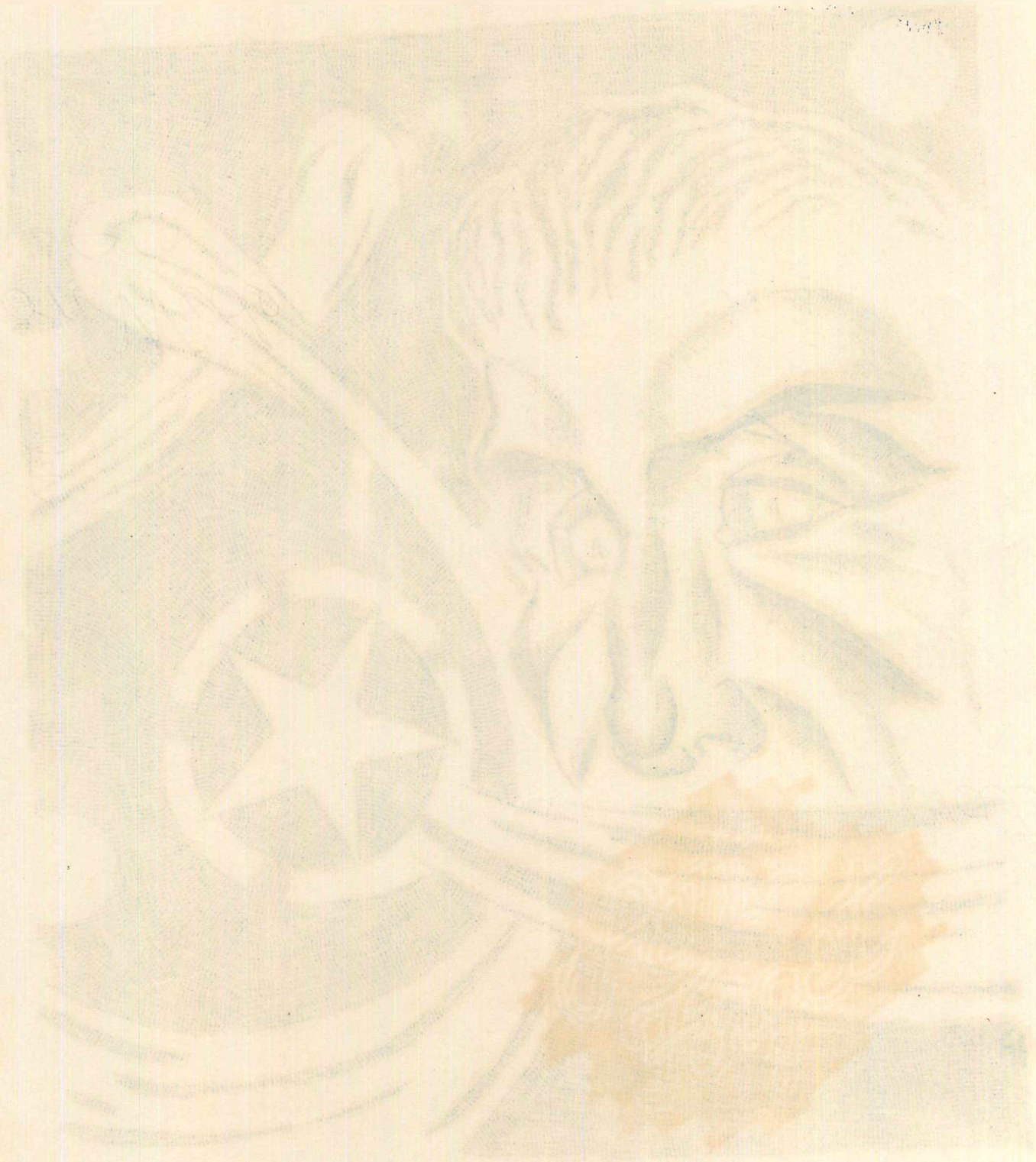


d i a b l e r i e



Historic



diablerie

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Don't
Forget

MALIAÑO

LET'S FORGET... by JOSEPH J FORTIER... fiction

JOE WANDERED AIMLESSLY BACK FROM THE CLUB CAR AND LURCHED WITH THE SWAY OF THE home-bound train. Even though his thoughts were rosy and warm, and his breath was cosy and strong, it was purely due to the shift of the train and not at all due to Joe's khaki form. Even with scars around them, steady gray eyes and firm bronzed hands proved that.

—There had been the girl, that one and only whom writers dream about, even virgin authors such as Joe, the one woman that only a dreamer could be faithful enough to see through and wed. Maybe particularly Joe. More of a dream had been his daytime newsbeat covering the city hall area and his partial nighttime manuscript reading. But the big dream had been the nights he would turn down damn swell party to produce his own literary brand until the almost late evening hours, to write, write, write... Almost forgotten were those days, but not quite and this trip he had resolved to bring them back, even now held a brown paper scribbled full of notes for his first comeback try.

--Pardon me, Miss, he said as pit-a-pat blue eyes picked themselves from almost under his chin. Joe's adam's apple matched his heart when a voice drifted out from under masses and masses of gorgeous blond hair: --Oh gee, Army, that's all right—really all right; and betrayed a young, curvaceous girl's pulse. It was only natural fate that when they were back at the GI coach Bette knew Joe and he half-wanted to know Bette even more.

—Yesterday agile, sensitive fingers had played across typewriter keys and full firm lips had tasted the night editor's whisky and kissed yielding, feminine flesh. Now agile, toughened fingers had learned to play across the triphammers of an air-cooled Browning and firm, chapped lips had tightened when the salty taste of sweat, and once blood, and even tears, had trickled down his face. And there had been Lei, the one he had pledged faithfulness to...

The two managed to carry on the ridiculous conversation that only totally perfect strangers can attack with flourish. And in the course of simple words and trite gestures life became something very intimate, always friendly, so Bette leaned her head against Joe's shoulder and one of them mentioned the car was getting chilly. A damp hand didn't even sense the brown paper full of writer's notes, good notes. Finally two pairs of feet were propped against the opposite seat, legs almost completely covered by a d r a b blanket, when Joe decided he really wanted to put his arms around Bette.

—Long months fading into years working for what you want, then a hell of a war and after a long time you go home on furlough to chase the fantasy of fiction for a brief spell, the very fantasy that had turned from sheer dreams to crawl into you and your buddy's foxhole out there. Joe had married last furlough, the only one until now. His wife, sweet and affectionate, offered everything a man wanted except something no one else had ever understood quite right—life. Joe thought of the first night home with his wife and didn't remember the girl, and he thought of words, wonderful words, but they gibbered away into nothingness...

Joe shook his head, turned sleepy eyes to the smiling face, the youthful, supple lips and near-bare shoulders in his arms. What was the look in his eyes, she wanted to know. Nothing, he told her. She had a boyfriend somewhere, though -- showed him the ring and began to chatter. Joe smiled and nodded, then looked vague. A furtive claw of memory wrestled with his mind as he tried to remember his wife who would meet him tomorrow, or was it the next day, and there was no girl for an instant, and there were no stories, never had been any words at all.

Joe's arm clutched the girl more tightly to cut away her words that were tearing something from him. She mustn't talk, not now, not when she might give everything a chance to come back to his memory and make him lose the brief touch with the anesthesia to a torn dream. --Forget it, kid, he murmured.

--Yes, let's forget, really forget, she answered back and she pressed her body tightly against him, ran her fingers up and down his back. Joe's eyes looked sleepy when the blanket was pulled higher and tighter but not the girl's. The olive drab cloth yielded a low moan and a sagaciously uttered --christ!

A crumpled, scribbly brown paper dropped unnoticed to the floor. Somewhere in the car a laugh crept down the aisle.

BANAL STORY:

Though I had previously decided, hours hence, that the viciousness of her lips was most uncomplimentary, and that she would undoubtedly talk of cabbages and kings, or worse—herself, I felt myself magnetically attracted toward her. As I settled on the bench in a half hearted manner, she turned to me and asked whether or not I would care for a peanut. I replied politely that while I could not climb her shoulder as the squirrels did, it would be a fascinating procedure, and accepted the small bag of nuts she tendered me.

And as she laughed I sat and watched the curves of her form shake attractively; the minute squirrels skittered off her arms and into the underbrush, and I munched my peanuts in an entirely detached manner.

Nevertheless she was aware of my intentions—they were admittedly not too admirable—and as she rose to leave, her supple grace and extended limbs beckoned slightly, either to me or the squirrels, though I could not tell since she still had one handful of peanuts to toss to them. I eyed her speculatively, always entirely detached, and when she returned my glance I knew that I had succeeded.

Nightmare

NUMBER FOUR

WE THOUGHT IT WAS A JOKE.

When we read in the papers that afternoon
 About some nut inventor down in Georgia
 With a device for printing matter on the air.
 No, it wasn't radio again,
 Or television; it printed matter on the air for you to read.
 And it wasn't exactly sky-writing, either, because this was permanent
 And wouldn't blow away. But there it was, just an item in the paper.
 It didn't mean much. Something to laugh about, or tell your wife
 --What will these guys think of doing next?
 And most people didn't even see it, I suppose. That's why it came
 As such a shock, when the advertisers took it up...

I remember the morning
 When I looked out of the window and saw the sign hanging there—
 Just hanging there, you understand, in bold black letters,
 Reading, HAVE YOU TAKEN A GOOD LAXATIVE LATELY, OLD TIMER?
 I know I blinked, and wondered if an airplane had written it.
 But no, the letters were only two feet high, and they were black,
 Black as ink. I know, because I went outside and touched them
 And they didn't go away, or even break.
 They were solid letters, and they hung
 Right outside my window, and they didn't vanish the next morning,
 This was the time it started—and on the streets, going to work,
 There were signs to read. EAT REEKIES—THEY'RE GOOD FOR YOU
 HAVE YOU HAD YOUR WINTER FUR RELINED? and GET YOUR CRANKCASE DRAINED.
 The passengers pointed them out in the bus. They puzzled, we all did
 But I don't think we were sore, then.


You see it was just starting,
 And there weren't many signs, and they were small, and nobody cared,
 Black and white, two feet high—POOPSI-COLA MAKES YOUR BLADDER GLADDER.
 After awhile we noticed how the men came out with their spray guns,
 Like insect exterminators, and sprayed the letters out.
 Little crowds used to watch them do it. And the radio comedians
 Made gags, and the columnists filled their columns
 But nobody wrote indignant letters to the newspapers.
 Yet.

Then they began spraying signs on the lawns.
 And on driveways.
 And above houses.
 And the streets were crowded with signs, signs, signs.
 Black specks of printed matter, wherever your eyes turned.
 And advertising agencies were sued by indignant property owners,
 But the air was free. Wasn't it? The courts thought so.
 Motorists complained that signs over the roads blocked visibility.
 There were accidents. Men were killed, but the ads went on.
 To sell more bread. To sell more tonics to help digest the bread.

over

To sell more laxatives to help you get rid of the bread
Once you digested it.

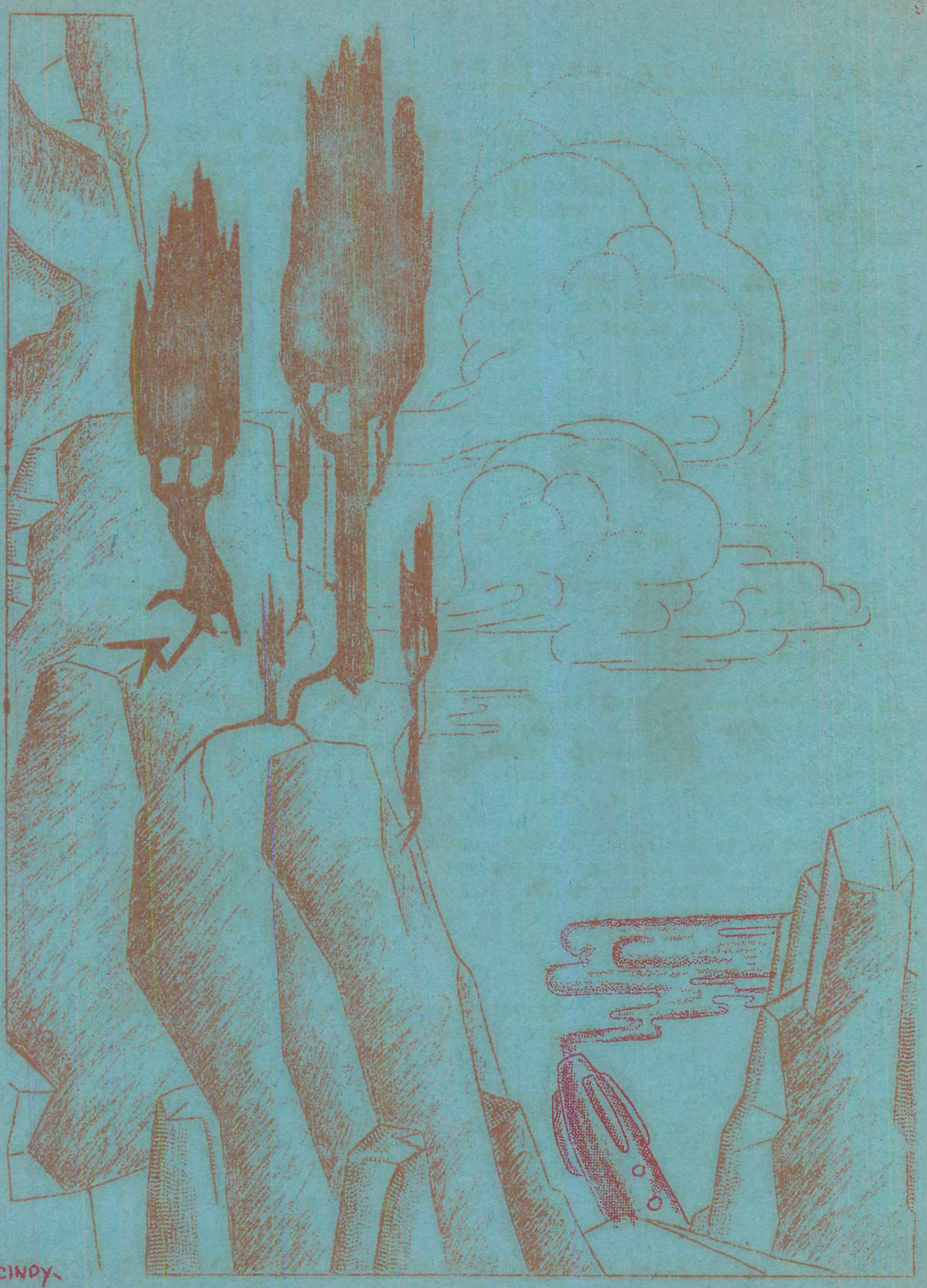
And then, of course, they advertised more bread again.
That's how it went, and we might have become used to it, in time,
If only the signs hadn't started getting bigger. And thicker.
Two feet tall in the air. Then five feet tall. Then ten feet.
And the letters a foot thick. The air became black. Foul.
There was some secret ink in the signs and you breathed it
And it made you retch. But that was all right.
One of the signs said, USE SIMPSON'S PILLS AND STOP RETCHING.
There was a cure.
But not for blindness, not for insanity, not for the perpetual sight
Of those signs, floating over Broadway and Park Avenue,
Twisting between lawn and sky on palatial estates,
Weaving between clothes-lines in the slums,
Shadowing the sun in a black blot over the city.
And then,
They made the signs in color.
And then they made them in Neon to light up the night
And blindness and insanity really began to pile up vital statistics.
But everybody stopped advertising in magazines and over the air.
Because visual, direct advertising was cheaper and more profitable.
And what if the signs did tangle up in streaming criss-crosses ?

They got the insects to work, then.
Innoculated them, I suppose. Trained them, perhaps.
To void out the signs. No more sprayers. Insect thoraxes
Spewed out the signs in patterns.
Of course they tried to pass some laws.
They always do when it's too late. And it was too late now.
There were insects everywhere. Insects in clouds.
Insects in black swarms, spurting from distended bellies
Each forming his little letter: his dot, his dash, his period.
Too man insects.
Too many to train, too many to control. So they bred.
Bred, and flew, and devoured.
They ate the grain that made the bread.
They bored through boxes of SIMPSON'S PILLS.
It didn't do any good to reline your winter furs. They ate them too.
The skies were really black now. Black with flying forms.
It was too late. The plague came, and then the famine.
There weren't any consumer goods left to consume, nor any consumers:
And—belated blessing !—there weren't any advertisers any more.
Just the insects flying
Aimlessly through print-spattered air. Droning by the signs made
Meaningless through lack of eyes to read them. And insect retinas
Flickered down on an empty world where there was nothing left
But words.
Lucky for me
I saved a few to write this down. 

ROBERT BLOCH, with apologies to S V Benet

Collison Course

Collision Course



CINDY-

EVERYBODY IS WRITING MEMOIRS . . . MILTY ROTHMAN

IT'S LIKE THIS: ONE DAY I SUDDENLY DISCOVER I'VE BEEN IN THE ARMY EXACTLY TWO years, and I'm thinking of all the things that happen in all that time. And what I think proves once more that the best thing about fandom is the fact that wherever you go in the country there will be people in the vicinity whom you know.

Those off-duty hours in the life of a serviceman are a thing of joy, but they can also be poison when you get to the point of wandering the streets of a strange city trying to decide what movie to see next. So, when I come to the place named San Francisco, it's nice that I can call up a guy I never saw named Bill Watson and say: Watson, this is Rothman.

Of course, all the time I've spent visiting science fiction fans could have been spent at some joint with a dame, and lots of guys would say that I've been wasting my time. But what good's a dame if she can't talk about rockets or atomic physics?

(My god, Laney will kill me for this !)

I got my first furlough when I'd been in the army only three months. That's because I was going to California—just like a pre-overseas furlough. Now that I've been in California I should get a colored service ribbon to wear—it's just the same as being in a foreign country.

So I get the furlough and high-tail it down to Washington D C from the Aberdeen Proving Grounds. I call up Jack Speer and ask him could I see him Sunday morning. Nope, he says. He has to go to church. Which, if you know Speer, is slightly incredible. But, indeed, there was an ulterior motive. That I won't tell, tho, not even the color of her hair.

So I shoot up to New York and wait under Father Duffy's statue in Times Square for Fred Pohl, who was then editing Astonishing. And Times Square was blacked out, and it was like the dimmed lights in Washington reminding you things were different. Fred Pohl was one of those guys who actually wanted to get into the army. And, ironically, his physical shape kept him out until they finally drafted him.

At Elsie Balter's apartment the rest of the Futurians were playing poker and drinking wine, and for a couple of hours it felt like the old days being with a bunch of Famous Fans.

Them were the days when authors were joining the army and navy in droves, and when I saw Norton on that trip he looked at me with that St. Bernard expression and asked hopefully if I had time to write anything for Astonishing. Having just got out of basic training, and not knowing what a goldbrick deal my army life was to be in the next several months, I gave a weary laugh and said no, nobody has any time in the army.

So after that I lived in the stables at Santa Anita with plenty of (page 12)

... whenever I got too broke to run into Los Angeles) so I wrote
... after while it came back saying: I liked the
... that was the last anyone heard of as-

... very first time I did that in L.A., a few hours after landing
... was to look up [unclear] and rejoining was rejoining
... a sterling addition was made to the LARS meetings.

Some of the meetings were good, others were not particularly inspiring, although
they had not degenerated to the point at which the Klugees walked out.
... to be a good conversation meeting light off to the concert I would
... would be there a number.
... of the Philharmonic and
... the latter wasn't a member of the LARS, so he doesn't count.

The last meetings were the nights when I was in the room & always taking pic-
tures. Yoke would bring his suitcase of paraphernalia and I'd have Yoke's
... and we would ...
... the lady would ...
... it's a ...

My father's memory of ...
... to Shostakovich records ...
... That's ...

There is a ...
... But somehow there was ...
... I ...
... it was hard to realize that had been
... a good thing for him that he ...
... to get in the ...
... Some of our very best people came from ...
... I have anything against ...
... that they ...

Which brings us to ...
... length of ...
... Since this ...
... who ...
... but I don't believe in
... talking like that in a fellow's own ...

The Frisco fans, though not numerous, turned out to be a good bunch. Any people
like Lou and Lorraine Smith, who keep an ice box and let you dig around in
it at will, are good people. ...
... how I feel that beneath that maligned and mis-
... and for a couple of
... the old days being with
... Fans...

... I finish my ...
... Whenever I go, the ...
... is Rothman coming?



spare time (i.e., whenever I got too broke to run into Los Angeles) so I wrote a story and sent it to Norton, and after awhile it came back saying: I liked the story, but we're not buying anymore. And that was the last anyone heard of Astonishing.

Of course, the very first thing I did when I hit L.A., a few hours after landing at Santa Anita, was to look up Ackerman and Morojo, and rejoicing was rejoiced by all that such a sterling addition was to be made to the LASFS meetings.

Some of the meetings were good; others were not particularly inspiring, although they had not yet degenerated to the point at which the Knarves walked out. If there happened to be a good concert on meeting night off to the concert I would go, and often as not Paul Freehafer and Bruce Yerke would be there as ushers. Ray Bradbury and Edward Robinson were also frequenters of the Philharmonic Auditorium, but the latter wasn't a member of the LASFS, so he doesn't count.

The best meetings were the nights we made the clubroom a shambles taking pictures. Yerke would bring his suitcase of paraphernalia, and I'd have Tessie, my camera, and we would flash bulbs madly, climb on tables, crawl under tables, and generally raise hell until the landlady would threaten to foreclose the mortgage, or whatever it is that landladies do.

My fondest memory of L.A. was the night Bronson, Yerke, and I were at Freehafer's apartment drinking wine and listening to Shostakovich records. That's a rare thing that can't come again.

Then it was up to Oregon, and the only far within hundreds of miles was Rosco Wright, and now that I look back on that year I spent there it seems ridiculous to me that I didn't get to see him more than once. But somehow there was always something to do on Sundays, which was the only chance I had to see him. I found Wright a good-looking, ambitious kid, and it was hard to realize that he'd been working on that farm all his life. It is a good thing for him that he got away from the farm when he did, even if he had to get in the navy to do it. Not that I have anything against farms. Some of our very best people come from farms. The important thing is that they came away in time.

Which brings us to San Francisco, a long ride across that marvelous bridge, a length of trudging up that awful hill to California Street, and the face of Willie Watson in the doorway. Since this is Willie's magazine, I could earn many browning points by telling what a nice guy he is, what hospitality he extends, and how generously he treats the visiting man, but I don't believe in talking like that in a fellow's own magazine.

The Frisco fans, though not numerous, turned out to be a good bunch. Any people like Lou and Lorraine Smith, who keep such an ice box and let you dig around in it at will, are good people, verily. Honig, I haven't seen enough of to allow an opinion to crystalize. Somehow, I feel that beneath that malignant and misunderstood exterior there lies a nugget of worth. But of course I'm just an old softie.

So next week I finish my training at the Signal Corps School and come to the next turn in the crooked road. Wherever I go, tho, doorbells and telephones will ring and people will wonder: is Rothman coming? ■

MR WELLS AND MR

Huxley

by JOHN F BURKE

IN A RECENT ARTICLE MR H G WELLS, DISCUSSING, AS USUAL, THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE that is to be built on the ruins of the present system, declared that his new world would have no room for people like Aldous Huxley. Mr Wells, the eternal optimist, is revolted by the pessimism of the poor unfortunate who could see no way out of the Brave New World but suicide. There is little doubt that he would be equally appalled at Stanley Weinbaum's New Adam. Are we to accept Mr Wells' optimism as the best way out of our troubles or must we admit that Huxley is right?

Whatever the possibilities the future may hold, there can be little doubt that Aldous Huxley's books are much more realistic and derived from everyday life among certain classes of people, despite their satirical extravagance. His highly- (perhaps over-) educated intellectuals commit suicide with more conviction than Mr Wells' innumerable Little Men—the Kippes, the Lewishams, the Britlings, and all that monotonous family—face up to life. Huxley's defeatists are sensitive; Wells' optimists have the optimism of stupidity: he insults the class he is endeavoring to glorify by making its representatives in his books mere puppets, all turned out in the same mould. We are apparently faced with the alternative of a death self-inflicted, because of over-sensitivity, or a blind, futile, unaesthetic life that only goes on because the race is too dull to recognize its own ugliness.

Somewhere there must be a compromise. If the purpose of Brave New World was to persuade readers that they must forsake science and take up life on the land, using bows and arrows to catch their food, it must be dismissed; I do not think that it was written with such a purpose. If Mr Wells, on the other hand, thinks that his world, like that of a somewhat earlier philosopher, will be better off without the writers—and particularly writers like Aldous Huxley—then Mr Wells cannot expect praise from the discerning.

It is possible for the intellectual to compromise, because the well-educated man has an intelligence that will, sooner or later, show him he is wrong and must make some adjustments; but for H G Wells' heroes, stuck in their rut, there is no compromise or alteration possible. They have dogged determination? Say, rather, stubborn incomprehension. They have not the necessary intelligence to achieve the change, even if they could be persuaded to recognize how essential it is.

The little men who run out of the innumerable pages of the books of H G Wells can be made useful; they are ideal material for dictators to shape into automata, but they are also potential helpers for the thinkers of the world. The Huxleyan philosopher, wild as he may be at times, is trying to find his way out by attacking the more obvious faults in the world, until he is left with something that will stand up to his attacks and thus provide a satisfactory basis for reconstruction. In the work of reconstruction he needs labor, and here is where the Wellsian legions come in. Let Mr Wells forsake his happy (page 21)



PIERROT

Look for me...look for me...

Past wind and sky and stars

On a twilight world

Where an undiscovered sea

Beats ceaselessly, tirelessly

On jeweled sands on hidden shores

To blur the chased outlines of memory,

Remember me...remember me...

As the echo of a twisted thought,

The shadow of a phantom's breath,

Lost in cool obscurity,

Remember me...remember me—

In faint, forgotten melodies.

Remember how a high and alien laughter shone

Through the humdrum tread of eternities. ■■

ARTHUR KENNEDY

B R E V I T Y . . . E D D I E C L I N T O N J R . . . a r t i c l e

TO STAND FOR A LOST CAUSE IS ONE OF TWO THINGS: IDIOCY OR MAGNIFICENCE. IF THE stand forthwith made here springs from idiocy, it goes without saying that I must be forgiven and forgotten; if it is magnificence, then I must needs rush to the task without further delay—lest I be forgotten regardless.

Too often it has been said that in science-fiction, a story by its nature needs room for expansion to be good or to achieve the purely local immortality to which all worthwhile science-fiction stories are destined—or doomed. Yet it is perhaps ironic that the very editorial force that has fostered this philosophy—the Campbell-Astounding regime—has also been responsible for the rise of the short science-fiction story from the pure-hack-and-snappy-idea stage in which it was to be found up until 1937 to a level where it could initiate a whole new brand of science-fiction and bring at least one follower to its defense. But, though ironic, it is hardly illogical—what made the Astounding of 1939-1940-1941 so excellent was the writing—the style, the realization of the human factor and the turn from materialism and robotism to humanism and logic; and without these things, there could never be a good short story, not in any field of writing.

All of which leads directly to the thought at hand: that the quality of writing in a short story is, necessarily—by the very nature of the problem of brevity confronting the author—finer than in longer tales. This may be because of the very "elbow room" which long stories are amply supplied; that is, the ultimate effect on the reader is, in the case of long narratives, the result of a slow accumulation of data and plot and force which, taken on the whole, leaves a tremendous impression. But with a short story, it is another thing entirely: in a very few words, the author must put something very definite and very precise forth with force—be it mood, plot, surprise ending, or whatever. Here the writer must, by sheer ability to use words, win over complete control of the reader's mind. If he does not, his story will fail; and, in science-fiction, it will revert to an idea yarn, which is almost to say a poor story.

Having summarily defended the short story and made the stand for brevity, a little proof is in order...

You've probably read Final Blackout. Yes, we are in absolute agreement—there was the cream in science-fiction, a brilliantly told story of man in decadence the story of what happens to man when his hatred and his lust for killing gets the best of him. L Ron Hubbard did a nice job on that one.

But another writer told the same story in a tenth the space, and he told it with a force and a power that Final Blackout never approached. The writer's name was Kelleem—Joseph E Kelleem, and he called his yarn Rust. Simple and deft, that title—like the story...oh, oh yes! Now you remember...

Well! The Time Machine, you will generally concede, stands pretty near the top in that line of story; it, and John Taine's Time Stream, are but definitely the best time travel stories yet concocted.

--We'll be the happiest people in the world,
iest, gayest, most in love two people in the

Steve. The happ-
world...



Gravity

Now I'll tell you about a three page story that has them both beaten the proverbial six ways from Sunday. Sure, you've read it, and you remember it, too— It ended with one of the finest scraps of mood writing ever to see print in a science-fiction magazine:

"--Steve, she cried. Her arm pressed him, her hand squeezed his. We'll be the happiest people in the world, Steve. The happiest, gayest, most in love two people in the world. And we'll go on being that, Steve—forever.

"Two trumpets were taking a hotchotch, unmuted, their notes sharp and high and quivering.

"--Forever, he said."

Brother, that's writing. Without seeing another word of the story, you can sense the utter ironic tragedy in those three paragraphs. Now you know—Forever Is Not So Long, by F Anton Reeds, May, 1942 Astounding.

What it took Will Stewart three stories and well over 100,000 words to tell, was told a long time before by Isaac Asimov in a tenth the wordage. With Stewart it was Seetee that was the great dream, and with Asimov it was the eternal dream of science-fiction, but Trends in its brevity was everything and more than the Stewart series ever could have been, with all its length and wordiness; and this one opened up the field of social-science-fiction.

Which is still not to criticize long stories.

But, like anything else, they have their limitations. Limitations that do not apply to briefer works; for short stories have told and can tell stories that an E B Smith with all that magnificent adjectivity could never possibly put down right.

Try to make something more out of The Forgiveness of Tenchu Taen, and see what you get. What's there is a story—a thought, an emotional bubble complete in all ways. It was a serious contender for top honors in that year of 1938.

Helen O'Loy, by Lester del Rey, is another. Touching, poignantly told, it is hardly a science fiction story and yet would be nothing without the basic science-fiction facet that puts it into the classification. Helen O'Loy, incidentally, is one story told in the first person where the reader did place himself in the hero's position—you just automatically fell in love with Helen.

Read the Long Winter again—yes, that's right, the middle of 1940. Many authors have told the same story, and they have tried to achieve the same end in length—but human emotion and grim irony cannot be stretched out over thousands of words and remain real, and thus Gallun has succeeded in brevity where all others have failed in their superfluity. The Long Winter is the story of man against the elements.

Try another by del Rey—there's a man with style—and you'll never call van Vogt's The Search great—some have. Del Rey's Dark Mission has it licked.

That's proof. It's more—it's the reservoir of evidence that can be flung in

"standing on the record". You can't argue against material like that, I don't think.

There are more—many more, little jewels of imagination and writing technique that stick in the memory, right beside the big gems, the super-novels and the epics. Stories like Alf Bester's Adam and No Eve, which may have been an old idea, but was done nonetheless in a particularly pleasing manner. To illustrate how absolutely serious a wacky idea could be made, Heinlein under the guise of MacDonald threw at us, We Also Walk Dogs, and we received an intense measure of satisfaction from reading the yarn—even though it's not a classic, agreed.

There's Liar, and all of Isaac Asimov's other robot tales, proving conclusively that a good psychological story is short one modelled after a stiff uppercut to the jaw: brief and effective.

Read Sunspot Purge by Simak and call it hack if you will, but know as you do that you'll remember those last words as long as you read science-fiction. Try Quietus by Ross Rocklynne, and feel uneasy as no novelette or novel will ever make you feel uneasy. Read Emergency in the same issue, by Vic Phillips, and you'll see the type of story that simply couldn't grow up into even a novelette. For mood, try one by the author of Rust—this one's called The Last of the Asterites; finish it, and you'll appreciate mood writing as few other authors can make you appreciate it.

Just for uniqueness, there's AMPhillips' wonderfully and sincerely told Chapter from the Beginning; and for modern justification of the idea-yarn, there is always Bob Heinlein's Life-line to give one new faith in science-fiction.

And if you're after humor—put down that d e Camp novel! Read, instead, Hubbard's Dangerous Dimension and get a real chuckle or two. And if it's an epic you want, there is always Eric Frank Russell's Mana. There's an epic for you—in three pages. If you liked van Vogt's monsters, try van Lorne's Marinorro and get just as much pleasure in half as much time.

This could go on for pages; which would be very very useless. Instead, here's a suggestion: think back, go back through your files yourself. Pickings nowadays are pretty slim, anyway, and one is oft tempted to give up the whole thing and stop buying the magazine; but rather than that, don't lose faith—brush through a few of the truly great and beautiful short stories, that, unnoticed and unsung have graced the pages of Astounding in the past, squeezed in between the super-novels and the high-powered classics.

You'll be pleasantly surprised!

silent gull

i too am lonely when i see you perched
atop a slimey pole
watching the contour of the tide

SYLVIA MOORE

FRONT!

THE STAFF

PEOPLE HAVE ASKED FOR THE RETURN OF THIS COLUMN, AND SINCE WE HAVE A NUMBER OF different contributors this issue, we feel that we might as well bring it back. We'll take the peoples in order, as they appear in the magazine...

JOE J FORTIER: Now a private in Uncle Sam's army, Joseph is assured of enough hooch and good times until at least the end of the whar. He was, at last hearing, stationed at MacDill Field in Florida. We wonder offhand if he has visited Raym, the hermit-poet (harumph), of Live Oak. Undoubtedly some swamp wench led him off the path, if he ever attempted the journey. 'Tenny rate, Let's Forget is undoubtedly Joe's best fiction to date. We're happy that we could publish and illustrate it.

BOB BLOCH: An introduction is hardly necessary here, for Bob has had stuff published in almost every magazine from Weird Tales on up to Esqy. Or has he hit Esqy? We don't know, strictly speaking, but if he hasn't yet, he undoubtedly will. At least his ability should net him a place on the mag's contents page someday. Bob's Nightmare Number Four is tops, so we think, and we figure that you'll enjoy it too. It reminds us of those endless signboards one sees while spinning along the highways today, or rather, a couple years ago. They have purty pitchers though.

CINDY: Short for Avona Close, who is now doodling eerie landscapes for bleery, bless her heart. Our particular favorite in the two-color job titled Collision Course. We of course stenciled it. You can tell by the botchy lines and all-around sloppy effect. Nevertheless, the originals were purty. Dammit, no money for lithographs.

MILTY ROTHMAN: Ahh-h-h-h. Those happy Sundays when Milty would drop into town and we'd chat and maybe go down to Chinatown or Original Joe's for dinner; only Original Joe's was always so damn crowded we'd have to settle for baked ham in pineapple sauce or baked salmon or—we drool. Or the jaunts over to the Psmiths when we would blow in unexpected and slurp port or iced sauterne and munch olives and sandwiches and cough over cake and cookies when they went down the wrong way. Milty never did get an opportunity to meet the Cripps, the male member of the family who is intensely interested in rocketry and its various phrases. He brought over Swisher's treatise on the subject one day, but I had failed to contact Jimmy and so he had to write me an article which is included in this issue, but nevertheless met Frank Holby and we chatted for hours and Frank told us about the horrors of Texas and invirons until Milty decided he had to go.

JOHN F BURKE : This article is reprinted from ZENITH, top English fanzine. About the author we know nothing, but are in complete accord with the views expressed in his article.

ARTHUR KENNEDY : The real name of this chum is obvious, if anyone has made a study at all of his poetry, all of which was published in STAR-STUNG. Pierrot is probably his best composition to date. The illustration is lovely, too, we think, but know that Ebey would feel slighted if we mentioned it. We wish he would write more---more often. No such luck, though.

EDDIE CLINTON JR : Eddie's article last issue was the longest we've run this far, and as the result his article this issue is lamentably short. Thanks for the quote, though, chum, what lovely illustrations it offered. We could only do one though, again dammit. That's life, though, we guess. Can't have everything. Don't weep, peepul.

SYLVIA MOORE : ---is of course Shirley Chapper, whom we've interviewed before. A short resume might be in order, though: has had poetry in SAPPHO, PARADOX, CENTAURI, and a biting (though somewhat maudlin) review in Kepner's TOWARD TOMORROW. Poor Jimmy, someday we guess that he'll learn the meaning of the term 'poetry'. How did the safari into Pershing Square come out, Jimmy? We wonder if Honig was still in good shape...

MALIANO : The meaning, in literal Castillian: 'Bad Year'. Nevertheless the cat-tracks done under the name have been received fairly well, at least good enough to continue using the name. We hope Joe is pleased, since Maliano tried to make the pitchur of the man look a little like Fortier. He didn't remember much about Joe's looks, though. Maybe he wasn't impressed; and at such an impressionable age, too! Tsk tsk, what will Kull think? Never mind, people, if you can't understand it; we know Joe does, don't you, Chosef? No? How sad. ☹

MR WELLS & MR HUXLEY...continued

DREAMS OF A MID-VICTORIAN UTOPIA PEOPLED with replicas of Mr Polly. One hopes that all those silly little nondescript men are creations of an author's imagination; if they were real, and if the future of the world rests in their hands, then let us sit down and weep.

The Wellsian optomist will give you life, but no opportunity to see the beauty there may be in life; the Huxleyan pessimist will see all the potentialities of this "world, unfathomably fair", but realize that in the midst of such c r a w s materialism he will never have the opportunity to use those potentialities.

Woe betide the unbeautiful stodginess of his optomistic future world if there is "no place" for Mr Huxley's analytical satire. ☹

be very kind to us, chums

AND SO, DEAR CHILDREN, WE DRAW THE BLINDS OVER ANOTHER ISSUE OF BLEERY. THIS one, we figure, is a damnsight better than any preceding ones, cause there's many, many more illustrations, and line outs too!, plus what we think is a considerably better balanced contents page (meaning the contributions). The last issue is something for which we are lamentably sorry, and hope that you will forgive the horrible make-up and mediocre material. Or rather, we should say, the spotty material. 'Twill never happen again, we assure you.

You've of course noticed the switchback in general makeup, a sort of revolt over the stereotyped formats of the past. We've published six issues of bleery now, and have come to the conclusion that this particular format is the best, for all around circulation and the various personalities involved. Hope you feel the same.

Also of some note and perhaps of some interest is the cut in the number of pages now being pubbed. Henceforth, we are holding publication down to 24 pages, and come hell or high water, or a flood of material (no snickers, please, it may happen someday) we are going to stick to that figure. It's not the dough involved, nor the effort; we like to pub bleery; nevertheless, we figure that oftener publication is far better than 50 pages twice a year.

Too, just for the sheer hell of it, we want to see how many fairly sized issues we can publish between now and the time when we join the Merchant Marine, in June. We figure ten as a minimum, or rather, three more after the publication of this one, and hope to do as many as twelve. It all depends on whether or not you cooperate—by sending material.

Missed this issue are Jack Wiedenbeck, Marijane Nuttall, and Eddie Price. We hope, however, that they'll be back with the 8th number. Vaguely (oh, very vaguely!) hoped for is another yarn by Fortier, but then, Joe's pretty busy these days and can't be bothered with civilians. Nevertheless, we can hope.

Lesse, wot else can we talk about? Well, we can retrace our steps, and say: 1) we need material, so badly we'll do anything to get the stuff 2) we also need some good poetry, since we can't always be yelling at Marijane and Banks for stuff, and George complains that he's written dry. Danyou, Burbee! Why the hell can't you fill up Shangri-L'Affaires with Crozetti's stuff? We know it is bad, but then— 3) the old saw about illustrations. Wiedenbeck, lucky boy, got hisself hooked and is pretty busy setting up housekeeping. Watson and Cindy can't go on drawing forever, filling up pages and pages, so why don't you fellas help a guy out? Bob Jones, front! 4) our publication date is still damned sketchy, but you can expect a copy at least every two months, if not a monthly. Sorry we can't pull a fanewscardweekly, really.

And that is all. Drink hearty! **EN**

THE STAFF