"LOOK TO THE ESSENCE OF A THING
WHETHER IT BE A POINT OF DOCTRINE,
OF PRACTICE, OR OF INTERPRETATION."

M. Aurelius... Meditations
This generation reads for knowledge, but not for vicarious human contact. It can mix concrete and steel and produce structural strength; however, it cannot mix the ideas of white and black men and produce psychological harmony. It is able to understand why a certain combination of atoms causes a nuclear reaction, and is capable of comprehending the theory of jet propulsion, yet it is confused when a Japanese student says that Americans expect too much of their allies or vice-versa. The need is for mutual understanding. Men must realize that, though physically they are living more closely together every day, in the realm of understanding they have seldom been so distant.

It is a matter of survival in the modern world to understand not only what one's contemporaries are thinking, but also their methods of thinking, and it is a matter of survival to read not only for knowledge, but also as a means of blending ways of thought. This generation must read to know not simply how their contemporaries solve a problem, but why they solve it in a particular manner. This type of reading is not easy. It is a skill which can be acquired only through practice, and it is but a part of man's social obligation. He must also provide opportunities for intellectual contact by the expression and publication of his emotional reactions and his reasoned opinions. It is through self-expression that man learns to know himself and through the published opinions of others that he recognizes himself and his common humanity. Writer and reader, artist and spectator, come vicariously into a contact that can lead to human harmony, the essence of social unity.
There, where we would not have it standing
And telling other people of our backwardness,
Stood the old wagon—rotting in the sun.
It seemed content in resting there
And pleased us in the feeling
That we cared enough to spare
A useful thing no longer used.
It told of load on load of hay it bore
And didn’t sag at all
For having known the strain.
It told of farmer-boys
Who carved initials at conspicuous places.
It talked of eighteenth century life,
But never showed how old it really was;
We guessed it could be eight score years and more,
Though it showed signs of being older.
We checked the holding place for axes
But found it couldn’t tell us
When the first had nestled there.
We remember how the wagon came to us
A ladder wagon from our father’s father
And how it came to him from earlier kin.

Without a lengthy palaver
We burned the wagon in the meadow,
The doing wasn’t easy;
We later tried to rationalize
Our having done a cruel thing.
We shuffled in the ashes
To gather artifacts in form of iron pieces
That survived the burning.
We saw the artist of the handwrought iron pieces
Slighted in his handiwork.
We learned a treachery of progress;
We destroyed a little of ourselves
When we set the wagon burning;
We wished to find our earlier selves again—
We couldn’t in the ashes.

seemed to say, “I am king of these mountains; nothing can vanquish me,” his disfigured head seemed to say, “Nothing but man and his gun. . . .”

PIECES
FROM
AN
OLD
WAGON

A LAST TROPHY

The day was clear, just right for the last day of deer season. There were about twenty of us at “Scattered Oaks,” our hunting lodge. We had divided ourselves into five hunting parties and decided which sections we would hunt. In my group there were two young fellows and one older man.

This old gentleman was rapidly becoming a legend in our part of the mountains. Although hale and hearty, he claimed to be seventy-two years old. He still took a nip or two from the whiskey bottle, still played poker with the rest of the boys. His longevity and ability to hunt, no doubt helped to create his distinction; but the mere fact that every year, for as far back as anybody could remember, he had always shot a deer during deer season made him legendary. He had indeed shot so many deer that he was commonly called “The Ol’ Deerslayer.” I was pleased to be in his hunting party.

This year it looked as though “Ol’ Deerslayer” were going to be thwarted. Because he had not shot a deer yet, some things became obvious to us. From the way he complained about the cold weather and a few aches and pains, we surmised that this would be the last season he would hunt. He talked a good deal about a deer called “Treetop” that had been recognized in our hunting circle for the past five years. He was so named because on top of his head there stood a magnificent set of antlers. “Deerslayer” said that he would like to have the head mounted on the wall of his den.

The favorite story of this old gentleman was about the time he thought he had shot and killed the deer, that had merely fallen to the ground and had lain there bleeding. “Deerslayer” had been in the process of stringing him up for field dressing when “Treetop” suddenly had come to life and had made a dash for freedom. In his escape the deer had struck the man’s side with one of those great antlers, throwing him to the ground. After that, “Deerslayer” always walked with a slight limp. “Ol’ Treetop’s” antlers would be a fitting trophy for his retirement.

Lunchtime came on the last day of the season. I made my way to “Deerslayer’s” stand. Just in time I sank out of sight behind a mound of earth. “Deerslayer’s” rifle was against his shoulder, aimed at a deer about twenty-five feet in front of him.

I looked at that deer for a long time. He was not “Ol’ Treetop”
with his vast array of antlers; no, this deer had only six points, but he was the rarest and the most beautiful deer I had even seen. He was an albino.

Slowly I put my rifle to my shoulder and placed the cross-hairs of my telescope on the pure white neck. Silently I pulled the hammer back. I did not mean to shoot the deer, but I did intend to offer supporting fire in case the old man’s shot was not fatal.

Every little movement and feature of the animal was plain to me through the telescope. I noticed his eyes—the beautiful eyes of an albino. The irises were a pale pink, and the pupils were a darker, ruby red. He was a true albino, the rarest of creatures in any species. His body was long and lean. The whiteness of his fur blended with the snow.

I do not know how long I knelt there admiring him, but I finally raised myself and wondered why the old man did not shoot. I looked in his direction and saw that he was no longer aiming at the deer. He was staring fixedly at the albino. “The Ol’ Deerslayer” would not shoot. Perhaps he did not have the heart to kill now, after all of his years of successful hunting.

I turned my attention back to my gun and sighted through the telescope again. Placing the crosshairs on that creamy white neck, I slowly began to pull the trigger. Before the hammer fell, a thought crossed my mind. Slowly I eased the hammer back to the safety position and regarded the old man. He was still watching the deer, his gun at his side. . . .

DAFFODILS
Golden Daffodils,
Taunting March’s cold blasts
Stand in majesty.
DAVID HARTMAIER, ’64

The bell in the church tower chimed ten. The harbor city rose up with a strange calmness in the drizzly night. An occasional fog horn blared in the distance; a scintillating light flickered from a passing ship. The world seemed peaceful and quiet, yet the heart of a twelve year old girl was sad. Her eyes were filled with tears. She was leaving her native country, never to tread its shore again.

The memories of her past life appeared before her. There had been so much suffering. During the war, mothers saw their children killed. They picked up the limp bodies, asking God, “Why?” Yet, there were no tears in their eyes. Grown men lay in the streets groaning in pain. Wives lay there too—embracing their husbands. Yet, they, too, could not weep. The whole population was paralyzed. Houses crumbled as the earth beneath rocked. These were her memories, memories never to be forgotten. She was at last
leaving the scenes of hate, fear, death, and destruction she had known. She was also leaving behind her all that was dear to her—the people whom she loved and her beloved native land.

It was time for her to be an adult. The great step of decision had been taken, and must be carried out with courage. God would help, as he had done before. With this thought she faced reality. The damp night seemed beautiful. Even the fog horns sounded melodious. A whole new world opened before her. She was not afraid anymore.

Time flew. Soon Ingrid and her mother found themselves ready to board the ship, which stood at the far end of the pier, ready to undertake the journey across the Atlantic Ocean. To America! To freedom! With them were many people, their faces showing mixed emotions. There were tears, and there were laughs as memories of the homeland were exchanged.

Something was murmuring with a lulling, sleepy sound. Something else was quivering incessantly. As mother and child set foot on the enormous ship, Ingrid closed her eyes and clasped her mother's hand for a moment, to fight down the dull pain in her heart. They had waited in patience for three years—three years that were an eternity. Finally, the ship started to move. The coast line slowly receded till only an outline of land could be seen.

They were out on the Atlantic, out on the open sea, between two continents! Nothing but water everywhere! The sea wind blew sharply across the deck. The salt spray made little rainbows over the waves. By day the sun shone, and at night the infinite vault of the heavens arched over the vastness.

The voyage was a pleasant one for two days. On Easter morning, however, the ocean raged. The waves, with Herculean strength, towered over and covered the ship, pounding it about in an altogether outrageous fashion. The sea was in control, terrifying the passengers.

When storm and fear had vanished, Ingrid's dream came true. There was the Statue of Liberty, the symbol of freedom to all who came to her for refuge. There was the Manhattan skyline! Towering high above the mist, stood the skyscrapers of the New World. They were like a group of Alpine peaks splashed with pink from the rising sun—mountain summits of steel and concrete! It was beyond reality. Ingrid could no longer utter a word. Mountains of concrete, canyons of stone—she felt as far removed from her green German valleys as though she had been cast adrift upon a strange planet. She had to take a long, deep breath of amazement before she could believe it. America!
Iceland, vomited from the harsh sea countless centuries ago, is a land of torment and misery. Located in the frigid North Atlantic, and barely south of the Arctic Circle lies this volcanic eruption. The island is ravished by cyclonic winds, beset by the merciless sea, and smothered under immense snows. Acute loneliness is created by the scorched earth and volcanic ash. The small amount of edible vegetation is constantly challenged by the towering volcanoes and gigantic icecaps. Stench from the cod-fish drying in the faint sun torments the inhabitants, and the fine volcanic dust passing through the air is extremely nauseating. Sickness and misery are brought upon the islanders by the cruel winter cold, and the summer has little relief to offer. The deep snows vanish; but a constant, drenching rain follows. Beyond any doubt, Iceland is a cancer on the surface of the earth.

The island offers unusual contrast, for this land of never-ceasing struggle is also a land of strange, attracting beauty. During the latter part of the year, no section on earth can match the splendor that this North Atlantic island has to offer. The magnitude and force of nature are clearly felt as she writes the greatest symphony on earth, the creation of winter.

A phantom glow appears in the heavens; at first it is nothing more than a narrow, single beam of light. The overture commences as the light begins to swish and sway across the rugged, black island, enlarging and becoming more vivid. Eeriness results as these great Northern Lights form into a gigantic, uneven shape of a hand, the hand of nature. As the conflict between the winds begin, the lights grow brighter and dance swiftly about the sky; the volcanoes murmur then rumble violently, and the sea smashes loudly against the raped land. Except for the devilish lights, the sky becomes a deathly black. The struggle will soon be over; the ice is the victor! In the final movement the sea is again calm, the volcanoes silent, and the winds serene, for now the snow begins to fall, fall...fall. This is the land of exotic lights—the land of fire and ice.
THE EMPTY ROOM
VIVIAN L. WAHL

From his lounge on the rustic wooden porch, Al Melrose sat watching the deer wading in the shallow blue water along the northern bank. The early morning sunlight fascinated him as it pierced through the heavy foliage, forming diamond-shaped patches of gold along the backs of a buck and a doe. Periodically, the deer would raise their heads in the direction of the old cabin and their silent observer.

Al watched them lazily as he lay in the dancing rays. To him, owning a cabin in the Catskills meant merely an escape from the cutthroat business world of New York. Fishing and hunting held no interest for him; and the animals around the lake seemed to sense this, for they stood fearless under his gaze.

Suddenly, the sound of metal heels scraping on dried wood and a clatter of heavy, iron cookware aroused Al from his repose. Angela had awakened and was furiously struggling to prepare some breakfast. He could hear her angry mutterings.

"Oh, this is such a filthy place. Why must we live in this wilderness like barbarians?"

Presently, the scraping sounds moved closer to the door; and Angela's tall, shapely figure emerged into the brilliant sunlight. As usual, her physical appearance was perfect. Not one hair of her gleaming, black bouffant was awry, and each pleat of her softly clinging chiffon dress caressed her slender body. The startling blue of her gown re-emphasized the blue innocence of her eyes, but the innocence was touched by an iciness suggested by the multitudinous chains of beads about her tawny neck.

As he gazed at her costume, Al realized that his purpose in bringing Angela to his private hideaway had failed. Of course, he was always dumbfounded by the beauty of the woman he married, but her nervous manner and the cigarette hanging perpetually between her long, delicate fingers showed him her dissatisfaction with their present situation and her eagerness to return to the hustle of the city. He hoped it was nothing more than that. Deep in the back of his mind was the gnawing suspicion that something else was amiss in their marital state. Friends in New York had warned him about giving Angela too much freedom. She came and went as she wished. He did not think that was wrong. He, himself, was a quiet man who didn't enjoy large crowds and noisy parties. Besides, his business kept him so busy that he didn't have time to take Angela to many parties or plays or dances, but this didn't mean that she had to confine herself to their home. Angela was different; she loved excitement and glamour. Why shouldn't she enjoy herself? How could that harm a marriage that was based on a love as deep as theirs?

"I wonder if Angela is keeping something from me," Al thought to himself. "There has to be something deeper in her involvements than just a few laughs with her friends to make her so anxious to return to that gray concrete world. Something has been building up between us, but I thought that these few days of rest and relaxation in the mountains would give us an opportunity to renew and strengthen our love."

Despair swept over him as he gazed at the beautiful creature before him. A soft breeze was ruffling at her skirt as she stood staring down on the valley below. Suddenly she whirled about, breaking the silence.

"Al?" Her voice lingered over the words as though she wanted to go on, but feared the consequences.

"Yes?" he answered dully, both desiring and dreading her response.

"Al, I'm returning to New York today", she replied, casting her eyes intently downward, deeply concentrating on the slow progress of a black ant as it dragged a bit of bread across the wooden planks.

"I knew it would come to this eventually. That was my reason for bringing you out here. I had to be certain," he answered, gazing steadily at her bent head and shoulders.

"Oh, Al, I tried to fight it; really I did, but... Well, anyway, the plane is leaving at 11:30, so I'd better get packed. There's no need to drive me to the airport, I'll have the car sent back."

In a few quick steps she was through the dark doorway and out
of sight. Al sat musing to himself. Should he plead with her, make a scene? No, he knew that would not help. The time had come for a break, and he was powerless against it.

He was still deeply concentrating on his problem when he heard the car door slam and the roar of the engine echo across the mountains. Now she was really, truly gone; he could not force himself to believe it. A deep sense of loneliness and panic swept over him.

"It can't be true," he told himself. "She will come back, she must, she must."

The sun had risen high in the sky, and Angela had been gone for several hours before Al finally aroused himself, convinced that everything was a mistake and that she would return. It was only a matter of time. Meanwhile, he would wait for her.

Slowly he began to pace about, eventually wandering down to the lake about one hundred yards from the house. He had crossed through a copse of trees and was leaning against a huge, jagged green rock by the water's edge when he heard a call. Turning about quickly, he thought he glimpsed a patch of blue dart in and out among the trees. Yes, he was certain now. It was Angela running breathlessly toward the cabin. She had returned. His heart beat with exultation. She had returned. But why? He did not care. All he knew or felt was his love for her.

He would let her gain the cabin, put her bag in the bedroom, then he would grasp her in his arms, muffling her apologies and explanations against his chest. Gradually, her mutterings and sobs would decrease and finally she would raise her head to meet his eyes, carrying to him all of her love and repentance in her passionate gaze.

For the first time in many months Al felt perfectly in accord with his world. He waited a few moments, passed the clump of trees sheltering the cabin, and had just reached the steps when he heard the phone ringing.

"Darn that phone," he thought irritably hurrying to lift the receiver. "Hello!" he forced himself to say, wishing he could growl, "Who is it, and what do you want?"

"Mr. Allan Melrose?"

"Speaking." "This is United Airlines. We are deeply sorry to inform you that the plane on which your wife was traveling crashed about a half hour ago. Mrs. Melrose's body has been identified. There were no survivors."

Panic twisted a great knot in Al's throat. Was this some sort of cruel joke? He burst open the door of the bedroom. It was empty.

INFINITY

JUDITH FOSTER

Against the earth
Both you and I;
We three are one
Beneath the sky.

Beneath the vast
Inverted sea
Encompassing,
Infinity.

Infinity,
Where does it end,
How far into
The sky ascend?

Below, the earth;
Above, the sky;
We four are one,
But two must die.
MIDSUMMER HAPPINESS

ILSE LAUERSON

As I recall my childhood, I think of a strange evening and an unusual night. From the summits of the distant hills shone lights, and echoed joyous laughter. It was St. John's festival.

Thousands of years ago, before Christ was born, people dwelt among the forests and worshipped Nature. In Latvia they worshipped one of the goddesses named Ligo. Some called her the goddess of pleasure; some called her the goddess of spring; and others called her the fairy of the flowers. After the people became Christianized, Ligo Day became known as St. John's Day, the day when earth is greenest and daylight hours are longest—June the twenty-fourth.

It was good to be alive in the happy, flowery world—a world of the young in heart. The girls wore midsummer wreaths made of cornflowers blue as the eyes of the Baltic maidens themselves. The buttercups' yellow was as dazzling as the sun itself, and the red clover poured forth its sweetness like honey. The fragrance, color, and life stirred my heart. The golden and the dark braids of the dancing girls were twined with colorful ribbons. The maidens' gay skirts whirled, as the lads' embroidered belts and oak wreaths flashed as they danced The Squire's Polka, and other familiar folk dances.

There was a savory smell of fresh baking in the air. Traditional wheat rolls with fillings of chopped bacon and onion and very tasty smoked pork were being prepared for the merrymakers. Especially for the occasion, the mother of each house made St. John's cheese, which was nothing more than cottage cheese with butter, eggs, and caraway seeds. The father of the house had an equally important duty to perform—namely, to pour the ale made from barley.

A happy and beautiful mood prevailed. How the full heart ached to bursting, how the soul soared to heaven in the joyousness of the day! Folk songs were written in the people's hearts and the silver-toned voices poured upward into the golden air. The fireworks crackled high above, then displaying colorful designs and patterns in the sky. The burning tar in the barrels, high on poles, shimmered like large stars on the rivers. Young folks and old folks alike, joined hands, and danced.

This was St. John's Day as I remember it; but wait—one of its legends has not yet been told. As the story goes, at midnight, on St. John's Day, a young couple may behold the starlike blooming of the fern in the forest. Only sweethearts, whose affections are genuine, may see the midnight blooming of the fern. So, at the end of that bright day, the young couples strolled into the forest, in search for the miracle of St. John's Eve.

A TOWN DIES

E. BIAJCO

It was a town of action once. Its people danced in the street, drank the red double wine, and shouted out the feelings of joy in their hearts. They wept for the dead, muffling the sounds of grief in moist pillows. The men worked and died, digging coal from the earth. The women bore and raised children. They grieved when husbands did not come home. The children questioned with fearful hope the prolonged absence of their fathers. They laughed as mother kissed a coal-blackened face. They learned of bravery and fear, of love and hate as they soaked up the joy and tragedy about them. There was a sparkle in the eye once.

Time passed. New ways and ideas upset the town and the people. Anthracite became a strange foreign word. Coal lost its luster; it became a piece of hard black rock.

No longer are there trips beneath the earth; no longer are the sounds of men and machines heard. There is no more raucous laughter from the barrooms, no more smiling within the homes, no more movement beneath the earth. The people are separated from the earth and from action. No one has spirit to cry or laugh or cheer when mother has to work and father has to mind the children; when clothes and food and even heat are scarce. The blank face is all there is. A depressed people haunt a depressed area. This is the twilight of a dying world.
MORNING

The world awoke in bird song
To stretch its old-man bones
To smile
And drowse a little
By the kindling hearth of Spring.

WALL

Patterns of the vines
Grip the rusted clay; and the
Snow plays a white harp.

QUIET

The silence
Of a lonely room
Is muted
Cricket sounds
And wind.

THEODORE OLIK

OMEGA AND ALPHA

J. BEHUN

It was after the drinks, the toasts, the stories, the tears. Friends and neighbors were gone. His grown daughter had left for her own home. Margita, his wife, had just gone to bed. But Josef Marek, husband, father, immigrant from Tabor in Czechoslovakia, remained sitting in the kitchen. Mental pictures flashed swiftly before him—Czechoslovakia, Tabor, the home of his youth, the farm, the family. The images finally focused on his beloved brother Stefan still living in Tabor. His seasonal letter to Europe was overdue. He must write Stefan tonight. It would be, he knew, the most important letter of his thirty years in America. He began:

Dear Stefan,

Today has been the saddest and strangest day of my life. My son Michael, just twenty-six years old was buried today! As you know from my previous writing, he was an American soldier who was killed in battle in that foreign country called Korea. You never saw him. It makes me very sad to think of that. I know you would have loved him. He was a good boy, a little lazy like all Americans, but strong in body and spirit.

I remember how often you urged me to return to Tabor. Each time I promised that soon I and my family would come home, but there was always something that delayed our departing. When Michael went to war, I cursed my indecision and misfortune for
not returning sooner. I also cursed the evil men everywhere who bring violence and death to peaceful people. It is as our father used to say, "When the nobles quarrel, the peasants bleed!"

When we received the news six months ago from the government that our son was dead, I told Margita that when Michael was returned and laid to rest at home, we would leave America and return to Tabor.

Early this morning Margita and I met the train that brought Michael home, but we were not alone. There were hundreds at the station, government officials, army officers, soldiers, our priest, friends, neighbors and strangers. Michael was ours, I thought, but was he in some strange way also theirs? The thought confused me. After the music and speeches we drove to church for the funeral Mass. Our priest spoke soft and warm about our son. It was good. After the service we were put into the leading car. It seemed like a long ride to the cemetery. Many people lined the sidewalks to watch with sadness and understanding. I could not see their faces. Tears and thoughts blinded me. I felt so lonely, Stefan, like the day I landed in America. How I prayed then to be able to earn a lot of money quickly so I could return to Tabor. I never really felt at home here but not because America had not been good to me. Actually, it is a blessed land. I have had a fine, steady job, good wages, a home fit for the very wealthy in Tabor and good health. Yet I have never felt a part of the land as I did in Tabor as a child and young man.

But something happened to me today during that ride to the cemetery. My feelings were not only sadness and loss but also pride and belonging. I knew then why I always felt like a stranger here. It was because I believed I was always taking from this land and never giving. But I realized I had given back to this land. I gave it my son in life to help it grow and remain strong. His duty called him to the end of his road. Stefan, I am an American; I have always been one—but more, this is my home!

I can write no more tonight. My love to you and your family. Write soon.

Your loving brother,

Josef

He folded the letter, placed it in an envelope, addressed and sealed it. Stefan will not understand, he thought. No matter. He did not completely understand it himself; but just as he knew when spring was in the ground, he knew he was right. He got up, blew his nose, strongly and thoroughly, put out the light and went to bed.
THE MILL
CHESTER HAAS

Dusk caught us at an aging mill
Beneath a hillside camp of pines
That were man-planted (so we thought
By lines they made around the hill).
We hadn't planned to bother with the mill
But that it bothered us in being vacant
And we descended to the power room
To find it undefended by a miller and his broom.
There we talked in idle speculation
Of the last administrator and his last administration.
When above our talk was heard the squeak
And creak of the ailing upper door
And sound of feet on the upper floor,
And we surmised that one who chose to watch the mill
Had come to ward away potential pillagers.
We climbed the stairs to meet him.
But "No," he said, "I've not come to keep
The mill from your hands so much as
I would keep you from the mill's."
I feared the place was haunted,
Not knowing what he meant in his seeming to say
What he didn't mean to say.
"It's not exactly haunted," he said,
"And if it were I wouldn't be the one
To tell you of its ghosts and how to treat them.
But I will—" and here he paused,
Preferring to say something he'd forgotten
By way of introduction.
"I saw you cross the open fields," he blurted,
"And thought you wouldn't know about the mill.
You campers keep a man from his own porch—"
(We didn't know what we had done in that behalf.)
"In summer when he most enjoys to sit and watch the mill
He's worked in all his life.
Sometimes I wish the trail was farther from my place,
But then—I like the telling folk
And I'd sort of hate to have to stop;

It's my own private project of a sort."
We took advantage of the lull to say our sorrows
Over how we'd trespassed in the mill
When we hadn't right to.
"It should be padlocked anyway," was what he had to say,
"And posted, too, but I keep an eye on things."
He spoke into the chamber we had left,
I haven't seen the room since Johnson died;
Johnson was my partner.
He died between the two big wheels you saw down there."
I thought I heard him chuckle here
And didn't look around for finding other eyes
Confirming what I thought I heard
And telling me that she had heard it too.
"Something there must have been to set the thing in action."
He continued, "Call it ghosts if you want to;
But it seems the mill has got a secret that it won't give up.
It's best you didn't prowl around;
It seems that those who do are courting trouble."
We looked back down the stairs
And strained our eyes through dusty webs to more dust
And the shadow of two huge wheels on dust.
We must have thought together in that moment,
"You don't mind our camping in the pines?"
We asked in unison.
"Oh no!" he said, "I've seen a thousand campers there
If I've seen one. There's plenty of good water
In the spring behind the mill;
I've drunk my fill there many times."
We doffed our hats in turning to the pines
And he yelled back in turning to his house,
"I hope you take the open spot.
I like the sight of campfires on the hill
Where I can see them from my porch
Or frame them in my kitchen window."
We said we'd bother looking for his kitchen light
(In return for his caring for our fires).
We waved farewell and climbed the hill
But passed beyond the open spot;
We camped the night behind a copipce
That screened our fires from his place.
We didn't enjoy meeting him, nor having seen the mill.
We moved on early in the morning.
Black pattern, as a forged screen, hangs
Impaled on the massive stone wall.

Ted Olik

Jane Warfield

Barton Dunlap
Grace Johnson, having completed her work for the day, was ready to settle down for an afternoon of television. The rugs had been vacuumed, the wash run through the washing machine — then the dryer — and finally steam pressed; the dishes had been washed clean by the dishwasher; all this had been accomplished with no particular discomfort because it was done in an air-conditioned house. As she lazily changed channels with her remote control unit, she began to daydream, for none of the programs were particularly interesting.

"We have it easy," she romanticised. "I'm surely glad I wasn't born before the benefits of modern science, for I can't see how it would be possible for me to get along without our conveniences. It's funny how these conveniences have a way of becoming necessities."

Her flight of fancy was shattered by the ringing phone. It was on the direct line from the laboratory of her husband, Dr. Noah Johnson. She knew something was wrong. Dr. Johnson's job was classified as "Top Security" by the government and all calls to or from his lab had to be cleared. He was not even allowed to discuss his work with her, and F.B.I. agents called on her occasionally to make sure that he never had.

"Grace?" her husband's voice asked as she picked up the phone.

"Who did you expect, Liz Taylor?" she teased. Dr. Johnson did not laugh.

"Now listen, honey," he said in a voice of apparently forced calmness, "Call the boys and tell them to get their families and come to my lab immediately — don't interrupt, just listen. Then you get here right away. Our instruments here at the lab have recorded a blast which could only have been made by an electron bomb dropped somewhere in Europe. The government is checking all sources before making the news public. This checking process will take about an hour. When the news is made public, there will probably be mass hysteria because this means total destruction of life on earth. In other words, you and the boys have one hour to get here."

Dr. Johnson hung up. He did not want to waste any time by talking, for there would be plenty of time for explanations later. He wanted to make sure his wife and three sons got to his laboratory before the announcement.

His youngest son and daughter-in-law were the first to arrive.

They wanted to know if the story were true and if it were, why they should come to the laboratory.

Careful not to get excited, Dr. Johnson explained to his son what had happened. "... and the reaction will be so violent that even the rocks will melt. No life could possibly survive. That is why I want you to come here. This project on which I've been working is our only chance." He explained suspended animation to them. His daughter-in-law grasped the idea immediately.

"In other words," she said, "We'll be glorified sleeping beauties. But where shall we sleep?"

Her father-in-law led them into an adjacent building; "We'll orbit the earth in this rocket while the earth cools down."

Eventually the rest of the family arrived. Each was told the reason for the summons.

When the space-ship was safely in orbit, they gathered around the radio and managed to pick up a program in English. "... Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done..."

"What else could they do except pray?" Mrs. Johnson interrupted.

"What shall we find when we land?" one of the sons wanted to know.

Dr. Johnson pointed to a dial. "That dial is an automatic detonator which is set to react when the earth has cooled and water again has formed. It will send a small rocket containing paramaecia and amoebae to earth. If Darwin's Theory is correct, animal and plant life should have evolved by the time we land."

"I hope the dinosaur age is past when we land," Mrs. Johnson said.

The family decided to "go to sleep" as they called it. Dr. Johnson explained that each chamber was set to awaken them simultaneously in the very distant future. However, each chamber was equipped with a manual control so that if one of the automatic devices failed, the others could wake up the "late sleeper."

Quite some time later they woke up. After they made sure everyone was physically fit, Dr. Johnson gave a few short blasts on the reverse rockets. The space ship began to slow down and soon started dipping in and out of the earth's atmosphere. Finally they landed.

They were all understandably hungry. The men decided to go hunting; partly to satisfy their curiosity about the nature of the animals they would find, partly to satisfy their hunger.

None of them knew how to make a bow-and-arrow, nor how to hunt in that primitive manner if they could make one. Furthermore, none of the women could cook without an automatic oven. Gradu-
ally they began to realize the hardships which lay before them.

The Johnson family then decided to destroy what remained of
scientific knowledge. Although they desperately needed scientific de-
vices, they knew it was science which had almost annihilated the
world, and they feared the same thing might happen in the future.
They blew up the rocket and all their possessions. They saved only
the clothes which they were wearing. The family then settled down
as simple farmers.

The only form of entertainment for these people was story-telling,
and the favorite story was the end of the world and consequent
rocket ride. The story was told and retold from generation to
generation. As scientific knowledge began to disappear, it became
harder and harder for the children to grasp the meaning of
"amoeba," or "suspended animation," or "rocket"; and finally when
the story was told, Dr. Noah Johnson's space-ship was called an
ark.

---

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ABSURD IN
THE STRANGER BY ALBERT CAMUS

KAREN WEIDMAN

Albert Camus' philosophy of the Absurd, as he states it, contains
several basic themes. These themes are, absurdity in a life situation,
a revolt against the absurdity, a refound freedom, and the trans-
forming significance of death.

In Camus' novel The Stranger, his hero, Meursault, is a man com-
pletely indifferent to everything in life. It is this indifference that
makes Meursault the victim of justice, and opens the way for him
to realize not only his own situation, but a principle governing all
men.

Immediately after his conviction for murder, Meursault is still
indifferent, but soon he begins to revolt against the idea of his
execution. He realizes that his former indifference stemmed from
his unconscious knowledge of the inevitability of death.

With this revolt, Meursault becomes a hero of the Absurd because
he realizes the absurdity of the situation in which he has been
placed. It is significant to note that in Camus' work The Myth of
Sisyphus, he stresses the fact that in order to have a true hero of
the Absurd, the character must first be cognizant of the situation in

which he finds himself. When Meursault realizes that all life is in
vain because all life ends in death, he is able to view his own death
with a strange sort of anticipation.

It can easily be seen that Camus' novel is really a well-polished,
literary vehicle for a philosophy. The philosophy is really more
important than the book as a separate work of art, and is only a
device used by Camus to reiterate his completely philosophical

The philosophy of both works is essentially the same. Camus is
always concerned with the significance of death. For him, since
death is inevitable, none of the earthly duties, achievements, or
virtues that people usually strive for, have any meaning. Out of
this realization of death grew Camus' revolt and his doctrine of the
Absurd.

In order to be significant, the Absurd must first be realized.
According to Camus, after a realization such as this, there are
only two alternatives, suicide or readjustment.

After Meursault's realization, and his becoming a true hero of
the Absurd, he has no choice in his fate, because his execution has
already been planned. He soon realizes that his execution is a kind
of suicide because of the indifferent attitude he held during his
life. Therefore his fate becomes a sort of self sacrifice to a principle,
and he welcomes death.

---

SWINGER OF BIRCHES

CHESTER HAAS

Swinger of Birches is an offspring of the Cox-Frost friendship of
many years. Cox's long acquaintance with Frost and his thorough
knowledge of the Frost poems, tempered by professional knowledge
of other writings and other men, work together to mark the author
as one most qualified to sketch the four-time Pulitzer Prize poet.
Indeed, the author's chief qualification for the work he has com-
pleted is his genuine understanding of the poet and his poems.
Cox knows his subject so well that it is good his interpretation is in
print. He has caught much of what Frost thought out loud about
life, love, war, reading, teaching, and writing.

Cox handles his lens very carefully, examining all the "poet-
pieces" and composing them together into one overall picture com-
prised largely of excerpts from the poet's writings and conversation.
Though the portraitry tries his best to blend these pieces together,
the picture blurs at times and is dark in places. This could be very annoying, but the figure of the poet is discernible throughout and holds the reader's attention.

What is the nature of the Frost that shines through? Is it the real Frost? Of course it is impossible to give a formula for the real Frost. One cannot say, "This plus that plus something else equals Robert Frost." One can qualify the statement and say, "As far as is discernible, this plus that plus something else equals Frost." Cox has slowly inched his way as close to the real Frost as possible.

The author of *Swinger of Birches* would have us know that the discernible Frost is a complex Frost. Above all, he would have us see that Frost is not a monist. To use words from the book, "He has been called romantic, classic, realist, naturalist, humanist, defeatist, complaisant; radical, conservative, reactionary. He swings." His mind is not one of foolish consistencies.

*Swinger of Birches* portrays the poet as one always turning tables, showing that someone had forgotten that all tables have undersides. Cox tells us that Frost's exploratory mind has made for the evolution of his particular philosophy based on experience. Frost's philosophy is not prescriptive; it is analytical and descriptive. It is not cut and dried; it is soft and pliable. It is not bookish; it has sprung from the school of life, from experience; it has been tested by experience and (judging by the poet's serenity) proved by experience. It is not made of tenets; it is made of tentatives.

Cox distinguishes his subject from other thinkers. He talks about the people who give up desires for security; who get new concepts by absorbing those of others; who individually have less and less mind; who are so busy with what is being said, thought, and written that they have neither time nor energy to make discoveries; who are the first to be second. They are the hanger-ons. Cox emphasizes the fact that Frost is not a hanger-on, that he meets things in stride and fathoms them for what they are worth.

Frost wrote in 1925: "The most exciting movement in nature is not progress, advance, but the expansion and contraction. The opening and shutting of the eye, the hand, the heart, the mind. We throw our arms wide in a gesture of religion to the universe; we close them around a person. We explore and adventure for a while and then draw in to consolidate our gains." This is Frost. This is the swinger who inscribes an arc without becoming so infatuated with any particular part of that arc as to be unable to leave it. There are few formulae about the man; what is cut and dried about him does not remain so for long. This swinging is the wholeness of the man as Cox portrays him.