

# LEAS LIT

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## **IF LEAR LIVED HERE**

### TODAY'S MENU

A couple who lived at the Leas  
Confessed to a certain unease,  
They'd ordered fresh fruit  
And lobster en crouete  
But were served macaroni and cheese.

### THE SPECIALIST

A much-admired man at the Leas  
Excelled in arts Japanese  
He bought a tatami  
Where he made origami  
And rolled sushi for all of the teas.

### THE LAST TANGO

Another old man at the Leas  
Took his girlfriend, Mary Louise,  
To Spain and to France  
Where they learned how to dance  
And ruined all four of their knees.

### ARBOR DAY

A lady who moved to the Leas  
Was allergic to all of the trees.  
“You must chop them all down  
Or I’ll have to leave town,”  
She sobbed, as she started to sneeze.

### BON VOYAGE

There once was a man at the Leas  
Who objected to paying the fees.  
Asked why he demurred  
He said he preferred  
A luxury cruise to Belize.

### AND FINALLY

A cat owner here at the Leas  
So loved her pet Siamese  
She learned to speak Thai  
So the cat would reply  
But? – YOU FINISH IT —!

*Joan McKeon*

## GRANDMOTHERS

**M**ine were important in my life. One of them, Meda, Mother's mother, frail and troubled and brave, survivor of three marriages and mother of an alcoholic son, lived with us most of the time. The other, Ruby, was a widow for sixty years. She lived sedately in a big, dark house where no one ever spilled anything, or lost anything or raised her voice. That house seemed to wait there for our visits that happened when it was too hot at home or when I needed to be tended while my parents made an occasional job hunting trek.

My mother shaped my attitude to these women. She presented Meda to me as Nanny; enormously selfless and loving, and Ruby, her mother-in-law as Grandma, solemn and remote. Neither picture was exactly accurate: both were overdrawn. Under their poses, the defenses that they had developed to cope with widowhood, they had more in common than I could have imagined as a child. I am intrigued by that now I am the same age as they were in my early recollections.

I have memories of watching my grandmothers dress for the day. Meda lounged in her robe, doing word puzzles in the daily paper, drinking coffee, and sponge bathing at length behind the opened bathroom door. Dried, wrapped in a loose kimono, out in the room that she shared with my sister, she patted herself all over with a swansdown puff that she kept in a round, flowered box. Drifts of scented white powder fell across the dressing table and lay on the carpet around her feet. She

put on haphazard layers of threadbare underclothes. She drew bracelets onto her fragile wrists where a tinge of blue showed beneath the smooth skin and flared rouge onto the upswept bones of her pale cheeks. She rolled stockings around ribbon garters above her knees, stepped into shoes with heels so high that they forced her insteps into the arching curves that caught all eyes and led them upward to her stunning legs. She knew they were lovely. She told me that when she was a girl and legs were hidden under long, flounced skirts, she had always made a business of stepping down from sleighs and streetcars by lifting her dress and flaunting a flash of ankle. Now, in the wartime forties, skirts were short and she wore sheer, lacy hose and, sitting, crossed her legs at the knee and swung her foot.

Lost in dreams of femininity, I lay across the end of her bed waiting for the moment when, dressed, perfumed, made-up, smiling into the mirror, she would throw back her shoulders and, bright-eyed and sparkling, she would glide out into the day.

When I visited Ruby, my father's mother, the morning routine began early. I slept with her in her spacious room where wooden shutters were folded across the windows while she dressed. I would prop myself up on the special pillows that she used. They were filled with pine needles that smelled of the woods and felt sharp beneath my head. I watched while she used an ivory brush to smooth the dark hair that hung to her hips. She knotted it on her neck and secured it with long metal pins. Facing the closet, and using complicated strings and straps, she fastened herself into a one-piece corset



that covered her from armpit to thigh. On top of that, she wore step-in drawers, a camisole and a slip. Her dresses were dark, navy or black or gray. The only pattern was polka dots. Their neck openings ended in a vee where she put a gold pin, a circle or a bar. As she left the room in her lace-up Oxfords or, on Sundays, her mid-heel court shoes, she seemed as tall and upright as a tree. I can remember lying there, watching her, and wondering if she might have Native American blood. Her features were strong and straight. Her hair stayed black as long as she lived, ninety-five years, and, unpinned, hung full and heavy down her back.

When I watched Meda, I saw a woman like the one I wanted to be, warm and pretty and soft. Frail as she was, and vulnerable, she stood alone in my mind's eye, taking on the world. Ruby belonged to a background, the tall, Gothic house behind its ornate, forbidding fence, the long, shaded lawn that ran back to the stables and the alley and, beyond that, the railroad, where I was not allowed to play. She fit into substantial surroundings where she seemed to be well in control.

If I could have viewed her alone, I would have seen a magnificent woman with talent, intelligence, strength and humor that showed in her face. But I seldom thought of her without her setting, or without contrasting her to my beloved image of Meda, and in the contest for the fascination of a romantic little girl, Ruby was bound to lose. Meda cuddled me, sprayed cologne in a fine mist onto the back of my neck, took my side and sang me to sleep. Ruby expected more of me. She paid me the compliment of treating me like a friend.

The only photograph of those women together was taken at my wedding. They would have been seventy-five or so. Meda is dressed in a stylish outfit with a tilted picture hat and lacy gloves. Ruby, stately in a pastel gown, smiles brilliantly at the camera, but not until I cover Meda's image with my hand do I realize how lovely Ruby looks.

*Marcy Webster*



## CHOOSING COLORS

There was an avalanche of red. Then yellow erupted.

Blue made a sudden gesture and was gone.

A splash of green then appeared briefly.

I wanted red back!

I tried but red would not return.

Finally pink was there but did not stay.

A feral gray approached but then withdrew.

Magenta and mauve and puce spun into a pinwheel

and disappeared .

I was impressed but I still wanted red.

Then white tried to intrude but I said, “No.”

(White is not a color, is it?)

*William B. Pickering*

## TAUTIRA

**H**ere, in the shelter of the Outrigger Canoe Club on Waikiki Beach in Honolulu, Hawaii, I feel privileged to share this solemn sanctuary as a professional guest. I am a member of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, one who lost his sloop, with its single mast, off Tautira, Tahiti, three weeks ago. I have time now to reflect on my voyage and prepare my report for the Bishop Museum. I will see Mei Li again.

Mei Li? Mei Li, winsome, diminutive, a research assistant of the Museum Archives, whom I virtually haunted with so many questions while preparing for my Polynesian navigation adventure. Our academic friendship warmed to deeper shared interests as we explored out of the way places on Oahu and spoke in her native tongue. The morning I got underway from the Ala Wai marina, she was there, alone, a maile lei in her hand, a momentary lingering kiss, and a whisper of aloha, through tears, for me. How I have missed her!

Looking out on Waikiki, I can see the world is alive. Beach boys with outriggers scudding the surf, exhilarating bikini-clads with rides; guests of the Royal Hawaiian lazing about getting suntans; honeymooners, making memories; and the flashy thong and speedo groups, there to be enraptured or there to be captured; and in the background, the soothing wash of the surf and the silhouette of Diamond Head. The world is alive, indeed, but three weeks ago on Tautira, there were beach boys, too, but not wearing floral leis or enchanting tourists.

Thinking back, it is easy to remember. I was studying an old chart I had of Tautira; ancient and used on many all-weather cruises, its critical details were jaundiced virtually to obscurity. Word in the Sailing Directions warned of dangerous reefs surrounding the island and cautioned against irresolute venture. Breaks in the encircling ring of smoking surf marked shallows where possible entry might be tried. After two weeks at sea, all I was looking for was a sheltering lagoon where I could drop the hook and lay to for the night.

It was in that moment that my boat suddenly shuddered and lunged violently to starboard. The stern was lifted by a ponderous wave, which sent us surfboarding towards reefs that girded a beach. I groped for the wheel to retain a heading, but in that instant there was incredibly abrupt, explosive disintegration topside, and I was vaguely conscious of struggling for a foothold on the bottom of near deeps of turbulent surf. My mind was blitzing me with “what the hell happened?” and I was then somehow here on a beach, washed ashore by a thundering seaway that was savagely littering the shore with debris that a few moments ago was my boat.

What the hell happened, indeed! As a shellback\* from navy service, I felt I had developed an extrasensory familiarity with attitudes of the sea to the extent that I

---

\*Shellback is what you become if you're in the Navy and you cross the equator for the first time. The event ritual involves a special initiation into the Royal Court of Neptunus Rex, ruler of the deep. Before your initiation you're merely a “polywog.” After your induction into the realm of Neptunus Rex, you become a “shellback.”

considered myself a precise navigator. I had read the Sailing Directions and committed virtually all of the island charts to memory. I knew there were reefs, where the reefs were, and which ones fringed which beaches. Cataclysmic as it was, though, my sloop went down like a rock; and boats built in Muscongus, Maine, heavily-wooded for blue sea venturing, do not broach, swamp or go down without a demonstrably vigorous determination to survive; and my adventurous, voyaging sloop had held up to her heritage until now.

From the asylum of this devastation a feeling of abject desolation seemed to come over me. I was abruptly alone. Stark alone, virtually hypnotically transfixed by the visualization of the bleak derelict world scattered before me. Yet, sounds of excited voices along the shore disclosed several natives looking over the debris strewn about, pointing at objects and shouting back and forth over their finds.

Aware I was watching them, they turned to me with hands extended to me in a gesture for approval to scavenge the beach. I nodded and shrugged my shoulders, which they interpreted immediately; then I wandered down to assess their activity as they picked their way through the wreckage. There was just too much to consider. For the scavengers, they knew the sea conditions, the depths of the reefs, what likely would be found, where and in what condition, all part of their lives. For me, it was a tragic loss, which I would detail in my Bishop Museum report.

To the West, an essence of late afternoon gentleness was deepening shadows in the valleys of the Tiarapa

ranges, and the mountains around them all seem hushed by a quieting of the restless surf giving way to the night. Time, now, is my leisure. The vast panorama of this remote world, replete with an inherent beckoning to silent primitive valleys of waterfalls, rainbows and fleeting perfumed mists that luminesce in the sun, seemed to have a mellowing effect over me.

In a short while, the first of the navigation stars would be coming out and the expanse of the heavens above me, in its macrocosmic majesty, would evoke a chilling awareness that I would be seeing the same stars the old priests and Polynesian navigators had seen. Night after night, they studied to impress in their memory “na alanui o no hoku hookele,” the highways of the navigation stars.

There, would be Ana-mua, Mataril, Anaroto and Pirea-tea. Over the northern horizon, Anania and Mere; actually too many names to recall from my studies of Polynesian navigation at the Museum.

Now near sleep, I sensed figures wandering the beach site, scavengers looking over the debris still washing in. To Papeete tomorrow, and then the flight home. HmMMM!

I awoke sometime in the morning rested, having slept on the warm sand under a tapa cloth someone covered me with in the night. Curious people, this family of Tahitians surrounding me, querying me by gestures of their concern; was I all right, was there anything I wanted or needed? Conversation was limited since I didn't speak Tahitian or French. Their Tahitian, my answering shoulder shrugs, and the boisterous laughter between us

did make me understand they would get me food, and someone would take me back to Papeete. These were a gentle and caring people, indeed. How did Bligh and the Bounty people have so much trouble?

I wandered reluctantly down to the littered beach. This was the last time, the last fleeting moment to grieve my sloop, staunch friend who for weeks put up with my moods, demands, frustrations and trials and errors, and who succumbed due to my misjudgment. The eternal sounds of the sonorous seaway will commemorate her grave forever, and echo forever in my memory.

As Mei Li said to me that day I left Honolulu on this venture, so I hear myself whispering this moment, “Tofa lau pele moni,” Goodbye, My True Love.

*Gene Raup*



## LET'S CHAT

The bell clanged and Julie Matthews stood aside as her creative writing class rushed for the door. Gathering up her papers, she headed for the teachers' lounge. Pouring herself a cup of coffee, she settled in a corner and began to read her students' essays. She smiled as she reviewed the papers. A wave of satisfaction swept over her as she corrected an error in spelling the computer didn't catch.

"May I join you?" A deep voice interrupted her concentration.

Julie turned, her senses suddenly alert. "Sure, why not." She removed her reading glasses and tucked a wisp of blonde hair behind her ear.

Michael Wilson, Computer Science, eased into the chair opposite. "Still challenging the realm of electronics, Julie?"

Unsettled by his grey/green eyes, she scratched away at her papers. "I keep trying. I intend to turn out capable writers before the year is up. Writers who can do more than scribble messages on Facebook, dispatch email or tweet their friends on Twitter!"

"Oh, come on, Julie, the internet is changing the face of everything from the way we communicate with each other, to the world of business. Book publishing is in a state of flux. Books are now instantly available, sold on demand. Surf the net some time. You'll find a treasure trove of books and information."

Throwing down her pencil, she faced him, eyes flashing. “I’ll be damned if I’ll give up going to the corner bookstore to buy books. Who wants to curl up in bed with a Kindle or iPad anyway? How can surfing the net ever match the emotional experience of savoring a good book? I’ll continue to use my car radio for weather reports, the local newspaper for news and my telephone for chats and if I need reference materials, there’s always the school library, thank you very much! Go play with your whiz kids.” She got up, stuffed her papers in her brief case and marched out.

Michael watched her leave, frowned, then went to his computer science class.

That evening, Julie finished her paper work, took a shower and pulled on a comfortable robe. She went to her desk and switched on her Macintosh computer.

She logged onto the internet. She got the local weather update and checked the current news. Feeling like a traitor, she pulled out some obscure reference material she needed for class tomorrow. This was her deep, dark secret. She found she loved this complicated piece of electronic equipment, and was good at it! Now and then she ran into a problem, but hell would have to freeze over before she asked Michael Wilson for help! She had found the help she needed right here, anyway. Logging into a computer chat room, with the user name of Mac, she had discovered the Snafu Guru who knew this electronic stuff backwards and forwards. Whenever she had a problem, she visited that clandestine Chat Room.

Tonight, feeling lonely and a little depressed thinking about the demise of all those bookstores, she pulled up the chat room. The Guru was there.

She typed, “Hi, it’s Mac.”

“What’s up?” flashed on the screen.

“Feeling a little out of sorts. Guess I got too much sun today.”

“Have you had a Caribbean cruise lately, or do you live in the Sunshine State?”

“As a matter of fact, I do. The West Coast of Florida.”

“No kidding! Wouldn’t by any chance be near Sarasota?”

She realized then what she had done. “I’ve got to go,” and she beat a hasty retreat.

The next day in the teachers’ lounge, she again tackled her students’ writing assignments. Michael came in. She tensed and her sunburn itched. Gosh, he smelled good.

“Got a question for you, Ms. Matthews, about the use of the active or passive voice in writing. Can you explain it to me in plain English?”

Puzzled, Julie said, “Well the passive voice is less direct and not quite as concise. The active voice is bold and makes for forcible writing. Here’s an example of passive: ‘In the distance, the shouts of students could be heard.’ Now active: ‘In the distance, students shouted!’ Here, take this little book, Strunk’s *The Elements of Style*.

Everything you need to know about writing is right here.”

“Gee, thanks, Julie. Appreciate this.”

“Are you writing the great American novel or something?” she teased.

“Oh, just fooling around with a science fiction thing,” and he tugged at his ear and gave her a sheepish grin.

The next time Julie logged into the computer chat room, the Guru was waiting for her.

“Hi, Mac! How’s the sunburn? Where do you go to catch a few rays?”

Throwing caution to the wind she replied, “I head for the fine white sand of Siesta Key every chance I get.”

“I guessed as much. We’re neighbors, you know. Don’t you think it’s time we met?”

She gasped and a feeling of panic swept over her as she computed that information. “Umm, I don’t think so. Let’s just keep it as it is.”

“Afraid to meet the Guru? Aren’t you just a little bit curious?”

“Well sure, but...”

“No strings attached. We’ll just meet, have coffee, and walk away.”

“Well...”

“How about meeting at the Main Book Shop in downtown Sarasota?”

“Oh,” she sighed, “I love that cluttered old bookstore with its resident cat.”

“Look for me Saturday morning, browsing through the computer section. Be there!”

She was late. Curiosity finally won out and then she spent too much time figuring out what to wear. As she rounded the stacks of books, new books, and out of print books, she saw a familiar figure and stopped dead. It was Michael Wilson! Her heart skittered about and she tripped over the cat.

Michael turned, startled to see her, then a slow grin spread across his face. “Mac, Miss Matthews? This is great!”

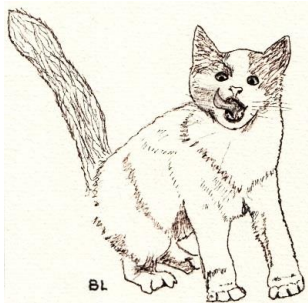
“No! This is crazy!” Mortified and embarrassed, she turned to escape.

Michael grabbed her hand and pulled her toward the coffee shop. “Come on, Julie, let’s chat!”

*Edith Pray*

## CATACOMBS

Pumpkin is a cat with a fantastic passion  
For additions not part of her daily ration.  
These are the things that are bound to please,  
The tip of a hot dog, a nice piece of cheese.  
So is the mouse in the little blue blouse.  
Or that other mouse that has the run of the house.  
Perhaps a leaping, chirping, challenging cricket,  
Any of the above would be just the ticket.



With a twitch of her tail, Pumpkin plans her attack.  
She'll soon have that cricket flat on its back.  
Like a speedy Philly Flyer pursuing the puck,  
Pumpkin dodges and weaves with the greatest of pluck!  
She'll whack her treasured morsel. She'll fling it in the air.  
When it finally lands, we know not where.  
Perhaps in a hidey-hole under my bed,  
A good spot for a cricket that is clearly quite dead.

When Betty Jo cleans, she'll soon discover  
A few hidden treasures undercover –  
A wretched cricket, a tired old mouse.  
There's more than one catacomb to be found in my house.

*Sarah Klos*

## A CABIN IN THE PINES

When my sister came home to live  
(Or to die, one's point of view being a consideration),  
She had smoked at least seven thousand  
Cigars in her lifetime.  
She let nothing stand in her way of dying,  
Except the love for her three children.

She came home to the state of her birth,  
The place she loved but could not find.  
She brought with her a few clothes  
And hard life memories,  
Packed in a yard sale suitcase, secured with a belt.  
The same belt would later secure her jeans.  
Her flannel shirts were colorful  
As if from the Isle of Lesbos.  
Her one wish was to live in a cabin in the Pines,  
Her one wish.



Her life stubbornness left her cold  
To physicians' warnings,  
An infidelity to insulin care.  
I was angry with her. But not for long.  
I paid for her cigars.

As she went from a pauper motel room to a way home,  
To a bed in hospital (many surgeries,  
Each hospital discharge meant a foot, a leg missing),  
And finally, to a nursing home,  
She carried her precious material goods  
In a cardboard carton and a plastic trash bag.

When we, her friends and family,  
Brought her good times,  
And sometimes portable parties,  
She always gave us smiles and much laughter.  
And there were surprise events of her own making.  
Amidst the laughter, the tears,  
Death, the devourer of all our fears,  
Came for her quickly.

On a summer's day, a few friends and family gathered  
On Quaker Bridge in the Pines.  
With our words of affection and farewell  
We lifted handfuls of her ashes,  
Mingled with rose petals, onto the ever-moving stream.  
The red and pink petals lay soft and dreamy  
On the water's surface.  
They bejeweled the river's edges of broken twigs.  
And there, formed her wished-for cabin in the Pines.

*Chris Darlington*



## A PILGRIMAGE

It was Lisa's idea to visit the places of my childhood with me. Historians love site visits, and I, knowing that she's intrigued by her international ancestry, jumped at her invitation. Her parents had met by chance continents away from either one's birthplace, and their marriage blended different ethnic, social, and religious legacies. Lisa was born to diversity, first offspring of that "mismatch." There's plenty on both sides to occupy her, and in due course she'll write a book. It's a lucky parent indeed who can look forward to such a gift!

She's already been to my birthplace in Germany. Sometime we'll go back there together. But that's for another day. Here we revisit my English Period.

To help with her 8-month-old baby, she recruited her 15-year-old niece. The four of us set out separately on June 24, 2011: Lisa and Julian from Cedar Rapids, IA; Rachel from New York City; and I from Newark. Aided by Lady Luck (and some planning), our three planes arrived in Manchester within two hours of each other. Here our ten-day pilgrimage began and ended.

Seventy-two years earlier I was an eight-year-old *Kind* enrolled in a *Kindertransport*, one of 10,000 children to whom Great Britain opened its doors after *Kristallnacht*, November 9, 1938. World War II would begin less than three months after my escape from Germany. My closest friends' parents did not have the foresight or courage that mine did to send their children into the unknown. I never saw those friends or their parents again.

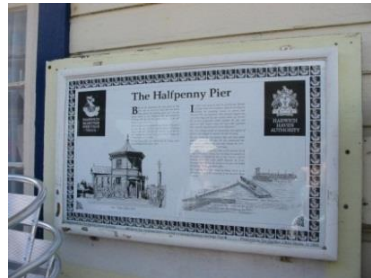
My war years began in Kent and ended, nine relocations later, in Manchester. In 2011 we followed a similar path. A two-day drive brought us to Cliftonville, near Margate. On a clear day you can see the French coast from there, and I remember early in 1940 watching a ship, probably having struck a mine, sink in the English Channel. My first home (not counting quarantine when scarlet fever was discovered), until our evacuation to the Midlands after Dunkirk, was Rowden Hall School, in the former summer residence of the margarine magnate Jacob Van den Bergh. It stood then at 13, Third Avenue. Now even its location eluded us; the block was a monotony of flats. Nothing was left to anchor my memories of homesickness, a sadistic housemother, horrid margarine, lumpy porridge, an outbreak of mumps, soccer games, and my first days in an English school. So we walked down to the beach, where in the gathering darkness we stood at water's edge and dipped a finger (and Julian's foot) in the Channel. It wasn't what we'd come for, but it was something to remember Cliftonville by.

Shrugging off that inauspicious start, we set out for Harwich, Essex, now a busy cargo port but historically the entry point for thousands of refugee children, of whom my brother and I were two. On June 7, 1939, I reached Harwich by overnight ferry from Hoek van Holland; on June 29, 2011, via a 20-minute motorboat trip across the harbor from Felixstowe, Suffolk, where we stayed with English friends who have also visited us in Lumberton. Sadly, the vending machine on the Halfpenny Pier where I made my first purchase in England is gone. But then, the ha'penny that bought a small bar of chocolate in 1939 disappeared long ago together with all

the mind-boggling currency of that time – farthings, shillings, crowns, guineas, and more – replaced by today’s decimal system of pounds and pence. I recognized no landmarks besides the dock, but before our return to Felixstowe Lisa sniffed out the Harwich Society, whose shelves held records of the immigration. Archives had saved the day, as they would a week later in Manchester.



*White cliffs*



*Harwich's Halfpenny Pier*

More optimistic now, we drove on to the White House, once a girls’ hostel, in Great Chesterford, Essex. My trips there as a teenager (the first, in 1944, involving five different trains) are as much part of my history as any place I actually lived. Unlike Rowden Hall, this venerable structure has defied the centuries and still looks welcoming. What was once a girls’ hostel is now two private residences. I could not resist telling Liz Gamble, our hostess, about those visits – even the tender detail of carrying 13-year-old Irene up the staircase to the second-floor balcony. Enriched by the romantic history of her home, Liz walked us through the large garden in the back where sixty-six years earlier two teens had pledged everlasting love. (Postwar emigration modified that commitment to a more sustainable friendship.)



*Lisa (holding Julian), Rachel, and I  
White House garden, 2011*



*Irene age 13  
White House  
garden, 1944*



*Irene age 79  
Windermere,  
2011*

*An enduring friendship*

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*Left to right, brother Eric,  
cousin Gus, and "Herbi"  
White House garden, 1944  
Building is outside photographic field*



And so to Staffordshire, 1940-1944: four years, four homes, two schools. The house at 55, The Crescent, Boney Hay, looked just like it had. I stood and reflected in the living room where we'd once congregated nightly with our foster family, behind blackout curtains, during the air raids. I don't remember being afraid; we got used to the drone of the bombers and even fancied we could tell them from the British planes. But like lightning in the countless storms we've all experienced, the bombs all hit elsewhere; we heard the thunder, flinched, and waited. In the end, the entire Crescent was spared, including the Ring O'Bells pub on the corner, where we bought dog biscuits to chew on when cookies were unavailable.

And here, in Boney Hay, I found my sole living human link to those days, just a couple of blocks from where she was born. Iris, now in her 70s, was my foster sister, five years old when my brother and I moved in and began tormenting her. Iris remembered it all. But she also revealed that I used to walk her to school – a pitifully inadequate way to repay her parents’ kindness.

*Iris then (below, with her parents)  
and now (right, with her husband  
and me)*



(Midlands homeowners were urged to take in refugees in return for a small stipend. My brother and I had been evicted by our previous hosts for calling their boys pigs. We *really* owed the Turners more gratitude.)

George Turner was a coal miner, maven of an industry that once thrived in the Midlands. He biked to work five and a half days a week and spoke little.

We soon learned more about coal mining. Visible from our B&B in Brownhills stands a 40-foot stainless-steel figure. This impressive statue, titled “The Brownhills Miner” (2006), might as well serve as a memorial to the entire industry, brought to its knees by intractable labor strife. England now imports coal from Poland.

George Turner, dead of lung cancer, had been posthumously outsourced.



*The four pilgrims and the Brownhills Miner*

We continued to Walsall and Queen Mary’s Grammar School, which to this date I regard as the peak of my educational experience. Here the teachers wore robes, all students took Latin and French (Greek optional), and rugby was the sport. But it was too good to last. Another forced relocation cut short my stay after only two years. By then my home at 2, Walsall Wood Road, in the nearby village of Aldridge, had reached – if not passed – the limits of habitability. It’s gone now, but I immediately recognized the former pear orchard across the street. Most particularly the brick wall, which we used to climb to go “scrumping,” i.e. stealing, pears until we were chased off by the owner. Curious about its interim history, we followed a chain of directions leading us to a woman in her nineties known to her neighbors as Pixie,



*The scrumping wall (door always locked)*

an amazingly well-preserved descendant of our nemesis of yore. She spoke with us of the 1940s and her service in The Royal Navy, and showed us pictures of an Aldridge I never knew. The orchard, sadly, did not age as gracefully as Pixie. Houses have replaced part of it, and scrumping no longer pays. If only today's youthful denizens of Walsall Wood Road knew what they missed!



*Pixie then*



*Pixie now, with Lisa*

Mary Tudor founded the school that bears her name in 1554. When I first saw the buildings in 1942, I assumed they were original, and I pictured the Queen herself dedicating the school right there. In fact, they'd been rebuilt just 93 years before my arrival!



Those buildings once surrounded a large playground, scene of many a pick-up ball-game and many a pick-up fist-fight (never a weapon), and used only by the boys. Girls attended Queen Mary's *High School*, on the other side of a wall. In 1961 a brand new school was built a couple of miles away. Predictably, being new, it was for the boys.

*Rebuilt A.D. 1849* The girls inherited the old campus, and the playground, no longer needed for rough games or fighting, became a parking lot. Still, the students who took us around – seniors, exempt from the school uniform and allowed makeup – represented a proud group who equalled the boys on national exams.

If my long-treasured memory of QMGS was ill served by these changes – and it was – worse awaited me in Manchester. North Manchester High School for Boys lacked the stature of Queen Mary's, but it did have a small greenhouse. In this gathering place we socialized, generated nitrogen dioxide (a malodorous, toxic brown gas) for fun, and learned some botany. The assembly hall sported a plaque with my name as a university scholarship winner. But all that was before a hurricane named Progress leveled the school. Early in July 2011 a duo of amateur archaeologists recovered brick fragments from the weed-covered plot where it had stood. After that I had no enthusiasm for visiting the box-like new school building down the road.



Gone too were the four homes in which I'd lived in succession during those years. One had had no electric lights; we read by genuine gaslight – a lot of bother and no romance. Their disappearance was no surprise.

And just when it seemed that the past had vanished entirely, archives again came to the rescue. With characteristic resource, Lisa dug up records of me and kids I'd known, kept by the Manchester Jewish Refugees Committee. I expect she'll return to continue digging.

With that our pilgrimage was over. Next morning we left as we'd come, for three different destinations.

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As I traveled this road of rediscovery, a hint of nostalgia was never far behind. England holds a powerful attraction for me, which may seem remarkable given that it's where I, a vulnerable eight-year-old, experienced indefinite separation from my parents with no caring surrogates to take their place, homesickness, uprooting over and over, and wartime privation. Yet I still have a warm spot for the country and for the memories of those years. Maybe it's the power of that glorious first crush of youth; maybe it's Queen Mary's; or the Manchester City football team; or the school trip to the dark depths of a working coal mine; or my varied recreational life. Were I to chronicle that period, I would not bemoan the travails of a lonely refugee child; I would write about the joys of growing up as an English schoolboy.

*Herb Heineman*

*After surviving three years in the Terezin (Theresienstadt) concentration camp, my parents joined my brother and me in England in 1946.*

*Lisa is a professor of history at the University of Iowa.*

## Crystals Balance

If our senses are in tune with Mother Nature,  
Can we then see the battle with Her offspring  
When witnessing a struggle?  
Watching the quiet beauty of crystals  
Balancing layers of weight,  
On the leaf's stem prematurely.  
Enduring strength of a short-lived creation  
Just before the colorful thirst was deprived in  
Her autumn leaf.

Was this  
A test of endurance,

To Her trunk

To Her leaf

Or the observer?

EARL W SEELY  
autumn 2011



## PERFECTION

**E**arly on in life I was taught by my mother that there is nothing on this side of Heaven that is perfect.

Perhaps that is why I love baseball. It is a game that acknowledges, if not embraces, human frailty. It teaches us that it's OK to strike out because maybe on your next at bat you'll hit a home run. We see players who get paid to play do it all the time. And when we become old enough to appreciate and study the statistics of the game, we realize that nobody in the history of baseball has ever batted 1000 over a season or, for that matter, even .500. Ted Williams amazed the baseball world when he batted .406 in 1941. A player who is able to bat over .300 is considered to be a good hitter. But this still means that he will make an out on 7 out of his 10 trips to the plate. A player who can hit more than 30 home runs a year is called a "slugger." But when we break this down to the entire season all it means is that maybe we'll see him hit a homer once in every 5 games.

A pitcher with an ERA (earned run average) of less than 3 is considered to be an exceptional pitcher. Bob Gibson, generally acknowledged to be one of the greatest hurlers of the modern era, had a lifetime ERA of 2.91. But that still meant that the opposing team scored almost 3 runs a game.

And so it was with rapt attention that I watched a drama unfold on June 2, 2010, at Comerica Park in Detroit. ESPN saw possible history in the making and switched their telecasts to Detroit as Armando Galarraga, a young journeyman pitcher for Detroit, took the

mound in the ninth inning. For the first eight innings he had pitched a “perfect” game. In baseball parlance this means that no opposing player had reached first base, either by hit, walk, or error. If Galarraga could retire the next three batters he would have succeeded in doing something that only 20 pitchers in the history of professional baseball had ever accomplished.

As Galarraga took the mound in the 9<sup>th</sup>, he appeared to be in complete control, and quickly dispatched the first two batters. The final out was to be Jessie Donald, who grounded weakly toward first base. Miguel Cabrera, the Tiger, first baseman, fielded the ball cleanly and tossed it underhand to Galarraga who ran from the mound to cover first base. Everyone could see that the throw clearly beat Donald by a stride, and Galarraga smiled knowing what he had just done and held up his glove in triumph.

But the first base umpire, Jim Joyce, made his call, signaling “safe.” Galarraga looked stunned and 17,000 fans at Comerica Park fell silent in disbelief. Galarraga went back to work as the crowd started to boo. He quickly retired Trevor Howard for a one hit shutout.

During interviews after the game, Galarraga refused to express anger or remorse, focusing instead on the fact that his team had won the game and that his pitching appeared to be improving on the strength of the shutout. The umpire, Jim Joyce, went back to the clubhouse and reviewed videotapes. Before leaving the ballpark he acknowledged to reporters that he had erred: “I just cost that kid a perfect game.” So, because of the

umpire's imperfection Armando Galarraga was denied perfection and his place in baseball history.

But on the following night a very unusual thing took place. Before the game started, the Tigers' crusty old manager, Jim Leyland, did not, as was his custom, jog out of the dugout to present the starting lineup card to the umpires assembled at home plate (including Jim Joyce). Instead he sent Armando Galarraga who ran straight for Jim Joyce. I am sure that there were more than a few angry Tigers fans in the stands who hoped that he would curse the umpire who had cost him his perfect game, or at the very least, in the manner of Billy Martin or Lou Pinella, kick a little dirt onto home plate as a sign of his displeasure. But no, Armando did something I have never witnessed before. Reaching out, he put his arm around a man who was old enough to be his father. Touching an umpire during a game means automatic ejection, but in that moment we saw an act of forgiveness that transcended the imperfection and pain that had been visited on that young man less than 24 hours before. And although Tom Hanks famously proclaimed ("A League of Their Own") "there's no crying in baseball," the camera clearly showed tears streaming down the face of the veteran umpire.

That night, for one fleeting moment, I think I witnessed Perfection. But it quickly came to an end when one of the other umpires saw what was going on and saved us from any further sentimentality by calling out "Play Ball!"

The players streamed out onto the field and the game went on.

*Pete McCord*

## ESTRE'S SHORE

Alone he goes to Estre's shore  
To end the Lenten fast,  
In sands he knew in other times  
And memories of the past.

He chooses not of bread nor wine  
But communes in harmony  
With heavens lit by moon and stars  
Above the azured sea.

And thusly held by earth and sky  
He sheds baubles of man's lust,  
'Til passion washed by Estre's tides  
His bones become the dust.

*Pete McCord*

## SENIORS INVADE ARMY WAR COLLEGE

### Breach Deemed a “Low Level” Risk

by Homeland Security

**T**his is a story of how two earnest, somewhat misguided senior citizens attempted to pay homage to the past. Instead they ran headlong into a strange and daunting new world.

In the summer of 2009 I read a book titled *Carlisle vs. Army* by Lars Anderson. It described the early years of college football culminating in a fateful clash between these two collegiate powers in 1912. The game captured the attention of the entire nation and pitted the man acknowledged to be America’s greatest athlete of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jim Thorpe, against a man destined to become one of America’s greatest heroes, Dwight Eisenhower. Several other noteworthy characters also emerged in the book, including Douglas MacArthur, Omar Bradley, George Patton and Pop Warner.

Much of the story takes place in rural Pennsylvania at the Carlisle Indian School, an institution designed to “elevate” Indian children by immersing them in the ways of the white people. The premise was that by enlightening the Indian children to our culture and civilization, they would logically abandon their “primitive” ways and assimilate into our society. The school had its humble start in an old army barracks built in 1754. With no plumbing or modern conveniences, it housed about 82 children. In time, another addition would accommodate over 200 Indian students.

In the early 1900s football was a savage, brutal game with few rules. Indeed, the death of several players each season prompted critics to call for a ban of the sport. Glenn “Pop” Warner, the son of a Union Army captain, arrived at Carlisle in 1903 and proceeded to build a juggernaut football team relying on his innovative tactics and the dazzling speed of his team. When Jim Thorpe, a troubled young teenager from the Sac and Fox tribe of Oklahoma, arrived at Carlisle, Pop Warner recognized that he had a superstar with the talent to compete with the major football powerhouses of his era. Soon such teams as Yale, Penn, Stanford, Villanova and Harvard all fell to the small school from the backwoods of Pennsylvania. The game against Army in 1912 was to determine the national championship.

With this intriguing “David and Goliath” story and its cast of legendary characters, Carlisle became a center for my historical appetites. Shirley and I picked a nice autumn weekend and headed for Mt. Joy, north of Lancaster. On Sunday, we planned to stroll the streets of this old-fashioned town. Shirley was looking forward to shopping in some of the quaint country stores. As fate would have it, the stores were closed out of respect for the Sabbath. Shirley was disappointed. I was not. So, after a nice lunch, we headed to the Carlisle Indian School.

Carlisle is a busy junction for both east and west traffic. We saw many signs pointing to the Army War College, but there was nothing to indicate where the old Indian School was or had been. After a few false starts, we came to a driveway with a guardhouse and uniformed sentry. This looked promising enough, so we approached.



Then, on this peaceful Sunday afternoon, you could say that all hell broke loose. As we approached the guardhouse, a large dual concrete barrier popped up out of the roadway. No doubt, this barrier was designed to stop tanks and did an able job of stopping our Toyota. Immediately, two military police cars emerged with lights flashing and sirens blaring. Needless to say, we were not expecting such an elaborate reception.

As I tried to get out of the car, a loud booming voice told me to “get back in the car and close the door.” The big uniformed man did not have a happy face. He instructed me to go forward into the adjacent yard. The high concrete barrier was lowered and I moved into the yard. What else could I do? Shirley was becoming pale. The two patrol cars followed close behind.

The officer, without a smile, came to my window and asked to see my license, insurance and military identification. (After all these years, I didn’t know I still carried it, but I did!) Politely, I asked him if he knew the old Indian school. His answer was an emphatic NO! We were not finished. He directed us across the street to a more elaborate setting. Then two slightly more congenial men asked us to open the hood and the trunk and then to get out of the car. They proceeded to conduct a thorough search of the car, looking under seats, through the glove compartment, and then through the engine. Then they stuck long poles with mirrors to look for possible bombs hidden under the car. After 15 or more minutes, I guess they concluded that Shirley and I were not anarchists or terrorists. We got back into the car. Then, much to our

surprise, they gave us a map to where the Indian school had once been. We were free to go.

It was a very circuitous route. We asked a few people for help along the way, but no one had ever heard of the Carlisle Indian School. Eventually we did arrive at the site. Only one building remained. It was the original barracks from 1754. Inside was the military uniform museum. Shirley was reluctant to leave the car, but with a little coaxing she came inside. There really wasn't much to enjoy, other than the fact that we had made it thus far beating the system . . . maybe. So ends the saga of our visit to the famous Carlisle Indian School. I have a feeling that somewhere in heaven, Jim Thorpe got a good chuckle.

*Ben Paradee*

## GETTING TO LOVE MY MOTHER-IN-LAW

**I** was 36 years old and still unmarried. Having a family and children had always been my most important goal. I decided that I had to go where I would meet some men, and I joined the Wanderbird Hiking Club in Washington, DC. As a youngster growing up in Germany, my parents had taken me on hikes from age five, and I've loved the outdoors ever since.

On my first hike, there were about 30 young men and women, and I tried to walk along with a number of men to get acquainted. One of them stood out from the rest, because he was carrying a big backpack for a day hike, while most others just had a small bag for their lunch. When the leader called a halt for lunch after a couple of hours, I had been talking to Mark with the big pack. He motioned me to sit next to him. He unpacked a poncho for us to sit on and then pulled out some extra sandwiches, passing them around for anyone who had no lunch. After we started hiking again, one girl got too close to some brambles and her arm started bleeding. Mark had Band-Aids for her. When others asked for names of mushrooms, flowers, or trees, Mark found the answer in a book he had brought.

At the end of the hike, Mark asked for my phone number. He called me the following Wednesday and we made a dinner date for Saturday. This pattern continued for several weeks; then we spent weekends together, hiking with the club or by ourselves. After five months, in February 1956, we were engaged and set a wedding date for May 15.

I knew there might be some problem with Mark's mother, because her name was Dora, the same as mine, and Mark asked me whether I would be willing to change my first name. I had never liked Dora as my name and immediately suggested Lillian. "That's great," Mark said, "I can call you Lily."

My parents, who lived in Brookline, MA, always visited me for my birthday in April, so Mark suggested we have lunch in my apartment with his parents from Coney Island. They were used to Jewish food, Mark said, so I made chopped liver for an appetizer. We all sat down together in my living room and enjoyed some wine and chopped liver on crackers. When Dora took the first bite, she cried out "Oh, this is much too salty!" Nobody said anything and we moved to the dining area for lunch. My mother, who had been told to call me Lily, forgot all about it and asked, "Dora, where did you get this wonderful bread?" The other Dora turned around and said, "Who is the Dora here anyway?" She got up from the table, turned to her husband, Joe, and told him that they would have to leave. They walked to the door and started talking in Yiddish. Silence at the table. After a few minutes, they came back and Dora said, "We might as well finish our meal." Mark drove them back to their home and told them that they were invited to the wedding but didn't have to come. They came.

Sadly, Mark's father got very ill with cancer and died within a year. Dora moved to Florida and came to visit us in our home in Moorestown for a week a couple of times a year. She showed her dislike for me in many ways. Whenever she called from Florida, she would nev-

er talk to me and always asked for Mark. When I tried to offer her a warm robe on a very cold morning, she yelled from the door, “When I need a robe, I’ll buy my own.”

I decided that this bad relationship between Dora and me was a bad example for our two children and that I had to do something to bring about a change. It just occurred to me that we really did not know anything about Dora’s life and what happened to make her so negative just about everything. Unfortunately during her visits, she had to spend many hours alone while Mark and I were at our jobs and the children were in school.

I got my tape recorder and showed it to Dora and explained that she could talk into it and tell us the story of her life, and that we really wanted to know all about it. She liked the idea and quickly learned how to record her voice.

When the whole family was home, we all sat around the table and listened to the tape. We learned that Dora wanted to be a schoolteacher, that her mother took her out of school after the sixth grade and put her to work, and that she hid Dora from the truant officer in a big trunk. She was never allowed to visit school friends or have them visit in her home. The children asked her questions and we talked about her experiences for quite some time before dinner.

After that evening, my relationship with my mother-in-law took a dramatic turn. I knew that Dora was a very intelligent person, and on her subsequent visits I would take her to my law office and to court with me. She used to brag about “my daughter-in-law, a lawyer,” to her Florida friends. Her eyesight had deteriorated to

the point that she couldn't read newspapers anymore, so I would read and discuss the important news with her. I realized I had come to love her, and she said I was the only person who ever loved her. A couple of years later, she had a fall and had to stay in a rehab facility, where I visited her every day. She died there within a few weeks. On a cold wintry day, we buried her in the local Jewish cemetery, with only our family of four in attendance. Her other son's family was kept away by a snowstorm.

*Ellen Stimler*

## NATURE'S FRISBEES ON OLD CAPE COD

I don't recall why Johnny Copeland and I were on Water Street by Lower Shawme Lake in Sandwich on Cape Cod. We were slowly returning home to our family cottages perched high on the glacial moraine above Upper Shawme Lake. Perhaps it was a weekday and we had walked two miles downtown to the drug store on Jarvis Street to get a pistachio ice cream cone, an exquisite flavor we had just discovered. Perhaps it was Sunday and we had been to Sunday Bible School at the old Federated Church which is now a doll museum. Johnny's grandmother, Ferdie Reed, would drive us to Bible class in her well-used Model A Ford with a rumble seat, then we would walk home.

Ferdie had been married to a minister at the Federated Church, but he had moved on and they had separated. She was a big-boned lady who had inherited the Wesselhoeft family's boundless energy and enthusiasm for life. She chopped her own kindling and cooked on a wood-burning stove. She could boil water for tea in five minutes from a cold start. I know because my mother often told me how she had lost a bet with Ferdie on that. Prohibition was the law of the land but Ferdie drank her tea with a dollop of rum. She skinny-dipped discretely in Upper Shawme Lake every day and did not let trivial things like a snow squall deter her. Fortunately Johnny was a normal human being and fun to be with.

The reason we were on our way home really doesn't matter much because we were ready for whatever fate had in store for us as we wandered aimlessly homeward bound.

We had tried to find a buddy, John Robinson, but he wasn't home. His mother kept an inn, long since torn down, by the Hoxie house, the oldest house on Cape Cod. The demolished inn has also long since been forgotten as the stone marker at its location merely says:

**Site of the Sandwich Academy  
the First Private School of Higher Learning  
in Barnstable County  
Incorporated by the State Legislature in 1804**

Having nothing better to do on this hot summer day, we gravitated to the shore of Lower Shawme Lake near the location of today's bandstand.



There we spotted a turtle sleeping on the end of a long log. Fate's intervention was making this day more interesting, and the turtle was worth investigating. The turtle didn't mind us. I was elected or volunteered to crawl out on the log and catch him. Slowly I inched my way out on the log trying not to alarm the sleeping turtle.



At last I was within grasping distance. As I carefully reached for him, he slipped into the water, I lost my balance and tumbled after him. No matter, it was a hot summer day and I would soon dry off.

My clothes dried as we trudged along Water Street past the Wing School. At that time, in 1929, it was a new two-story brick building which held all the classes for Sandwich, first through twelfth. Next door to the school was the Bartley home. No excitement there as it was filled with six talkative girls, so we walked past it. Just beyond the Bartleys was Frank Lovell's farm. It had more potential. Frank kept cows, and if you brought your own container, he charged a nickel for a quart of milk fresh out of the cow. It wasn't pasteurized and the cows weren't tuberculin tested. Ferdie thought raw milk was super healthy and fed Johnny lots of it with no obvious harm. However, my mother wouldn't let me drink it as TB had done too much damage to her and killed several cousins.

We kept our distance from the cows, which eyed us with suspicion. Frank had a yappy little dog that liked to snarl and snap at small boys, so we gave him a wide berth. Frank's farm also had a few apple trees that grew along the highway. Young underdeveloped hard green apples were lying by the road. Out of boredom we began throwing them at stationary targets and gradually improved our aim. Then we heard a rare sound, a car putt-putting up route 130. This meant fate had sent us a moving target! Life was on a glorious rebound. Our young throwing skills would be challenged; maybe we could even hurl several apples before the car got out of range. We quickly gathered ammunition. The noisy car

was a slow-moving target and we managed to hit it several times before it got out of range. The car continued undamaged up the road, the driver ignoring or perhaps unaware of our ambush. Shucks, life could be discouraging.

The pasture for Frank's cows was grassy Elephant's Back Hill, located about a quarter mile along route 130 from his farm. Nowadays that grassy hill is covered with dense woods and the silhouette that gave it its name is no longer visible. The hill was also a favorite spot for the Bartley girls to pick lowbush blueberries for their mother to make a pie. Thank goodness they were not there this fateful day.

Twice daily Frank walked his small herd to the pasture and back. The cows were not exactly housebroken. We saw plenty of evidence of this as we carefully stepped along 130. As the deposits dried nature gradually transformed them into frisbees. The scientific term for the deposits is "cow plops," but for the rest of this article for the sake of brevity they shall be called "plops".

These generous gifts of nature inspired us to test the aerodynamic quality of a few plops. Yes, the plops possessed aerodynamic qualities unknown to the Wright brothers. Despite their rudimentary crude construction, those plops really swooped gracefully before crashing. Each one soared in its own unique flight pattern and disintegrated on impact. Life had its happy moments of discovery.

We were nearly at Shawme Road. We always looked forward to the first section of loose sand where we liked to play fighter pilot, with arms outstretched and

making appropriate sounds like engines sputtering and the staccato of machine guns shooting as we fought the bad guys. Johnny's Uncle, Bill Reed, was in training to be a Marine Corps fighter pilot. In our imagination we flew in formation with him. In WW II Bill was called back into the service. In a real dogfight he was shot down by the Japanese over Surabaya in the Dutch East Indies.

Before reaching Shawme Road we heard another target approaching and were ready for it with our new aerodynamic weapons. As it rounded the bend, windows wide open in the summer heat, we launched our frisbees and watched in sudden panic as both skimmed the road then soared and disappeared through the open windows. In those days cars only had rear wheel brakes. I saw the rear wheels lock as the driver slammed on the brakes.

We turned, jumped the cattle gate and ran as fast as we could along a stone wall up Elephant's Back Hill towards the pasture, but six-year-olds cannot outrun an angry adult urged on by two women screaming furiously. In retrospect their vocabulary was a revelation to Johnny and me. He caught us, dragged us back to the car, and told us to clean it out. Fearing a worse fate, we did so as rapidly and efficiently as shaking little boys could. The ladies in the car were murmuring in shocked tones, "What kind of parents could bring up depraved children like these?"

After the shattered remains of the frisbees were removed from the car, he made us tell him our names and addresses. We told him, Johnny Copeland and Gor-

don Beckhart, and off he drove in a cloud of dust, skidding in the loose sand of Shawme Road to find and tell our parents about our wicked acts. His parting shout was that he would tell our parents how to deal with rascals like us.

Johnny and I were really scared, but instinctively we knew we should stay out of sight on the way home. So we ran back towards the Bartleys' and jumped a fence across the road from their home. We stayed out of sight by cutting through the fields to a little used path in the woods around Upper Shawme Lake. We ran along it, hell-bent for election, below Blueberry Hill and past the community dock and the creaky windmill that pumped water to our cottages. Then we slunk stealthily and furtively along the pipeline through the woods to our respective driveways. We were so scared we forgot to look out for the bears that Johnny believed lived in the woods. When I got to my driveway I stopped momentarily in the woods and listened carefully for any sounds of outrage from my family. No sounds from the cottage, and no sound of a car on Shawme Road. That could be a good omen. As I stepped out of the woods I looked up at the hand lettered sign at the entrance to our drive, it said "Myers," my grandfather's name. In my mind's eye I can still see that wonderful plain board with its white letters. Wow! What luck, and then I remembered, Johnny's sign read "Reed," his grandmother's name. Maybe fate was on our side and the folks in the car might never find our parents to tell them about their wicked depraved children. I crossed my fingers and hoped against hope that would be the case.

As I climbed the steep slippery path to the cottage my grandmother “Mom” saw me and said, “Gordon, you almost missed lunch. What have you been doing?” “Nothing,” I answered.

For about a week I tried to remain outwardly calm but was quaking inside whenever I heard a car in our drive. The ladies with their colorful vocabulary never found our parents, so we escaped parental wrath. Fate had given us a scare, but in the end it had not been too bad, and besides that day has been such fun to think about for the past 80 years.

*Gordon Beckhart*

## NEITHER A BORROWER NOR A LENDER BE

In the year 1936, I was a lowly sophomore at Wesleyan University. Only upper classmen were permitted to register cars on campus. I was quite excited when a fellow upper class fraternity brother, in exchange for past favors, offered me the use of his car one Wednesday night. The car in question was a small Ford coupe of several years vintage, equipped with a rumble seat and "Isinglass curtains that rolled right down, in case there was a change in the weather!" Nevertheless, when you didn't have access to any sort of wheels, a car was a car!

As you might well expect, as a student in an all-male college, I was debating the merits of which girls' college I might visit. I carelessly mentioned my good fortune to Dave, another fraternity brother. Well, he suggested, in what seemed like record time, that we join forces and visit his girlfriend at Wellesley, where he assured me she would find a date for me. I was intrigued and agreed to this suggestion.

Since Dave knew the route to Wellesley, I let him do the driving. When we arrived, his girlfriend, Virginia, having been advised of our impending visit, had lived up to her end of the bargain and found me a date. My date's name was Jane Tracy, and I must say that it took only a very few minutes for me to understand why she was called Jane T. Racy. She had long legs and she ran everywhere she went! We all conferred and decided to spend our evening at a well-known dance hall west of Boston known as the Totem Pole. Dave drove again, and Jane and I folded ourselves into the rumble seat. It was a tight fit! A long evening unfolded as I was led

around the dance floor for two hours. Nearing the point of exhaustion, we were mercifully obliged to leave as the girls' curfew crept up on us. The check was presented and Dave and I split the bill. Turning over all the cash that I had, we paid up and left. We drove the girls back to their campus, where I watched my date, Jane, jump out of the rumble seat and race full speed to her dormitory. So much for my one and only date with a Wellesley girl. Things were going along fine on our homeward route until we reached Worcester. Dave turned to me and advised me that we were just about out of gas. We stopped at the next gas station to refill. Once again Dave turned to me and asked if I had any money? It was at that very moment we found that we were broke.

Big spenders that we were, we had used all our ready cash to pay the dance hall bill. We offered to pay the attendant by check, whereupon he told us that under existing state law gas stations could not accept checks. So, here we were stranded! Frustrated, we decided to go to the Worcester Police Station for help. We explained our situation to the duty sergeant and asked him if he would cash a small check for us. He promptly refused, saying that the last person for whom he had done such a favor gave him a check that bounced.

So, with no other place to go at that time of night and no gas to get home, we asked the sergeant to lock us up for the night so that we could get some sleep. Again he refused but offered us the opportunity to sleep on a large wooden table in their "drill hall." Boy, was that table hard! There were no blankets, no pillows, no nothing. To make matters worse, we were serenaded nearly

all night long by the janitor, buffing up the floor with an electric floor polisher.

We arose early in the morning after enjoying virtually no sleep. It was at this point that Dave sheepishly informed me that he had an aunt who lived in Worcester. He had been reluctant to contact her for fear that she would notify his father and reveal the whole sorry tale of neglected studies to visit a girlfriend! I told Dave that we would have to visit his aunt because I had to get back on campus in time to take a test that morning. Reluctantly, he agreed and we proceeded to his aunt's home, where we were obliged to toss pebbles at her bedroom window to awaken her. To make a long story short, we got breakfast, got money, got gas and got back to the Wesleyan campus in time for me to take my test. I have never mentioned to anyone the mark I received on that test and I don't intend to do so now.

Needless to say, my friend who loaned me the car was glad to see it finally returned undamaged. From this experience I learned one valuable lesson: Neither a borrower nor a lender be! Wise words to live by, I vowed, until the next time.

*Bill Heisler*



## IN MY MIND

In my mind,  
So full of thoughts tumbling all over themselves  
Distant memories, vivid as if they happened yesterday.  
Not disturbing, you understand,  
But with a life of their own.

In my mind,  
I'm about 35 year's old and wearing high-heeled shoes.  
Running up and down the stairs and going off to work.  
I'm wearing dresses. Doesn't everybody?  
But in my closet – not a dress in sight.

In my mind,  
Who is that older woman in the mirror?  
And, look, she still has red hair!  
But that's all I can say for her.

In my mind,  
So much yet to do.  
So many pictures to be painted.  
They line up, waiting their turn.  
So many books to be read.  
What a pleasure to have one waiting for me.

In my mind,  
I awaken every day with thankfulness.  
Thankful for my life here in this place,  
Thankful for my “second-time-around” love.

*Pat Heller-Dow*





