top of his lungs or in an unearthly little squeaking half-voice. To give the devil his due, he sounds infinitely better in person than on records or during the Met broadcasts. But I keep wondering, was Chaliapin really as hammy as this?

September 17—It sounded like a run-of-the-mine obituary, but the local undertaker said that I'd better telephone Mrs. Mish, because he belonged to the historical society and she might know some more about him. While placing the call, I wondered at the nagging little sense of familiarity that the data about the deceased induced. The unusual first name—Jephtha—and the address on Charles Street finally caused memory to function. Many years ago, I had paid a visit to a house on Charles Street, one of the few streets in Hagerstown with mixed Negro and white occupancy, and this was the man whom I'd visited. I had been told that he sold second-hand magazines, and in those days, I was still collecting back issues of the prozines. I hadn't stayed there very long. He didn't have any magazines, except Fortunes and National Geographics, and didn't seem interested in particular in selling me anything. I remember wondering why a man who dealt in second-hand printed matter didn't have enough get-up-and-go to widen his stock. I also recall a five-

minute talk with his small daughter, while waiting for him to do something else. She must have been ten or eleven years old, and she talked like an adult character in a Lillian Hellman play. I thought for a while that it might be a dwarf, but finally concluded that it really was an exceptionally intelligent child who had somehow been born into this dull family in a tough neighborhood. I never returned to that house, partly because I felt uneasy on that street, partly because he was obviously not much of a second-hand book and magazine dealer. We nodded at each other when we met on local streets for a momth or so, then I forgot what he looked like and never recognized him again. Mrs. Mish, when I finally reached her, didn't quite know how to put it. He wasn't well enough known in Hagerstown to merit a headlined obituary, she said. But his death would cause much attention in other parts of the country, as one of the leading dealers in early American documents. He had helped the local historical society in its efforts to trace down early manuscripts relating to the founder of Hagerstown. Yes, the surviving daughter whose address is Saudi Arabia must have been the girl to whom I had talked so many years ago. Mrs. Mish knew what this daughter was doing so far from home, but she didn't feel at liberty to tell me. She did reveal that Jephtha had been a very wealthy hotel man before the depression. She also told me his middle name, McCulloh, which means nothing to you but has the same local significance as Tudor once meant in England. His ancestors had been among the first persons to explore Path Valley north of here, helping to open the path through the mountains to the west. Mrs. Mish foresaw a major eruption among collectors, when they learned that his stock must somehow be dispersed following his death. I began to understand how he must have drawn on his reserve supply of patience to be civil to me, that night I went looking for science fiction magazines. And all things considered, I decided that it would be best to write the obituary as an ordinary, unheadlined death notice. I described him as a dealer in old books and a member of the historical society.

December 6—Every time a fan comes to Hagerstown, he shakes my hand and says: "Well, well, well,. Just think. We've been corresponding for three years and this is the first time we've met. Where else could it happen, except in fandom?" Well, well$_2$, two miles from Hagerstown in the microscopic community of Bridgeport is a volunteer government weather station. It is operated by D. Paul Oswald, who has been recording the daily temperatures, precipitation, condition of the sky and wind direction since he was a boy in 1897, missing only a few days during the past 59 years to vacations and illness. He telephones the office every evening, to report on his findings for the day. Ever since I went to work for the newspaper, 13½ years ago, he had been promising to stop up in the office and meet the staff pretty soon, but just hadn't been able to get around to it. It wasn't for lack of time, because he's living in retirement, and it isn't because of lack of gregarity, because he belongs to almost every rural organization in his section of the county. It was just failure to get around to it. After about ten years of dealing with that disembodied telephone voice, I began to feel mildly curious and asked if I couldn't go out to his weather station and take some pictures. Come right ahead, he said; I've wanted to meet you, but please wait a few days until I get the grass cut and a few things fixed up a little better. After a few days, he sug-

gested another delay until some new instruments arrived. After that, the state had torn up the highway in front of his house, making picture-taking unwise. These obstacles caused him eventually to suggest that we might kill two birds with one stone: I could take pictures at the formation of the new Lions Club which he was helping to organize in that community, and meet him at the same time. That sounded fine, but I let one bird slip away. The church basement was so badly crowded by the organizational crowd that nobody spotted Mr. Oswald for me, and he was never able to squeeze through the mob to me from the other side of the room. So we decided to try again, this time at the town's boy scout troop court of honor, where there would be only a half-dozen adults present, and no chance of our missing one another. That night, a very big story came up, which only I possessed the background memories to cover, and another photographer was forced to pinchhit for me with the scout meeting. This sort of thing had continued for so long that I was mildly dazed when the skinny old man came up to me tonight at the Hagerstown Fair Association banquet, and the disembodied telephone voice said: "I'm Oswald." He wanted me to drink a cocktail in honor of the occasion, and admitted that he had had two cocktails to steel himself for the personal meeting. Now we chat on the telephone like old friends, and he keeps promising to bring his wife up to the office.

September 29—This old boozehound rides the midnight bus home about twice a week, every time he feels himself too drunk to walk. And for weeks, every time that he entered the bus, a tiny phrase of music popped up from its hiding place deep in my subconscious, a peculiarly poignant four-note descending passage, including the knowledge of the words: "Nie wieder kommt." It took a half-dozen repetitions of the old man's appearance on the bus and recurrence of this mental music before I was able to track down the source of the phrase. I finally pinpointed it: a bar from Strauss' "Elektra". Just then, I was interested in the subconscious' way of producing music to accompany half-hidden thinking processes, and I was completely stumped by this situation. There seemed no possible parallel between this stupid, rather unpleasant old guy and Elektra's bitter contrast of her younger, innocent self with her present fate-bedeviled, smouldering emotions. I found that recognition of the source of the music did not prevent the phrase from bobbing up during the bus rides that followed. I played several times the Beecham recording of the scene between Elektra and Orestes, in a vain effort to find a clue. The full context of the text was just as void of help: "But I! But I! To lie down, to realize that the child will never come again, never again, that the child down there in the chasm of horrors is yearning, that those who live in yonder and enjoy themselves—that this breed is alive in its burrow, and eats and drinks and sleeps, and I up here, worse than the wild beasts, lonely and hideous, I live up here, alone." Then, one pleasant afternoon, I was driving back to town along U.S.Route 11, in snail-like traffic about four miles from town. The bus up ahead that was causing most of the delays let off a young woman. Something about her way of walking up the path to a house was familiar. I looked more closely and recognized Betty, and everything was suddenly clear. Betty was about 14 or 15 when she used to ride the midnight bus. The old boozehound would stare at her unceasingly until she got off, then would explain his interest rather unconvincingly to the other passengers: "She used to

play with my daughter when they were little girls." At this time, everyone agreed that Betty was a very wild girl. She was in high school, working evenings at a downtown soda fountain. In a crowd, she became almost hysterically noisy and jerky. She had an uncontrollable urge to ride motorcycles. If a motorcycle approached before the bus left, she would jump off the bus and hop aboard the motorcycle, and vanish in a roar. Nobody was sure whether she did this because she knew every motorcycle owner in the county or simply introduced herself after getting aboard. She lived in a tough neighborhood, and you would hear the bus passengers muttering from time to time about what a bad girl she would turn out to be, if she wasn't lucky. She had one distinguishing feature, but I think that I'm the only person who realized it: remarkable taste for clothing. She could afford only cheap stuff, much of which looked like handmedowns. But she had a mysterious ability to contrive a skillful color combination out of the shoddiest elements, sticking closely to honest, bright hues, avoiding fanciness. After possibly a year, her mother died; the mother had been a widow for many years. That did it, the other bus riders told one another; she'll go to the dogs now, unless her religion saves her. Betty disappeared for a couple of weeks, then resumed her job and the bus riding, a bit subdued for a time, then her normal self once again. She had moved into an even dingier neighborhood, to stay with a married sister. She now supplemented her soda fountain wages with baby sitting income over weekends, obviously taking part of the sitting pay in the used clothing of the rather wealthy Catholics who hired her, and she looked better than ever. She didn't drop out of school, as everyone had expected. She graduated from the Catholic high school and switched to daytime work behind the lunch counter of a Hagerstown dime store. I didn't see her very often for a while, except for occasionally taking her home on nights that I drove and found her waiting for an earlier bus. Gossip about her and young men occasionally wafted through that midnight bus, and the boozehound usually asked what happened to the girl who used to play with his daughter. So I was as surprised as anyone the Sunday afternoon that someone brought into the office a few scribbled paragraphs about her marriage to a local youth who worked for the town's lowest-class undertaking parlors. A miserable little Polaroid photograph accompanied the facts, making her look like one of her new husband's subjects. The marriage had taken place in a Lutheran church, and her husband had no particular religion. So she was excommunicated from the Catholic church and she no longer had her religion. I don't know what happened in the year that followed; I saw her only once, walking down the street in a crowd of men and women, all of whom were slightly intoxicated. I heard rumors that she was going to the dogs. Then one evening, the hospital listings for the past 24 hours disclosed that Betty had had twins, and when I inquired about her, I discovered that her husband had left her some months earlier. Both twins died within a couple of days. "Too bad," the people on the bus said in the nights that followed. "But I always did say she would come to no good end." It wasn't too long after that, when I saw Betty in the office of the dime store where she had once betn a food clerk. She had a sort of Girl Friday job in the manager's office. She has held it for the past four or five years, and when I checked the city directory, I found that the very nice house which I saw her entering alongside U.S.Route 11 is the property of that married sister and brother-in-law.

She lives quietly with them there. I understand that she has made no effort to retrieve her husband and religion, or to obtain new specimens of those former possessions. George Eliot wrote: "We do not expect people to be deeply moved by what is not unusual. That element of tragedy which lies in the very fact of frequency has not yet wrought itself into the coarse element of mankind; and perhaps our frames could hardly bear much of it. If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity."

November 22—Payette got married tonight. Immediately after his marriage, he intended to return to Japan, where he has some sort of job with The Stars and Stripes. It is highly unlikely that he will ever live in Hagerstown again. I may have heard for the last time his long, complicated joke which ended in the shattering climax: "Do I know Pancho? Why, I had dinner with him!" And Hagerstown has lost its outstanding incident prone. Things happened to Payette, and Payette happened to things, with uncanny frequency. Payette is unique in my memory for many reasons. He is the only man among my acquaintances who is a godmother, having assumed that role when a good friend suddenly decided to be baptized and refused to wait until a woman could be located. He is the only man I know who sank in the middle of a nearby town's sewage. While working for the newspaper, he decided to explore the sources of pollution in the Potomac River, and didn't discover that his rowboat was leaking until he was in the middle of the wastes of Shepherdstown. It was just about then that he shot his college president, and didn't even get expelled. It was accidental, Payette insisted, even though the bullet did strike the college president in the head while they were out shooting mark, and the college official shrugged off both the injury and the incident, accepting the ricochet theory as the true one. Payette got along surprisingly well in the air force, after he enlisted, except for being considered rather eccentric the first time he was scheduled to get paid. When about to sign his name in order to receive his pay, he discovered that he had utterly forgotten his first name. Payette is a tall, gangling individual with a tremendous stutter which he claims that he can control when he really puts his mind to it. He suffers from hemophilia, necessitating a week in the hospital for a simple tooth extraction, and from a fascination with pills of every sort and variety. While working for the newspaper, he kept huge bottles of sleeping tablets and no-doze pills in his desk; he consumed the former at hourly intervals until two hours before quitting time, then began to take the latter. In view of his proneness to events, Payette was never allowed to do much work. Once he was set loose on what appeared to be an utterly safe story, about the orchid-raising hobby of a local industrialist, but six months later, the industrialist was in deep trouble with the federal tax authorities over something Payette had written about that hobby. Payette attended, on the average, 500 movies per year, new and old, partly because he liked them, partly because his father manages three of Hagerstown's four indoor movie theaters. While he was in the service, his family moved, but Payette found them and visited them during his first furlough, to their surprise.

December 8—Hagerstown's streets are still filled with open

ditches, temporary, bumpy fills and detours. The merchants are raising all sorts of thunder, because it's the shopping season and people hate to drive downtown through the mess. It's been like this since spring. After years of wrangling over traffic conditions, Hagerstown's mayor and council finally decided that the traffic control lights needed a complete renovation. Realizing that they would never be able to agree on the proper system to improve the flow of traffic, they turned the whole problem over to the city signal engineer, and gave him a free hand. Ralph, a middle-aged bachelor, living alone and not minding a reputation for avarice, immediately demanded a raise. He ignored the objection that he was earning a good salary, as local municipal salaries go, never spent a cent, and wouldn't know what to do with the additional money if he got it. He finally got most of what he wanted. He went to work, studying traffic lights in many other cities comparable to Hagerstown, obtaining data on all available automatic control systems, traveling to get advice from experts in many metropolitan areas. Finally he announced that he was all set with a radically new method of staggering the cycle changes from corner to corner, to replace the old simultaneous changes in the entire downtown section. It would require a complete rewiring, much new control equipment, and many more signal lights. It pained the departmental budget, but he was allowed to order everything needed. In the spring, the street department began to dig up the wiring under the intersections, installing new control boxes, replacing many of the control lights. It looked like an all-summer job, and was only about two-thirds completed the August evening when Ralph phoned a friend at the desk in police headquarters from his bachelor apartment one night, and said he didn't feel so well. By the time the squad car reached him, he was dead. He had no known relatives, so city authorities assumed charge of his estate. They weren't surprised to find that his years of miserly living had resulted in tens of thousands of dollars in the bank, but they were astonished to learn that Ralph had one relative after all, a maiden and elderly sister whom he susported in another town; his economy had been mainly intended to make certain that she wouldn't want in the event of his death. The city took fifty dollars of the savings to purchase a suit for Ralph's funeral, not believing it right to bury a man in a sport shirt; Ralph probably had not owned a suit since he was in college. The day after the funeral, the street department wanted to know what it should do about the traffic control system. Ralph had carried all of the plans around in his head, putting nothing onto paper, and nobody knew how he had intended to link up the things that he was arranging. So during the autumn rains and the winter freezes, the street department has been methodically reopening each ditch, to permit the new man in charge of control signals to discover what Ralph had done at each intersection. The only good outcome is the fact that nobody has been able to hold drag races through local streets for many months.

December 2—Come on over to my building and look at our new machine, the fellow said. I went. This is quite a gadget, he explained. It has a time sense, more accurate than yours. It knows how long any part of itself is being used, even if a lot of parts are being used simultaneously for different lengths of time, and it keeps a record of that. It has ability to diagnose its trouble when it gets sick. It punches a card to explain where it's sick and what should be done to make it well again. It also punches

a card when anyone tries to use it unskilfully, showing just how it's been used wrong. And it flashes a light to warn us when it is being overworked and can't function with full efficiency. Of course, it's a social sort of machine, and keeps in close touch with other machines more or less like it in a lot of cities all over North America. We've left plenty of space in this building, because it's going to be growing as the years go along. It doesn't have the sense of sight up to now, but there's talk about giving it that a little bit later on. And it has defences against damage, too. It sounds an alarm if anyone tries to break into this building. We're really proud of it. How do you turn it off? I asked. There isn't any way to turn it off, he said. It just keeps going. We have it hooked up with both Potomac Edison and Municipal Electric Light Plant power. If one fails, it automatically switches to the other. And if both should fail, there's an emergency generator that could keep it going for many hours. Of course, we do need someone in the building to start up that generator, in case of a complete failure of outside power. That's nice, I said. Privately, I decided that I hoped that the dial telephone system never does learn how to turn on that emergency generator without human aid. That machinery worries me.

September 27—The television station in Lancaster, Pa., and I had been negotiating for some time on arrangements that would make me their standby photographer in Hagerstown and vicinity, in case of unforeseen spot news and for predictable news events here at times when their staff photographers were too busy to come to Hagerstown. It seemed advisable to complete the deal with a visit by me to the television station, because of certain details involved in tv photography which can be demonstrated much more easily than described in letters. As a hick town resident, I welcomed the opportunity, because I'd never been inside a television station. Lancaster is a very pleasant city, containing possibly 70,000 persons, in the middle of one of the richest agricultural areas in the world. It has many big-city attributes, because of the lack of any larger cities within 75 miles, yet contains a friendliness of atmosphere that most cities of that size lack, owing to the predominance of farmers and retired farmers among its visitors and residents. WGAL-TV has its studios a half-block from the town square, but I missed the entrance twice, walking by; the door is a small, plain orange-painted affair about half of the size of the hyphen in the tremendous sign atop the roof bearing the call letters. The receptionist looked rather surprised at my identity. You came all the way from Hagerstown to see us? she asked. The production manager was busy at the moment, so I waited in the small room which contained nothing but chairs and a television receiver. The chairs were placed in such fashion that it was impossible not to watch the screen. The receptionist watched intently the conclusion of a soap opera. A young girl, obviously a friend, entered and they chatted for a while. Could I go in and watch them do this next program? the young girl asked. Better not, the receptionist said, the cameras might be pointing your way as you go through the door. I thought she was joking, but later discovered that the station's main studio was just inside that door, with no protection against intrusion other than the frail receptionist. The production manager was out of breath when he showed up, and even more winded after we had climbed up and down three flights of stairs. This is very embarrassing, he said, there must be some room where we can sit down and talk. Every room we tried

to enter was filled with people drawing things; the station prepares animated cartoon commercials for firms that can't afford to pay the cost of having them done by firms which specialize in the field. We ended up in what he described as the prop room. It consisted primarily of automobile tires, vast quantities of them, in every size and description. I longed to ask why so many different varieties were needed as props, when the differences among them must be undetectable on the television screen. We'll get out of this rat trap one of these days, he said, we're building a new station outside the city limits. We ought to be able to get our own picture better when we're in the new studios. Our transmitter is twenty miles away from town, and reception here is awful. I think it's on top of a mountain somewhere, I've never seen it. Now, how much do you think you ought to be paid for this? We've never had occasion to buy pictures before and we don't know what television stations are supposed to pay for such things. We worked out an agreement eventually, then came a cropper over the little matter of transporting photographs the 100 miles from Hagerstown to Lancaster. In this day of speedy transportation, it seems absurd to admit that we finally discovered that an ice cream firm's fleet of trucks offered the only possibility for speedy transportation; by bribing the drivers to take along pictures, we could save a dozen hours over railroad time, a full day over air transportation, and probably three days over bus transportation. I was shown through the photographic department of the station by a glum individual who spent most of his time lamenting the fact that the station just can't keep any fresh hypo on hand, no matter how carefully it makes plans and how diligently its photographic department strives to carry out those arrangements. So it would be useless for me to supply the station with movie film, even if I could make arrangements with the owner of a 16 mm camera in Hagerstown; the WGAL-TV hypo was never strong enough to remove the anti-halation backing substance completely from regular firm, and the staff photographers used a special commercial film that doesn't contain this backing. He also lamented the difficulties involved in using prints for television transmission because of the glare which lights create on their glossy surfaces. I suggested that maybe matte surface printing paper would work out better, and he said that that had never occurred to them and maybe it would. My respect for television photographers rose several notches, when he explained another situation that had never occurred to me. Television receiving sets, because of construction details, the proportions of the screens, and maladjustments, don't all receive the same area of the transmitted picture. So every television picture, whether a still or a frame of a movie, must contain along all four sides a "safe" area that has nothing essential to the sense of the picture; this permits persons who receive only the central part of the transmitted picture to make sense from their screens, and assures that persons equipped to get the full picture won't have blank areas at the edges of the screen. He almost slobbered with happiness upon learning that I have a 35 mm still camera. Wonderful, he exulted, it's so easy for us when we get 35 mm negatives. We just put them into this thing and project them onto a camera lens for transmission. Eventually, I learned the real cause of his eternally sad expression: the portable, self-contained lighting equipment which the station gives its movie cameramen. It's so heavy, he said. Try it for yourself. I couldn't raise the unit more

than three inches. And we've got to keep recharging the batteries, he added. After that, I went to the control room. Watching the warning signals on the filmed commercials made me think of Rotsler's famous counting down to blastoff time, and I missed the tremendous thump that always occurs at zero on his tapes. Just before I left, having completed financial arrangements, the program manager called me aside and asked me quietly if it really is true that people in Hagerstown can get the Lancaster television programs. I assured him that that channel gives near-perfect reception, with a properly directed antenna. I never would have thought it, he said.

December 24—The first sign of Christmas in the newspaper building is the shiny new piece of tinsel stretched across the press. The tinsel is there all year long, brushing against the web to remove static electricity from the paper, but it grows so dingy that nobody notices it until it's replaced the next November. Christmas gifts for staff members, frequently intended to have a bribing tendency toward a good press for the next year, begin to arrive in late November. The American Totalisator Company is the promptest and most eccentric. For several years, it sent playing cards containing bettors' tickets on the reverse side. This year, the addressograph machine must have broken down because cartons of matches, with folders imprinted to represent the #3 horse in the seventh race at a certain track on July 7, 1933, kept tumbling into the office for two weeks. We threw them away, gave them away, even held bonfires with them. The office Christmas trees, both of which are artificial, go up the first week in December. The difference between the frisky young girls who work in the business office and the worn inhabitants of the news room can be symbolized by the trees: the trimming of the one in the business office is a complex process that lasts two or three days, while the news room tree has been stored away in a large carton the previous January without being untrimmed, and needs only to be carefully lifted from this box to be ready for use. This year, I enjoyed better than normal harvest. For the first time, the local stockyards remembered me with a porterhouse steak, and a television station put me on its mailing list for barometers. Christmas cards begin to fill up the post office lock box, ten days before Christmas, and many of these are awful puzzlers: advertising agencies and celebrities and syndicates and other dreadful sources are diabolically skillful at making their mass-production cards look like home-signed, home-addressed greetings, and you're never sure whether you're just getting a sample of the commercialization of yule, or really have been remembered by the important person you interviewed last April. The whisky begins to arrive about three days before Christmas, mostly from lawyers and politicians who present it to only two or three persons on the staff; as a result, it is handled like bootleg moonshine, in a futile effort to keep it out of sight of the non-recipients. The management always remembers just before quitting time on Christmas Eve that nobody was assigned to get the silver dollars for the police force. Faint noises drift up to the news room from the extremely lengthy and invitation-only Christmas party thrown by the board of directors in the front office. The editor vows that this year we'll put the Christmas issue to bed at midnight, then shuts up when he sees the unset copy about holiday church services. And everyone wishes it would snow for Christmas.

Where There's Life*

The sky of Paris was a magical purplish-blue, peering between the chimneypots and the roof gables. The air still contained that improbable aroma. The people were fascinating, for the variety of dress, actions and faces. Rapid calculations showed Van that his American money, at this fantastic rate of exchange, could keep him well-fed and lodged in Paris for a year or longer. It was tempting to think of a year of freedom from the Alumni, freedom from subtle changes in the appearance of everything he had known in Washington, freedom from finicky advertisers. When the money ran out, there were jobs for Americans in Paris, Ted had said, if he didn't feel more capable by then of meeting the challenges of his native land. Van sank so deep into this cogitation that he paid no attention to the first taps on his shoulder.

When the tapping became more insistent, Van turned. He looked into a cherubic pink face topped by a beret. Crew-cut grey hair surrounded the beret. The man was leaning over Van's shoulder and saying: "You too have noticed that things are wrong?" The pink face smiled sweetly, then frowned with a Satanic hatred. The fellow was speaking English with a terrible accent.

"Wrong? I don't understand," Van said cautiously in French. He rose and moved a step away. The man in the beret moved a step in the same direction. "You have just come from the office of the great psychiatrist, Dr. Moses. You look as if he had not helped you. Many people see a psychiatrist, when they find everything is wrong. I am no psychiatrist. But I may be able to aid you for special reasons. Perhaps I have a clue to the solution of your problems. Perhaps your problems are my problems." "Let's have a drink," Van suggested.

This was a very doubtful individual. But he didn't talk like an Alumnus, didn't have the build of an Alumnus, and might prove useful. They chose the table at the nearest sidewalk cafe that was farthest from passersby and from the interior of the establishment, to minimize eavesdropping. Van ordered pernods. "Let me introduce myself." The Frenchman whipped from his breast pocket a card case and flipped out a white card. In flaming red letters, it was inscribed: Jacques Molliet, historien du temps passe. "This card contains a clue. Study it. Does it tell you anything?" Van looked at the card, turned it over and frowned at the blank reverse side. He handed it back to Molliet, shaking his head.

"Temps passe," Molliet quoted. "The past. Observe. Not temps ancien. Not ancient history. An important distinction. A distinction symbolizing the entire life work to which I have assigned me." "But I still don't quite see—" "Ancient history is all a fraud!" Molliet cried, in a sort of shouted grunt. "All ancient history is a tale invented by fools or devils!" "You couldn't prove it by me. I wouldn't know the reasons why one version of the past is better than another." He grimaced, because his pernod tasted exactly like orangeade.

"You need not be expert to understand," Molliet insisted. "It is not a case of one interpretation of the past over another. A deliberate effort has been made to create entirely false ancient history. I suspect that the Alumni of your own land have done it.

*Excerpt from a novel in progress

Soon I shall complete the tenth volume of my manuscript work that proves the non-existence of the entire Roman Empire."

"You're doing this all by yourself?"

"But no. I am an important member of La Societe des Amis de l'Art. It is a superficial name that has nothing to do with its real raison d'etre. We seek to determine the facts about ancient history. Gradually we are uncovering many proofs that the past was not as the histories claim. Slowly we find clues pointing to the true nature of history. When we make known what we have found, the world will rise in horror and the discredited Alumni will be wiped from the face of the earth." "Just like the French Revolution, eh?" "There never was a French Revolution. That is my latest discovery. Now, are you with us? I hope that you are not an Alumnus." Molliet didn't seem to consider his final statement anticlimactic.

"Hell, no," Van grinned. "I feel the same as you do about the Alumni. But I'm an advertising man. I'd never be able to do research work. I'm just trying to get over a shock with a vacation in Paris." "A shock? What kind of shock? An unhappy love affair? Or loss of money, or automobile accident, or—" "I'm not sure. I blacked out one day. When I snapped out of it, I couldn't remember quite right. Things were different from the way I thought they should be. I'm still mixed up."

"Brainwashing!" The English term was barely recognizable after undergoing Molliet's accent. He shouted at a waiter, then said earnestly to Van: "This is my life's most fortunate day." Molliet turned to the waiter who had rushed up, and emitted a volley of such soft, fast French that Van couldn't follow the meaning. When the waiter dashed away, Molliet turned to Van: "Do not worry, my friend, that he may have overheard your remarks. He is one of us. He specializes in old wines." "Old wines?" "Yes. He proves conclusively that they are not old. It is painful for a Frenchman to do this, but essential for the discrediting of history. Now, I said brain-washing. Your experience may be vital. You may be the first individual I have found who has not fallen complete victim to the brain-washing which the Alumni must have given to every adult in the world in creating this deliberate distortion of the past. You claim to remember a different world. Perhaps your mind withstood slightly whatever the Alumni did. It may be that a clumsy Alumnus was assigned to you and he grew careless. Whatever it may be, you are unique and you are valuable. If you will cooperate with us, we may determine the manner in which the Alumni have operated. How have they induced completely honorable historians to write such impossible accounts of the past? How have they obliterated all the obvious traces of the true past? Why are they never detected in their actions?"

"You'll feel foolish if you waste a lot of time with me and find out in the end that I just had a slight stroke," Van pointed out.

"I take that gamble. My life is already dedicated. Let me tell you how my consecration to this sole goal began. As a wide-eyed and guileless youth, I made an innocent and sincere effort to leap to sudden fame. I believed that I had discovered discrepancies in textbook statements about the cave paintings of primitive men in the south of France. I naively assumed that a crown of glory would settle upon my head, when the art world recognized

my intuitive genius. I visited the cave paintings during a summer holiday. I chiseled off a few square inches of rock and carried them away with me. After I got out of jail, I pestered the authorities into giving back to me those pieces of stone. A chemist friend analyzed for me the pigments. The analysis showed that the paint was a complicated, modern compound which does not exist in nature, that could not have been made by cave men without modern technology. The prehistoric paintings cannot be more than a half-century old! I smelled a hoax. But when I sent my article to an art journal, the editor himself wrote me a letter to explain that many references to the cave paintings exist in reference books published seventy-five and more years ago. Was I discouraged? No, my friend. I immediately scented some still greater truth behind this facade of mystery. I attempted to publish my theories in several leading general magazines. I failed. The editors said that the public is not interested or I am crazy or more documentary proof is needed. When I tried to tell the facts in person to art experts, they merely laughed at me.

"I grew angry. I set out to find other cases in which the accepted facts do not agree with the real facts. I became an amateur expert on engineering, geology, anthropology, many other sciences, to track down paradoxes. I climbed for weeks the cliffs of Dover and Calais. I possess photographic evidence of what I saw. The English channel has been scooped out by machinery in the recent past. The water has not washed away completely the marks left by the earth-moving machinery."

"Oh, now, really," Van interrupted. "You probably saw spots where rock had been cut for commercial use. It wouldn't make sense, to try to falsify the geological history of Europe."

"Many things do not make sense. When so many, many senseless things are found, they add up to a sum of some unknown sense. Listen. I have planted all types of trees and have measured their growth in all types of weather. In this way, I have proved that the most ancient trees in the Tuileries cannot be more than fifty years old. Listen. In the original manuscripts of Lully, I have found notes written for the trumpet that could not have been performed by the primitive trumpet of Lully's day with its limited, natural scale. Listen. Rabelais mentions a young girl who—"

The waiter reappeared with a rush. Moving slowly, deliberately behind him was a tall woman with a thickly painted face.

"La voila," the waiter whispered hurriedly to Molliet, then scurried off to wait on other customers. The woman pulled up a spare chair and sat down beside Van. She looked him up and down comprehensively. Then she reached into his shirt pocket, pulled out his cigarettes, and lit one. She blew smoke into his face as Molliet introduced her:

"This is Mademoiselle Marthe Cluytens, true connoisseur of the arts. You can trust her expert knowledge of the schools of the brush. Meanwhile, I must resume my vigil beside the Institut, my vigil to find more poor, puzzled persons like you. Mlle. Cluytens will accompany you to the art galleries, to remove your doubts about my researches. She will show you anachronisms. When your own eyes have seen a telephone pole in the background of an alleged 17th century oil by a Dutch master, you will know that art histories are collections of lies. Mlle. Cluytens will explain to you the features of the clothing in Rembrandt portraits which did

not come into fashion until a century later. She can—"

"Enough." Mlle. Cluytens spoke the single word. Molliet obediently leaped up, lifted politely his beret, and walked away.

Mlle. Cluytens leisurely added a superfluous layer of powder and lipstick to the coating on her face. She rose langourously, nodded an insinuating command to Van, twisted her hips slightly as if in practice, then led him down the quiet street.

"This is quite useless," Van began. "I don't know anything about art."

"Do not worry." Her voice was slow and deep, a husky, monotone version of the sexier Parisian chanteuses. "Those who feel themselves ignorant may be wise in their inability to find delight in what the stupid persons admire. Besides," she added, "we shall have a very good time." She nudged him skilfully with most of her body without breaking stride.

"But Molliet is jumping to conclusions if he thinks that I want to join your bunch. I think it would be better if you called me at the hotel later in the week."

Mlle. Cluytens stopped at the foot of stone steps leading to one of Paris' smaller museums. She nudged Van again, this time using the elbow only. This motion brought into view temporarily a knife with a six-inch, tapering blade in her right hand. The point of the knife was two inches from the pit of Van's stomach.

"We go inside," Mlle. Cluytens murmured in her best baritone.

Van hesitated only an instant. The knife was half-hidden in a fold of her voluminous skirt. No passerby would notice it. The blade would be inside him instantly, if he attempted to grab the arm. She looked fully capable of throwing the knife into his back if he ran. So he walked slowly up the marble steps at her side.

"We shall skip over Manet and Monet and the other comparative moderns," she said as if nothing had occurred. "They are not allegedly ancient enough for our purpose. I like you. Now, this is supposed to be an original David. The leaves of this bush in the foreground show it to be an African plant. This plant was not imported into Europe until the 1890's. It could not have been seen by the artist, unless he made a trip to Africa which the biographies do not mention. We are faced with alternatives. Either David made a long, dangerous trip that escaped the notice of his contemporaries and biographers, or this bush once flourished in Europe but became extinct within a century, or the painting is the work of some hack who may still be alive. Move closer to me, please."

"Listen, lady, I've got friends waiting for me back at the hotel. If I don't show up, they'll come looking for me and you'll get into trouble. Now, put that knife away."

"You are a very bad liar. I like you so much that I think that I shall take you home to sleep with me tonight. You are newly arrived in France and you will experience for the first time the full range of French love."

Two frail old men stood at the far end of the gallery, concentrating on an argument that involved much hand-waving. No museum guards were in sight. Mlle. Cluytens was continuing: "And I warn you that I really do not need this knife. If you attempt to elude me, I need only scream and register a complaint against you. The magistrates in this part of Paris are under the most intimate types of indebtedness to me. I need only hint to them that you are attempting to leave me without paying the obligations that

you have incurred, and you will be deep in jail for an indefinite period during which his brush technique was impeccable. There is a clear anticipation of pointillistic technique in the transparency of the light that flows—"

The coughing behind them that had changed the course of the conversation became so loud that Mlle. Cluytens stopped talking. Her frown put small gullies and jagged ditches into the cosmetic coating on her face. Keeping her right hand carefully concealed in her skirt, she said to Van: "Send away this pest, my dear, whoever it may be."

"But, Fifi, it's me," a voice said between coughs. "Please, Fifi, hear me. This is very unpleasant, but I must ask you a question. You have been the object of a denunciation. You are blamed for sacrilege. It is idiotic, that one should suspect you, but as a mere formality I must ask you—"

"Sacrilege?" Mlle. Cluytens turned slowly, majestically. She aimed her fury at a small, bald man in a museum attendant's uniform who had crept up behind them. "Henri, you go too far. I do not permit you to call me Fifi from this moment, even though we two have often—"

"Please, Fifi, not in public!" Henri whispered. He managed a watery smile. "It is all so ridiculous, that a great lover of the arts like you should be even suspected of such a crime."

Van began to edge slowly away from the woman. She snatched him with an iron hand, just before he got out of arm's reach. "Wait! You cannot go! You are my witness!"

"Just one tiny formality," Henri wheedled. "Just one tiny glance within your purse, to prove that it contains no knife which could have cut the slice from the pie in our beautiful Picasso."

"Picasso slashed!" Mlle. Cluytens' voice sounded genuinely excited. She rose to full height, quivering a little, as if coming to an interior boil. "You hint that I sliced a Picasso!" Her shout interrupted the argument of the two old men.

"Ha, ha." Henri's laugh fooled nobody. "Of course not. I know that you would not bring a sharp-edged instrument into this museum. But the denouncer insists that I make the inspection."

Like a large, deadly snake that has just seen a still larger and more poisonous reptile, Mlle. Cluytens recoiled. She hung to Van's arm, but he realized her dilemma. She couldn't hand over to Henri the purse that was tucked under her right arm, while her left hand held him and the other hand concealed the knife.

"Show me my denouncer. I shall break him to bits."

"You will break her to bits, Fifi. It is a woman. Please, let me see the purse."

A larger man in an attendant's uniform was moving determinedly toward them. Mlle. Cluytens spotted him. She yanked Van around and began moving him toward the main entrance, unleashing detailed insults over her shoulder. Henri was sobbing quietly.

They were three steps from the entrance when a small figure zoomed out of a side gallery with an enraged squawk. It leaped the final six feet and landed on Mlle. Cluytens' back. She toppled to her knees from the impact. Van wrenched free and lunged at her right arm, as she raised the knife to striking position. He tried to protect his face from fingernails with his left arm, while he twisted her right wrist with all his might. The knife clanged loudly against the marble floor. Van kicked it hard and

jumped out of the way.

Fifi was struggling to her feet. But her purse had flown open in the fracas, scattering the contents. She slipped on an extremely personal item and fell flat. The impact jarred the smaller woman from her back. Fifi rolled like a tiger, jumped up, and galloped through the door, disappearing down the steps. Henri was holding the knife and alternating between soft sobs and a keening wail. The other guard was helping the attacker to her feet. Van recognized Billie.

"My God!" he breathed. Billie started to readjust her rumpled clothing, then impatiently ran to Van. She grabbed him in a bear hug and squeezed hard.

"I thought you'd fallen for that old hag," she said in his ear. The two museum attendants were examining the knife, as if it were the guillotine that had just wiped out a royal family.

"Why did it have to be the Picasso?" Henri was moaning. "Anything but the Picasso could have been replaced—"

Van hustled Billie out of the museum. He found himself repeating to her, over and over: "Where did you come from?"

In the late afternoon sunshine, Billie brushed back her hair, sniffed the perfumed air, and sighed: "Gee, I like it around here. I guess I was just lucky. I never knew that she had a knife, too."

Van stopped searching for signs of Fifi and stared at Billie in sudden suspicion. "'She had a knife, too.' What do you mean?"

"Oh, I just sort of figured that most persons don't take knives into museums. I sliced up that painting. I picked the one that looked cheapest, so I wouldn't do much harm. Why, the pie pan wasn't even drawn in a good circle. I saw you with that big, painted hussy and I figured that I could get her away from you by claiming that she'd damaged a painting. What was she doing with a knife in her hand?"

"Seducing me." Van was thinking that Billie was ignorant of art but might have good instincts. That didn't look like a display of genuine masterpieces to him, either. "How come you're in Paris?"

"Well, back at the apartment, I woke up in the night and heard you getting ready to go somewhere. I knew it wouldn't do any good to ask to go along, since you were packing without waking me. And I thought that someone as mixed up as you needn't someone else to keep track of you. So as soon as you left in that taxi, I hitched a ride with a nice guy who was driving past. We followed your cab to the airport. I kept watching you and stayed out of sight. I didn't dare get on the same plane that you did. There wasn't another plane to France for a couple of days, so I just got in this morning. It's a good thing you registered under your real name, or I'd have never found your hotel. And it's lucky that Trucks had some money in his other pants."

Van took her to the most obscure eating place that he could find. They ate baked beans and hamburger and ice cream, prepared in a manner that completed the destruction of Van's crumbling ideals of French cuisine. Billie pronounced the food nearly as good as in the automat back home. Then she announced that she wanted to see the Seine. They found their way to the river after a half-dozen erroneous turns in a maze of deadend squares and radiating courtyards. The river was dark and oily in the fading

day. When the sun tipped under the horizon, night arrived with such a rush that they had barely time to find a rickety bench above a picturesque tangle of small boats. The temperature fell twenty degrees in five minutes. An abrupt shift in the wind brought the perfume back into the air, overpowering the nasty odors that floated up from the surface of the sluggish water.

"If you don't want to marry me right away," Billie said as she squirmed closer to Van, "I don't really mind too much. Here in Paris, people practically never bother about marriage. I learned that out of a magazine."

"You're a swell girl, Billie. And you got me out of a terrible spot. But I wish you wouldn't jump to conclusions. I mean, we hardly know wach other. I'm afraid that I might not hit it off with you. Maybe it would be better if we didn't get too serious, while I'm so badly mixed up about everything."

"You sure as hell acted serious enough with me back in the apartment that night," Billie said. Van winced. This wasn't his ideal of a life partner. But Billie was very pleasant to be near just now. He wasn't sure of his past and there was no point in trying to pin down the future; under such circumstances, he suspected that his best course of procedure could be summed up in two useful words: carpe diem. He could definitely control the present, whatever the past and the future might be. An interlude with this girl might be the easiest and most entertaining way to recover his shattered equilibrium. And meanwhile, the damp night air and the hard bench were giving him cramps.

The bank of the Seine had become alarmingly dark. The nearest streetlights were useless pinpoints of light in the distance. If the Parisian underworld made regular rounds of the bank, looking for something to do, it would be impossible to detect a thug's approach.

"Wonder if there's a moon tonight?" Van said. "It's not going to be easy to get back to the hotel without some light."

"A what?"

"A moon. What you use in June to spoon."

"I haven't been shown one yet. It doesn't even sound like a French word. Where do you buy it?"

Van looked at the faint patch of misty blondness that was Billy's head. He tightened his hold on her, as if the reality that she represented were about to slip out of his grasp. She mistook his motive and kissed him violently. When he could talk again, he said: "Don't kid me, Billie. I'm not quite up to it after everything that's happened."

"Kid you? That was the real McCoy. Oh, about this moon thing? You're the one who brought it up."

Van looked over the sky, racking his memory, trying to recall the phase that the moon should now possess. He thought that he had noticed a nearly full moon over Washington, just before his blackout. But he couldn't recall seeing a moon since then. He hesitated, then plunged in deep: "Billie, there's a world that circles the earth all the time. It's called the moon. Its real name is Luna. It shines up in the sky most nights, and it appears to go through phases, from a thin crescent to a full disc and then back the other way again. Now, you know all that just as well as I do, don't you? Every baby learns how the cow jumped over the moon. Every girl knows that it's bad luck to see the moon over

her left shoulder."

Billie released him, suddenly. "Van, boy, are you feeling worse or something?" There was an overtone in her voice that was unfamiliar to him. "You're talking crazy. There's nothing in the sky but clouds and stars and the sun and birds and sometimes airplanes."

"But you remember the songs, Billie. 'Moon over Miami.' 'Shine On, Harvest Moon.' 'When the Moon Comes over the Mountain.' Just think about them for a minute."

"I've never heard songs like those, Van. Honest. How do you think up such crazy things?"

"But books. 'The Moon and Sixpence.' 'South Moon Under.' Oh, God, I forgot. You don't read books." Van forced his stiff legs into standing position. He pulled Billie onto her feet, and they stumbled blindly back toward the city's lights. Filled with sudden urgency, he ignored Billie's chatter, trying to decide on some surefire method of proving the existence of the moon.

While Billie examined critically the bed and bureau, Van stood in his hotel room, thumbing through the cheap dictionary he had bought upon arriving in Paris, when he had not realized that he had full command of French. The English-French section contained no such word as moon. The French-English portion equally lacked a lune. He tried uselessly to find lunar and satellite in the English-French portion, before slamming the book to the floor.

Van rushed to the lobby, with Billie trotting at his heels. A grumbling desk clerk fumbled underneath the counter, and finally located a gigantic calendar with a nearly lifesize picture of the most important areas of a nude girl at the top. The calendar did not contain the facts about the phases of the moon that are common to most calendars.

He forgot to thank the clerk, looking around the nearly empty lobby for a newspaper. He finally found one, crumpled in a wastebasket, and riffled its pages until he found the meteorological information. It contained no data whatsoever about tides, in spite of a wealth of other information about maritime areas of France.

The offices of the Paris Harbor Authority were closed, by the time Van completed his desperate telephone call. A sleepy night watchman finally answered. The night watchman strove hard to be helpful and found several large almanacs. But he somehow got the impression from the start of the conversation that a tide was similar to a barometer. When Van attempted to direct his exploration of the index of the reference volumes, the night watchman finally began to suspect a practical joke. He hung up and refused to answer when Van placed the call a second time.

Billie was pacing up and down the lobby, looking more angry than worried by this time. Van methodically went down the list of bookstores in the telephone directory. After a half-hour of useless ringing, a late-closing establishment answered his call. The proprietor was thrilled to talk with a potential customer with much the same accent as rich Englishmen. But the book dealer sounded less cheerful when he was forced to admit that he had never stocked nor heard of a novel by Jules Verne entitled "From the Earth to the Moon." Van put the telephone back onto its cradle. He called to Billie. When she came to his side, he said: "You think that I'm crazy when I say there should be a moon. I think you're crazy if you believe that we're still on earth."