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To

Sir Winnifred Humphrey Witherspoon
(may you always
have as many
as you think
you can handle)

In his dreams he saw them
naked
and kissing every portion of his body
in ecstasy
if he but smiled

then he awoke

and put on his tie
and tied his shoes
and brushed his hair
and his teeth

And sold movie tickets
to the very old
and the very young

on forty-second street

Jack Smith

Consider

the shoe shine man
on the staten island ferry

he daily depends
on the laziness
of the world

and kneels
to produce respectability
for a quarter

his cry
is not unlike the almsman

Shine
Shine
Shine.....for the love of allah

Jack Smith

BILLIE'S CLUB

WILLIE SUTTON STOLE A BOOK,
("SING, SING," DID THE ANGELS SEND HIM?)
BILLIE'S CLUB WAS BOTHERED,
AND INCARCERATED HIM,
AND CONFISCATED THE BOOK,
THE BODY OF EVIDENCE.

THE BOOK NOW LIES IN THE CEMETARIUM,
(PART OF THE CATHOLIC MULTIVERSE)
WHERE BOY-GAMES ARE PLAYED BY MEN,
WHERE THESE DEAD-WATER BARNICLES SPIN A WEB
OF ABSTENTION AND DOGGED DERISION
OVER MEDITATIONS OF CONTRADICTIONS,
WHERE NERONORMAL ENERGY AGITATES
THE INSTILLMENT OF DISTILLMENT
SO THAT ALL MIGHT WITHER IN THE FIRE,
WHERE PROVOCATIONS ARE REVOKATIONS
OF THOUGHTS OF VACATIONS.

THE BOOK LIES BY ITSELF,
(HAMLET IS SECOND ONLY TO JESUS)
COMMITTS FRATRICIDE ON ITS PEOPLE,
CALLS IT EUTHANASIA OF A STEEPLE,
YET THE CHARACTERS REMAIN:

Jay Christian healed the blind,
And became blind himself,
Luke Matthews wrote on him,
Mark Johnson did likewise,
Gospel gossipers both,
Jay Christian they did betroth.

PAWNBROKER TETZEL READ THEM,
IN HIS INDULGENCE SHOP,
BUT HE OVERINDULGED,
DEMANDED TOO MUCH,
SO LUTHER CHEAPSON QUIT,
AND OPENED HIS OWN SHOP,
DROPPED NINETY-FIVE FECES,
THEN FELL FROM HIS PERCH,
WHEN HE CRAVED PURITY
AT AN ORGY FOR WORMS.
(HERE HE STOOD,
HE COULD DO NO MORE.)

BUT CALVIN PRICE QUIT WITH HIM,
WITH A JUSTIFICATION
OF PREDESTINATION,
WHICH FOUND ITS STATION
IN THE CATHOLIC MULTINATION.
(SAVONAROLA SAID:
"THE ASS ALONE SAW ANGELS.")

continued on next page
Witt Halle

BILLIE'S CLUB cont'd

THE BOOK LIES,
SO IRONCLAD RAMS HOLD CABINET MEETINGS
INSTEAD OF MASSES,
AND A FREE-SOIL MACHINE
INDULGES THE GRIMY LIONS OF CITIES,
UNTIL WILLIE SUTTON FINDS A KEY,
AND STONES BILLIE'S CLUB,
WHERE THE ICON LASTS UNTIL ICONOCLASTS.
("JUDGE THE FATHERLESS,
PLEAD FOR THE WIDOW.")

Witt Halle

"The Reflections of Janet Calloway"

Janet Calloway turned her face from one side to the other while looking in the mirror, glancing at this wrinkle and that one; and then she decided that the hour and a half she had spent applying makeup was unequal to the effort.

Earlier in the morning she had received a telephone call from Barney Plattel, who told her that he would be over at her house around 5:00. She did not question this declaration but hung up the phone with a contented exhalation of breath.

She had not seen Barney in weeks; in fact, she had not seen any man in weeks, and the gnawing feeling she got in the pit of her stomach became the cynosure of her recognition of growing age.

She looked again into the mirror but there was still no improvement. She thought it made little difference since she had a wonderful personality. She smiled. Her teeth were turning from yellow to brown, but still--there was a trace of vivaciousness, she thought. She rose from the chair and put her bathrobe over her nude frame. Then she went into the bathroom to brush her teeth for the third time that day.

Janet was 37. She had long black hair, green, almond eyes, a slightly curved nose, and a thin, well-shaped body. But in the past few years she had forgotten that beauty is not eternal and had not taken care of herself. All she cared for was men, a bedroom, and a dimmed light. As a result, she had acquired wrinkles on her face that made her look older than 37; she had eaten too many rich foods so that her stomach looked five months pregnant; and she had ceased to brush her teeth. Today was the first time she had brushed them in months. Nevertheless, she still had an aura of beauty and she knew that sooner or later a man would again call her.

She came out of the bathroom and started dressing, putting on, finally, a yellow chiffon cocktail dress which ended four inches above her knees. She was content. Feeling young again in a dress meant for one much younger and with much thinner legs, she thought she could sense the rise of her hidden charms onto her outer frame.

Always, at least through her thirtieth birthday, she had been known for her high, if not perverted, sense of humor. She had been known for her ability to communicate with any level of man, rich or poor, intelligent or moronic (she could not even approach other women much less talk to them); and she was known to exude some undefined quality that made men feel at ease. It could have been her

sultry beauty or her out and out craving for sex, yet no man who came in contact with her was sure. But in the last seven years she had lost her charm, and this, added to her loss of beauty, had slowed the progress of men to her door. Janet thought this was only due to the wrinkles in her face; she still believed she was the possessor of great sociability.

It was 5:00 and Barney had not yet arrived. She remembered him from a dance about a year ago, where they had talked quietly for five minutes and then had retired to her apartment. She saw him only once after that, again at her apartment, when she had come back from shopping and had found him in her bed, undressed and waiting impatiently. Barney was a nice guy, she thought, if only he would come more often and not treat her like some warm vegetable.

She went into the living room and to the liquor cabinet, where she poured herself a shot of scotch. As she swallowed it, the doorbell rang, so she shoved the used glass back in the cabinet, wiped her lips on her bare arms, straightened out her dress, and then walked quickly to the door. In the meantime, the bell had rung again.

She opened the door and Barney came in with a quick step and a bright smile. He was about an inch taller than Janet, had his brown hair in a short crewcut; under which was a red, scraggy face which was unshaven. He wore a wide houndstooth jacket with tight black chinos and a soiled white shirt with an open collar. In his hand he had a burning cigarillo.

"How's my girl," he asked jovially, taking her into his arms and pressing her close. She did not resist but was a bit dismayed by the odor of Barney's body. She kissed him on the neck and answered, "Great, sweetie, where the hell have you been the last few months?"

"Around, baby, around. Made a lot of money."

"That's what you said the last time." She pulled away, walked over to the liquor cabinet, and poured two double scotches on the rocks. She gave him one, looked slyly into his eyes, and said, "Cheers."

"Yeah....So what have you been doing?"

"Nothing much. I've been sick for the past few weeks." she lied.

"Nothing I'll catch, I hope."

She smiled and walked to the couch. "Don't worry Barney, the only thing you'll catch from me is what you're after." She laughed at this reply, considering it quite clever and witty. Barney did not laugh but went to the couch, sat beside her and kissed her violently. She could taste the tobacco from his cigarrillo on his tongue, but she was too excited to care, too excited, even, to notice that he had unzipped her pretty yellow chiffon dress and was undoing her bra. Then his large sweaty hand went to work and Janet lost herself. It was the first time in months and she was not about to let it go to waste. She let him take off her clothes completely and carry her into the bedroom, where he immediately turned out the light, undressed, and hopped into bed with her. From the living room, where the chiffon dress, meant for a young girl, was lying strewn upon the floor, came loud and breathless pants, rythmical creaks, whispers loud and soft, and silence.

At about ten o'clock they re-entered the living room, Barney completely dressed and Janet completely nude.

"Drink, hon?"

"Sure, babe," answered Barney, lighting up another cigarillo.

"When did you start smoking them?" asked Janet.

"Why? Don't you like 'em?"

"Not particularly."

"Tough."

"The Reflections of Janet Calloway" Cont'd

"What did you say?"

"Tough."

"That was uncalled for." She put her drink on the table beside the sofa and sat down, still undressed. Barney looked at her, smiled, swallowed the rest of his drink, laughed, and said, "You're getting ugly."

Janet jumped up. "Who the hell are you to talk to me like that? You had fun tonight."

"Sure, babe, but there's no hiding the facts. It doesn't seem like you're even trying to hide them." He gave her a lecherous glance. She quickly picked up her dress and held it to her frame.

"B-Barney?"

"Yeah?"

"Why did you come tonight?"

He went over to her, pinched her on the buttocks, and replied, "For this, babe. You aint ugly in that department."

"But ain't I nice?"

"Sure, real nice..."

"I don't mean that way. I..."

"I do, babe." He grabbed the dress from her and threw it behind him. Then he grabbed her and started playing with her. She tried to resist but began aching instead. She knew what a fool she had been made of already, but she could not stop. "Please, Barney, please; just one more time."

Barney said nothing but continued fondling until Janet, gasped for breath and could only stand by the strength of Barney, who was smiling coldly with the cigarillo firmly entrenched between his teeth. She was still pleading for Barney to take her to bed when he let her go, let her fall to the ground in a nude heap of stomach flab, brown teeth, wrinkled face, and disheveled hair. As she lay there he crossed over to the door, looked back and said as he opened the door, "Thanks a lot babe, I'll be back in a couple of months when I got nothing else. I'll do you a favor and send up some of my friends." He then closed the door behind him.

Janet was still panting on the floor, her legs writhing to and fro. After a minute or so she got up, lit a cigarette, and fixed herself another drink. Her mind was numbed and she did not try to think, but as soon as she had finished her drink and smoke, she went into the bedroom, turned on the light, looked in the mirror, and began to cry.

How ugly, she thought, how terribly ugly. He fooled me, that's for sure. I shouldn't have let the no good bastard in in the first place. He defiled me. He DEFILED me! God dammit anyhow.

She got up to wash herself in the bathroom. As she started for the door she looked back into the mirror where she saw a reflection of her nude frame. It's really not bad, she thought, it's really good, too good for that no good Barney.

She decided not to wash herself because she felt so tired. Instead, she took one last look at her profile in the mirror, caressed her bosom for a moment, then turned out the light and entered the warm, sweaty bed. All she thought of was the fact that Barney had defiled her. The no accounting son of a bitch had defiled HER. But as she fell toward sleep, she felt quite warm and wished Barney was beside her to defile her again and again and again and....

Witt Halle

Return to Homes Past

A battered rose feeds the remembered street
Chalked up by children seeking relief
From real things which are the greater dangers,
Candy stores next to pawn shops
Soda fountains next to liquor stores.
Mr. Johnson talking to children
Mr. Sweeny talking to pimps.

The park is a million miles it seems
From upset children seeking sanctuary
From angry parents wanting to be childless.

And while a beggar bums from another
A little girl sings to her doll
Happy songs - about God and goodness
Happy songs - about mothers and flowers
Happy songs - that died without her knowledge.

Still she sings unafraid of the final closing
door to those who aged to the death of adulthood
They can enter the cage of reality
While she and all like her
Sing to their dying dolls
The song of forgotten childhood
And looking on is the battered rose
Slightly dying each day too.

Harry Shaw

Dec. 1967

Veranda Place

Ghosts of blurred memories still reside
Silent ghosts of yesterday haunt the home
Where I lived many years before
As a child living with past people
Mr. Stevens was there in the form of John Agreeen
Even Mr. Sweeny had his counter-part
They all lived within crying distance laughing distance
They all affected me one way or the other way
While the house did the same
With its recurring echo of happiness
Coupled with the cold whisper of death
Its sometimes shady rooms brought me visions
Of large terrifying ghouls draped in dark gowns
Ready to steal me away to their dungeons of horror
While at other times the rooms had good and gentle
things to offer
Like the sunlight on a summer day
The comfort of watching snow fall safe from the elements
Or the feeling of breathing which suggested life within the walls
Which arrested any feeling of loneliness when alone
All this the house did for me
It frightened and spared me from the world outside

Harry Shaw

Not so holy Joan

She is beseeched by thousands
To remain with shouts of
Encore, Encore and shadowed screams
Of "my eyes have seen the glory"

Great Joan descends from the
Glorified labyrinth. Tears of
Ice fall upon marshmallow breasts,
And angels regale their bride
With mosaic reflections of a recent apocalypse.

A barefoot heroine leads her
Own procession. Arching her back,
She tilts her sacred side toward
A visible star, raises her arm
And allows a limp palm to be kissed by the sun.

The narrowing, disfigured streets,
Are richly decorated with
The dancing eyes of potters and
Strawmen, straining to catch
A glimpse of a maiden's prance.

A fair portrait of visions,
Walks over whitewashed cobblestones,
Cleansed with the blood of
Three black lambs, owned by an
Old Jew. Her holy feet are clean.

(continued on next page)

Not so holy Joan cont'd

Unselfish, consecrated servant
Of grace is deafened by the
Blasting sounds of trumpets,
Calling her fame. The noble spirit
Rises with each note from heaven.

Helpless, frightened blindmen
And wonted mary janes reach out
With screaming, hysterical hands,
To halt the ascent of a witch.

There is a zoo in the sky.
Joan sits snuggled between
The warm expressions of a
Good Humor Man and W. C. Fields,
Who fills his pockets with strange candy.

A fungus like darkness creeps down
Upon the house imprinted with
Photographic windows. Yesterday's
Friends have come and gone. Today,
The ominous stare of forgotten souls
Frightens them away.

The clouds are sick, but will not die.
The skies, outstretched
Across the cancerous bed,
Wait to witness an execution.

The maladroit archbishop
Secures the double knot around
The lacerated wrists, binds
Her feet to the stake, and
Walks away, his white satin robe
Raised by a crippled boy.

Against the hallowed,
Symmetrical wall, the
Silhouette of a magdalen
Slowly burns away.

The only sound that can be heard,
Are the sands of time slipping away
To meet history.

Richard Bascetta - 1-14-68

Orton Stevens

As Orton Stevens continued his daily romp of time and space, he came upon a golden key. Upon grasping it he was cast into the depths of "La."

The first thing he noticed was the incredible change of the key. Its gold nature turned iron, then melted into rust. About him danced purple, shimmering maidens-ever beckoning. From the orange rock on which he stood, Orton could see the ever changing sky - of stars and sun- colliding and exploding then beginning again. Through the red mist of water and dust, Orton could see three dark figures standing proudly on their orange rocks, looking at him.

He wanted to talk with them. He stepped off the rock. The yellow sand, upon which he walked, was without substance--yet it carried him as he stepped on it. He came closer to the figures. The closer he came, the more indistinct they would seem.

All this time he heard nothing. But as he came closer, Orton began to hear a strange ringing sound. He came closer. It grew louder. Another step. It was piercingly loud.

One more...

Orton Stevens lay dead on 42nd Street - the victim of a hit and run.

End

By Harry Shaw - 1968

Return to Homes Past

Garbage flies on a Sunday afternoon
A child cries for its face is bruised
By the neighborhood bully
Exercising his fists
Who, a strawberry-colored switch-blade
 hurls
Into the sun
And proclaims himself God
to all the crying children
He beat up..
Then three more of the same
Beat up on him
And soon the neighborhood bully lies slain,
Murdered
By his own blade
And under him lies the child he has beaten
Crying louder than before.
Afterwards he'll walk to the drugstore
And not buy the crucifix for \$1.29
He'll just look at it
And wonder what it's used for..
It has no meaning here
Not even on Sunday,

THE 14th DAY

5th Day

I am starting this journal now for a reason of which I am ignorant. I think it would be best to first describe what we are like.

There are three of us; Nancy, my 7 year old daughter; Bob, my friend and myself. Bob seems to remember that he was a doctor at one time, and he seems to have a great knowledge of healing. Nancy fell down and cut herself this morning, and Bob took care of her. He seemed to express great anxiety; he said she should not get an infection.

That word, "infection"--it is familiar, but I don't know what it means. It's all so strange. What has happened? Has the world always been like this? I cannot remember--neither can Bob or Nancy.

Every now and then one of us will say something that sparks a little form of memory in the others. But it is only a spark and on concentration one cannot remember what he was thinking of. Last night as I was putting Nancy to bed she asked where her Mommy was. I stopped and thought. I knew what a mommy was, but I could not remember who hers was. Logically, if Nancy is my daughter, and I know she is, then her mother was my wife. But I have no memory of such a person.

This started me to thinking and I realized that I cannot remember if I have any family other than Nancy. Bob remembers that he did have a wife, but that is all. He wonders where she is. He says he can remember little since he stumbled onto our porch. He can't even remember why he came to our house except that it was the only whole one he'd seen. That seems very strange as I can't imagine a house being less than whole. Our situation is strange. There are no other people around, but I can't remember when there were. It hurts me to ponder these things.

But I am certain of a few things. I know we must drink only the canned water, eat only canned food, and we cannot look up into the sky at noon. There's another thing. I remember that there are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday--but I don't know what day it is. I know that there are 24 hours in a day, but I only know when it is noon and midnight. Our clocks don't work, but I don't know why. We have many things here that don't work. I know what they are--telephones, radios, televisions and so on, but I can't understand why they refuse to operate. There is so much we don't remember.

Nancy asked me about school this afternoon.

"Don't you remember school, Daddy?"

"No, Honey, I don't. Tell me; what is school?"

"Gee, I don't know; I just remember that they used to make you memorize a lot of silly things and if you didn't they yelled at you."

"Who are 'they', Nancy?"

"You know--people; teachers, other kids."

Then there were, are (?) others.

7th Day

Bob says we must leave this place and move to a less open area. He says it is because of the corn. It is too near the house. We can't cut it down because Bob says we must always stay far away from it, but he doesn't know why. I don't know why he should feel this way, but something makes me feel that he is right. Nancy is afraid of it; she says that corn should not be blue and it should not be as tall as the trees.

Yesterday afternoon I thought I saw something inside the corn field. It gave me quite a scare as I haven't seen any living thing for as long as I can remember. This worried Bob and he has made us keep all the windows closed and lock the doors at night. This is annoying because it is so hot, but I trust Bob--I don't know why.

This morning at Breakfast I noticed that Nancy has a rash on her arm. It is small but it looks like a burn. I asked her what happened but she doesn't know. She says it itches sometimes and she wants to scratch it. I put a bandage over it and Bob told her not to touch it. It was just after that that he told me we must leave.

7th Day (cont'd.)

"But where can we go? and how will we get there?"

"I didn't tell you before, but I found this machine down the road. I don't know what it is but it has wheels, so I think it can be used for transportation. We will have to try it. As to where we can go, I'm not sure...but there is a road and it must go somewhere eventually."

"But it might take days. Where will we get our food and water? What about shelter? And at night what will we do? We can't stay out at night; it's too dangerous."

"That's why I hope this machine is a vehicle of transportation. If it is, we will be sheltered by it as it is all closed in. For food, we will have to take cans from here and hope that we arrive someplace before it runs out."

I don't think we will have to worry at night--in fact it might be a good idea, if the machine works, to use it at night and rest during the day. We shouldn't be bothered if we keep moving. Besides, I've observed no animal or insect life since I can remember; only the plants continue."

I told Nancy that "tomorrow we are going on a picnic." If she thinks it is for fun, she won't be frightened. I know I am and so is Bob.

Just after Nancy fell asleep we both heard a great deal of commotion in the corn field and the sound came closer to the house than before. We looked but couldn't see anything. Bob switched on the porch light and it stopped, so we will leave it on all night. That's another reason for leaving; the generator is nearly worn out. Too bad as there's plenty of gas.

Nancy says that there were picnics at school.

8th Day

This morning we packed as many cans as we could into Nancy's wagon and our knapsacks and left the house. I didn't know why, but I took along a gallon of gasoline with me. As we left the house I looked back on the corn field; several stalks had fallen down. I showed Bob and he hurried us on.

Nancy thinks all this is great fun. She talks about how in school she used to hate the picnics because ants always got into the food. She said that she's glad there aren't any ants here....I wonder why.....?

After we had walked for some distance we came across the thing Bob told me about. I recognized it as a station wagon. Bob couldn't understand why I knew what it was and he didn't. I don't either. I have to drive it as Bob doesn't know how. We were lucky as it had a full tank of gas and it works quite well.

"But Daddy, where are the people who own it?"

"I don't know Nancy."

"But won't they be mad if we take their car? Besides, isn't it stealing? In Sunday School we were told that God didn't want us to steal. Won't we make Him mad?"

I don't remember God, nor does Bob, but because I didn't want to upset Nancy I told her that we were just borrowing the car and would return it some day. I wonder why a car with a full tank of gas, and in perfect condition, should be abandoned in the middle of the road. Bob doesn't know either.

We drove for several miles and it got dark. I was tired so we stopped. There is nothing around us at all; no plants; no life; just red and brown sand. Bob told Nancy to roll up all the windows and we rationed the food. It will only last for five days. I put down the back seat and we let Nancy sleep in the front seat as it is the only cushioned part of the car when the back seat is down. She was very thrilled with it.

8th Day (continued)

Bob is worried about the rash on her arm; it's gotten bigger and he rebandaged it. He says that she is hot and may come down with a fever. He says that rash looks like a type of radiation burn. I asked him how he knew. He said he had studied it in Medical School.

So he was a doctor!

10th Day

We have come to a tunnel but don't know whether or not to go through it.

Yesterday we drove until four o'clock by the clock in the car. Nancy asked why that clock worked when the others didn't and I told her it was because of the battery in the car. But that doesn't make sense as the generator at the house provided current. I wonder why the clock didn't work. Nancy thinks it just broke down. Maybe that's why.

She had a bad nightmare last night. I have never heard a scream like she made since I can remember. I woke her up and she couldn't remember what the nightmare was about; only that it was terrible. She fell back to sleep muttering:

"The sky is falling; the sky is falling."

There is a thermometer in the car. Bob doesn't recognize it. He says a thermometer is long and thin and this one is round. It's funny, as I know it tells the temperature inside the car. It must be wrong though because it says 90° and it couldn't be that hot.

Bob examined Nancy's rash this morning. He says it came from the cut she got before. He is sure now that it's a type of radiation poisoning. He asked Nancy where she got the cut and she said that she got it when she was playing around the corn field. Bob says he is glad we left, but the rash is worse and he says we must get to a town or a city soon.

I can't remember what a town or city is and I get headaches when I think too long about them.

I have been very tired lately. I think it is because of the temperature. As we go on, it gets hotter and hotter. Bob is worried about radiation. He says that he remembers something about there being great areas of intense radiation and that it can kill just by being in the air.

I don't remember these things; all I remember is that you can use a geiger counter to tell how much radiation there is in a place. He said we should try and find one.

This afternoon we passed through a town. There was no one in it at all. Nancy had a bad scare though because she came across the body of a dead cat, or what was at one time a cat.

It was here that we found a geiger counter. It was in a museum. I wonder why I remember about museums. We were very lucky as it worked.

I read it and Bob said we should not stay in the town because it was too dangerous.

It's too bad because we could have learned a great deal. Tonight, when we saw the tunnel, Bob had me take readings. They were less than those in the town so tomorrow we will go through.

He said that if we come across a hospital on the other side, he can treat Nancy. She is getting worse and had a fever when she went to sleep. Bob said that she will die if we don't get her to a hospital very soon.

I was most upset and I cried "Oh God, don't let her die!"

We remember about God now.

11th Day

We have come through the tunnel, but it was a harrowing experience.

This morning we got up and Bob went to Nancy. She was much worse.

We started into the tunnel and after we were in a little bit we could see other cars, all immobile, ahead. As I drove around them, we could see skeletons of people who were in them. I am glad Nancy was asleep; it was a sight no child should see.

About half way through the tunnel something happened and the car stalled. We were in darkness for a few minutes and could see red dots in pairs around us. It scared both of us, and I cursed as I tried to get the car started. I can't remember having cursed before. The car wouldn't start and I knew that I would flood the engine if I kept trying, so I had to give it a few minutes before trying again.

The red dots began to come closer and we could hear small growling, snarling noises. We sat there, powerless, and watched. Suddenly one of the dots jumped or something because it banged against the side window, then another did the same thing, and then more! It was too dark to see what they were; we could only see the dots.

I tried the engine again and it started. As the lights went back on we could see large, grey shapes rushing away. I thought that these animals might be rats, but they were too big for that. We didn't wait to find out either!

I drove quickly and we soon came out of the tunnel-and just in time-because a few blocks away we ran out of gas.

We were in a large city, but which one I don't know. There were cars all over, most of them empty, and I got out to look for one that would work.

I found one about two blocks from where we were and called to Bob. He brought Nancy and we got in and drove on. She was red all over and her mouth was open; she couldn't close it.

We searched for a hospital. We drove for a long time, in all directions, among the buildings. There was no life at all; nothing moved and it was incredibly hot.

Finally we came to a small hospital. Bob took Nancy and we went in. It was empty. There was nobody at all in or around the building. Bob searched it and said that there was plenty of canned food and juice. He told me to block all entrance ways and the windows on the first two floors as we should stay here.

He took Nancy upstairs and found some medicine for her. He now had recovered most of his knowledge of medicine. But he might not be able to cure Nancy!

12th Day

We are very worried. Nancy has not gotten any better despite Bob's efforts.

I am not sure that we are the only people around because last night there was a great deal of banging on the doors. It didn't sound very much like a person knocking; it was more like a group of things pushing against the door. Anyway, I was glad I had blocked the entrance ways.

I had a nightmare last night. I don't remember much about it except that I was in a dark chamber working on something; something that required that I wear goggles and gloves and other odd apparel. I was working on this project and something horrible happened. But I can't remember what it was. Anyway, I woke up sweating and had to put on some dry clothes. I looked in the mirror and saw that I had been crying.

Today Bob showed me around the hospital. He took me into all the rooms and explained what they were for. He spent a long time in a place called an operating room and went into great detail about instruments and sterilization. I didn't understand most of what he was talking about as he began speaking in very technical terms. For some reason, some of the things in the hospital sounded familiar--the X-Ray machine, Laser operations, but I can't say why they did.

12th Day (continued)

Tomorrow I have decided to go outside and look around. I think I should look for a newspaper stand.

13th Day

I can't believe what I have seen today! There was so much, most of which I don't understand. But we are in terrible danger and we must take Nancy and leave!

I went out early in the morning--the temperature has risen even higher. I don't know if we can take much more of this heat. On the main door were deep marks made in long, sweeping curves. I don't know what made them and I'm not sure that I want to either! I walked a few blocks and I noticed something strange. On every corner is this pole with a box on top. The box has colored lights that change all over it. Out of curiosity I tried them and they change at regular intervals of 48 seconds. I wonder why? Also, there are a lot of poles which reach out and hang over the street, but they don't do anything. It seems like an awful waste - they aren't very attractive.

I came to an area that must have been uncultivated land. It was a big, open area of sand. Some of the sand was a very deep red and there were a few holes in the area. I went over to one and looked down. It was very deep and I could hear rustling noises from inside. I had a compulsion to leave, and I did.

I finally came to a building that was partially demolished. I went inside and there were thousands of books on shelves stacked very neatly. I picked up one of the books but I could not understand the language it was written in. I would have looked further, but I decided to wait and come back later. As I left, I heard a noise like a lot of books falling. I didn't stop to investigate but came back here.

For some reason I was in a great hurry. My heart was pounding and I wanted to run, but I could not think of any reason for doing so. As I approached the hospital I saw something that made me freeze in terror. On the wall of one of the buildings was a shadow, a shadow of something huge and gruesome. I ran for the door and as I reached it I looked back! How can I describe what I saw?

There, a half a block or so away, was this thing! I never saw anything like it. It was as big as a man and grey all over. Because of the distance I could not make out much detail, but its body was in the shape of an egg standing on the fat end. On top of that was a head that came to a point at the mouth, something like an egg on its side, and on each side was a large red eye, like the things in the tunnel. I didn't stay to look at it as it was coming toward me at a fast pace. I blocked the door and ran upstairs and told Bob.

We have decided to leave first thing in the morning. Whatever the thing was it apparently comes out only when the sun is low, so we should be able to get away.

Nancy was in a coma-like state all day. She muttered things about seeds from the sky, the burning world and other things that must have come from her delirium. Bob says that this is the crucial period.

14th Day

This is the last entry I shall make in my journal. I know now that no one shall read it.

This morning we packed up food, sheets and other things and placed them in the car. Bob carried Nancy down, wrapped in a blanket and put her in the back seat. Her face was horrible--there were boils all over--her eyes were bloodshot and her mouth was open. Bob said there was still hope though because her temperature had gone down. I drove at breakneck speed through the city. Everywhere was ruin. Buildings were in rubble, sidewalks torn up, stores broken into and always the oppressive heat from the sun!

We came to a bridge and, although some of the roadway was torn up, we went across with little difficulty. On the other side were more buildings and an area where there must have been factories but now were just empty sheds.

We passed a news stand and I grabbed some papers but we did not take time to read them as it was late in the afternoon and I still remembered the thing I saw quite well.

We drove on and soon the buildings were no longer around; just sand with occasional patches of red grass.

We decided to stop at a house which was in fairly good condition. That is where we are now.

Bob put Nancy in a bed. When he came back he looked very worried.

I opened up one of the newspapers. It was dated January 12th. There were strange things printed in it about politics, economy, war and many other subjects and there was one article, on the next to the last page, by a Dr. John Fraris which read:

Scientist warns of Comet.

New York, Jan. 11th.

Dr. John Fraris, noted atomic physicist from the Science Labs Inc. today announced that there is great danger from the new comet that was recently discovered by the astronomers at Polomar.

According to Dr. Fraris, the comet is giving off a great deal of fatal neutron rays, a rare by-product of atomic fission which he discovered and that when the earth passes through the tail of the comet in 5 days, every person who is not surrounded by at least 3 feet of lead and concrete will receive a fatal dose of radiation poisoning.

The doctor further added that due to the comet's immense size and the nature of its magnetic field, it could cause a change in the orbit of the earth and other bodies which it passes.

The head of the research team at Polomar said that this statement was "one of the most idiotic imaginings of the human mind." He added that if it were true, the entire solar system would be affected and that was impossible."

Bob seemed preoccupied throughout my reading and when I was finished, he went back to Nancy.

He came out with his eyes downcast. He said quietly, "She's dying."

With tears in my eyes I ran to her bed. She held out her hand, covered with sores, but as I reached to take it, Bob pulled me back.

"Daddy," she said softly.

"Yes, I'm here Honey."

"Daddy, I can see Mommy. She's calling me. Come on Daddy, let's go to her. She's so beautiful. Can't you see her?"

"No Honey, I'm sorry." I wanted so much to hold her outstretched hand that tears were flowing down my cheeks, but Bob still held me back.

"Daddy, why did the sky have to fall. It was so pretty--there were so many colors..."

Her hand fell to the side of the bed--her mouth was still open, and her tongue, now black, hung out to the side.

Bob dragged me out of the room. I fell on a chair weeping.

"Damn you; why didn't you let me go to her? She was my daughter. She held out her hand to me!"--I screamed at him.

"Ever since she got sick you've kept me away from her. What right had you?" I lunged for his neck but he knocked me down and hit me hard across the face.

14th Day (continued)

He held out his arm. On his wrist was a rash like Nancy had before.

"I found this yesterday. It came from Nancy. She was in the acute stages of radiation poisoning; contact was fatal. You're the only one left now. I couldn't let you touch her. It's too late for me now and soon I'll be like she is."

I looked up.

"I ... I'm so sorry. I didn't know. "

I slammed my hand on a table.

"Damn..why did this have to happen--Why!?"

For the first time we were at peace. The entire world was united; all threat of a nuclear war was gone. Then that damn comet had to come.

Why didn't anybody listen to me. I warned them. Instead they called me a fool.

"How could something so beautiful be so dangerous?" they asked. "Well, they had it. For two days the earth was in the tail; the nights were lit up like rainbows."

I stopped. Bob was staring at me, open mouthed.

"I remember now...everything. You had met me on the road. With your wife and Nancy you were driving to the Science Institute. We went to the atomic piles testing chamber. I had read the article and was going to look for you to try and understand the nature of the poisoning so I might develop a cure as I was a surgeon specializing in radiation therapy."

"Your wife died after we had come out and everyone was dead. She ate an apple. Remember?"

"Yes, I remember. She told me it was delicious and offered me a bite, but I knocked it out of her hand. The poison was swift on her. She died in her sleep that night; her stomach destroyed by the acid in the apple reacting with her gastric juices. You buried her in the back yard."

"I don't know what became of my wife." Bob turned toward the door and looked at his arm. "She may still be out there. I think I'll just look for her."

He opened the door and walked out.

The cloudless sky was the most beautiful shade of orange I have ever seen, painted by a setting sun.

Tim Thompson

1968

A childhood dream softly whispers
Up a spiral staircase into a world of fantasy
Down towards fields of gypsy sisters
Spinning, laughing, and drifting into ecstasy.

Toys that are living today as yesterday
Are carried far up and away
Past magical chessboards and hills of clay
Wondering about a place far away.

Miry faces joined hand in hand
Smile across time at legendary knights
Raping the maiden of fairy land
Who had to be home before dark each night.

New games to be played when blinds are drawn
Only when guns and nurses have died
Will fairies lead their sweet ships to dawn
Waving feverish hands stained with lye.

The strange face of man
Impressed in dripped, ice grips of a child
Bleeds joy from mystery land
While sterile words die on the lips of an idol.

Twins of darkness playing with their toys
Set afire an angel in search of joy
Her countenance rejoicing a narcissist stare
Commands a crippled pawn into the air.

Richard Bascetta 1/22/68

Let's go over it again said Wilson. You say you went home early, Mr. Hobson. Why?

I wasn't feeling well. I told my secretary to cancel all my appointments for the afternoon and took a cab to my apartment.

Then what?

Well, when I walked in I heard a strange noise in the living room, so I went in to investigate. There was no one there, but there was a tape recorder sitting on my coffee table. I don't have a recorder in the house, so it puzzled me, to say the least. When I went to pick it up, it began to operate, and this voice started talking. To me.

Try to remember exactly what the voice said. Wilson was visibly agitated, and the other men in the room could see that he didn't believe a word of what Hobson was saying.

It said "good afternoon, Mr. Hobson. I'm so sorry to hear that you aren't feeling well, because what I am about to tell you is going to make you feel much worse." Then it laughed. A horribly vicious laugh. He shuddered visibly at the memory of it.

Continue, please.

Well, I don't remember the exact words of the rest, but it told me that I was, in effect, being kidnapped without leaving the house. The doors and windows were all wired so they would know if I tried to leave, and the phone had been tapped so they would know if I tried to call and what I said. They warned me against anything foolish, and then...

Then what, Mr. Hobson?

Then a bullet came from somewhere inside the house and smashed into the wall behind my head!

How do you know it was from inside the house. Couldn't it have been fired through a window?

I suppose it could have, but I didn't hear the sound of glass breaking and I would have heard that I'M sure.

Yes. Then what?

It started talking again. They said that they wanted me to call my bank and withdraw 250,000, and have it brought by messenger to my house.

Do you have that kind of money in the bank Mr. Hobson?

Why, yes, of course. I have that much in my checking account.

Did you do as they asked?

Yes! What else was I to do. The voice said that if I refused, the next bullet wouldn't miss. I made the call and the money arrived about one hour later. I waited for about ten minutes, and then the doorbell rang. There was a note tacked on the outside of the door which told me to leave the money in the hall and stay inside, or I would be shot.....

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Jack Smith

