

rycengga symposium



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THE
RYCENGA
SYMPOSIUM

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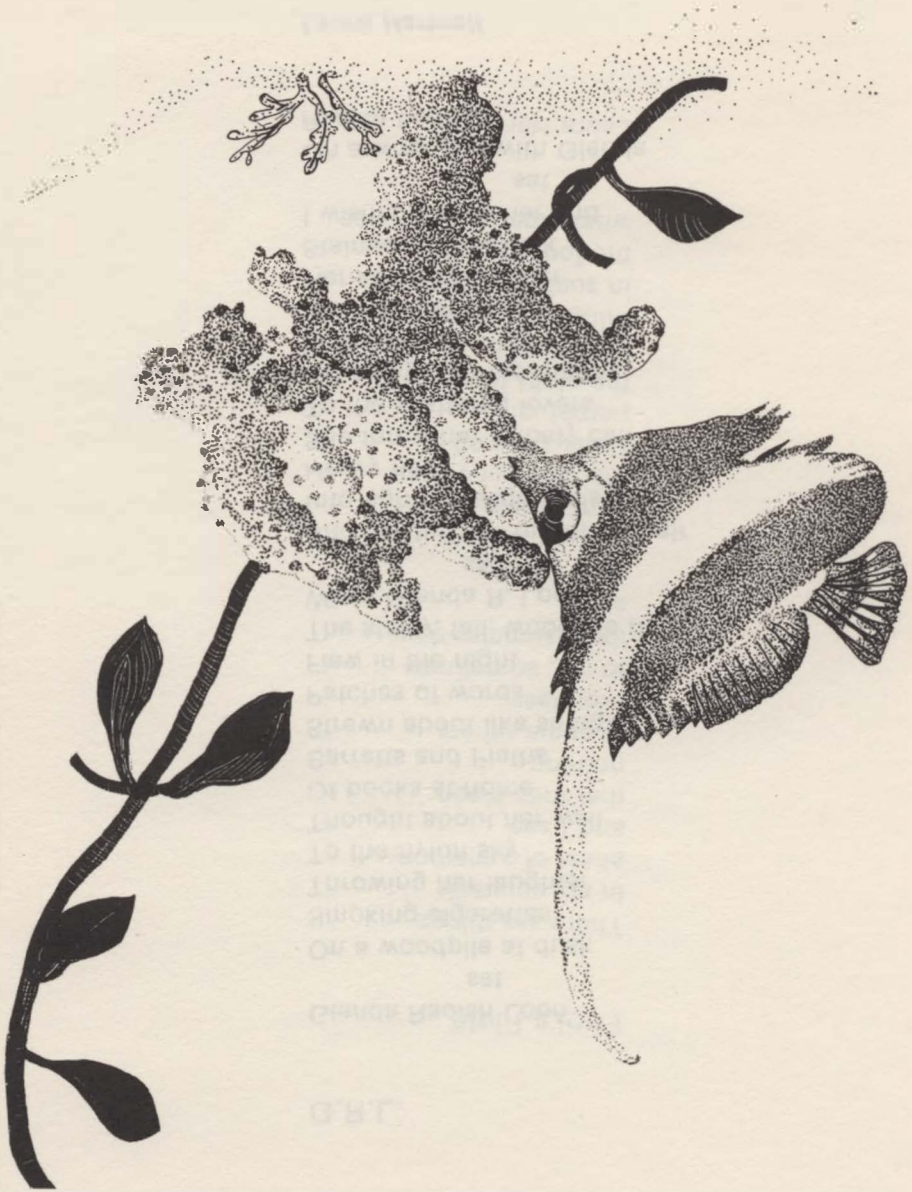
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G.R.L.

Glenda Radish Loon

sat

On a woodpile at dusk
Smoking cigarettes
Throwing her laughter
To the nylon sky
Thought about her wall
Of books at home
Barretts and Plaths
Strewn about like shingles
Patches of words
Flew in the night
The starry, fall, woodpile night
When Glenda R. Loon

sat

And twisted her red/black hair
Into tight sausage curls
Heavy hair
She threw her throaty call
To the scattered lovers
Far away past mountains
Past hearing
Her sensuous keen
Her anxious whisper
Stained with lipstick
I wished I were her and

sat

On a woodpile with Glenda
Radish Loon.

Laura Hartnett

Fool's Field

There are things
in my souvenir
chest of a memory
and I see
that they mean
nothing
to some others
even less
to me, sometimes
thick summer days
and
wine nights
the sky always
a millenium blue
that someone drew
chalk stars on
perpetually
the night time
of the soul
things are dangerous
in such expanse
the fool's field
where memories dance.

Laura Hartnett

Amazon

White stranger zone
widens, bites the night
licks the kodachrome flowers
embraces you and I
we ride horses that rear up
at the sight of
hideous creatures
that break virgin forests
eyes curl around corners
and eat away at strays.

Put your cards
on the table of land
a million miles away
I can see what your
blind mouth seeks
where your hands wander
and memorize the
tender bones in the flesh
of my mind
still the zone widens
with the help of night
streamers of mystery
surround this chance.

Laura Hartnett

One to a Lazy Man
The Essential Truth

Fatback Summer

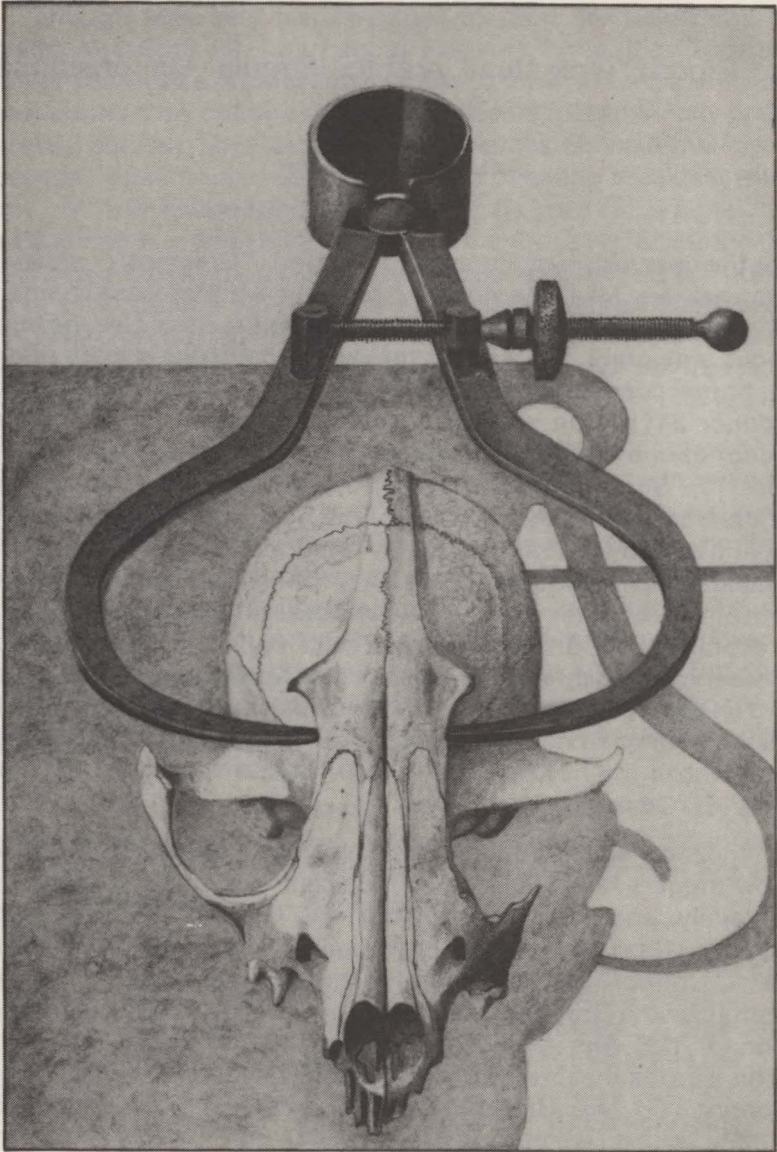
You caress your stone
 heart
The gargoyle face
 watches
But you don't see
all the pain that follows
Maybe your life goes
 by
like a song that's sung
during fatback summer
But you make it hard
to silence the siren
you cry, a thousand
 tears
drive away even me
spoonfuls of love you
 try
to give away, never more
than what you never
 need
maybe your life goes
 down
like a ship on a blackboard ocean
but it never goes down on
 me.

Laura Hartnett

Ode to a Lazy Man: The Eventual Truth

There was a man,
Once
And this he said to me;
He told me
Just how lazy
He had been
And that I should,
With my hairspray,
Blood and crayons
Write a poem
Called "Ode to
A Lazy Man"
Not thinking that
Perhaps I'd feel
The obligation
To really write one
Like it wasn't a
Sentence (jail term, hard time)
To write sentences
That sometimes made
Sense
So much to write
About a lazy man
So many words the man
(Lazy though he is) said
About his life, his
Friend who maybe
More than one person hiding
Inside one entity,
So he says.
This is what the lazy man
Really says
When he tells the
Eventual truth,
Walk alone
Because you never know
Who you'll be
Tomorrow.

Laura Hartnett



Bad Blood: "Greenleaf" and the Secular Unconscious

Donesse Champeau

At the conclusion of Flannery O'Connor's "Greenleaf," widowed farm-owner Mrs. May dies violently, gored by a bull she has spent the whole story chasing. O'Connor critic Carol Shloss has noted the bull's symbolic ambiguity. Shloss says that while the hedge-wreath on the bull's horns connotes the Christian passion, "some patient god" (O'Connor 311) is an allusion to classical myth, and the bull as "uncouth country suitor" (O'Connor 312) projects primal sexuality (Shloss 70). Structurally, the framework of "Greenleaf" consists of three dreams. The bull's function in this framework, combined with Oedipal overtones in the May family relationship, invites a psychoanalytical interpretation of "Greenleaf." Using the Freudian premise that "the majority of the dreams of adults deal with sexual material and give expression to erotic wishes" (Freud 431), the bull's invasion signifies something more concrete than Mrs. May's "misplaced attitude toward religion" (Shloss 72). The bull's violation of Mrs. May symbolizes the death wish of an unutterably sad and lonely fictional character, a woman whose life has become "a dark wound in a world that was nothing" (O'Connor 333).

In the story's first dream, a chewing sound outside her bedroom window triggers Mrs. May's conceptualization of the bull eating her farm, family, and self "until nothing was left but the Greenleafs" (O'Connor 312). The Greenleaf boys' bull, a "sport" who "likes to bust loose" (O'Connor 323), represents the threat posed to Mrs. May's rigid work ethic by the Greenleaf lifestyle: "They lived like lilies of the field" (O'Connor 319). Mrs. May calls Mr. Greenleaf "shiftless" (O'Connor 313); his wife manifests an erotic spirituality Mrs. May finds "obscene" (O'Connor 317). Mrs. Greenleaf is "large and loose" (O'Connor 315). Mrs. May, "a small woman" (O'Connor 313) with "narrow shoulders" (O'Connor 311), extends her rivalry with the Greenleafs into generalized paranoia: "'Everything is against you,' she would say, 'the weather . . . the dirt . . . the help . . .'" (O'Connor 321). The contrast

between Mrs. May's lazy, combative sons and O.T. and E.T. Greenleaf especially irritates Mrs. May. She jealously admits O.T. and E.T., both married family men, are "fine boys" (O'Connor 321).

Though Mrs. May has managed to prod her unwedded sons, Wesley and Scofield, into joining the work force, they approach a middle age of sexual privation. Unable to form mature alliances with other adults, they continue to play adolescent roles in a daily drama of parental conflict. Mrs. May grudgingly rations out maternal love as if she were repaying a social debt. Instead of eating breakfast with her sons, she "sits on the edge of her chair at the head of the table . . . to see that they had what they wanted" (O'Connor 314). At another tense meal, Wesley baits his mother. He tells Scofield "neither you nor me is her boy" (O'Connor 327). Wesley's comment elicits a violent reaction. Mrs. May cries out like "an old horse lashed unexpectedly" (O'Connor 327), and flees the room. Wesley has unmasked the true familial relationship: mother and sons both loathe and desire one another.

The "late Mr. May" (O'Connor 319), by dying, abandoned his sons to the emotional machinations of a repressive mother who even wears a mask to bed, "her face smooth as concrete with an egg-white paste" (O'Connor 311). Though Mrs. May apparently encourages her sons to find "nice girls," she has revised her will "so that if they married, they could not leave [the farm] to their wives" (O'Connor 315). Thus Mrs. May emasculates her sons, as she asserts eternal control over their lives. Impotent Wesley, "the intellectual," hates his life's routines and rituals, but "he never made any move to leave" (O'Connor 319). Scofield's "broad pleasant smiling face" (O'Connor 315) hides a venomous hatred of mother, brother, and self.

An ostensibly playful family scene illuminates the May family's sexual dilemma. When Mrs. May brags about her organizational competence to her city friends — "There's nothing for it but an iron hand" (O'Connor 321) — Scofield mocks her:

"Look at Mamma's iron hand!" Scofield would yell and grab her arm and hold it up so that her delicate blue-veined little hand would dangle from her wrist like the head of a broken lily. The company always laughed.
(O'Connor 322)

Mrs. May's flaccid hand, on one level an ironic comment on Mrs. May's

personal vulnerability, also symbolizes the impotence of Scofield and Wesley. Scofield projects his own, and Wesley's, stunted masculinity onto his mother's limp hand. This psychological source of the May family's tragedy continues to reveal itself in the story's dreams.

In Mrs. May's second dream, narration again indicates an outer stimulus, the bull's chewing, has engendered Mrs. May's dream. Her unconscious transforms the stimulus into an erotic symbol. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud discusses "the part played by organic stimuli which disturb sleep. Dreams which come about under their influence," Freud writes, "exhibit a transparent symbolism . . . a stimulus awakens a dreamer *after a vain attempt has been made to deal with it under a symbolic disguise*" (Freud 438). Mrs. May hears the bull "as if some large stone were grinding a hole on the outside wall of her brain" (O'Connor 329). This imagery changes from auditory to visual; the noise becomes the sun, transformed into a "narrow, pale" phallic projectile. Mrs. May awakens "with her hand over her mouth" (O'Connor 329), unable to articulate or integrate her fear.

During Mrs. May's third and final dream, she dozes in the sun, leaning against her car's hood while Mr. Greenleaf hunts the bull. Mrs. May has been drowsily imagining Mrs. Greenleaf "asleep over her holeful of clippings" (O'Connor 332). While this fantasy recalls Mrs. Greenleaf releasing "all her emotions in prayer healing" (O'Connor 319), it also contrasts an idyllic sense of post-coital tranquility with the violence that follows. The absence of sound awakens Mrs. May from this dream: "When she sat up and looked at her watch, more than ten minutes had passed. She had not heard any shot" (O'Connor 333). Mrs. May impatiently honks the car's horn. Her impulsive summons enrages the bull, who gores Mrs. May "like a wild tormented lover" (O'Connor 333).

This ultimate penetration undeniably alters Mrs. May's perspective; O'Connor tells us "the entire scene in front of her had changed" (O'Connor 333). O'Connor does not, however, indicate within the story's text this revelatory vision's nature. To identify Mrs. May's insight as religious, as "a moment of grace," the reader needs to approach the work with a Christian frame of reference. O'Connor wrote not for Christians, but "to an audience not adequately equipped to believe anything" (*Habit* 290). The sexual bull symbolism, dream imagery, and Oedipal family dynamics in "Greenleaf" diminish the significance of Mrs. May's agnosticism. The "unbearable light" Mrs. May sees signals not a mystical insight, but her repressed personality's climactic disintegration. Mrs. May dies forever isolated "outside some

invisible circle" (O'Connor 333) of human love, poisoned by the bad blood of a bitter, unshared life.

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Is There Anyone There to see Your Dreams?

It is with difficulty, now, that
I understand you.

Your motivations, your dreams,
Your goals — even your feelings
are shrouded.

Although before your moods
were many, I could easily discern
one from another.

Where they started,
where they changed.

The joy was high and free —
the sorrow, wrenching.

But, now, now —

Where does guilt stop?

Why does anger become diluted by time —
and love by fear?

Are you hiding now or have you gone away?

Do you show yourself to anyone
(is it just to me the shades are drawn?)
or has everyone lost the you in you?

When you look in the mirror, are you there?

When you knock on your door, are you home?

Do you sign your letters? answer your phone?

If the weave of your skin is too tightly pulled, no
light can escape and fly free,
none can come in and explore.

Hope J. Fortier



Reflections on Self-Estrangement

Robert F. Kryspin

Like any form of literature, fantasy serves the purpose of expressing the many facets of humanity. The language of fantasy is not demure but instead becomes the mirror-image of our human reality. Ursula K. Le Guin is a master craftsman of fantasy who writes an imaginative story which elucidates some philosophical concepts that are essential to our understanding of what it is to be human. In her concluding story of the Earthsea Trilogy, *The Farthest Shore*, Le Guin effectively and subtly writes of self-estrangement. Estrangement is a word which denotes that something has become other than it ought to be, and, therefore, it carries a negative valuation. Similarly, self-estrangement means that a person has become other than he ought to be.

In order to understand the origin of self-estrangement, one must realize that the complete self possesses two major aspects which are diametrically opposed to one another. The first aspect or light side is essentially altruistic by nature and manifests itself in the form of submission, humility, conscience, morality, and love. The second aspect or dark side is essentially narcissistic by nature and manifests itself in the form of domination, vanity, greed, despair, and lust. Dialectically speaking, the dark side is the antithesis of the light side and, because they coexist, they are collectively known as the self. Expressed in another fashion, the dark side and the light side belong ineluctably to the individual; each has its claim, and neither can be absorbed into the other without damage to the individual. Hence, for the self to remain intact and without damage, there must certainly be a balance between both aspects of the self. Self-estrangement is the result of an imbalance of the self with the scale tipping in favor of the dark side in *The Farthest Shore*.

The reason that Cob, the madman, the witch of Lorbanery, Hare, and the people of Hort town fell victim to self-estrangement is because the dark side is powerful, more provincial, and easy to obtain compared to the light side. Thus, self-estrangement is an effective trap

because it is not concrete or external, and, therefore, goes undetected while at the same time it entices and seduces the individual with the promise of power:

But when we crave power over life — endless wealth, unassailable safety, immortality — then desire becomes greed. And if knowledge allies itself to that greed, then comes evil.

(Le Guin 34)

Ged, the archmage, understands the balance between the dark side and the light side. In *A Wizard of Earthsea*, the first story of the Earthsea Trilogy, Ged was forced to come to grips with his own dark side or shadow and stave off the destruction that the imbalance within would surely have caused. Through growth and personal experience, Ged is able to see the imbalance and estrangement in others. He cautions young Arren about the trap of self-estrangement:

The traitor, the self; the self that cries I want to live; let the world burn so long as I can live! The little traitor soul in us, like the worm in the apple. He talks to all of us . . . but to be one's self is a rare thing and a great one.

(Le Guin 135)

The traitor self, the worm in the apple, is the dark side which speaks of greed and estrangement. But to be one's self is to have a balance between the dark side and the light side. Ged is insightful and taciturn. He appears contemplative throughout the story; although he incessantly instructs both Arren and the reader alike about the danger of estrangement and ways to overcome estrangement. Ged points out that it is necessary to follow an external pattern and not to be self-directed because self-direction will summon the dark side and estrangement will take charge. It takes a great deal of discipline not to give in to the dark side:

For discipline is the channel in which our acts run

strong and deep; where there is no direction the deeds
of men run shallow and wander and are wasted.

(Le Guin 72)

Where there is no direction, the deeds are provincial, just like the dark side which controls them.

The theme of self-estrangement follows a continual thread of lessons and examples throughout *The Farthest Shore* and it is Ged who unravels the spool. The thread is visible but it is thin and sometimes difficult to see. For the less captious reader, Le Guin conveniently personified self-estrangement in the character of Cob. Cob is an outrageous and exaggerated example of the seduction and enslavement of the dark side because he is self-estranged to the point where he loses his existence and becomes a non-self. In his deep self-estrangement, Cob denies reality: "Let all nature go its stupid course, but I am a man, better than nature, above nature" (Le Guin 178). However when Ged confronts Cob and explains the truth to him, Cob replies: "No one can ever set me free . . . There is no power anywhere that can close the door I opened" (Le Guin 181). Cob, on his own volition, allowed the dark side to take control to the point that his self-estrangement became despair; there was no longer any hope. Is it really surprising to learn then that Cob, consumed by greed, could be described as "Very strange . . . the mixture of despair and vindictiveness, terror and vanity, in his words and voice" (Le Guin 181)? The vanity, terror, and entire state of emotion eloquently describe self-estrangement when the dark side has become powerful enough to disturb the balance.

Had Cob not been seduced by the dark side to the extent that he could no longer discern reality, he would have done well to realize that:

Nothing is immortal. But only to us it is given to know
that we must die. And that is a great gift: the gift of
selfhood. For we have only what we know we must
lose, what we are willing to lose . . . That selfhood
which is our torment, and our treasure, and our
humanity does not endure.

(Le Guin 122)

In this way Cob would have faced reality and never given in to the futile

attempt to live forever that was dictated by his dark side and became testimony of his self-estrangement. Thus, to be human and to experience the self as it ought to be and not be self-estranged takes courage and wisdom, but it does not stop there.

Nobody is immune from the pitfall of self-estrangement, not even the wise archmage Ged. Like the baobabs which must be continually uprooted before they can cause serious damage, so must the enticement of the dark side be thwarted on a regular basis. In *A Wizard of Earthsea*, Ged's own pride and powers induced him to be a slave of his shadow/dark side for a long time until he realized that he had to struggle to free himself. But the struggle never ends, and near the conclusion of *The Farthest Shore* with Ged's power lost as well as the vices and footholds for the dark side which power can provide, Ged has only his experience to lead the way and states:

There is no kingdom like the forests. It is time I went there, went in silence, went alone. And maybe there I would learn at least what no act or power can teach me, what I have never learned.

(Le Guin 156)

And so Ged continues on his quest. And, if one listens closely, he may hear Ged sing:

And I am seized by long forgotten yearning
For that kingdom of spirits; still and grave;
To flowing song I see my feelings turning,
As from aeolian harps, wave upon wave;
A shudder grips me, tear on tear falls burning,
Soft grows my heart, once so severe and brave;
What I possess, seems so far away to me,
And what is gone becomes reality.

(Goethe 17)

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Upon First Seeing Fort Montgomery



Illustration by [Name]

[Faint text]

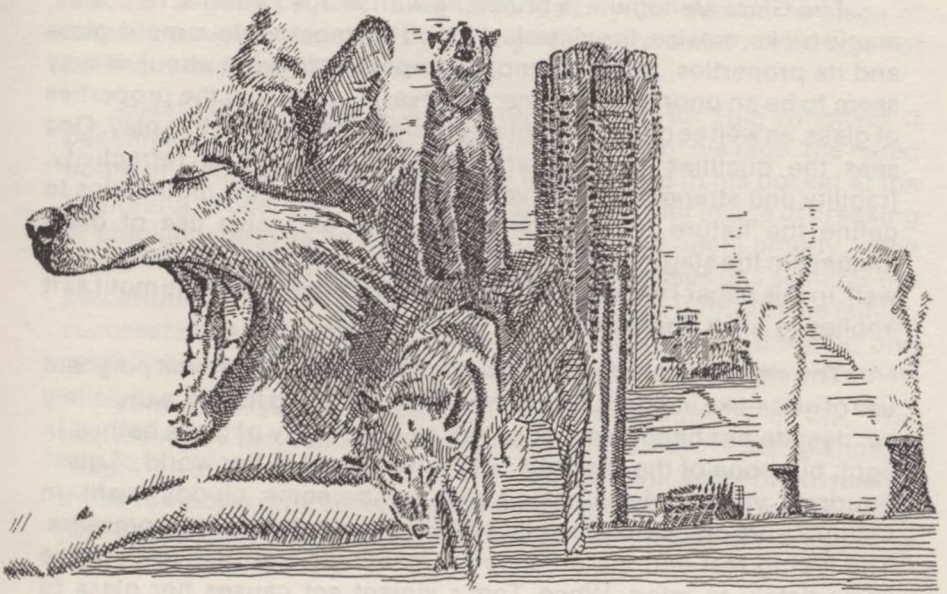
Upon First Seeing Fort Montgomery

Upon the shores of memory
against the rippling waves,
gentle tides caress forever
these weathered ruins of long forgotten days.
Here lies a pillar of man,
fortress walls under his eternal command.

But the deafening volley of ball and powder
has long since surrendered to a thunder even louder.
The once hard-red brick has crumbled to
blue-green moss,
and now an overgrown courtyard gleams with silvery frost.
Like the cold steel cannon captured by earth-brown rust
the warlike memories are but now forgotten dust.
All that remains of this frontier post
are the windswept ruins and footsteps of ghosts.

Amid these earthfilled halls,
among these collapsed sagging walls;
Sharing the shore on this everlasting lake
nature retrieves what man could never take.
The victor, as always, the ageless anthem
of silent time,
forever singing softly to parading
seasons in endless rhythmic rhyme.

Michael Bielawa



Glass Imagery in *The Glass Menagerie*

Katherine M. Bronko

The Glass Menagerie is brimming with image patterns: rainbows, magic tricks, movies, the victrola. I found the most obvious motif, glass and its properties, to be the most compelling to write about. It may seem to be an unoriginal choice; however, I found that the properties of glass, as well as glass itself, played a significant role in this play. One sees the qualities of transparency, clarity and haze, refractivity, fragility and strength used in very effective ways. This motif helps to define the nature of each character. The extensive use of glass imagery in the staging of the play becomes riveting to the audience as well. In this paper I will attempt to demonstrate the use of this motif as it applies to each character.

The character of Laura Wingfield demonstrates the most poignant use of glass-like imagery. She is introduced as being fragile, exquisitely so, despite her handicap. Laura has all the beauty of glass bathed in light, but none of the strength. She is immersed in her world of glass figurines, yet she views herself as a cumbersome, cloddy misfit. In reality, Laura cracks like her glass figurines with the slightest pressure. The typing test and the prospect of meeting her dream lover come immediately to mind. When Tom's violent act causes her glass to shatter, Laura seems to feel the blow herself. She manages to find a second world of glass in which to hide when the pressure of the outside world becomes too great, "the Jewelbox, that big glass house where they raise tropical flowers" (Williams 962).

Laura cares for the glass menagerie lovingly and tenderly — much as she would like to be cared for. The glass unicorn becomes metaphoric, the vehicle for herself, the tenor. She fancies herself the unicorn, different from the others yet with her own beauty. Laura uses the unicorn to express her inner-most feelings. One feels her dream-like yearning as she instructs Jim to hold the unicorn gently and to "Hold him over the light, he loves the light!" (Williams 996). She

expresses her deep-seated unhappiness with her mundane existence when she asks Jim to put the unicorn on the table, saying, "They all like a change of scenery once in a while" (Williams 997). Her own sense of fragility manifests itself as she exclaims to Jim, "Oh, be careful! If you breathe it breaks!" (Williams 996).

Laura gains incredible, if momentary strength during her dialogue with Jim. When the horn is broken from the unicorn (making it similar to the other horses), she calls Jim by a pet name and says forgivingly, "Glass breaks so easily, no matter how careful you are" (Williams 998). Fragility returns with a jolt when Jim confesses his commitment to Betty. Laura trembles and sways, much like her collection does when the traffic goes by. She is, as described by the author, "a piece of translucent glass touched by light, given a momentary radiance, not actual, not lasting" (Williams 980).

Glass takes on an entirely different meaning for Tom Wingfield. It becomes more ominous, the unintended object of his rage, the hated bottle of alcohol. He finds an empty liquor bottle in his pocket at the beginning of Scene IV. We immediately see another image of breaking or cracking glass as he drops his house key and utters bitterly, "One crack — and it falls through!" (Williams 967). Perhaps this signifies the precarious nature of Tom's existence. He remains dutiful to the family, successfully sublimating his own desires. But should there be one crack in his devotion, one final insult, Tom could end up like his father.

Tom speaks to the audience about the illusions of life. The chandelier in the dance hall become metaphoric. At first glance, it "filters the dusk with delicate rainbow colors" (Williams 974). In reality, those rainbows only serve to deceive the masses. Here we see glass (the chandelier) as a disquieting force, as compared to the soothing effect it has on Laura.

The progression of the drama shows a progression from weakness to strength in the glass-like imagery as it relates to Amanda Wingfield. In Scene IV, one finds Amanda *breaking* into child-like tears when Tom apologizes to her. The next scene finds Amanda asking, "Is my head so transparent?" (Williams 975) when Tom guesses her wish. Transparency and fragility connote the delicacy of glass. In Scene V, Amanda begins to gain strength in anticipation of the gentleman caller. She expresses her desire to be perceived by him as "polished" and "brilliant."

Glass takes on a positive meaning for Amanda in Scene VI when we see images of jonquils in scores of glass vases about her former

home. Flower vases are usually quite beautiful and very strong. I believe that Amanda felt this way about herself at this point in the play. At the climax of Amanda's fervent hope for Laura's happiness (Scene VII), Amanda is seen serving lemonade in the strongest of functional glass: an old-fashioned cut glass pitcher. At this moment, Amanda holds her strongest belief in the delusion that Jim O'Conner will be Laura's future husband.

Jim O'Conner is responsible for giving Laura a fleeting glimpse of being somewhat like other women her age. He is also responsible for shattering Laura's treasured unicorn, as well as her dreams. Laura gives Jim the broken unicorn at the end of their meeting as a souvenir — perhaps of what he had done *for* her as well as to her. I'd like to believe that the shattering of Laura's dream world will be the impetus she needs to try once more to live her life in the real world.

Williams has done a remarkable job in using the imagery of glass throughout this play. If all the references I've stated were intentional, I believe that he demonstrated true genius in the coordination of words, action, and symbol.

The future of Amanda and Laura is unclear. Perhaps we should have seen Laura closing the window (against the storms of her life) at the end of the play if the author had wanted to convey a positive feeling. Instead, Laura and Amanda speak but no one hears them. This may well be the story of the rest of their lives: speaking to and hearing only each other.

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Eternity

I walk along the sand alone,
Each step washed in lace
Embroidered by the quiet sea.
I look ahead to wave on wave
Retreating, returning, retreating;
A moving fabric making one
Great tapestry.
Forever changing, yet the same;
Captured eternity.

Eleanor Kohler



Women “Wastelanders” of the Twenties

Jeanne K. Smith

Ernest Hemingway in *The Sun Also Rises* and F. Scott Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby* both present beautiful women as “Wastelanders” of the 1920s, a time of great cultural change. Morally weak, neurotic and irresponsible, it is Fitzgerald’s Daisy (portrayed by an apparently misogynistic genius — “Gatsby indicated a gorgeous scarcely human orchid of a woman . . .” [Fitzgerald 106]) who glitters outstandingly as the more destructive female. Compared to her Hemingway contemporary, the charming but alcoholic and insecure Brett, Daisy is a ruthless person: “She’s a drunk . . . there’s a certain quality about her, a certain fineness” (Fitzgerald 38).

Lady Brett Ashley of *The Sun Also Rises* is a style leader, a woman of class and refinement, but Hemingway also sketches her as sadistic: “He said Brett was a sadist just because she has a good, healthy stomach” (Hemingway 166). Lacking self-control and self-respect (“I’ve got to do something I really want to do. I’ve lost my self-respect” [Hemingway 183]), bob-haired Brett had the seemingly easy-swinging sexual freedom immortalized by the women pictured in Larry Icart’s etchings of the period. Brett seemed to love toting up the score of her male conquests as if sex were a mere game of darts. She felt bored with life much of the time and at the mercy of her senses, apparently as helpless as the tides of the ocean controlled by a capricious moon. This neurotic dependence on approval and affection of others led her from one meaningless sexual affair to another, signifying some inner insecurity. However, there was a certain honesty in her openness about these affairs: “When I think of the hell I’ve put chaps through, I’m paying for it all now” (Hemingway 26). She loved the hero, Jake, but was unable to accept the fact that his handicap frustrated her needs. Our image of her is a blend of irony and pity.

Looked upon as a pagan goddess, worshipped by the irreligious — “They wanted her as an image to dance around” (Hemingway 155)

— Brett is also referred to as a despicable Circe, who “turns men into swine” (Hemingway 144). Her behavior is admired on the one hand and condemned on the other.

The immaculate Daisy Fay Buchanan of *The Great Gatsby* also symbolizes a Jazz-age “Wastelander.” Her voice may be “full of money” (Fitzgerald 120), but it resounds with silly, inane comments. She is a classically bored member of the upper class who drifts here and there attempting to find amusement in an ocean of ennui: “I’ve been everywhere and seen everything and done everything” (Fitzgerald 18). More a Venus flytrap than the flower her name implies, Daisy is the narcissistic, vacuous, insincere and unprincipled object of deluded Jay Gatsby’s immature, fanciful dream.

An “Eve” in the Garden of Eden of East Egg, whose earthly paradise is the focus of a romantic Adam, Gatsby incorporates Daisy into his vision of success. She is a goddess upon a pedestal whom he attempts to purchase and ensconce in his West Egg heaven.

Unattainable, Daisy is a flawed illusion that really does not exist. A spoiler of Gatsby’s dream, she betrays his capacity to love by token of her unworthiness: “There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams — not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion” (Fitzgerald 97). Daisy is a flirt, a cynic, and, as a sophisticated woman of the East, has assimilated a “code” of behavior that allows the “discreet” affair (“It’s a great advantage not to drink . . . you can time any little irregularity of your own so that everybody else is so blind that they don’t see or care” [Fitzgerald 78]), but must vanish at the hint of things sordid. Outwardly pure, she is inwardly a moral cripple produced by a corrupt society. Here, in the web of this venomous creature, her prey is caught by circumstances, left to die, spiritually and physically, while the spinner wanders off unscathed to play her game again.

Daisy is an unworthy representative of womanhood, but serves well as a symbol of a contemporary American dream’s innate deficiencies. Alas, was this the Barbie doll prototype (no brains, but what a body) destined to be foisted on a later generation of little girls?

Although unstable, Brett, to her credit, proves she has a conscience. No Dante’s Beatrice, but also no spider woman who has a fling and thereafter kills her love object, Brett suffers from anxieties brought on by her own actions. In the end, she rises above her selfishness to send a young bullfighter back to his sport because she realizes she is bad for him: “You know I’d have lived with him if I hadn’t

seen it was bad for him" (Hemingway 243). Her code of behavior allowed for personal change and human sympathy. The caring wartime nurse is there just beneath the sleek, streamlined surface.

Daisy, in contrast, whose pristine countenance covers a hedonistic, if not mechanical, heart, prefers to escape into her wealthy emptiness rather than face the reality of what she is and what she has done. She leaves it for others to deal with the consequences of her behavior: "They smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness" (Fitzgerald 181).

Brett and Daisy both dramatize the loss of values and collapse of beliefs of a whole generation. They are ironically gorgeous symbols of the post-war changes in social mores. This "ain't we got fun" society delighted in breaking puritanical rules, rebelliously and joyfully exposing the hypocritical attitudes of their forefathers. The old rules were cast aside to be replaced by a boundless nothingness. They forgot to include a meaning or purpose for the new rules of the game they were playing.

As the parasitic person of Daisy exits the stage, what happened to the charming Brett? Will hope continue to wither in the greenish twilight, or could it reappear in the newly-found Hemingway novel? Could Brett triumph at last over her destructive alcoholism and eliminate the need for those tawdry sexual encounters? Will she gain emotional balance, self-mastery, and (if a note of optimism may be permitted in the face of such depressing people) launch herself into the sea of self-acceptance where real freedom begins? Will she then tack and run full sail toward a purposeful life? One can only dream with romantic wonderment — isn't it pretty to think so?

Works Cited

- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.
- Hemingway, Ernest. *The Sun Also Rises*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926.



Proudly the Potter worked his craft
Perfection was his theme.
His precious art, glazed and fired —
Beauty was the scheme.

Trial by fire the porcelain stood
Translucent white and strong.
The charm and beauty of the piece —
Its life one must prolong.

The strength displayed, yet fragile be
This juxtaposed duality.
Will it withstand the test of time —
And find immortality?

Joyce Telage Beaudoin

Dream Lover

Scott Barwick

Miss February 1986. You always picture in your mind the ideal . . . the perfect woman — physically speaking of course. When I saw her in that winter issue, I knew she was my ideal. Blonde shoulder-length hair, deep blue eyes, a sweet smile. Even her measurements were sent from God Almighty — 5'7", 115 lbs., 36-24-35. With luscious long legs and creamy white skin. Just amazing . . . I mean *really* amazing.

I know what you're thinking. She's only a picture, right. You can't, as it has been said *ad infinitum*, fall in love with a picture, right. I'm here to tell you that you just might be fooling yourself, if you swallow that little saying.

Love is wonderfully complex, subjective, emotional, and a host of other things that are far too numerous to mention. But mainly Love is *your* feelings and just yours. If you think you love someone, then you do. You're the best person to know, aren't you?

Yet the problem with falling in love with just a picture of someone is that the object of your affection is just a picture and can't be anything other than that. You can't run your fingers through its hair. You can't fill your arms with a hug around it. It can't kiss you. It can't talk to you. It certainly can't make mad passionate love to you. And most importantly, it can't be your girlfriend — a companion, one who is respected and respects, a sharer of dreams, thoughts, and feelings. That picture is not a real person, just the image of one. One, by the way, that you don't really know, and one made up to look as stunning as possible.

That's why loving a picture is ultimately fruitless, although you don't realize this when you're looking puppy-face at this exquisite centerfold. So, ultimately and somewhat begrudgingly, you just have to smile a warm smile for a while, and let your feelings (along with other things) just fade away. A memory tucked warmly away and then forgotten. Sometimes.

I write comic books for a living. Yes, comic books for those of you

less enlightened that snickered. As I've described in my monthly columns in the back of said periodicals, I prefer the term graphic literature myself. These works have high drama, fine art, deep meaning, for those who would just cast away the stereotype of "kiddie stuff" and read the damn things. Anyway, that term is not widely known, so no one knows what the hell you are talking about when you use it. So, reluctantly, I just use comic book in public to avoid confusion.

I'm best known as the creator of such titles as *The Protectors* and *Midnight Star* — just to name a few. They're pretty successful, if I do say so myself. I credit my imagination as the key to this ongoing success. It can conjure up almost anything — making the bizarre . . . plausible, the impossible . . . possible, the absurd . . . real, and have it come to life when I set it on paper. Reality. That's what I want these characters to exude and emulate — the reality of the person in the fantasy or fantastic situation in which they might find themselves. I've always had this inclination that they were only limited by their one-dimensional, unanimated format, much like any photo. They're the same thing, except they're something extra. Photos are moments of time snatched forever. Moments never to be retrieved, but always instantly remembered. Just a thought to keep in mind.

Now, I'm a single man, early 20's . . . who hasn't had a girlfriend in about a year (sounds like your typical classified ad, don't it?). When you're alone that long, you start looking at all available women with keen interest. But you're also looking for a person who's willing to make some sort of commitment. And you have to add the fact that you're afraid of catching some disease. So basically what I'm trying to say is that I spend a lot of time watching television. It contains the same principle of looking, not touching. And it provides some of the most beautiful women in the world for your gazes. Magazines do the trick too. Your eyes get caught by every pretty lady that steps in front of you. Just to torture yourself, I suppose. You're hoping to find someone just like that, but, stupidly and naively, without leaving your home. Too much heartbreak. Fantasy is better.

Miss February had this effect on me. She really struck me the first time I saw her. OK, I admit my attention was first grabbed by her attractive chest. This titillation, if you pardon the expression, slowly passes, though. Once it does you start to notice other things (no, not her pelvic region, you notice that when your eyes move down from her breasts. Hey, this might sound sexist, but it's true).

You start to notice a pair of deep blue eyes (truly the windows to the soul), hair of spun gold, and an infectious smile. A smile so warm

that you have to smile yourself when you see it. To say the least I became slightly infatuated. Slightly obsessed, to be totally honest. I'd find myself looking at one picture, just looking, mind you, nothing else, as seconds became minutes, minutes became hours. Eventually, the realization of futility intruded upon my dreamworld and I became more depressed than ever. I stacked the issue with the rest of my collection, hoping that I would get over it if I denied myself in ignoring her. Problem was I kept going back for more. Until eventually, I could see her solely in my mind, and didn't need the book. It was just like she was there.

And then, three days ago, Monday night, I had this dream. The details were fuzzy. But I know this. She was in that dream. And there was music playing in this dream. It had to be Lou Reed's "Hot Hips" playing on my stereo. I heard it. Other than that, like I said, the specifics are a little vague.

Now, you're probably saying to yourself that this isn't so unusual. Most of us can't remember the specifics of our dreams; they fade pretty quickly once we wake up. And I did have the image of this lady permanently burned upon my subconscious. Plus, if you knew that Mr. Reed is one of my favorite musical poets, the appearance of his music in my dreams wouldn't be hard to explain either. Music seeps into the old grey matter just as easily as pictures do. I, like you, probably thought that these were good solid rationalizations. That was until I walked past my stereo the next morning. Ya, you guessed it. The damn record was on the turntable.

Problem was I don't remember playing it the night before. I watched *Stripes* last night and then went to bed. Besides, if I was playing my music last night, the elderly couple in the next apartment would have probably called the cops on me. Also, I have had no recent blows to the head, so amnesia could be ruled out. Twilo Zone for sure. It gets weirder.

Tuesday night, the same dream occurred. Same elements, only I remember more. I could see the way she was dressed (in red). I could smell perfume in the air. My favorite fragrance — *Obsession* (isn't that high up there on the irony scale?). Oh wow, this was sweet. I could have remembered more but the telephone rang just as it was getting good. I shouldn't say rang; it more of just ripped right through what remains of my eardrums. I shakingly picked the receiver off the nightstand. "Hello," I said half-consciously.

"Where's the script?" a cold monotone voice blurts in the darkness.

A demon! A demon! It must be a demon! That was my first thought. Nothing could be so cold and evil with such a bad sense of timing. I

turned to look at the clock. The blue digitals said 7:00 A.M. I suddenly knew who this was.

"Hi, Len!" My editor.

He started ranting. I was still asleep. Except for something about schedules and a few expletives, I couldn't make out anything he said. I rarely listen to him while I'm awake, so it didn't matter. I sat myself up and threw my legs over the edge of the bed. Eyes closed up again. Ran my free hand through my hair. His words still garbled. I bent my head forward either out of disgust or fatigue, and slowly opened my eyes. Guess what was staring me in the face? A pair of white laced panties lay crumpled on the floor beneath my head. I leaned over, cradling the receiver on my shoulder, and picked them up.

I stretched them out between my fingers. Beautiful. I could smell the perfume on them even from here. Soft silk as I ran them through my fingers. The phone dropped to the bed. Len was still babbling.

"Are you listening to me?" the ice king yelled.

I picked my head from my nice distraction and yelled back at the phone. Not at the mouth part, just at the phone in general. Hoping it would pick up my voice nonetheless.

"All right, Len. You'll have it tomorrow," I screamed.

"OK. But . . ." he started to mumble.

Good-bye, Len," I said, slamming the phone down in the same instant.

I looked down. Empty hands. Panties gone. Disappeared while my attention was distracted. They must have disappeared. I looked on the floor. Looked under the bed. Looked under the sheets. Beneath the carpet. Nothing. Nada. Not a trace. I was not happy, maybe nuts, but not happy.

Was I crazy? That was one of the things that crossed my mind as I lay awake in bed last night. I dismissed that notion quite early; I knew that this was really happening. I spent the whole day just lounging around the apartment. Didn't write anything. Thinking. Watching. Waiting. Wondering. Hoping. Praying. Passing the time before the night came (I tried to take a nap but couldn't). Didn't matter. Found myself in bed early that night anyway.

It was 2:00 A.M. No, 2:05. Make it 2:17. The clock just kept moving. The light from the numbers was bright enough to herald each passing minute. Did you ever notice how moonlight can also light up your room? And isn't it incredible that you can flip your pillow over millions of times without finding a cool spot on it? Why do cars with sirens or motorcycles without mufflers always go past your window in the middle of the night? And why do cats or dogs have to screw beneath

that same window? Why are my feet so cold? These were but some of the questions that popped into my mind as I battled my insomnia. I was nervous. With anticipation, I suppose. Then I questioned my sanity again.

This was nuts. Everything that happened those other nights could be explained. I wasn't fully awake when I thought I saw the panties. I only thought I saw them. And maybe I did leave the record on the stereo and just forgot about it. And maybe there was some bottle of perfume in the house that I forgot about and had accidentally fallen and broken somewhere in my home. I didn't buy these rationalizations either. I knew the truth. Being crazy was just so much simpler.

I had to get to sleep. The trudge to the medicine cabinet is a very long one during the middle of the night. Especially when you leave your sneakers in front of the bedroom door. I put a band-aid on my forehead when I reached the bathroom.

Where *is* the Sominex? Of course it was hidden behind the Listerine, Q-tips, and Bactine. What an obvious location. I fumbled the bottle into my palm. Tapped out three tablets into my other hand. The bottle says only take two but I wanted to be sure. Turned off the light and ambled into the kitchen. Opened the frig up and got a quart of milk (it really does help you sleep, I read it somewhere). Popped the pills and drank half the carton. I was ready for sleep now. Should have thought of it before.

In about a half hour my eyes grew heavy. I started to think again. Isn't the line between imagination and insanity a fine one indeed? It may be what you think is real really is. What you think is imagined is imagined. Of course, what one person imagines to be real is really imagined by someone else. This thought must have been too deep to comprehend so late at night because I fell asleep.

How long I was asleep, I couldn't say. At some point the haze started to fade. Sounds. Music playing. "Hot Hips." *Obsession* floated through the air. Pictures started to evolve. Then it happened. Everything came in place and became clear.

I saw a shadowy figure in the doorway to my bedroom. Moonlight at first silhouetted the figure and then rose to put it into full view. She leaned against the door frame. Head tilted and resting against the wood. Arms behind her back. That golden hair flowed over her shoulders and rested upon her chest. I awoke and opened my eyes. She still stood there.

My eyes gazed up her body. The red heels followed by the white stockings that flowed up to the thigh-high red silk dress. It was the sleeveless kind that started where it began to push up her breasts. I

looked up to her face as I slowly sat up. She smiled that familiar smile and slowly glided to the edge of my bed. She slid down upon the sheets. Ran her fingers through my hair gently, lovingly. She took my chin into her hand. I looked into those dark blue eyes highlighted in black. She looked back and smiled. Pulled me close and pressed her rouge lips against my own. Gently forcing her body down upon mine until I was lying flat. Arms around her. Squeezing. She pulled back from the embrace and rose to her feet.

She smiled. Pulled out of her heels and flicked them with her toe behind her. She leaned her head forward, which brought her hair flowing about her face, and reached her hands up her back. The zipper of the dress pulled down. The silk slid down her creamy body. Her breasts popped out as the dress abandoned them. Beautiful. It continued to slide till it clung to her hips. Hands effortlessly nudging till it fell around her ankles. She stepped out. White stockings attached to the lace garter-belt. Silk panties. A goddess in white stood before me.

She crawled onto the bed, kissing her way up my body until she reached my lips. Wrapped her arms around my neck tightly. I slid my hands down her back and beneath her panties. This was my dream come true.

Dream. As I held her there with me, that one word would not become dislodged from my thoughts. She is there in the way I've always fantasized about, but something was just not right. As we became more passionate, the feeling grew and grew. Until it finally hit me. As I was about to plunge into everything that I thought meant something to me, as I was about to let go of every last inhibition, I knew what was wrong. She wasn't real. She just wasn't really real.

At that moment of realization, she stopped kissing me and opened her eyes, pushed herself up, sat on the edge of my bed, and withdrew her hands to her lap. No more smile, just a look of sadness came over her face. She shook her head softly from side to side. She began to fade from view. And, as she was about to go forever, I saw a tear roll down her cheek.

Needless to say, I stayed awake the rest of the night, laid on my back, and stared at the ceiling — thinking. What happened. What could have been. Maybe I blew it. Maybe what I said about the imagined being real was correct: she was exactly what I dreamt for after all. I don't know. What I do know is this: she was created by me, by my thoughts. I'm not ready to be God. And I'm certainly not ready to give up on the real world yet and be lost in my own little fantasy world. It's too easy. Too many people do it. I couldn't give up on this world yet. It

will all come together. When it does, I know the happiness I feel will be real, not a dream. Might get hurt along the way, but that will make that happiness more satisfying. I need that. She would not have been able to give it. She was not from this world, but I am. I felt better.

I blinked. The sun shone through the blinds. The light hit my eyes. I blinked again. Turned my head to the clock. It was 11:00 A.M. Got a script due in about four hours. Didn't really care. I just wanted to get out of this room and go outside. I threw off the covers to the side. Sat on the edge of the bed. Scanned around. Nothing. No panties. No perfume. No record.

I wandered to the bathroom. Stepped out of my briefs. Dragged myself into the shower. Hot water felt good. Sprayed for about twenty minutes. Relaxing. Dried off. Grabbed the infamous black t-shirt, faded Levi's, and white Converse. Dressed. And breezed out the door around noon. Went to my favorite place. A shop in the Village called Forbidden Planet. Comic books. Science Fiction. My kind of place. Had a different meaning for me now. I walked through the black doors.

"Hi, big guy," the girl at the check-out counter said as I walked in.

I smiled and waved at her. Most of the people know me here, both employees and patrons. Been coming here since before I hit it big. I started to walk into the place's big main room. But before I got swallowed up she called to me again.

"*X-Men* came in this morning," she yelled.

"Great, save me a copy. I'm going to rummage through back issues of the *Swamp Thing* for a while," I said as I pointed to the basement where they were kept.

"Okeedokee," she smiled as she was helping another customer.

She is really cute. But she is also really seventeen. That's depressing. There is always something keeping people apart. I like flirting with her anyway. She's a brunette.

I made my way down the creaky wooden steps into the cellar with the plethora of graphic literature (comic books). The books are stacked upright, alphabetically, in acid-free boxes. Each book is wrapped in protective mylar bags. All kept in a cool, dry environment. I never fully appreciated the great care needed in order for them to survive.

I followed the letters around until I got to the S's. Flipped through till I got *Swamp Thing*. Alan Moore's first issue of the series stared me right in the face. Along with Frank Miller and Chris Claremont, he is my favorite writer of the genre. I grabbed the issue pretty quickly. It goes pretty fast. Collector's item.

I sorted through some other books for awhile. Didn't see anything

else that interested me at the moment. Nothing really interested me today. I only grabbed Moore out of reflex. I shuffled up the stairs and over to the check-out line.

"You get what you want?" the seventeen-year-old said. I had to keep reminding myself of that. I smiled and nodded yes.

"Alan Moore, huh," she said, looking up from the book, "lucked out today, didn't we?" She laughed. "Here's your *X-Men*, too." She pulled it from underneath the counter and plopped it in a bag. "Cash or charge?"

"I'll Visa this one." I opened my black wallet and pulled the magic plastic from one of the folds.

She slid it out of my hand and put it in one of the sliding credit card machines. One click-clunk and I'll pay next month. The damage being done, she gave the card back.

"You are all set," she smiled, as she flipped her brown hair from her eyes.

"Thanks a lot," I smiled back.

She leaned forward on her elbows. "See you next week."

"You bet," I flirted one last time. Remember, she is what is known as jail bait. I get depressed again. Here is this wonderful girl and I can't touch her. She tended to another customer and I left. She'd be better off without me anyway.

Back out on the street. I thought I'd go to the company. Just tell Len I had no ideas. He could get a freelance story. That would make his day. Started shuffling down the street. Swinging my bag back and forth like a loaf of bread. Well, I don't know if you follow football or not, but when you carry a football like a loaf, it has the tendency to fly out of your hands. I found that bags do the same thing. Sailed a good fifteen feet backwards, I'd say.

"Hey, you dropped this," a voice called from behind.

Could I feel more like an idiot? Could I feel more embarrassed beyond my face's capacity to become red? I swiveled around. I froze when I completed the turn. My eyes widened; my face got even redder — had to.

For me, she just seemed to glow there. A yellow sundress hugging her body; the sun striking her in just the right way. Blonde shoulder-length hair, deep blue eyes, a sweet smile. Just amazing . . . I mean *really* amazing.

"Hi," she said with a southern drawl, "you dropped this."

I didn't say a word, just stared at her like an idiot. She let out a "tsk" from her teeth and walked over to me, bag extended from her hand.

"You . . . dropped . . . this," she slowly repeated, emphasizing

every word. She shook her head and smiled.

"Thanks," my voice cracked between the times I swallowed hard. I smiled, keeping eye contact. She laughed. I thought it was at me. I took the bag from her hand.

"I think I'm flattered," she said easing my worry.

"I think so . . . I mean you should . . . uh, really." I was babbling. I lost the spit in my mouth.

"I know you," she said confidently. This worried me. I began to question if this was really happening or just . . . It couldn't happen again. I chased fantasyland away. Thoughts flashed through my mind faster than I could comprehend.

"You do?" I barely managed to say.

"Ya," she paused. "I have to admit I followed you out of the store when I knew it was you for sure." I was scared, to say the least.

"I recognized you from your little picture above your column," she smiled. "I love your work." A strange feeling came over me just then. Somehow . . . some way, I knew this was real. I knew I wasn't dreaming this time. Can't say what made me so sure.

I smiled and turned my face to the ground.

"You're embarrassed," she said as she touched my shoulder.

"A little," I said, eyes still looking down.

"Sorry," she said with a slight tone of embarrassment in her voice. I looked up into her eyes.

"Don't be," I smiled. Don't know how long we stood there looking at each other as people passed on by us. Probably giving us strange looks, no doubt. I couldn't say, I was busy watching her. Seemed like a long time, was probably just a minute.

"I know you, too," I confidently offered.

"I bet I know from where," she sang kiddingly.

"Got a subscription," I laughed. She jumped back, clasped her hands to her chest.

"Now I'm embarrassed," she said kind of happily. Smiling all the time. I've never seen anyone smile so much. She was the one blushing now.

"Don't be," I repeated. This idea just burst in my head at the moment the words left my lips. Both of us still staring at each other.

"Say, I was going to go to the office," motioning with my hand towards downtown. "You want to come along?"

"Really?" she whispered. I nodded quickly and hopefully. She put her arm through mine.

"I'd love to," she calmly stated.

"Great," I said with excitement just about to burst out, "I'll show

you around."

"Shall I flag a taxi?" she questioned.

"Na," smiling down at her, "I think I'd rather walk."

This gives me a whole new meaning for the saying "love at first sight."



