

Buds AND Blossoms

By
MAMIE MILLER



"Now therefore keep thy sorrow to thyself, and bear with a good courage that which hath befallen thee."

When you visit beach areas this summer, take a closer look at the sea oats, or southern dune-grass growing there. Examine the gracefully arched panicles of numerous large spikelets.

The sea oat has accepted the stern challenge of life by the sea, and exhibits remarkable fortitude against the salt spray cast upon it by ocean breezes.

You'll find sea oats along the coast from Florida to Texas, and they range as far north as southeastern Virginia. There's an inland sea oat too, that grows

along stream banks in the Piedmont section of our state.

The scientific name for sea oats is *Uniola paniculata*, but you don't have to know that to appreciate the lovely dried arrangements you can fashion from these plants. Cut the stems soon after the panicles are fully expanded.

Although there are prettier trees in more protected spots, the weather beaten trees near beaches are intriguing. You have to admire the way they have stood up to hurricanes for many years.

Silent sentinels, battered by vicious winds, they can teach us the meaning of courage. Maybe, when we're despondent, we should seek them.

This week's Buds and Blossoms poem, by John Masefield, is titled "Sea Fever."

I must down to the seas again,
to the lonely sea and sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and
a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the
wind's song and the white
sail's shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's
face and a gray dawn
breaking.

I must down to the seas again,
for the call of the running
tide
Is a wild call and a clear call
that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with
the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the
blown spume, and the
seagulls crying.

I must down to the seas again to
the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the
whale's way where the
winds like a whetted knife;

And all I ask is a meery yarn
from a laughing fellow-
rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet
dream when the long trick's
over.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

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Brain Waves

Popularly known as the "brain wave machine," the electroencephalogram is a mystifying piece of apparatus to most people with its strange-looking wires attached to a person's skull and running to a complex machine where jiggling pens scribble mysterious, wavy lines across a vast expanse of seemingly unending, rolling paper.

"Let's do an EEG", a physician or scientist will say on TV; and then we see the machine, its use with the patient, and the grave heads of the medical team huddling over the rolling paper, nodding or shaking as they examine the tracings.

The rolling paper is the record, or electroencephalogram, from the electroencephalogram, or machine, and is used in research studies and in diagnosis.

Actually, in a sense, the "brain wave machine" is not terribly complex. It merely is an instrument for recording graphically the electrical activity of the brain. This electrical activity fluctuates or changes, making up and down patterns, hence the "waves" on the paper record, which come via wires usually attached by easily removable means to a person's skull and, despite their grim look, not damaging or painful.

As an American Psychiatric Association definition says, the EEG is a graphic recording of minute electrical impulses

arising from the activity of cells in the brain. It is used in neurologic and psychiatric diagnosis and research."

The instrument and its recording are remindful of the electrocardiograph, or ECG, which is another machine for recording electrical activity—this time of the heart. The ECG, with electrodes (end connections of the wires from the machine) attached to the chest, writes down tracings that depict the electrical impulses of the heart.

The electrocardiograph has been in use for many, many years and is valuable both to the research scientist and the physician looking for heart disease. It is a useful diagnostic tool, but it does *not* diagnose heart disease in all of the people on whom it is used.

Somewhat the same thing may be said of the EEG. The electroencephalogram is useful in studying mental illness. Brain wave patterns brain's electrical activities are helpful

to the neurologist looking for organic damage or to the psychiatrist seeking for subtle manifestations of mental illness; and the instrument is growing in usefulness both to research and diagnosis.

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