Fiction

shame. The KKK talked a lot about burning a cross downtown but they never got around to it. Jimbob never saw such a yellow Klan as Connelly Spring's was. When he got old enough he was going to join the White Knights in the next county, which was a whole lot higher class.

Then this marshal went and reported Miss Poindexter's NEVER button to Asheville. She got her picture in the papers but lost her second grade. The school board had to back down to the government and take her off school teaching. They couldn't think of any place to put her except in the library instead.

She still wore her NEVER button to story hour.

So you could have knocked Jimbob over with a feather when he eased into the big old dark courtroom and who should be sitting in the witness stand, big as brass? It was Trellis. It looked like even story hour was integrated.

Jimbob tried to slink down to about angleworm size, to where nobody that knew him would know he was integrated in the same room with Trellis, without a marshal. The only soul in sight besides her was Miss Poindexter, in the judge's seat, sitting as relaxed as a TV announcer. It was puzzling. In the first place there wasn't the least need to drag a nigger kid to story hour since her marshal long went back to Asheville a month ago. The Jaycees already took a vote to just let Trellis keep on in second grade by herself a few years till she wore herself out and got old enough to quit. That was all the integration, they said, anybody could put up with in one town.

(But it turned out it was Miss Poindexter herself that got Trellis to come! That is an idea of just how peculiar Miss Poindexter was.)

It was all cool and spooky in there, with the window shades rolled down against the p.m. sun and only one light to see to read by lit up behind the judge's bench where Miss Poindexter was sitting. She had a story book already open to some story she was going to read. Jimbob had a good notion to hightail it home, for he figured she had never noticed him coming in. That was where he was wrong. She must have heard his tiptoes or something. She put on her glasses she wore to see with (she read without) and said, "Jimbob!"

He had been meaning to hunch down behind the last row of benches, but too late. She had that same type of voice of every retired schoolteacher there ever was, and sheriff.

"Just please sir step right up here in front where we're all nice and integrated."

Jimbob was mortified, but he did it. At least he did not have to sit with any nigger. Trellis was sitting in the witness stand.

Something he noticed when he got up front in the light was where the closet door was off the closet over next to the jury box. That must have been the very door Eljay was laid out asleep on. The closet was the closet Miss Poindexter kept the library in. Only it was all emptied out now. She had all her raggedy magazines and yellowy books piled up in the jury box, and piled up next to the closet with the door off was a stack of cinder blocks. There was even a tub of wet cement. Jimbob reckoned Eljay was told to fill in the old closet but if he didn't quick sober up and get busy his cement was going to dry up on him.

"Boys and girls," said Miss P (but Jimbob didn't see any boys and girls to it, only himself and a nigger), "This afternoon we're going to read a lovely-special tale by Mr. Edgar Allan Poe, poet and Virginian."

Jimbob took a look at Trellis on her witness chair to see how she was taking to integration. Not too hot. She was shiny as a tar baby from the sweats, and her witness seat was too high for her. Pearl had put her into a big orange organdy sundress, with white sandals to top it off. The sandals didn't anywhere near touch the floor on account of how short-legged she was. She couldn't have budged if she wanted to, her dress was so stiff with starch.

"The Cask," said Miss P, "of Amontillado."

"Phooey!" said Jimbob (but not out loud). He already saw that story on TV.

Miss Poindexter took her glasses off to see better. Her eyes were littler with glasses off than on.

"The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as best I could...' " she started. But Jimbob's mind had wandered off. All that story was about was about two Italian fellas down in some cellar in Italy. They had a feud on and one Italian buries the other one over some wine. What was the use of listening if you already knew how it turned out?

But somewhere in the middle of it Miss Poindexter stopped cold and said, "Boys and girls," again.

"Boys and girls," she said, "this afternoon instead of only just reading out of our story book like usual, in honor of our little darky visitor we've got with us today, we're agoing to do a nice pageant of Mr. Poe's tale."

To give you an idea of how peculiar Miss Poindexter was, here is what she dreamed up. She dreamed up for Trellis to go and stand in the closet and be Fortunato.

Trellis just looked up at Miss P with her pullet-egg eyes as wide as they could get. So Miss P had to say it over again: "Now if you'll please just step over to that cupboard yonder, Fortunato, we'll get started on a right nice pageant for everybody."

Trellis naturally never budged. She was either too starched or too stubborn. Miss Poindexter had to finally get up from the judge's bench and take hold of her orange organdy sundress by one wing, like something dead you take to the outhouse between two fingers. Trellis slid off her witness seat and walked stiff along next to Miss P with her starchy dress sounding like dry leaves when you step on them. They came right up to the closet together before Miss Poindexter let go. Trellis turned around still big-eyed as ever, and finally backed in slow, like a mule.

"Now Seen-yor Montresor, sir," (which was Jimbob) "will yousir be so kind as to take this trowel," and Jimbob came up and she handed him this trowel out of the wet cement, "and take and make us a nice neat row of blocks across the doorsill like in the story."

Well, he did it, but he was not too handy with the trowel. First three or four licks landed more cement on his big toe than on the cinderblocks. And a cinder block to pick one up is no featherweight, either. But he finally got the hang of it and how to turn your cinder blocks sideways when you reach the end to fit. He worked up a nice sweat on his first five layers. Though would not likely win any medals for mason work.

Jimbob finally got to where he could not reach the cinder blocks up that high and was going to get a chair out of the jury box to stand on but Miss P quick snatched the trowel all excited out of his hand. For all her Sunday clothes and clean hands, she finished off his next row for him herself.

After that you could not get that trowel away from her for love or money. Nothing for Jimbob to do but go and sit back down up front, bored stiff again. He would have given anything to be back home in front of TV..It never pays to miss a good show on TV. His momma was watching that time where Ruby shot Oswald, and just Jimbob's luck he was in Sunday school.

Miss P's hair pins were coming loose and Jimbob finally saw her ears for the first time in history. They were little-bitty like her eyes. Her wash-and-wear armpits turned into big wet moons of sweat before she was done. She shoved her last cinderblock in with all her snow-white teeth showing. Her collar had come unfastened and that made her NEVER button hang down loose to where you couldn't read it.

Then cool as a cucumber (but all kind of undone) she marched right back to her judge's bench and took up her Poe where she had left off.

" 'I forced the last stone into its position,' " she read, and took a swipe at a stray hairpin on a strand of hair hanging down to her story book. " 'I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones.' " (With a funny stomach Jimbob sneaked a look, but naturally saw no bones. It was only a pageant.) " 'For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them.' " She took a dreamy look out in space like she wasn't all there. The minute she said, " 'In pace requiescat!' " and closed her book, Jimbob took off.

The late sun outside like to blinded him, but he could see old Eljay still laid out on that door dead drunk. He scooted on out a hole in the aborviate hedge, which was pretty near all holes on account of worms. He skidded down an embankment by the lumber mill to take a short cut and be home before the World news Roundup. The depot, when he went past, was all boarded up the way it always is. (The Railroad put that depot in and then never laid track. They took a survey and said Connelly Springs was way too steep for anything less than a diesel, and that was no run worth putting a diesel on for.) The whole town is backwards like that-Jimbob could hardly wait till he was sixteen and out of school and in the Marines.

By going straight through the cannery he got home before his daddy did and got a good seat in front of the TV. You had to sit up close to see anything. Connelly Springs has got the worst TV reception in North Carolina. Put a fifty-foot antenna up and you will still get ghosts.

Robin Kaplan

Winter Exam Schedule

MONDAY 10:00 - 12:00

L & M 102 & 302 — 329
Miller
L & M 202 — 327
Shaffer
L & M 402 — 320
Shaffer

MONDAY 2:00 - 4:00

Music Hist. 202 — 327
M. Johnson
Music Hist. 302 — 329
M. Johnson

TUESDAY 10:00 - 12:00

(All M & Th 1:35 classes)
German 102 A — 313
Stiener
German 102-B — 327
McDowell
American Novel — 320
Johnston

TUESDAY 2:00 - 4:00

(All T & F 11:45 classes plus Italian 102-S)
20th Century British and American Drama — Old Bookstore
Frohn
Italian 302 — 319
Artom
Italian 102-S — 319
Artom
SS 100 — Sem. C
Belnap

WEDNESDAY 10:00 - 12:00

(All M & Th 10:50 classes)
English 100 — 313
Fitz-Simons
English 102-A — 315
Johnston
Italian 102-A — 319
Artom

WEDNESDAY 2:00 - 4:00

(All T & F 1:35 classes)
English 102-D — 327
Johnston
French 302 — 317
Coleman
Italian 102-B — 319
Artom

THURSDAY 10:00 - 12:00

(All M & Th 11:45 classes)
Italian 202 — 313
Baskin
Art History — 320
Jeffries
Film — Old Bookstore
King
Math [illegible]

THURSDAY 2:00 - 4:00

(All T & F 10:50 classes)
English 100 L — 313
Johnston
Phys. Science — 209
Bordeaux
French 102 — 317
Coleman

FRIDAY 10:00 - 12:00

(All T & F 12:40 classes)

Marriage, Section A — 311
C. Johnston

World History — 315
Ruark
Social Ethics — 313
Stone
Ecology — 210
Van Hoven

FRIDAY 2:00 - 4:00

(All M & Th 12:40 classes)
Marriage, Section B — 311
C. Johnson
French 202 — 317
Coleman
Anatomy — 210
Van Hoven
[illegible]l Thought — Sem. B

Journal Continued:

older. Their hands were big and worked, some of the strongest hands I've seen. They were all dressed in the traditional costume with peasant blouse, vest, long skirt, and apron. What a spirit they had to them as they bargained and handled their fruit. Bev and I found three tomatoes and two plums in perfect condition on the ground. Wright bought a huge, fat, juicy piece of sausage, and we sat down in the middle of the market and had a feast. What bliss! Wandered around for a while and came upon a young couple about to be married waiting outside a tiny little church. The bride was all dressed up and smiled and waved at us. Went back to have a look around our castle and found two stoned American G.I.'s under the drawbridge. They were in a rather anti-American Army mood, and when they found out we were poor and hungry they offered to steal three cases of sea rations for us. We were elated, and agreed to meet that night. At nine they came, carrying three 29 lb. cases, each containing 13 complete meals, prepared in the year 1964. Hiding in the shadows of the stone wall, we opened one case to see what we had gotten. My God it was like Christmas. Out tumbled these dark green cans that said Peaches, Boned Chicken, Beef and Potato, and on and on. Each dinner had a little packet of four free cigarettes, and - wonder of wonders - a tiny roll of soft toilet paper. Our friends showed us how to use the little can opener and gave us some advice on the meals that weren't good. We thanked them and went back to the room, clutching our loot. Next morning we got up early and went outside by the garbage cans to break down the cases and divide them up. There were paper and cartons all over the place, and shouts of delight as we came upon a different food like Fruit Cocktail or Peacan Roll. We attracted quite a crowd, most of them travellers like us. The cans were very heavy and we had more than we could carry in our packs. We kept as many meat and fruit cans as we could, and gave the rest, including all the B-1 cracker units, to the kids standing around. Everyone was getting a big kick out of it. It was like a bread line, and finally all had an illegal can of U.S. sea rations. Having done our duty, we left our castle, and with our backs breaking but our spirits high, we headed for Munich.