

Meaning for Words

By BILLIE ROBINSON

The Creative Writing Class that I am attending is an experiment for me. I had wanted to write for a long time, and tell about some of the places that I had visited, the people I had known and my own reactions to both. I wanted others to read what I wrote, but I did not know the first thing about the mechanics of writing a story.

A friend of mine who had attended a class in Creative Writing last year, persuaded me to come and visit when the group met for the first time this Spring. I did this and during the evening I became very much interested in the teacher and her ideas, as well as the men and women who had signed up to take the course.

In a conversation with the teacher, Dr. Bernice Kelly Har-

ris, who is a published author, I explained that the only attempt that I had made to do any writing, was about seven years ago when I traveled across the United States with four children. I drove one car and my son drove a station wagon and pulled a boat on a trailer behind it. So many funny things happened to us on the trip, I knew I would want to relate to my husband later that I decided to keep an account of the happenings. When I did read it to him, he seemed to enjoy the story, as well as the way that I had written it. The laughter and praise provoked by my humorous travelog was heady stuff to me, and my desire to write grew out of this reaction.

No sooner had I mulled aloud the question as to whether or not I should go to a night class in writing, than family insistence began. First from my husband and then from the children. Of course I should go. It would be good for me. Here's the money for it, go sign up! I was told. I discovered later that this class was to be not only a source of great pleasure and information to me, but a therapeutic outlet as well.

After an interview with Philips Russell, a retired professor of Creative Writing at the University of North Carolina, a fellow student quoted him as saying, "Seek out the unique experiences in your life and write a story around them--". All of the dozen or so students in my class have revealed part of themselves through the stories they have written. Their "unique experiences" are sometimes presented in a factual way, but more often than not, they are the background for a good fictional story.

A doctor in our class wrote about a poor couple with little education, whose child-bearing capabilities far exceeded their income and the wife's health. The doctor's knowledge of, and concern for, this condition seems to indicate his first-hand experience with the problem. One of the women students, who spends much of her time as a civic leader and part-time business executive, writes poignant stories about her past life, which has included the greatest of tragedies and joys.

A prominent hostess and young mother writes stories that point out the falseness and wrong sense of values which is prevalent in her social group. Another young woman with very strong religious convictions has created out of her own beliefs, poems and stories of great moral character.

We are fortunate to have in our class, a minister who has written a play concerned with a religious point of view. He is now revealing himself and his own "unique experiences" in a series of essays that he hopes will be published some day.

Along with the need for using personal experiences to write about, we find that all students of writing should have a respect for the meaning of words, as they are the key to clarity in a story. There is a woman in our group, who has a major in English. She attended Columbia University, and did a great deal of writing there. Her words show clarity, her descriptions are incisive, and the stories she writes must certainly be expressions of her own convictions touched by experiences that she may have had.

No mention of my fellow students would be complete without a word of admiration for the lady who has so aptly written about her childhood home with an ability to combine its' history with description and make it delightfully palatable. Or for the wife of a newspaperman who enrolled to learn more about the art of writing.

There are several college students in this class, who find the time spent in it so rewarding that they are willing to give up their free time in the evening once a week for the sake of expressing themselves on paper. One of these, a young lady, wrote a play which is to be produced at Chapel Hill in competition with other plays written by older and more experienced authors. Still another student writes of his experiences in a relaxed and easily understood manner.

I wish I knew more about the other members of this fraternity of apprentice writers. I cannot attempt to guess their motivations, but I believe each one of them is putting some of his and her personal experiences into their writing. All of us are experimenting with some form of Creative Writing in our own manner. We are learning to use words correctly, utilize our own unique experiences, and satisfy the gnawing urge that we all have -- to write creatively!

Consolation

By EUNICE M. BROWN

Here we all have sat and said
"While in my garden or in bed
I was so struck with beauty rare
I yearned to mark it down—to share
A blinding moment, sadly lost
Because my thoughts and pen got crossed.
I knew a certain sense of shame
That I sought words which never came."
Count less fortunate than you
All the myriad people who
Never see a wondrous thing
Never feel the need to sing.
I sympathize, I know the plight
Of those who thrill and cannot write
Here's consolation for any such:
You saw, you felt — and that is much.

The Viewing

By SARA POPE

Driving through the lovely suburbs of Philadelphia on a sight-seeing tour, I was startled to see two long lines of people on a sidewalk, slowly moving in dignified progress toward a stately columned building.

"What on earth is that crowd doing?" I asked my friend and guide.

"They're going to a viewing," she answered.

"A viewing? Of what?"

"Don't you have them in the South? When someone dies here, the body lies in state at the undertaker's parlor. The family assembles to receive expressions of sympathy and condolence, and friends pay their last respects by viewing the body of the deceased."

"Interesting," I said.

"On one occasion it led to an interesting culmination," the

friend and guide told me. "Recently my seventeen year-old son and a schoolmate of his wanted to pay their respects when a classmate died, following a head injury in a football practice. They knew the approximate location of the funeral home, but were uncertain as to the number of the street. Finally they came upon a long line such as you just saw. So they quickly parked their jalopy and took their place at the end of the line. After an hour of slow and tortuous advance, they stood by the open casket. A low whistle of unbelief broke the muted silence.

"My God!" one of the boys exclaimed.

"Great guns!" the other cried.

"How Bill has changed!"

"In the casket lay the corpse of a wrinkled eighty year-old woman.

"Their approximate location was two blocks off."

Resonance

By DR. JOHN H. STANLEY

"Pour me just a half cup this time, Cynthia," I told my wife. "I always drink too much coffee on Saturday mornings when I can loaf around the table so long." I continued reading the newspaper.

"What's the news, Harry?" Cynthia asked.

"Nothing much. Oh, here's an interesting piece. Remember that James boy who lived over on Oak Street? What was it he studied in college? Geology? Astrology? No, it was Astronomy. Anyway, here's an article by him, and he says something spectacular will take place today which will have far-reaching effects on Smithfield. Something about resonance being produced by the interaction of two asteroids and—Oh, what the heck! Who can understand that gibberish? I thought it was something interesting."

Suddenly I felt like really doing something today. I decided to catch up all those jobs around the house that had accumulated over the past twelve months. I directed Cynthia to call Fred for me and to tell him to get Charlie to finish out our usual foursome for golf. I hurried to the shower.

"Fred called while you were in the shower," Cynthia told me after I had dressed in my work clothes. "He said tell you that Bill and Frank had already called off the game for today. They had some work to do around the house."

I went to the telephone to call the hardware store. "That you, Dennis?" I asked. "What took you so long to get to the 'phone? I'm glad to hear the hardware business is rushing this morning. Paint, eh? Well, that's what I want. Send me over two quarts of outside white and one of green, Dennis. Out of green? Well, send the white on over, and I'll get the

green when some more comes in."

I was so tired that evening I didn't even feel like going out for the paper. Cynthia brought it in for me while I called Sid down at the office. "Sid," I told him, "when you go by the Garrison fellow's house tonight to carry him that box of groceries, tell him to come down to the plant Monday morning. I'm going to put him to work. There's no need for you and me just to keep on sending him groceries every week. Work is what he needs."

Sid agreed.

"By the way, Sid," I continued, "you said something several months ago about our forming a community betterment association, remember? I think it's a grand idea. Let's get started on it the first thing next week. Okay?"

I quickly glanced over the newspaper Cynthia handed me. "Well, there's no mention of anything spectacular happening in Smithfield today," I said. "Here's a little filler that says a lot of cleaning up and repairing is going on in town. Nothing spectacular about that. What we need here is a dentist and a big mill to hire a lot of people, to create jobs. I thought maybe that was the 'resonance' Harold James was writing about this morning. Well, he never was so bright anyway."

"Do you suppose Dennis ever sold out of green paint in one day's time?" Cynthia asked.

Women are like that, I thought. Always making comments apropos of nothing. I yawned. "Let's go to bed early tonight so we can get up in time to go to Sunday school tomorrow. We haven't been in a long time," I said.

Cynthia looked at me and nodded her head thoughtfully.

Rainy Sunday

(Continued)

"Why?" Mr. Parrish asked. "This raincoat situation," the deacon replied.

Mr. Parrish, thinking the deacon had found out about his missing coat, said, "Oh, you've heard about someone taking my raincoat yesterday."

"No," the deacon said, "I'm talking about my own coat. Somebody took my coat yesterday, and I had to take the only thing that was left on the rack—this thing." He looked down at the plastic coat he was wearing. The pocket was torn slightly, and two or three of the snap-fasteners down the front were torn out of the plastic material.

All the men were looking at the 'thing' the deacon wore.

Suddenly the minister stepped a little closer to inspect the torn pocket and the missing snap-fasteners. "Why, that's my raincoat," he said. "You'll find the name under the label."

A howl of laughter went up from them as the deacon peeled off the coat and gave it to the preacher.

Mr. Parrish told the deacon that a coat, most likely his, was in the coat room at the church. He did not add that it was in bad shape too. But he looked the deacon straight in the eye and said with a chuckle, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do. Next Sunday morning I'm going to preach on the subject, 'Thou art the man!'"

All for Humanity

(Continued)

the wonderful opportunity before me. My hands shook, my whole body trembled with anticipation. Anyone, I knew, would be envious of my position.

I found a good place upon the rock facing in a direction that included the whole valley below and the mountain directly across the plain. I felt like Columbus on the bow of his boat facing new worlds as I stood on the summit of the mountain.

I braced myself. Inhaling deeply, I gave a triumphant shout: "I am John, a man!" Then I waited for the glorious echo to return to glorify mankind.

The echo returned loud and sharp: "Fool, fool, fool, fool, fool, fool, fool, fool . . ."

My wife had climbed the other mountain.

Lament of a Teacher's Desk

By ROWLAND STALLINGS

Oof, boy, are you fat!
Don't you realize where you're sitting at?

Hey, look out! Put away that knife.
Ouch! Are you trying to take my life?
Oh, well — another scar, another nick,
I'll soon be reduced to a mere toothpick.

Uh-oh! Here comes my sentinel.
To him everything is unfortunat and detrimental.

Oh, dear! The class is unattentive today.
The sentinel fumes, quite carried away.
Calm down, master, have a seat,
Stop pounding me with you hands and feet.

Ah-h, at last the class is over.
There they go, Bill, Ed and Grover.
Now to rest my aching timber awhile —
Another day, away from the woodpile.