



# The Buff and Blue

LITERARY NUMBER

SPRING 1958



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## *Tower of Education*

PEGGY JANE GREENE, '58

Short time ago, it seems,  
We came to you,  
Unsure of ourselves, but now steadied  
With courage and understanding.  
Now we leave, joyful and regretful,  
That others may follow  
In our steps toward richer lives.  
Tower of Education,  
Long will you be remembered,  
For the power and knowledge  
You so freely gave to us  
That we may not fail.

# *The Last Night of Winter*

HOWARD PALMER, '59

The trees are stripped and bare ;  
Their gaunt arms grope,  
Long held in winter's grip.

Beneath the pearly moon  
A single star gleams  
Upon white covered snow.

Underneath bleak leafless trees  
Dark shadows streak the snow,  
Quivering on cold tranquility.

Rough breezes among southern boughs  
Gently bite the stark contours,  
As chilly and chattering, frozen forests lie.

Jewelled icicles scintillate and sparkle,  
Along the branches blink,  
Glittering bright with frosty insulation.

Tonight in the cheerless evening,  
King Winter holds sway over the upland,  
Heavy with deep forlorn desire.

All silent, the forest endures numbly,  
But wryly and nodding still in mockery  
Of King Winter's seasonal pursuit.

Impish nymphs and fairies  
Trip on waking lawn with mirth,  
Scene of radiance, sweet enchantment on its birth.

Then sunrise, Spring's sleeping harbingers awake  
At the drip of weeping icicles on bended branches,  
And hark, how King Winter groans on the wane.

Like a layer of dawn mist  
The sun clambers up the head of mountain;  
Alas! its beams pry the frozen lake apart.

King Winter, now behold, is blind  
Ah! his wrinkles spatter wide;  
Retreat to the land of his birth

Icy coverings on trees, broken off  
By their first mighty stretch  
At the new-born Spring.

## *Synonymy*

DONALD PETERSON, M.S., '53

Physical darkness:

A beam of light  
    stabs the sky,  
And tears a hole  
In the night.

Mental darkness:

The sword of truth  
    of the wise  
Rips a hole  
In the lies.

# Dance of Salome

VIRGINIA LEE NOULIN, '61

A moon of langour rose beyond the walls  
Of Herod's palace-garden, and its light  
Sang softly o'er the multitudinous vines,  
Tranformed the fountain-pools to silver-white;

There in the palace, in the very court  
Sate royal Herod and his company;  
The flute-boys piped a merry festive air  
While harpists strummed a lilting harmony;

And all about was Expectation . . . "Ah!"  
The sigh arose from many spectators  
To see the lovely Princess come at last;  
*Salóme* emerged now from the corridors.

She bowed before King Herod's throne, and then  
Twirling her pretty foot, began the dance;  
Her undulating limbs rose with the veils  
And lulled the gazing court into a trance

Of breathless admiration . . . yet of all,  
The one most moved by her unnerving grace,  
None other than the regal king himself:  
What rapt attention beamed upon his face!

But in his eyes no evil passions gleamed;  
His gaze was fraught with highest reverence  
Such as deferred unto an artist's work  
That dazzles with its visual opulence.

Salome—her soul entirely in her feet—  
Danced in a frenzy through the awestruck court,  
A dark, manædan Fury, so possessed  
She danced as though it were her last resort

To tear her body from the clutch of Death!  
Her motions effortless and serpentine,  
Wild, chaotic, terrible in power,  
A blending of the Evil and Divine,



So palpable in beauty that a chill  
Coursed through the veins of every onlooker—  
And one united gasp arose from all  
When suddenly, upon the marbled floor

The lovely Princess fell, limp with exhaustion.  
It was as if enchanted Butterfly  
Had flown too near the sun and singed its wings  
Then helpless, fell to smite the earth, and die,

Spreading Enchantment on the very spot!  
Indeed, bewitched were all the palace crowd;  
One moment silence, wild applause the next;  
Salome arose; to all the court she bowed

Then forward strode, to the Imperial Throne,  
Hair disarrayed and with exertion wan,  
Yet on her countenance a subtle smile  
That hints of triumph, of a battle won;

Already as she bowed once more, to hear  
The praise in Herod's voice, and his decree  
Of rich reward for her divinest grace—  
She searched about—abrupt and hastily—

The faces of the solemn court; at last  
She fixed her gaze beyond the gilded throne:  
In an adjoining chamber lurked the Queen  
Who bade her daughter come to her alone.

Salome moved quickly to her mother's call,  
Far from faint knowledge of the dark Desire  
That long had overwhelmed Herodias  
Whose eyes were blazing now with vengeful fire . . .



## *Spring-time Reverie*

JAN AFZELIUS, '59

Spring,  
a time of breath-taking beauty and eye-filling marvel . . .  
nature in bloom around us,  
enticing us by fragrant perfumes . . .  
Green leaves painting the bare branches of lonely trees . . .  
those trees once in desperate emptiness . . .  
it gives a subtle feeling of sprightliness and lucidity,  
that marks the coming of a light-spirited season . . .  
Spring, in some ways, resembles a fickle woman:  
the wanton woman with many wistful delights,  
and with many sumptuous joys,  
and with many sensual desires,  
and with many ardent dreams . . .  
Behold the approach of Spring,  
the time of sweet romances mixed with wondrous adventure,  
playful moods and sheer exuberance.

## *For Libbie*

BERTHA C. DOBSON, '38

Ah! she is a bonnie wee thing,  
This golden child of mine.  
Her eyes like stars of Heaven,  
Her baby smile divine.

Pray He who looks down from the Heavens  
Who makes all the good and the fair;  
Guide her, bless her and keep her.  
Sweet Libbie with the golden hair.

# The Madonna's Hill

● JAMES KUNDERT, '60

## I

TWIN MAPLES lay sprawled upon the knoll, its white stucco walls gleaming like alabaster in the glow of this late September sunset. Before it, the maples stood flamboyant sentries. Ralph Malone swung his sleek roadster up the driveway slowly. Somehow the cheeriness he sensed within was a mockery, an affront to the pallid cast of death.

"Madeline," he whispered to a vision that throbbed obscurely in a distant void, "give me the strength to live up to my promise. Fortify me in my weakness."

With these words, the memories of that fateful May evening in the arbor came in one turbulent surge. He recalled the way her fingers had clung to his while her face writhed in sudden, intense pain. She clutched her heart and then, with a groan sank limply in his arms. He recalled the panic at the thought that this attack was the last, the fatal one.

"Don't leave me, Madeline. No, not now."

He swept her into his arms and carried her unconscious figure to her room.

When finally she opened her eyes, it was to reach for his hand.

"Why weep for me, Ralph? Is my death to be dreaded so much? When I am gone, there shall be another to take my place; someone you can love without the shadow of death looming about."

"No, Madeline," he replied with ardor, "as long as there's a breath of life in me, it shall be dedicated to loving you."

She had smiled, a smile that acknowledged his love and gloried in it. Yet Ralph sensed an alien substance in that smile. To him, it bespoke a happiness ending in a glimpse of eternity. There she would find final surcease to the pains that racked her with such piercing intensity.

For several months after Madeline's death, the promise had lain dormant. That it was conceived on the threshold of impending death, rendered it doubly sacred to Ralph. He did not question its validity since nothing had risen to threaten it. Nothing, that is, until Suzette appeared. Suzette, with her fresh blond gaiety, her engaging youth and loveliness.

With an effort Ralph switched off the ignition and swung his lean figure from the car. There was an air of intense absorption

about him as he traversed the path leading to the front door in long strides. He was an attractive man facing thirty, yet the shadows around his eyes and the streaks of grey that brushed the sides of his tousled head bespoke an extra five years. And in the set line of his somewhat crooked jaw, you sensed a grim, abiding determination. He paused as the front door of the bungalow opened and for one fleeting moment he fully expected to envision the same familiar figure in the doorway. But it was only Stevie, his and Madeline's Stevie, who rushed from within with peals of mischievous laughter trailing close behind. On seeing his father, he ran to him and clung to his legs, his eyes fastened in gleeful anticipation upon the open door.

"Hi Stevie." The words came slowly as Ralph snapped from his reverie. "What's tickling you?"

Before Stevie could reply, Miss Suzette Noir, or rather Suzette, as she preferred to be called, appeared in the doorway, evidently in pursuit of her charge. Upon confronting Ralph, she stopped short and blushed becomingly.

"So there he is." Then she continued in mock-seriousness, "He scared the wits out of me bringing in that loathsome garden snake."

Ralph burst into laughter. Like some cleansing spring it flowed pure and limpid throughout him, dissipating the gloom that had previously enveloped him. There was a quality about Suzette's petite figure in the doorway that suffused him with a tingling warmth. He was aware of it now as he surveyed her, crisp and immaculate in her governess' uniform, her blond gamin curls in a golden aureole about her head. From the moment he had first employed her, Ralph had found himself comparing her to Madeline: Madeline who complimented the night as Suzette glorified the day. And in Suzette, he found youth, laughter and loveliness. He shied from them, sensing in their midst a threat to undermine the foundations of the promise made on the eve of death. Now he turned abruptly to Stevie.

"How's my boy today, outside of his teasing mood?"

"I couldn't find a better mannered six-year-old, Ralph," Suzette answered, fixing an indulgent gaze upon her charge. "Even if I did, I'm afraid I'd be frightfully prejudiced in his favor. I'd say that again in spite of the stigma imposed upon him."

"I didn't break anything today, Daddy," Stevie said proudly.

"Heaven knows what else there is to break, son," Ralph smiled.

"C'mon Stevie," Suzette said, "dinner is about ready and you'll have to wash that grime from your hands. Remind me to

ask you someday how you get them so filthy, especially on such short notice."

She smiled up at Ralph before flitting off with Stevie in the direction of the kitchen from which tantalizing odors issued.

Ralph sensed the warmth and the message behind the smile. It relaxed him like a soothing ointment applied to some tender hurt. He sought to condition himself against any further manifestations of feeling aroused in him by Suzette, yet, in her presence, his forces yielded: it was only when he was away from her did he regret his actions. Her tacit reference to Stevie's former governesses ignited a chain of memories that had once been a source of acute embarrassment to him. He recalled the parting words of his two employees.

"A regular little demon," Miss Henrietta Garkey had said about Stevie upon leaving.

"Impossible," the word was a shriek from Mrs. Lora Tanner. She ran from Twin Maples, hugging her shawl tightly about her as though to collect the last remnants of a much shredded dignity.

At first Ralph had attributed Stevie's behavior to a malicious streak in him that required tempering. He had thrown innumerable tantrums before his governesses and as though they had been insufficient in themselves, had taken to flinging breakables about. Only Maude Thompson, the kitchen paragon of many years standing, could solve that problem. Ralph knew her for a shrewd judge of human nature. She had known and loved Madeline, was in fact, the last to see her alive.

"Take care of him, Maude," Madeline's breath had come in short, tortured gasps. "Tell him I'm his always."

At her passing a tie had sprung up between Maude and Ralph, one compounded by equal ingredients of love and sympathy.

"Can't you see, Ralph," she once said, "them there women were trying to mother Stevie, trying to fill in Madeline's shoes. As if they could," she snapped indignantly. "It's good riddance to bad rubbish, I'd say. Hope it learns you not to pick the first hag that comes along."

But he had, he mused, though Maude's word was a vast understatement. Suzette alighted upon the doorstep of Twin Maples looking like the incarnation of glorious spring. Her references proved her a competent governess and a note, written especially by the wealthy Alfred Patterson, was lavish in its praise of her. Now as he glanced backwards three weeks ago, he wasn't at all sure whether her qualifications had clinched the matter. His

heart seemed to execute a series of intricate leaps and pirouettes but he ignored them, seeing that even Stevie was smitten by her presence.

"Gee Daddy," he said, staring at Suzette in wide-eyed wonder, "is that my fairy godmother?"

Suzette had laughed, a silvery, rippling laugh that seemed to banish the cobwebs of the past.

Even Maude had approved of her. Grim, staunch Maude, whose loyalty he never questioned. Usually she was stiff in the presence of any newly hired help but with Suzette, she all but took her into the folds of her heart.

"She knows children," were her words, brief and to the point. In those few words, she bestowed her highest praise. Ralph wondered if they shouldn't have been reversed.

With Suzette, Stevie became her most ardent fan, following her everywhere, her slightest wish his command. Or was he, Ralph thought, recalling the dinner at Antoinette's on Maude's day off. Even more so, he remembered the dance afterwards in even greater detail. She had worn an emerald green silk sheath, and under the flickering candlelight her cheeks glowed with an iridescent sheen.

"Care to dance?" he murmured low as the strains of a Viennese waltz dipped and eddied across the dance floor, subtly beckoning several couples away from their tables.

She fitted his arms like a Greek goddess her niche, only instead of marble, she was soft and warm to the touch. Her body swayed to the rhythm of the waltz with the graceful abandon of a reed in the wind. Madeline came on the wisp of a thought, but the highlights that glistened on Suzette's hair and the faint, elusive fragrance of her cologne, proclaimed her another woman.

"Dinner's ready," a feminine voice announced from a distance. Slight tremors of guilt coursed throughout Ralph when he came to with thoughts lingering upon Suzette. Her voice from the kitchen was followed immediately by a wild scamper of tiny feet.

"Surprise, Daddy! There's a surprise," Stevie said, all agog. He tugged at his father's fingers to hurry him along.

A distinct aroma mingled, yet stood apart, from that of the roast from the kitchen. Ralph recognized it.

"Lemon meringue," he said. Stevie ceased tugging and frowned.

"Who told you?" he said, dismay clouding his features.

"My nose."



"Aw Dad," Stevie said, incredulous. He launched into a series of uncontrolled giggles.

Ralph felt parental pride stirring within him at the sight of his son. Though Stevie had his hair and build, he was more of Madeline's than his. Such obvious aspects were overlooked, Ralph believed, in a single glance into his eyes, so dark and mischievous as though the night had been concentrated into those tiny orbits. To Ralph, they proved mildly disconcerting for in them was mirrored a temperament peculiarly akin to Madeline's.

"Ralph," Suzette said over the meal, "Maude phoned from the hospital that she would be unable to return tomorrow. Her mother's fall is more serious than she cares to admit and she's afraid to leave her for the moment."

"Did she say definitely how long she'd be away?"

"Not quite, but I believe it will be a week or so," Suzette replied.

"Guess I'll have to phone the Bureau for a temporary cook."

"Don't bother," Suzette said, "unless my cooking's that bad. I'll be glad to take over the kitchen until Maude returns."

"By the way, will you be leaving for Paris this Thursday, or is Donald going after all? If you do, it will be a small matter to cook for Stevie."

Ralph frowned at the memory of Judson Donald's words that day.

"About those new plans, Ralph," he had said, "how about flying down instead of me to discuss them with the *Paris Gazette*? As Assistant Editor of the *Star*, you know as much about them as I do. Besides," he added, "the whole staff has noticed the amount of overtime you've been putting in. Take the week off and relax."

"Guess I'll bring in the pie now that you're all finished. Think you'll be able to eat yours, Stevie, after that huge plate you just had?"

"Uh-huh," came the affirmative reply from a mouth already crammed full.

When the pie was finally served, it was eaten in reverent silence save for the flattering "mmms" Stevie aimed at Suzette's heart. It was Ralph's and Stevie's favorite pie and only Maude could bake it to such crisp perfection. Suzette's results were highly laudable. Obviously, Ralph mused, she had found the recipe in Maude's baking file.

"Daddy," Stevie said suddenly with innocent candor, "why don't you and Suz get married?"

The question startled Ralph and he cast a fleeting glance in

the direction of Suzette at the opposite end of the table. For one brief second her fork was poised in midair to register the impact the question had on her. She maintained a calm and preoccupied silence, apparently intent on her meal. Stevie, however, squirmed in his chair, aware that he had posed an awkward question.

Ralph rose from the table, unable to finish his meal. Halfway through the room, he paused.

"Suzette," he said without turning, "come to the library when you have taken Stevie to his room."

Once behind the closed doors of the library, the one room in Twin Maples that had witnessed a panorama of grief and tears that fell unabashed, Ralph paced the floor, his fingers interweaved in his hair. He knew that explanations were long overdue and he dreaded the coming ordeal. Stevie's question had hit home with an accuracy that bewildered him. It stripped his thoughts bare of every pretence. Only then did he catch a glimmer of the undercurrents surging within him. He did not recognize it at first, for love was to him the passionate yearning and ecstasy that only Madeline could provoke in him. With Suzette, it came on the wings of a rhapsody, gilded with golden sunshine. But was it love, pure and undiluted as it had been with Madeline? Or merely some vagabond emotion that preyed upon his grief, mocking the echoes of a former love?

He hesitated before the bay window slanting outward into the gardens beyond, but his view was a chaos of conflicting emotions. Behind him a fire crackled and spit in the fireplace. He was, at once, acutely conscious of it for directly above the mantle, hung a gilt-framed portrait of a woman as dark and mysterious as the shadows that played in the gloom.

"Ralph," he heard Suzette's calm and unruffled voice behind him. He tensed.

"Yes," he said. He turned to meet the questioning gaze in her eyes, one that sought to probe within him, to understand him. He could go no further.

"Is it Madeline?" she inquired.

"What makes you say that, Suzette?"

"A child's heart is just as sensitive as an adult's, Ralph, only his grief finds some outlet, some healing channel. That is one reason why I could never blame Stevie for his temper tantrums with his former governesses. Madeline's sudden death was an outrage to his youth; it blighted his security and cost him the one woman he held dearest to his heart. Whether he has an ugly temper or not, is something that I have yet to discover. When



you're hurt, Ralph, you invariably strike at the first object that meets the eye."

Ralph sank wearily upon the chaise lounge nearby. For one full minute the frenzied dance of the flames in the grate held him spellbound. Suzette advanced but with a motion of his hand, he stayed her. He did not wish to succumb to that curious warmth and tenderness that was like a spring welling up inside her. He preferred to utter his ultimatum at a merciful distance.

"Suzette," he began, "I-I must ask you to leave."

He hated himself for uttering those words the moment he heard her anguished cry.

"But why, Ralph?" she inquired with incredulity. "It's all so sudden tha-that. . . . ."

Ralph rose and walked to the window. Beyond the night had cast its darkening folds over day, obliterating it from view. To Ralph, it throbbed with an ominous tempo, or was it the beating in his heart? He did not dare to look at Suzette in the soft glow of the fireplace where golden highlights leapt playfully about on her hair and on the tips of her lashes. In that one minute, he longed for her as he had longed for . . . . . The name would not come.

"What kind of woman was Madeline that she can reach from beyond the darkness and still hold you for her own? Through Stevie, I have met her as the mother. Only you, Ralph, can introduce me to her as the wife."

There was no bitterness in her tone, Ralph observed. Rather it belied shattered visions of a dream that was love itself. He knew that she loved him and he braced himself against the knowledge that her heart had responded to his. Before then, he had acknowledged her love by a smile, a subdued brilliance in her blue eyes whenever they lingered upon him, and by her loving devotion to Stevie.

"She was like the night, itself," he said at length, "like some dark, tempestuous night. She knew she was on the threshold of death, just as night knows that day will shortly follow. She suffered so many attacks, but at the last one, when she called for me," he paused, his voice a low monotone, "I-I came too late."

He stood there with the night beyond forming a dark and unfathomable void, half expecting Madeline to emerge from within its shroud and once again, become whole.

"Oh Ralph," Suzette cried, "why do you cling to those memories of Madeline? Love her, yes, but don't overshadow reality with them. Death is cruel, that I will acknowledge,"

she said, "especially to lovers."

"I made a promise to her, Suzette, that I would never love another woman as I loved her."

"But surely her death has relieved you of that promise. I can't imagine her as a woman exacting love when her death has rendered it forfeit to her."

"What do you know of love, Suzette; you who have yet to find it?" His words were unduly harsh, provoked on the spur of the moment. But they elicited no response.

"Forgive me," he said when the silence became oppressive.

Only the fireplace deigned to answer his plea. A log split in the grate and immediately afterwards came Suzette's quick intake of breath.

"Madeline, I presume," she said, indicating the woman in the portrait.

Ralph turned and nodded.

"Haven't you ever seen it before?"

"No," came the reply. "Maude gave me to understand that this was your own private sanctum. I have never dared to trespass."

Her eyes, Ralph noticed, scrutinized the portrait, searching for that elusive charm behind the woman. He followed her gaze from the dark, lustrous hair that fell in a soft cascade of midnight about a pale, yet breathtakingly beautiful face, to the eyes that shone with a consuming luster above a faintly aquiline nose. Flashes of heightened flames leapt from below, illuminating the portrait, casting the features into a vivid, lifelike relief. Suzette was held by the lips where a smile played, mysterious and caressing, a deft intermingling of the mundane and divine. It seemed to strike a chord in her memory for her brows knitted in profound thought.

"Have you ever known Madeline before, Suzette?"

"No," came the distant reply. "I don't believe I have."

Her brow unfurrowed itself as though in sudden recognition and she said in the same faraway tone: "There's something, something almost ethereal about her smile."

"Yes," Ralph replied. "If all her smiles could but speak, their message would be one of hope, of another tomorrow bright with promise."

He turned to contemplate the portrait of the woman who had once been his before death claimed her for its own. He had loved her smile. It had a peculiar sweetness, an almost angelic beatitude about it that stood in stark contrast to an otherwise dark nature. It began on a slow ascent in the curve of her lips,

reaching upwards into a dazzling crescendo in the sparkle of her eyes. The overall effect was one of love, yet somewhere, he felt there lurked a note of sorrow as though she shared a secret with the Infinite. During those times Ralph knew Madeline belonged to him, was in fact, part of him. And at such times all the cares of the day faded into the glow of a rosier tomorrow.

"Ralph," Suzette's voice nibbled at the edge of his thoughts. There was a distinct note of hope, if not absolute confidence in it.

"Do me one last favor before you send me away from you?"

"Sure," Ralph agreed, looking away from the portrait. He marveled at the transformation that had overcome Suzette, bringing with it the roses he had plucked from her cheeks shortly before.

"As long as you're leaving for Paris, see if you can spend at least a few days in a tiny hamlet among the hills of southern France."

"Have you ever been there before, Suzette?"

"Yes," she replied. "In fact, I was born there."

"But what good would such a visit do me? You haven't given me any inkling of what to expect there."

"I have found something there, Ralph. Perhaps you will find more."

She turned to glance once more at the portrait above the mantle. From there, her eyes turned to his.

"I-I love you, Ralph, so help me, I do. I'd fight any woman to get you. But Madeline isn't a woman any longer, but a pale echo of one. That is where my disadvantage lies."

She turned and as she left the room, Ralph was positive that the sunshine had abandoned his heart, leaving it a barren and lonely plain haunted by the memories of a wife that once was.

## II

Paris. Immediately after his assignment with the *Gazette*, Ralph boarded the first train leading south. He anticipated forgetfulness in the gaiety of a city far from home, from the familiar scenes so mindful of Madeline. Only oblivion did not come.

"Cable me before you return, Ralph," he recalled Suzette's parting words over the roar of the plane as she and Stevie saw him off.

"I will," he had replied, hugging his son to him in a fond embrace. He hesitated before Suzette. She had looked so wan and forlorn at that moment that he had a sudden impulse to en-

fold her in his arms. But she spared him that moment by holding tight to Stevie and disappearing into the onrushing crowd.

From Valence in southern France on the Paris-Lyons railway, the train carried him to Die in the province of Dauphine. From there a hired carriage whisked him deeper into the hills. From verdant pastorals, the scene shifted, revealing a landscape that even today, breathed an old world charm, dedicated as it was to the flourishing vine. In this late September day, the hills had mellowed into a glowing amber. Ralph admired the scenery when suddenly, like a jewel in its setting, his eyes alighted upon a certain hill rising sublime and majestic in the distance. It towered above the surrounding hills and sunlight played a blithe ballet about it, diffusing an aura of peace and enchantment about it. Ralph gazed at it raptly, thrilling and tingling to the profound peace stirring within him.

At the hamlet, the carriage rumbled and grunted over an ancient stone pavement, finally screeching to an abrupt halt before the Cavalier Inn, suggested by Suzette.

As he emerged from his carriage before the aged yet sturdy dwelling whose twin pointed gables were clasped hands raised in prayer, he was immediately greeted by Monsieur Du Bois, a personage of great dimensions whose smile was even greater. He was fortyish, with a florid countenance, whose fair features belied a nationality other than French. His greeting was effusive and his English excellent save for a slight accent.

"I do believe you're English," Ralph observed, eyeing him closely.

"American, Monsieur," the innkeeper corrected. "I served in the invasion of Normandy and by some twist of fate, I was introduced to this town. After the war I returned. So far, I've no inclination to leave. It's an example of how a place grows on you, almost enchants you. But," he said, apologetic, "this is all so irrelevant. How is Suzette?"

Ralph was appalled at the ease and familiarity with which he uttered the name.

"I gathered she has not briefed you on the town she loved so well, but then, it's hard to describe such a place. It's another place where seeing is believing. But on the other hand, it probably held too many memories of Mark."

"Mark," Ralph repeated, his word a question.

"Mark Summers, Monsieur. He was my buddy during the war. He knew Suzette well in the States and when he found she was vacationing here with an aging aunt, he pursued her further.

He was a happy man, with a laugh that was infectious and what's more, he was madly in love with Suzette. They were to be married in the Chapel by the mill, but death had other plans. I came to break the news to her as Mark wished me to before he died. That is the reason why I am here today."

"How did she take it?" Ralph inquired further.

"Hard," the innkeeper commented as though the memory weighed heavily upon him.

"How is it you knew in advance of my coming?" Ralph inquired further, anxious to switch the conversation into happier channels.

"Oh that," DuBois brightened, "Suzette sent me a cablegram informing me to be on the lookout for a tall and handsome stranger, slender, with dark hair and bright grey eyes." He laughed at Ralph's embarrassment. "She did not write much but did stress a visit to the Madonna's Hill."

"The Madonna's Hill," Ralph ejaculated. The words fell in a sonorous note from his lips. He recognized it even before the innkeeper indicated it in the east.

"Are you staying here long, Monsieur?" he said, picking up Ralph's bag. He became at once the efficient innkeeper.

"For a few days at most," Ralph responded.

They entered the Inn where a group of prosperous vinters were engaged in a deep discussion of the vine. Only a few guests were scattered informally about the lobby and several more were seated leisurely at tables dotting the wide lawn running behind the rear of the Inn.

"This is not our busiest season," DuBois' remark coincided with Ralph's thoughts.

He accompanied Ralph to his room. Upon entering, the first thing Ralph noticed as he turned to glance out of the window, was the hill nestling serenely in the distance.

"Is there any special reason why it has been named the Madonna's Hill?" he asked.

"There is a story to it, Monsieur, and every tourist hears it before leaving. However, if you're willing to hear it, I will relate it as I first heard it years ago. Perhaps then you will understand why this town appeals to me."

"Suppose you come to the garden when you're ready. We have an excellent view from there."

"I'd be glad to only as long as it won't inconvenience you."

"Not in the least, Monsieur," DuBois assured him. "My duties are none too pressing at the moment but I'll ask Pierre to tend



the bar for a while. Any friend of Suzette's has my time at his disposal."

Within a short time, Ralph was seated beside DuBois at a table on the lawn, savoring a sherry of excellent vintage.

From where he was seated, he could view Madonna's Hill rising between twin hills of amber. The story as DuBois related it began centuries ago when the dreaded plague swept all of Europe like some giant scythe intent on ever increasing victims. The villagers were thrown into panic and as a last resort, entreated the intercession of the Virgin. They promised in return for her help to dedicate a shrine in her behalf. Their prayers were answered and they kept their promise. Since the hill in the distance was far too steep for vineyard purposes, the villagers erected the shrine there. From then on, it has been referred to as the Madonna's Hill.

"But isn't it a difficult climb?" Ralph inquired, turning to survey the steep slope facing the Inn.

"Far from it, Monsieur," replied the Innkeeper. "It slopes gently to the rear where a path winds to the top. Try to visit the shrine before you leave."

During the ensuing days, Ralph grew to love the hill dearly. He was happy here and somehow his happiness was reflected in the faces of everyone he met. He could well believe Suzette had been here, had basked in the benign shadow of the Madonna's Hill. Here time fell into oblivion and the thoughts that coursed through his mind lingered lovingly upon Suzette, Suzette who concealed her emotions behind a veil of sunnyness and good cheer.

Only the nights proved intolerable. Then he would toss and turn in his sleep where Madeline held the reins to his every dream. Even Stevie flashed on his thoughts. He tried not to think of him, because of those eyes, so remarkably similiar to Madeline's. During one sleepless night, Ralph left his bed and paced the room, his fingers interlaced in his hair. He paused before the open window and sank wearily into a chair. He knew he was clinging to his memories of Madeline. He had known it ever since Suzette had confronted him with the knowledge. Suddenly the promise loomed above him, taunting him, binding him to the woman he loved who was but a dim and elusive echo of the past.

He turned to glance out into the night.

"No, Madeline," he said with finality, "I will never let you go."

The night remained silent. In the distance the moonbeams shimmered from above, falling in a benediction upon the Madonna's Hill, while myriads of twinkling stars rested upon its summit in one glittering diadem. As he gazed, Ralph was again overcome with peace. Somehow the more he looked, the more the hill beckoned to him. He felt it contained some mystery it yearned to impart to him.

Early the next morning, he slipped silently from his room and encountered DuBois out of doors, awaiting the approaching dawn.

"Well, well," he said on seeing Ralph. "You're our earliest riser so far. You don't seem to have had a good night's sleep," he added, noting Ralph's haggard features.

"I didn't," Ralph admitted. "I've been up most of the night. But could you tell me how to find the path leading to the top of the Hill?"

"Sure," the Innkeeper answered, a note of wonder in his voice. "Take the road straight down and when you come to a fork near a large chestnut, turn to the left. From there, the path leads up. You just can't miss it."

"Thanks," Ralph said. He could feel DuBois' eyes fixed on him as he turned to leave the Inn. He wondered how much his face betrayed him.

His strides as he started up the road were long and athletic and once more his heart was serene. A grey dawn settled in a somnolent mist over the entire landscape and the ground was heavy with dew. Faint rays of sunlight traced a delicate line along the edges of the Madonna's Hill. Soon he came to the fork in the road and after turning left, the path led gently upwards, winding and meandering before ancient chestnuts, standing in solemn sentry upon the hill. Everywhere reigned a tranquil silence, punctuated occasionally by the shrill songs of awakening birds. Upon reaching the summit, the path turned abruptly, leading into a cool and shaded clearing. It was then that he saw the shrine. The familiar blue of the Madonna's mantle was the first to meet his eyes. A cathedral-like silence prevailed and the Virgin stood serenely upon her pedestal, undisputed queen of this sylvan paradise. It was not an imposing statue yet every detail suggested the work of loving hands. As he stood before her, Ralph's heart disrobed itself of its own accord, revealing the ravages wrought by the pent-up bitterness and grief that Madeline's passing had plunged it into. Slowly, yet surely, from out of childhood oblivion, the beloved words of the *Memorare* stirred



and fell from his lips in a sweet refrain.

From a distance a stray night breeze swept over the chestnuts, and sunlight streamed in through parted branches, falling in dappled patches on the ground. A ray fell upon the Madonna's face, until then obscured by shadow. As Ralph turned to look, a pang, intensified by surprise, shot furiously throughout him when he noticed the Madonna's smile. Only for one brief moment, it was the smile of Madeline, full of tender and caressing warmth.

"Madeline," he whispered. The word fell with a hollow ring upon the hushed silence. His arms rose instinctively, seeking to clasp her to him, but at that moment the ray disappeared and realization slowly sank in. At the same time, unseen chains fell limp inside him and his heart exulted in its release. He felt that Madeline had smiled upon him from beyond a void and once again his heart was serene and at peace.

And Suzette, his Suzette, he thought as the rising sun suffused a warm, misty glow throughout the entire shrine. The very thought of her waiting, hoping, yearning for him caressed him like a fresh spring breeze. His heartbeats quickened as he turned to leave the shrine after bidding it a fond adieu. Gratitude knew no bounds in his heart. He would not forget Madeline, he knew. Stevie would remind him. And by reminding him, he would remember her smile, which was also the smile of the Madonna.

Literature is my Utopia. Here I am not disfranchised. No barrier of the senses shuts me out from the sweet, gracious discourse of my book-friends. They talk to me without embarrassment or awkwardness.

HELEN KELLER, *The Story of My Life*

## *Stones of Dejection*

VIRGINIA L. NOULIN, '61

Grey stones, defiant of the tread of Time,  
Enthroned for miles along the ebbing foam,  
Wind-chastened ramparts ancient as the hills  
Whose spires ascend o'er Northern Barbary  
That lies beyond . . .

O granite Citadel!  
Alas, that a duration long as yours  
Reaps not the harvest of a due requital;  
Bereft of cosmic wholeness, you will be  
Mere shattered fragments finally released  
From idle station on the forlorn shore . . .

A thousand or a million years henceforth—  
Where then the lonely couch of your repose?  
Shall it be still this galaxy of sand  
On whose pale face you lie, as nebulae?

Or will the subterranean tentacles  
In the devouring spirit of the sea,  
Awake, arise from black and lurid depths  
To lash the higher spheres of watery main  
In ferocious vengeance on a cringing land?

A sudden, fiery devastating Death  
Razed down the stones of ancient Nineveh;  
But yours shall be complete Oblivion—  
Barred from all chronicles of mortal man.

## Spring Fever

ROBERT F. PANARA, '45

Come, my lady love and queen,  
While the sky is soft and blue  
And the blossoming pink and green ,  
Hide the once-bare boughs from view!

Though this sign says: *Tread With Care*,  
Lady, won't you take the cue?  
We've so little time to spare  
And springtime comes so seldom, too.

Look at robin strut about!  
He has every right and reason—  
Ere the early buds were out  
He was herald of the season.

In his wake there flew the rest:  
Jaunty jay and merry marten;  
And the three have come to nest  
In this public flower garden!

O, in questing for the hand  
Of my lady love and queen,  
Would that big Cop understand  
If I trespassed on the green?

And those graybeards over there,  
Sucking on their orange peels—  
Would they pop their eyes and stare  
If I up and kicked my heels?

Lilacs just within my reach,  
Garlands of the pearly pear,  
And the laurel of the peach—  
Rivals for my lady's hair!

Blossoms in the cherry tree,  
Roses climbing up and down,  
Violets rushing out to be  
Favors for my lady's gown!

Listen to the robin's tweet,  
Guessing at my inmost sighs:  
"Dare you walk on tiptoe feet  
And take your lady by surprise?"

Colors swirling everywhere,  
Rhythms full of love and laughter,  
I will up and kiss her there—  
And risk the comments that comes after!

## *An Ode on the Coming of Spring*

DONALD PETERSON, M.S., '53

Spring has come . . .  
So poets have exclaimed through all the years.  
All the signs of spring have blossomed,  
And my fears  
                    have also blossomed  
Into reality . . .  
                    . . . I hab a code.

## **We: The Young**

DONALD PETERSON, M.S., '53

"Your old men shall dream dreams,  
Your young men shall see visions."

*Old Testament, Joel, II, 28.*

Dream ye old men,  
Dream of the things you have done;  
Dream of the happy times you have had.  
Is it more pleasant to dream of the heartbreaks?  
—then dream of those.  
Coax your memory if you must,  
But dream, for dreams are all you have.

We do not dream.  
We are the young, and the young have visions.  
We have visions of great things in store for us.

You had visions once, perhaps—  
But our visions are different.  
We shall do greater things.  
Ye old men—we thank you—  
—for leaving so much undone.  
Ye may die before our great deeds come to pass,  
But our seed shall see and hear  
—and shall honor us.

We do not dream,  
We have visions . . .  
Great ones!

Now we must go . . .  
... into the world  
To learn of life.