

## Rain

Rain . . .  
 Bathing the weary, hate spattered earth with shining petals of quicksilver;  
 Rain . . .  
 Tearing away the earth's coat of bitterness and greed;  
 Rain . . .  
 Making a clear mirror of the inky streets,  
 A mirror whose semblance shows only the red and green of the street-lamp  
 And not the ugly steel box from which it shines;  
 A mirror in whose light is seen  
 Not the homely frame of a bulldog,  
 But rather his warm, sparkling eyes—  
 Eyes radiating friendship and love.  
 Rain . . .  
 Wanting to keep the mirror clear and always there,  
 Hoping that some day man might look in  
 And see there—  
 Not the color or shape of his brother,  
 But to see instead  
 The light shining from within.  
 Rain . . .  
 Hoping to cleanse the earth  
 Of itself  
 Some day.

N.G.

## Rejected

by Lee MacNeil

It was after twelve on the station clock when I dropped off the steps of the train that night. Its roar drummed in my ears as it gathered speed in the dark.

The news vendor was on duty in front of his stand outside the entrance. An oil lamp lit up the pulp magazines that hung in triangular fashion across the top of his shed. As soon as he saw me he gathered up the midnight edition and held it toward me. This had been his custom for the last five years.

I was ashamed of the way my hands shook while his were so steady. I took the paper, and shoved my hands deep in my pockets so the shaking wouldn't show. Fool! I had nothing to fear. There was no law against shaking hands.

I saw Regan the cop standing outside my rooming house, but he couldn't be waiting for me. They couldn't find out so quickly. I mumbled something to him and hurried up the stairs, snatching at a letter in the mail box as I went past. I had trouble with my key. It rattled in the door.

I crossed the room and in the reflection of the red neons outside I opened the letter. I knew what it said almost before it was open. So they wanted a story eh? Well they were due to get my best effort in years.

I pulled the typewriter over to the window and I began to punch out my master-piece in that red gloom.

\* \* \* \*

It took them a full year to get around to me. There were two of them. They didn't even flash a badge. They brought the paper clippings with them but I knew those by heart now. After I had glanced through they asked me if I knew him.

I knew him all right. We had worked together. I had a girl and a brain wave. He took both of them but I didn't tell them all that because he had been killed.

I hated him and I was very glad that he was dead but I didn't mention that either.

They weren't very interested in me or my opinions but one of them had liking for crime stories. I showed them my efforts. Carbons of those approved, stacks of others not. They didn't balance. Neither did my budget. They smiled at that and settled down to browse through them.

I laughed inwardly because the story they were looking for wasn't in either stack. I had not received an answer from the publisher yet. I really hoped that he had lost the thing. They asked if they could take some home and I was only too obliging to them.

They called again the following week. I had only to look in their eyes to see that this was not a social

call. They had my story with them. It was placed in front of me and before I could gather my wits they started hammering questions at me.

I told them I had written the story years ago. I said I often brought familiar surroundings and people into my stories. I hadn't seen him for six years.

Why a green walled living room? It was yellow two years ago, they said. Why wall-to-wall carpets? It had been a hall runner then. Red silk bathrobe. Could he afford one in those years?

I explained wearily that it was just coincidence that the story went that way. I wasn't there, a friend of mine had seen me inside the theatre. Perhaps the druggist made a mistake in the prescription he used constantly.

They nodded and told me that the papers hadn't even known about the altered prescription. They said they were going to place me under arrest. Only his wife and doctor knew about the medicine and his wife had been away for half a year.

My story confided that I had waited for five years to commit the perfect crime. My story told them that on the day I sought relief for my sore back he had phoned the doctor and even set the plot for me as I sat in that man's office.

I swore that it was one of those strange coincidences that happen to most anyone. I was sure that—

They handed me a copy of the prescription that had been for me to cure my back. That prescription had killed. They motioned for me to gather up some clothes.

We stumbled down those narrow stairs together. They were afraid that I would break away but I didn't have the nerve. As I passed the mail box I saw a letter addressed to me. I nearly dropped it as they hurried me on.

I opened the letter hesitatingly in their car. There wasn't a cheque. The white paper showed in the same red glare that pervaded the street that night.

"Dear Mr. Warren:

We're sorry in taking so long in replying about your manuscript. It showed great possibilities at first, but the actual murder and the aftermath seemed rather hazy.

We are sorry to say that your story seemed too implausible. It couldn't possibly have happened."

\* \* \* \*

We reached the station. We went through the same hammer and tongs routine that had taken place in the room. They handed me a typewriter and paper and told me to sit down.

I re-read the letter.

I smiled.

And signed my name to my last murder mystery.

### For Graduation

Most families like to mark graduation with a gift, a keepsake.

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### LOST

A Navy Burberry was lost on Munroe Day in the Dal Gym. The owner's name is stenciled inside. If found, please contact O'Brien at the Dal Gym.

### CONTEST

All entries for the Gazette Short Story Contest may be submitted at the Gazette office before March 22. The contest closes at noon, Mar. 22.

## STATE EXPRESS

for a smooth  
 smoke...



Before the Lecture



During the Game

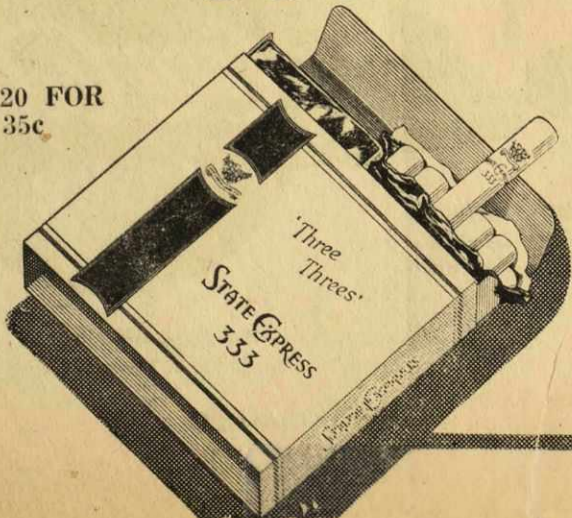


After "Goodnight"

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 Fri. and Sat.  
 "FIGHTING FATHER DUNNE"  
 "THUNDERHAFF"

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