

### Ebb Tide

*From the gutter, a light was dying.*

It was wet. It was hard. And somewhere in the dark void around him a harsh white light glared. Then he remembered,—the squeaking door—the three worn steps—the knocked over ash can. In his dying brain her words: "Gee, honey, I love you. I'm nuts about you".

And then Max's gruff, impatient voice had said: "Put your money here, bud. Pay as you go". The record player grinding out a pagan, rendition of The Basin Street Blues—a clarinet wailing. Noise, raucous laughter, and that song—'down where the white and black folk meet—'.

"Have another drink, brother, pay as you go". Then that knife had flashed like fire. And at some time she had said "Yes, kiss me again, honey, and drink up".

—heaven on earth, they call it Basin Street.

Shimmering, reeling wetness pain and light. He saw her leaning in the doorway. A cigarette in her crimson lips, with long hair falling to her shoulders in confusion. Her blouse was slightly torn. A cat was on the ash can — there was an empty tomato can he had not seen before. He was hot, but the cement was cold and there was a warm slime that covered his shirt. Light's gone again. No air—why couldn't he move? But neither could he hear. He tried to think and then remembered the argument.

"You drunken bum, give her to me or I'll—"

"Honey, don't let him take me away."

"Put your money down here, bud."

What was that noise? A siren? So hard, so wet. He saw Max in his white apron. He tried to speak and could not. The girl in the doorway was talking with silent lips. Suddenly her voice broke in on his defective hearing.

"Max, we gotta get him outa here."

"Yeh. God, what a sight! Get that knife outa him. He'll be dead in a minute with a throat like that."

Dead? Panic and then rapidly rationalized disbelief.

"Max. See if he's got any money."

"He's loaded. Wonder what makes a nice guy like that want to come to a place like this?"

"So young too—", the girls voice again. "Gee, he was a sweet kid", she added stooping to undo his watch.

Then the awful silence closed in again. But the light was still there and the cat watched the looting with wistful eyes. From the old phonograph inside the blues still wailed their melancholy strain.

He saw his home: spacious lawns,

green trees. He remembered his mother, the Sunday-afternoon drives, his first girl and the day he wore his first long pants. His father's smiling face came to him, saying some proud word he could not hear. Then he was with Jeannie — dancing — it was a prom and flowers were in her hair. Boyhood again — and then the parties at college — and then this party. Where were the boys? Where was the laughter and excitement now?

He looked up, and suddenly there were strange faces around him. Max and the girl mingled with the crowd. Their lips moved in silence. How stupid they look, he thought. The world of sound shattered the silence again. The voiceless lips made terrifying sense.

"What happened?", asked the man with the cigar.

"Been a killing", the man next him replied.

"Is he dead?"

"He will be."

A photographer knelt beside him. There was blinding flash. "Hey, boss. What a sheet! Guy with his throat cut down by the tanks. And guess who he is—".

Panic now, and silence. He can't move—he tries to speak. A great tide of fatigue, of weakness, swarms over him. The cat is still there — the empty tomato can — the wet, hard pavement. In his reeling brain: Jeannie, where are you? I want to go home. I'm hurt, but I want to go home. Why won't you take me home? Forgive me.

His eyes plead to the crowd, but to them they are vacant and sightless. His lips are parted. The wine of life makes its silent escape.

"Gee, honey I love you. I'm nuts about you". He can't breathe. The staring faces blur. The light is far away now.

He recalls a poem. "Oh, Christ, come down and help me, reach Thy hand . . . (Jeannie, I'm hurt. Take me home.) . . . for I am drowning in a stormier sea, than Simon in Thy Lake of Gallilee."

Silence. A vacuum. He feels strangely warm. Darkness and total relaxation sweeps across his still form.

"Here's the cops", the man with the cigar said.

"What's the dif?" asked another. "He's dead."

As the crowd melted, Max cracked a joke and there was harsh laughter. The girl took his arm and they walked off up the street. The pavement was empty now. And it had started to rain, a dismal, steady dirzzle. The light still shone, on the loneliness of the city street. Only the song of the rain, like an aimless hymn for the dead.

Silently the cat with the wistful eyes left its perch and disappeared into the night.

### Evasion

IN mists of memory a mother walked.

Should you return to stroll the garden path

And casually bend to pick a weed that wraps

Its lethal arms around some tender flower

Which slumbers soft, within its twilight bower—

Now as then the ivy on the tree

Outside your window, moves upon the breeze.

The house of quiet now has empty doors,

Your form no longer stands there, as before

It used to stand. Your book still lies

Upon the table open, where I try to hide my tears, for your book marks reads

Ironically in script of gold this lead:

"Here's where I fell asleep".

Oh, yes, return. But she cannot", they said

And yet your son still knows That you must not be dead.

### C.U.P. Conference—

(Continued from page two)

She wasn't bad looking either.

Afterwards we attended a dance at a local Armoury given especially for the CUP. The dance was very nice and Jean Vincent of U. of O. deserves credit for his fine work in getting dates for all the delegates.

We had a long bull session when we got home that morning. We were unable to wake Phillips, the delegate from Sir George Williams, but we did not have trouble getting half the other delegates for a long session about the days' activities.

The conference wound-up the next morning when a meeting chose the McGill Daily as the CUP executive for the coming year and left Queens and Varsity to decide where the conference would be held next year.

I boarded a train to Montreal early that afternoon. I did not see much of Ottawa but I did meet the college editors from St. F. X. to U.B.C. and as the train left the 14th. CUP conference I realized that it was an experience every editor should have and that although the organization of the conference was important, perhaps the bull sessions would be of greater influence on our future actions.

A. H.

### Universities of Canada—

atomic science, and Boards of governors enjoy that, although with little idea of what it can possibly mean. But the main purpose of a University is to train youthful minds, not to advance discovery about the A-bomb or the H-bomb, and the difficulties put in the way of those instructors who would continue faithfully this essential work have become in recent years not slighter but graver.

## The Optimist

I rushed inside and sat right down  
And filled my pen with ink,  
I mopped my brow and glanced about  
And tried in vain to think.  
I read the paper through again  
To see just what I knew,  
But all the questions that were asked  
Were things I couldn't do.

I shuffled in my straight-backed chair  
I loosened up my tie,  
Invigilators and my profs  
Were there with watchful eye.  
I wrote my name upon the page  
Oh would I could do more,  
The fools-cap looked so awfully thick  
And both my eyes were sore.  
And sitting there across the way  
Was one of my old pals,  
Who used to go on dates with me  
And take out all the gals.  
I squirmed to see him writing so  
Two books of his were done  
How could he ever go so fast  
Ere I had scarce begun?

I counted faces that I knew  
Old friends with me at Joe's,  
They didn't seem at all afraid  
And so my story goes.  
And there was Bill who lived with me  
He added to my gloom,  
I never saw him through the year  
Or in the common room!

And there's the girl went out with me  
The one with all the looks,  
But unlike me she's blessed with an  
Affinity for books.  
I'd linger at her door at night  
Her studies couldn't wait,  
She told me she had work to do  
And it was getting late.

And there's that girl from Shirreff Hall  
The studious little wench,  
Refused a date with me last week  
To study up her French.  
And there my answers, short and sweet,  
And none to share my doom,  
While scratching pens re-echoed back  
And forth across the room.

Oh knowledge do not leave me now  
In this my hour of need,  
If I am going to get a pass  
I'll have to write with speed.  
Then someone cried "Your time is up"  
I woke and with a start  
I passed my meagre paper in  
Both weak and sick at heart.

Oh gentle Prof, or learned Prof  
Tis time you did relent,  
I might discourse with you at length  
Upon the hours I spent  
On this your subject, and I was  
Attentive in your class,  
So all I ask of you is that  
You spare me just a pass.

J. L. B.

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