THE REVOLT OF "MOTHER"
by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman

This is a story of character against a New England background. Each character is worked out with the delicacy and minuteness of a cameo. Each is intensely realistic and yet, as in the cameo, is palely flushed with romance. "Mother," along with her originality of action and long-concealed ideals, has the saving appeal of the daily realities of life. Thus when "Father," dazed by the unexpected revelation of the character and ideals of the woman he has misunderstood for forty years, stands uncertain whether to assert or to surrender his long-established supremacy, she helps him decide in her favor by a practical suggestion of acquiescence: "You had better take your coat off and get washed, there in the washbasin, and then we will have supper."

Mary E. Wilkins Freeman (1852-1930), was born in Randolph, Massachusetts, but grew up in a small city in southern Vermont. About 1883, she returned to Massachusetts and began to publish her first stories for adults. Her earlier writings had been stories and poems for children. Mrs. Freeman used as a background for her best works the flat, inland scenery of eastern Massachusetts. Against this background, she portrayed the people whom she had first known and to whom she had returned, the people of rural New England. Her works reflect their fierce adherence to conscience, their emotional repressions, their austerity in the use of words, and their occasional outbreaks against the conventions that often enslaved them.

Today literary critics and social historians place Mrs. Freeman's works as significant contributions to American genre writing, that is, to writing that portrays the everyday life of a locality at a definite time in its history.

THE REVOLT OF "MOTHER"

"Father!" "What is it?"

"What are those men digging over there in the field for?" There was a sudden dropping and enlarging of the lower part of the old man's face, as if some heavy weight had settled therein; he shut his mouth tight, and went on harnessing the great bay mare. He hustled the collar onto her neck with a jerk.

"Father" The old man slapped the saddle upon the mare's back.

"Look here, Father, I want to know what those men are digging over in the field for, and I=m going to know."
"I wish you would go into the house, Mother, and tend to your own affairs," the old man said. He ran his words together, and his speech was almost as inarticulate as a growl.

But the woman understood, it was her most native tongue. "I’m not going into the house until you tell me what those men are doing over there in the field," said she.

Then she stood waiting. She was a small woman, short and straight waisted like a child in her brown cotton gown. Her forehead was mild and benevolent between the smooth curves of gray hair; there were meek downward lines about her nose and mouth; but her eyes, fixed upon the old man, looked as if the meekness had been the result of her own will, never of the will of another. They were in the barn, standing before the wide-open doors. The spring air, full of the smell of growing grass and unseen blossoms, came in their faces. The deep yard in front was littered with farm wagons and piles of wood; on the edges, close to the fence and the house, the grass was a vivid green, and there were some dandelions.

The old man glanced doggedly at his wife as he tightened the last buckles on the harness. She looked as immovable to him as one of the rocks in his pasture land, bound to the earth with generations of blackberry vines. He slapped the reins over the horse, and started forth from the barn.

"Father!" said she.

The old man pulled up. "What is it?"

"I want to know what those men are digging over there in that field for."

"They are digging a cellar, I suppose, if you have to know."

"A cellar for what?"

"A barn."

"A barn? You’re not going to build a barn where we were going to have a house, Father?"

The old man said not another word. He hurried the horse into the farm wagon, and clattered out of the yard, jouncing on his seat as a boy. The woman stood a moment looking after him; then she went out of the barn across a corner with the great barn and a long reach of sheds and outbuildings, which was infinitesimal compared with them. It was scarcely as commodious for people as the little boxes under the barn eaves were for doves.
A pretty girl's face, pink and delicate as a flower, was looking out of one of the house windows. She was watching three men who were digging over in the field that bounded the yard near the road line. She turned quietly when the woman entered.

"What are they digging for, Mother?" said she. "Did he tell you?"

"They're digging a cellar for a new barn."

"Oh, Mother, is he going to build another barn?"

"That's what he says."

A boy stood before the kitchen glass combing his hair. He combed slowly and painstakingly, arranging his brown hair in a smooth hillock over his forehead. He did not seem to pay any attention to the conversation.

"Sammy, did you know Father was going to build a new barn?" asked the girl.

The boy combed assiduously.

"Sammy!"

He turned, and showed a face like his father's under his smooth crest of hair. "Yes, I suppose I did," he said, reluctantly.

"How long have you known it?" asked his mother.

"About three months, I guess."

"Why didn't you tell us about it?"

"I did not think it would do any good."

"I don't see what Father wants another barn for," said the girl, in her sweet, slow voice. She turned again to the window, and stared out at the digging men in the field. Her tender, sweet face was full of gentle distress. Her forehead was as bald and innocent as that of a baby, with the light hair strained back from it in a row of curlpapers. She was quite large, but her soft curves did not look as if they covered muscles.

Her mother looked sternly at the boy. "Is he going to buy more cows?" said she.

The boy did not reply; he was tying his shoes.
"Sammy, I want you to tell me if he is going to buy more cows."

"I suppose he is."

"How many?"

"Four, I guess."

His mother said nothing more. She went into the pantry, and there was a clatter of dishes. The boy got his cap from a nail behind the door, took an old arithmetic book from the shelf, and started for school. He was lightly built, but clumsy. He went out of the yard with a curious spring in the hips that made his loose homemade jacket tilt up in the rear.

The girl went to the sink, and began to wash the dishes that were piled up there. Her mother came promptly out of the pantry, and shoved her aside. "You wipe them," said she. "I will wash. There are a good many dishes this morning."

The mother plunged her hands vigorously into the water; the girl wiped the plates slowly and dreamily. "Mother," said she, "don't you think it is too bad Father's going to build that new barn when we need a decent house to live in?"

Her mother scrubbed a dish fiercely. "You haven't yet found out that we are women-folks, Nanny Penn," said she. "You haven't seen enough of men-folks yet. One of these days you will find out, and then you will know that we know only what men-folks think we do. You will know that we do not complain about what they do any more than we complain about the weather."

"I don't care; I don't believe George is anything like that" said Nanny. Her delicate face flushed pink, her lips pouted softly, as if she were going to cry.

"You wait and see. I guess George Eastman is no better than other men. You should not judge Father, though. He can't help it, because he does not look at things the way we do. And we have been pretty comfortable here, after all. The roof does not leak and never did but one time. Father's kept it shingled right up."

"I do wish we had a parlor."

"I guess it won't hurt George Eastman any to come to see you in a nice clean kitchen. I guess many girls don't have a place as good as this. Nobody's ever heard me complain."
"I haven’t complained either, Mother."

“Well, I don’t think you had better. You have a good father and a good home. Suppose your father made you go out and work for your living? Lots of girls have to that are not any stronger and better able than you are.”

Sarah Penn washed the frying pan with a conclusive air. She scrubbed the outside of it faithfully as the inside. She was a masterly keeper of her box of a house. Her one living room never seemed to have any of the dust that the friction of life with inanimate matter produces. She swept, and there seemed to be no dirt to go before the broom; she cleaned, and one could see no difference. She was like an artist so perfect that he has apparently no art. Today, she got a mixing bowl and a board, and rolled some pies, and there was no more flour upon her than upon her daughter who was doing finer work.

Nanny was to be married in the fall, and she was sewing on some white cambric and embroidery. She sewed industriously while her mother cooked; her soft, milk-white hands and wrists showed whiter than her delicate work.

"We must have the stove moved to the shed before long," said Mrs. Penn. "Talk about not having things, it had been a real blessing to be able to put a stove up in that shed in hot weather. Father did one good thing when he fixed that stove-pipe out there."

Sarah Penn’s face, as she rolled her pies, had that expression of meek vigor that might have characterized one of the New Testament saints. She was making mince pies. Her husband, Adoniram Penn, liked them better than any other kind. She baked twice a week. Adoniram often had a piece of pie between meals. She hurried this morning. It had been later than usual when she began, and she wanted to have a pie baked for dinner. However deep a resentment she might be forced to hold against her husband, she would never fail in sedulous attention to his wants.

Nobility of character manifests itself as loopholes when it is not provided with large doors. Sarah Penn’s showed itself today in flaky dishes of pastry. So she made the pies faithfully, while across the table she could see, when she glanced up from her work, the sight that rankled in her patient and steadfast soul, the digging of the cellar for the new barn in the place where Adoniram forty years ago had promised her their new house should stand.

The pies were done for dinner. Adoniram and Sammy were home a few minutes after twelve o’clock. The dinner was eaten with serious haste. There was never much conversation at the table in the Penn family. Adoniram asked a blessing, and they ate promptly, then rose up and went about their work.

Sammy went back to school, taking soft sly lopes out of the yard like a rabbit. He wanted a
game of marbles before school, and feared his father would give him some chores to do. Adoniram hastened to the door and called after him, but he was out of sight.

"You should not let him go so quickly, Mother," said he, "I wanted him to help me unload that wood."

Adoniram went to work out in the yard unloading wood from the wagon. Sarah put away the dinner dishes, while Nanny took down her curlpapers and changed her dress. She was going down to the store to buy some more embroidery and thread.

When Nanny was gone, Mrs. Penn went to the door, "Father!" she called.

"Well, what is it!"

"I want to see you for just a minute, Father."

"I can't leave this wood; I must get it unloaded and go for a load of gravel before two o'clock. Sammy should have had to help. You should not let him go back to school so early."

"I want to see you a minute, Father."

"I tell you I can't, Mother."

"Father, you come here." Sarah Penn stood in the door like a queen; she held her head as if it bore a crown; there was that patience which made authority royal in her voice. Adoniram went. Mrs. Penn led the way into the kitchen, and pointed to a chair. "Sit down, Father," said she; "I have something I want to say to you."

He sat down heavily; his face was quite stolid, but he looked at her with restive eyes.

"Well, what is it, Mother?"

"I want to know what you are building that new barn for, Father?"

"I haven't got anything to say about it."

"It can't be you think you need another barn?"

"I tell you I haven't got anything to say about it, Mother; and I'm not going to say anything."

"Could it be you are going to buy more cows?"
Adoniram did not reply; he shut his mouth tight.

"Now, Father, look here." Sarah Penn had not sat down; she stood before her husband in the humble fashion of a Scripture woman. "I'm going to talk real plain to you; I never have since I married you, but I'm going to now. I have never complained, and I'm not going to complain now, but I'm going to talk plain. You see this room here, Father; you look at it well. You see there is no carpet on the floor, and you see the paper is all dirty, and dropping off the walls. We haven't had any new paper on these walls for ten years, and then I put it on myself, and it didn't cost but nine-pence a roll. You see this room, Father; it's the only one I've had to work in and eat in and sit in since we were married. There isn't another woman in the whole town whose husband only has half the means you have but who has better. It's the only room Nanny has to have her company in; and there is not one of her mates that does not have better, and their fathers are not as able as hers. It's all the room she will have to be married in. What would you have thought, Father, if our wedding had been held in a room no better than this? I was married in my mother's parlor, with a carpet on the floor, and stuffed furniture, and a mahogany card table. And this is the only room my daughter will have to be married in. Look here, Father!"

Sarah Penn went across the room as though it were a tragic stage. She flung open a door and disclosed a tiny bedroom, only large enough for a bed and bureau, with a path between. "There, Father," said she, "This is the room I've had to sleep in for forty years. All my children were born here, the two that died, and the two that are living. I was sick with a fever here."

She stepped to another door and opened it. It led into the small, ill-lighted pantry. "Here," said she, "is all the buttery I have, every place I've got for my dishes, to set away my victuals in, and to keep my milk pans in. Father, I've been taking care of the milk of six cows in this place, and now you're going to build a new barn, and keep more cows, and give me more to do in it."

She threw open another door. A narrow crooked flight of stairs wound upward from it. "There, Father," said she, "I want you to look at the stairs that go up to those two unfinished chambers that are all the places our son and daughter have had to sleep all their lives. There isn't a prettier girl in town or a more ladylike one than Nanny, and that is the place she has to sleep in. It isn't as good as your horse's stall; it isn't as warm and tight."

Sarah Penn went back and stood before her husband. "Now, Father," said she, "I want to know if you think you're doing right and according to what you profess. When we were married, forty years ago, you promised me faithful that we would have a new house built in that lot over in the field before the year was out. You said you had enough money, and you
wouldn't ask me to live in such a place as this. It is forty years now, and you've been making more money, and I've been saving of it for you, and you haven't built the house yet. You've built sheds and cow houses and one new barn, and now you're going to build another. Father, I want to know if you think it's right. You're lodging your dumb beasts better than you are your own flesh and blood. I want to know if you think it's right."

"I haven't anything to say."

"You can't say a thing without saying it isn't right, Father. And there's another thing, I haven't complained about; I've gotten along forty years, and I suppose I should forty more, if it wasn't that, if we don't have another house, Nanny can't live with us after she's married. She'll have to go somewhere else to live, and it don't seem as if I could have it any other way, Father. She hasn't ever been strong. She has considerable color, but there has never been any backbone to her. I've always taken the heavy work off her, and she isn't fit to keep house and do everything herself. She'll be all worn out inside of a year. Think of her doing all the washing, ironing and baking with those soft white hands and arms, and sweeping! I can't have it, Father."

Mrs. Penn's face was burning; her mild eyes gleamed. She had pleaded her little cause like a Webster; she had ranged for severity to pathos; but her opponent employed that obstinate silence which makes eloquence futile with mocking echoes. Adoniram arose clumsily.

"Father, haven't you got anything to say?" said Mrs. Penn.

"I've got to go after that load of gravel. I can't stand here talking all day."

"Father, won't you think it over, and have a house built there instead of a barn?"

"I haven't got anything to say." Adoniram shuffled out.

Mrs. Penn went into her bedroom. When she came out, her eyes were red. She had a roll of unbleached cotton cloth. She spread it out on the kitchen table, and began cutting out some shirts for her husband. The men over in the field had a team to help them this afternoon; she could hear their hallos. She had a scanty pattern for the shirts; she had to plan and piece the sleeves.

Nanny came home with her embroidery, and sat down with her needlework. She had taken down her curlpapers, and there was a soft roll of hair like an aureole over her forehead; her face was as delicately fine and clear as porcelain. Suddenly she looked up, and the tender red flamed all over her face and neck. "Mother," said she.
"What say?"

"I've been thinking. I don't see how we're going to have any wedding in this room. I'd be ashamed to have his folks come if we didn't have anybody else."

"Maybe, we can have some new paper before then; I can put it on. I guess you won't have a call to be ashamed of your belongings."

"We might have the wedding in the new barn," said Nanny, with gentle pettishness. "Why, Mother, what makes you look so?"

Mrs. Penn was staring at her with a curious expression. She turned again to her work, and spread out a pattern carefully on the cloth. "Nothing," said she.

Presently Adoniram clattered out of the yard in his two-wheeled dump cart, standing as proudly upright as a Roman charioteer. Mrs. Penn opened the door and stood there a minute looking out; the hallos of the men sounded louder.

It seemed to her all through the spring months that she heard nothing but the hallos and the noises of saws and hammers. The new barn grew fast. It was a fine edifice for this little village. Men came on pleasant Sundays, in their meeting suits and clean shirt bosoms, and stood around it admiringly. Mrs. Penn did not speak of it, and Adoniram did not mention it to her, although sometimes, upon a return from inspecting it, he bore himself with injured dignity.

"It's a strange thing how your mother feels about the new barn," he said, confidentially, to Sammy one day.

Sammy only grunted after an odd fashion for a boy; he had learned it from his father.

The barn was all completed, ready for use by the third week in July. Adoniram had planned to move his stock in on Wednesday; on Tuesday he received a letter that changed his plans. He came in with it early in the morning. "Sammy's been to the post office," said he, "and I've got a letter from Hiram." Hiram was Mrs. Penn's brother, who lived in Vermont.

"Well," said Mrs. Penn, "what does he say about the folks?"

"I guess they're all right. He says he thinks if I come up country right away there's a chance to buy just the kind of horse I want." He stared reflectively out of the window at the new barn.
Mrs. Penn was making pies. She went on clapping the rolling pin into the crust, although she was very pale, and her heart beat loudly.

"I think I'd better go," said Adoniram. "I hate to go off just now, right in the midst of haying, but the ten-acre lot's cut, and I guess Rufus and the others can get along without me three or four days. I can't get a horse round here to suit me, and I have to get another horse for all that wood hauling in the fall. I told Hiram to watch out, and if he has wind of a good horse to let me know. I guess I'd better go."

"I'll get out your clean shirt and collar," said Mrs. Penn, calmly.

She laid out Adoniram's Sunday suit and his clean clothes on the bed in the little bedroom. She got his shaving water and razor ready. At last she buttoned on his collar and fastened his black cravat.

Adoniram never wore his collar and cravat except on extra occasions. He held his head high, with a rasped dignity. When he was all ready, with his coat and hat brushed, and a lunch of pie and cheese in a paper bag, he hesitated on the threshold of the door. He looked at his wife, and his manner was defiantly apologetic. "If those cows come today, Sammy can drive them into the new barn," said he; "and when they bring the hay up, they can pitch it in there."

"Well," replied Mrs. Penn.

Adoniram set his shaven face ahead and started. When he had cleared the doorstep, he turned and looked back with a kind of nervous solemnity. "I shall be back on Saturday if nothing happens," said he.

"Do be careful. Father," returned his wife.

She stood in the door with Nanny at her elbow and watched until he was out of sight. Her eyes had a strange, doubtful expression in them; her peaceful forehead was contracted. She went in, and about her baking again. Nanny sat sewing. Her wedding day was drawing nearer, and she was getting pale and thin with her steady sewing; her mother kept glancing at her.

"Have you got that pain in your side this morning?" she asked.

"A little."

Mrs. Penn's face, as she worked, changed; her perplexed forehead smoothed; her eyes were steady, her lips firmly set. She formed a maxim for herself, although incoherently with
her unlettered thought. "Unsolicited opportunities are the guideposts of the Lord to the new roads of life," she repeated in effect, and she made up her mind to her course of action.

"Suppose I had written to Hiram," she muttered once, when she was in the pantry, "suppose, I had written, and asked him if he knew of any horse? But I didn’t and Father’s going wasn’t any of my doing. It looks like a providence.” Her voice rang out quite loud at the last.

"What you talking about. Mother?" called Nanny.

"Nothing"

Mrs. Penn hurried her baking; at eleven o’clock it was all done. The load of hay from the west field came slowly down the cart track, and drew up at the new barn. Mrs. Penn ran out. "Stop!" she screamed; "stop!"

The men stopped and looked; Sammy rose up from the top of the load, and stared at his mother.

"Stop! "She cried out again, "don't you put the hay in that barn; put it in the old one."

"Why, he said to put it in here," returned one of the haymakers, wonderingly. He was a young man, a neighbor’s son, whom Adoniram hired by the year to help on the farm.

"Don't put the hay in the new barn; there's room enough in the old one, is not there?" said Mrs. Penn.

"Room enough," returned the hired man, in his thick, rustic tones. "The new barn was needed for room, anyhow. Well, I suppose he changed his mind." He took hold of the horses’ bridles.

Mrs. Penn went back to the house. Soon the kitchen windows were darkened, a fragrance like warm honey came into the room.

Nanny laid down her work. "I thought Father wanted them to put the hay into the new barn?" she said, wonderingly.

"It's all right," replied her mother.

Sammy slid down from the load of hay, and came in to see if dinner was ready.

"I >m not going to get a regular dinner today, as long as Father's gone," said his mother. "I
let the fire go out. You can have some bread and milk and pie. I thought we could get along." She set out some bowls of milk, some bread, and a pie on the kitchen table. "You had better eat your dinner now," said she. "You might just as well get through with it. I want you to help me afterward"

Nanny and Sammy stared at each other. There was something strange in their mother's manner. Mrs. Penn did not eat anything herself. She went into the pantry, and they heard her moving dishes while they ate. Presently she came out with a pile of plates. She got the clothes basket out of the shed, and packed the dishes in it. Nanny and Sammy watched. She brought out cups and saucers, and put them in with the plates.

"What are you going to do, Mother?" inquired Nanny, in a timid voice. A sense of something unusual made her tremble, as if it were a ghost. Sammy rolled his eyes over his pie.

"You'll see what I'm going to do," replied Mrs. Penn. "If you're through. Nanny, I want you to go upstairs and pack up your things; and I want you, Sammy, to help me take down the bed in the bedroom."

"Oh, Mother, what for?" gasped Nanny.

"You'll see."

During the next few hours a feat was performed by this simple, pious New England mother that was equal in its way to Wolfe's storming of the Heights of Abraham. It took no more genius and audacity of bravery for Wolfe to cheer his wondering soldiers up those steep precipices, under the sleeping eyes of the enemy, than for Sarah Penn, at the head of her children, to move all their little household goods into the new barn while her husband was away.

Nanny and Sammy followed their mother's instructions without a murmur; indeed, they were overawed. There is a certain uncanny and superhuman quality about all such purely original undertakings as their mother's was to them. Nanny went back and forth with her light loads, and Sammy tugged with sober energy.

At five o'clock in the afternoon the little house in which the Penn family had lived for forty years had emptied itself into the new barn.

Every builder builds somewhat for unknown purposes, and is in a measure a prophet. The architect of Adoniram Penn's barn, while he designed it for the comfort of four-footed animals, had planned better than he knew for the comfort of humans. Sarah Penn saw at a glance its possibilities. Those great box stalls, with quilts hung before them, would make
better bedrooms than the one she had occupied for forty years, and there was a tight carriage room. The harness room, with its chimney and shelves, would make a kitchen of her dreams. The great middle space would make a parlor, by and by, fit for a palace. Upstairs there was as much room as down. With partitions and windows, what a house would there be! Sarah looked at the row of stanchions before the allotted space for cows, and reflected that she would have her front entry there.

At six o'clock the stove was up in the harness room, the kettle was boiling, and the table set for tea. It looked almost as homelike as the abandoned house across the yard had ever done. The young hired man milked, and Sarah directed him calmly to bring the milk to the new barn. He came gaping, dropping little blots of foam from the brimming pails on the grass. Before the next morning he had spread the story of Adoniram Penn's wife moving into the new barn all over the little village. Men assembled in the store and talked it over, women with shawls over their heads scuttled into each other's houses before their work was done. Any deviation from the ordinary course of life in this quiet town was enough to stop all progress in it. Everybody paused to look at the staid, independent figure on the side track. There was a difference of opinion with regard to her. Some held her to be insane; some, of a lawless and rebellious spirit.

Friday the minister went to see her. It was in the afternoon, and she was at the barn door shelling peas for dinner. She looked up and returned his salutation with dignity; then she went on with her work. She did not invite him in. The saintly expression of her face remained fixed, but there was an angry flush over it.

The minister stood awkwardly before her, and talked. She handled the peas as if they were bullets. At last she looked up, and her eyes showed the spirit that her meek front had covered for a lifetime.

"There is not any use talking Mr. Hersey," said she. "I've thought it all over and over, and I believe I'm doing what's right. I've made it the subject of prayer, and its between me and the Lord and Adoniram. There=s no call for anybody else to worry about it."

"Well, of course, if you have brought it to the Lord in prayer, and feel satisfied that you are doing right, Mrs. Penn," said the minister, helplessly. His thin gray-bearded face was pathetic. He was a sickly man; his youthful confidence had cooled; he had to scourge himself up to some of his pastoral duties as relentlessly as a Catholic ascetic, and then he was prostrated by the smart.

"I think it's right just as much I think it was right for our forefathers to come over from the old country because they didn't have what belonged to them," said Mrs. Penn. She arose. The barn threshold might have been Plymouth Rock from her bearing. "I don't doubt you mean well, Mr. Hersey," said she, "but there are things people should not interfere with."
I've been a member of the church for over forty years. I have my own mind and my own ways, and nobody but the Lord is going to dictate to me unless I've a mind to have him. Won't you come in and set down? How is Mrs. Hersey?"

"She is well, I thank you," replied the minister. He added some more perplexed apologetic remarks; then he retreated.

He could expound the intricacies of every character study in the Scriptures, he was competent to grasp the Pilgrim Fathers and all historical innovators, but Sarah Penn was beyond him. He could deal with primal cases, but parallel ones worsted him. But, after all, although it was aside from his province, he wondered more how Adoniram Penn would deal with his wife than how the Lord would. Everybody shared the wonder. When Adoniram's four new cows arrived, Sarah ordered three to be put in the old barn, the other in the house shed where the cooking stove had stood. That added to the excitement. It was whispered that all four cows were domiciled in the house.

Toward sunset on Saturday, when Adoniram was expected home, there was a knot of men in the road near the new barn. The hired man had milked, but he still hung around the premises. Sarah Penn had supper all ready, brown bread, baked beans and a custard pie; it was the supper Adoniram loved on a Saturday night. She had on a clean calico, and she bore herself imperturbably. Nanny and Sammy kept close at her heels. Their eyes were large, and Nanny was full of nervous tremors. Still, there was to them more pleasant excitement than anything else. An inborn confidence in their mother over their father asserted itself.

Sammy looked out of the harness room window. "There he is," he announced, in an awed whisper. He and Nanny peeped around the casing. Mrs. Penn kept on about her work. The children watched Adoniram leave the new horse standing in the drive while he went to the house door. It was fastened. Then he went around to the shed. That door was seldom locked, even when the family was away. The thought of how her father would be confronted by the cow flashed upon Nanny. There was a hysterical sob in her throat. Adoniram emerged from the shed and stood looking about in a dazed fashion. His lips moved; he was saying something, but they could not hear what it was. The hired man was peeping around a comer of the old barn, but nobody saw him.

Adoniram took the new horse by the bridle and led him across the yard to the new barn. Nanny and Sammy slunk close to their mother. The barn doors rolled back, and there stood Adoniram, with the long mild face of the great Canadian farm horse looking over his shoulder.

Nanny kept behind her mother, but Sammy stepped suddenly forward, and stood in front of her.
Adoniram stared at the group. "What's the matter with the house?"

"We've come here to live. Father," said Sammy. His shrill voice quavered out bravely.

"What," Adoniram sniffed, "it smells like cooking!" said he. He stepped forward and looked in the open door of the harness room. Then he turned to his wife. His old bristling face was pale and frightened. "'What on earth does this mean, Mother?" he grasped.

"You come in here. Father," said Sarah. She led the way into the harness room and shut the door. "Now, Father," said she, "you needn't be scared. I'm not crazy. There's nothing to be upset over. But we've come here to live, and we're going to live here. We have just as much right here as new horses and cows. The house wasn't fit to live in any longer, and I made up my mind that I wasn't going to stay there. I've done my duty by you forty years, and I'm going to do it now; but I'm going to live here. You've got to put in some windows and partitions; and you'll have to buy some furniture."

"Why, Mother!" the old man gasped.

"You'd better take your coat off and get washed, there's the washbasin, and then we'll have supper."

"Why, Mother!"

Sammy went past the window, leading the new horse to the old barn. The old man saw him, and shook his head speechlessly. He tried to take off his coat, but his arms seemed to lack the power. His wife helped him. She poured some water into the tin basin, and put in a piece of soap. She got the comb and brush, and smoothed his thin gray hair after he had washed. Then she put the beans, hot bread, and tea on the table. Sammy came in, and the family drew up. Adoniram sat looking dazedly at his plate, and they waited. "Are you not going to ask a blessing, Father?" said Sarah.

And the old man bent his head and mumbled.

All through the meal he stopped eating at intervals, and stared furtively at his wife; but he ate well. The home food tasted good to him, and his old frame was too sturdily healthy to be affected by his mind. But after supper he went out, and sat down on the step of the smaller door at the right of the barn, the door through which he had meant his Jerseys to pass in stately file; the door which Sarah designed for her front house door. He leaned his head on his hands.

After the supper dishes were cleared away and the milk pans washed, Sarah went out to
him. The twilight was deepening. There was a clear green glow in the sky. Before them stretched the smooth level of a field; in the distance was a cluster of haystacks like the huts of a village; the air was very cool and calm and sweet. The landscape might have been an ideal one of peace.

Sarah bent over and touched her husband on one of his thin, sinewy shoulders.

"Father!" The old man's shoulders heaved; he was weeping.

"Why, don't you do so, Father," said Sarah.

"I'll put up the partitions, and-everything you want, Mother."

Sarah put her apron up to her face; she was overcome by her own triumph.

Adoniram was like a fortress whose walls had no active resistance, and went down the instant the right besieging tools were used. "Why, Mother," he said, hoarsely, "I had no idea you were so set on a house to come to this."

THE RANSOM OF RED CHIEF

It looked like a good thing: but wait till I tell you. We were down South, in Alabama—Bill Driscoll and myself—when this kidnapping idea struck us. It was, as Bill afterward expressed it, "during a moment of temporary mental apparition"; but we did not find that out till later.

There was a town down there, as flat as a flannel cake, and called Summit, of course. It contained inhabitants of as undeletious and self-satisfied a class of peasantry as ever clustered around a Maypole.

Bill and me had a joint capital of about six hundred dollars, and we needed just two thousand dollars more to pull off a fraudulent town-lot scheme in Western Illinois with. We talked it over on the front steps of the hotel. Philoprogenitiveness, say we, is strong in semirural communities; therefore, and for other reasons, a kidnapping project ought to do better there than in the radius of newspapers that send reporters out in plain clothes to stir up talk about such things. We knew that Summit could not get after us with anything stronger than constables and, maybe, some lackadaisical bloodhounds and a diatribe or two in the Weekly Farmers' Budget. So, it looked good.

We selected for our victim the only child of a prominent citizen named Ebenezer Dorset. The father was respectable and tight, a mortgage fancier and a stem, upright collection-plate passes and foreclosure. The kid was a boy of ten, with bas-relief freckles, and hair
the color of the cover of the magazine you buy at the newsstand when you want to catch a train. Bill and me figured that Ebenezer would melt down for a ransom of two thousand dollars to a cent. But wait till I tell you.

About two miles from Summit was a little mountain, covered with a dense cedar brake. On the rear elevation of this mountain was a cave. There we stored provisions.

One evening after sundown, we drove in a buggy past old Dorset's house. The kid was in the street, throwing rocks at a kitten on the opposite fence.

"Hey, little boy!" says Bill, "would you like to have a bag of candy and a nice ride?"

The boy catches Bill neatly in the eye with a piece of brick.

"That will cost the old man an extra five hundred dollars," says Bill, climbing over the wheel.

That boy put up a fight like a welterweight cinnamon bear; but, at last, we got him down in the bottom of the buggy and drove away. We took him up to the cave, and I hitched the horse in the cedar brake. After dark I drove the buggy to the little village, three miles away, where we had hired it, and walked back to the mountain.

Bill was pasting court plaster over the scratches and bruises on his features. There was a fire burning behind the big rock at the entrance of the cave, and the boy was watching a pot of boiling coffee, with two buzzard tail feathers stuck in his red hair. He points a stick at me when I come up, and says:

"Ha! cursed paleface, do you dare to enter the camp of Red Chief, the terror of the plains?"

"He's all right now," says Bill, rolling up his trousers and examining some bruises on his shins. "We're playing Indian. We're making Buffalo Bill's show look like magic-lantern views of Palestine in the town hall. I'm Old Hank, the Trapper, Red Chiefs captive, and I'm to be scalped at daybreak. By Geronimo! that kid can kick hard."

Yes, sir, that boy seemed to be having the time of his life. The fun of camping out in a cave had made him forget that he was a captive himself. He immediately christened me Snake-eye, the Spy, and announced that, when his braves returned from the warpath, I was to be broiled at the stake at the rising of the sun.

Then we had supper; and he filled his mouth full of bacon and bread and gravy, and began to talk. He made a during-dinner speech something like this:
"I like this fine, I never camped out before; but I had a pet 'possum once, and I was nine last birthday. I hate to go to school. Rats ate up sixteen of Jimmy Talbot's aunt's speckled hen's eggs. Are there any real Indians in these woods? I want some more gravy. Does the trees moving make the wind blow? We had five puppies. What makes your nose so red, Hank? My father has lots of money. Are the stars hot? I whipped Ed Walker twice, Saturday. I don't like girls, You dassium catch toads unless with a string. Do oxen make any noise? Why are oranges round? Have you got beds to sleep on in this cave? Amos Murray has got six toes. A parrot can talk, but a monkey or fish can't. How many does it take to make twelve?"

Every few minutes he would remember that he was a pesky redskin, and pick up his stick rifle and tiptoe to the mouth of the cave to rubber for the scouts of the hatred paleface. Now and then he would let out a war whoop that made Old Hank the Trapper shiver. That boy had Bill terrorized from the start.

"Red Chief," says he. "I don't have any fun at home. I hate to go to school. I like to camp out. You won't take me back home again, Snake-eye, will you?"

"Not right away," says I. "We'll stay here in the cave awhile.

"All right!" says he. "That'll be fine. I never had such fun in all my life."

We went to bed about eleven o'clock. We spread down some wide blankets and quilts and put Red Chief between us. We weren't afraid he'd run away. He kept us awake for three hours, jumping up and reaching for his rifle and screeching: "Hist! pard," in mine and Bill's ears, as the fancied craddle of a twig or the rustle of a leaf revealed to his young imagination the stealthy approach of the outlaw band. At last, I fell into a troubled sleep, and dreamed that I had been kidnapped and chained to a tree by a ferocious pirate with red hair.

Just at daybreak, I was awakened by a series of awful screams from Bill. They weren't yells, or howls, or shouts, or whoops, or yawps, such as you would expect from a manly set of vocal organs; they were simply indecent, terrifying, humiliating screams, such as women emit when they see ghosts or caterpillars. It's an awful thing to hear a strong desperate, fat man scream incontinently in a cave at daybreak.

I jumped up to see what the matter was. Red Chief was sitting on Bill's chest, with one hand twined in Bill's hair. In the other he had the sharp case knife we used for slicing bacon; and he was industriously and realistically trying to take Bill's scalp, according to the sentence that had been pronounced upon him the evening before.

I got the knife away from the kid and made him lie down again. But, from that moment,
Bill's spirit was broken. He laid down on his side of the bed, but he never closed an eye again in sleep as long as that boy was with us. I dozed off for a while, but along toward sunup I remembered that Red Chief had said I was to be burned at the stake at the rising of the sun. I wasn't nervous or afraid; but I sat up and light my pipe and leaned against a rock.

"What you getting up so soon for, Sam?" asked Bill.

"Me?" says I. "Oh, I got a kind of pain in my shoulder. I thought sitting up would rest it."

"You're a liar!" says Bill. "You're afraid. You was to be burned at sunrise, and you was afraid he'd do it. And he would, too, if he could find a match. Ain't it awful, Sam? Do you think anybody will pay out money to get a little imp like that back home?"

"Sure," said I. "A rowdy kid like that is just the kind that parents dote on. Now, you and the Chief get up and cook breakfast, while I go up the top of the mountain and reconnoiter."

I went up on the peak of the little mountain and ran my eye over the contiguous vicinity. Over toward Summit I expected to see the sturdy yeomanry of the village armed with scythes and pitchforks beating the countryside for the dastardly kidnappers. But what I saw was a peaceful landscape dotted with one man plowing with a dumb mule. Nobody was dragging the creek; no couriers dashed hither and yon, bringing tidings of no news to the distracted parents. There was a sylvan attitude of somnolent sleepiness pervading that section of the external outward surface of Alabama that lay exposed to my view. "Perhaps," says I to myself, "it has not yet been discovered that the wolves have borne away the tender lambkin from the fold. Heaven help the wolves!" says I, and I went down the mountain to breakfast.

When I got to the cave I found Bill backed up against the side of it, breathing hard, and the boy threatening to smash him with a rock half as big as a coconut.

"He put a red-hot boiled potato down my back," explained Bill, "and then mashed it with his foot; and I boxed his ears. Have you got a gun about you, Sam?"

I took the rock away from the boy and kind of patched up the argument. "I'll fix you," says the kid to Bill. "No man ever yet struck the Red Chief but what he got paid for it. You better beware!"

After breakfast the kid takes a place of leather with strings wrapped around it out of his pocket and goes outside the cave unwinding it.

"What's he up to now?" says Bill, anxiously. "You don't think he'll run away, do you, Sam?"
"No fear of it," says I. "He don't seem to be much of a homebody. But we've got to fix up some plan about the ransom. There don't seem to be much excitement around Summit on account of his disappearance; but maybe they haven't realized yet that he's gone. His folks may think he's spending the night with Aunt Jane or one of the neighbors. Anyhow, he'll be missed today. Tonight we must get a message to his father demanding the two thousand dollars for his return."

Just then we heard a kind of war whoop, such as David might have emitted when he knocked out the champion Goliath. It was a sling that Red Chief had pulled out of his pocket, and he was whirling it around his head.

I dodged, and heard a heavy thud and a kind of a sigh from Bill, like a horse gives out when you take his saddle off. A rock the size of an egg had caught Bill just behind his left ear. He loosened himself all over and fell in the fire across the frying pan of hot water for washing the dishes. I dragged him out and poured cold water on his head for half an hour.

By and by, Bill sits up and feels behind his ear and says: "Sam, do you know who my favorite Biblical character is?"

"Take it easy," says I. "You'll come to your senses presently."

"King Herod," says he. "You won't go away and leave me here alone, will you Sam?"

I went out and caught that boy and shook him until his freckles rattled.

"If you don't behave," says I, "I'll take you straight home. Now, are you going to be good, or not?"

I was only funning," says he sullenly. "I didn't mean to hurt Old Hank. But what did he hit me for? I'll behave. Snake-eye, if you won't send me home, and if you'll let me play the Black Scout today."

I don't know the game," says I. "That's for you and Mr. Bill to decide. He's your playmate for the day. I'm going away for a while, on business. Now, you come in and make friends with him and say you are sorry for hurting him, or home you go, at once."

I made him and Bill shake hands, and then I took Bill aside and told him I was going to Popular Cove, a little village three miles from the cave, and find out what I could about how the kidnapping had been regarded in Summit. Also, I thought it best to send a peremptory letter to old man Dorset that day, demanding the ransom and dictating how it should be paid.
"You know, Sam," says Bill, "I've stood by you without batting an eye in earthquakes, fire
and flood—in poker games, dynamite outrages, police raids, train robberies, and cyclones. I
never lost my nerve yet till we kidnapped that two-legged skyrocket of a kid. He's got me
going. You won't leave me long with him, will you, Sam?"

"I'll be back sometime this afternoon," says I. "You must keep the boy amused and quiet till
I return. And now we'll write the letter to old Dorset."

Bill and I got paper and pencil and worked on the letter while Red Chief, with a blanket
wrapped around him, strutted up and down, guarding the mouth of the cave. Bill begged
me tearfully to make the ransom fifteen hundred dollars instead of two thousand. "I ain't
attempting," say he, "to decry the celebrated moral aspect of parental affection, but we're
dealing with humans, and it ain't human for anybody to give up two thousand dollars for
that forty-pound chunk of freckled wildcat. I'm willing to take a chance at fifteen hundred
dollars. You can charge the difference up to me."

So, to relieve Bill, I acceded, and we collaborated a letter that ran this way:

Ebenezer Dorset Esq.:

We have your boy concealed in a place far from Summit. It is useless for you or the most
skillful detectives to attempt to find him. Absolutely, the only terms on which you can have
him restored to you are these: We demand fifteen hundred dollars in large bills for his
return; the money to be left at midnight tonight at the same spot and in the same box as
your reply—as hereinafter described. If you agree to these terms, send your answer in
writing by a solitary messenger tonight at half-past eight o'clock. After crossing Owl Creek
on the road to Popular Cove, there are three large trees about a hundred yards apart,
close to the fence of the wheat field on the right-hand side. At the bottom of the fence post,
opposite the third tree, will be found a small pasteboard box.

The messenger will place the answer in this box and return immediately to Summit.

If you attempt any treachery or fail to comply with our demand as stated, you will never see
your boy again.

If you pay the money as demanded, he will be returned to you safe and well within three
hours. These terms are final, and if you do not accede to them no further communication
will be attempted.

Two Desperate Men
I addressed this letter to Dorset and put it in my pocket. As I was about to start, the kid comes up to me and says:

"Aw, Snake-eye, you said I could play the Black Scout while you was gone."

"Play it, of course," says I. "Mr. Bill will play with you. What kind of a game is it?"

"I'm the Black Scout," says Red Chief, "and I have to ride to the stockade to warn the settlers that the Indians are coming. I'm tired of playing Indian myself. I want to be the Black Scout."

"All right," says I. "It sounds harmless to me. I guess Mr. Bill will help you foil the pesky savages."

"What am I to do?" asks Bill, looking at the kid suspiciously.

"You are the hoss," says Black Scout. "Get down on your hands and knees. How can I ride to the stockade without a hoss?"

"You'd better keep him interested," said I, "till we get the scheme going. Loosen up."

Bill gets down on his all fours, and a look comes in his eye like a rabbit's when you catch it in a trap.

"How far is it to the stockade, kid?" he asks, in a husky manner of voice.

"Ninety miles," says the Black Scout. "And you have to hump yourself to get there on time. Whoa, now!"

The Black Scout jumps on Bill's back and digs his heels in his side.

"For Heaven's sake," says Bill, "hurry back, Sam as soon as you can. I wish we hadn't made the ransom more than a thousand. Say, you quit kicking me or I'll get up and warm you good."

I walked over to Popular Cove and sat around the post office and store, talking with the chawbacons that came in to trade. One whiskerando says that he hears Summit is all upset on account of Elder Ebenezer Dorset's boy having been lost or stolen. That was all I wanted to know. I bought some smoking tobacco, referred casually to the price of black-eyed peas, posted my letter surreptitiously, and come by in an hour to take the mail on to Summit.
When I got back to the cave Bill and the boy were not to be found. I explored the vicinity of the cave, and risked a yodel or two, but there was no response.

So I lighted my pipe and sat down on a mossy bank to await developments.

In about half an hour I heard the bushes rustic, and Bill wabbled out into the little glade in front of the cave. Behind him was the kid, stepping softly like a scout, with a broad grin on his face. Bill stopped, took off his hat, and wiped his face with a red handkerchief. The kid stopped about eight feet behind him.

"Sam," says Bill, "I suppose you'll think I'm a renegade, but I couldn't help it. I'm a grown person with masculine proclivities and habits of self-defense, but there is a time when all systems of egotism and predominance fail. The boy is gone. I have sent him home. All is off. There were martyrs in old times," goes on Bill, "that suffered death rather than give up the particular graft they enjoyed. None of em ever was subjugated to such supernatural tortures as I have been. I tried to be faithful to our articles of depredation; but there came a limit." "What's the trouble, Bill?" I asks him. "I was rode," says Bill, "the ninety miles to the stockade, not barring an inch. Then, when the settlers was rescued, I was given oats. Sand ain't a palatable substitute. And then, for an hour I had to try to explain to him why there was nothin' in holes, how a road can run both ways, and what makes the grass green. I tell you, Sam, a human can only stand so much. I takes him by the neck of his clothes and drags him down the mountain. On the way he kicks my legs black-and-blue from the knees down; and I've got to have two or three bites on my thumb and hand cauterized.

"But he's gone" continues Bill "gone home. I showed him the road to Summit and kicked him about eight feet nearer there at one kick. I'm sorry we lose the ransom; but it was either that or Bill Driscoll to the madhouse."

Bill is puffing and blowing, but there is a look of ineffable peace and growing content on his rose-pink features.

"Bill," says I, "there isn't any heart disease in your family, is there?"

"No," says Bill, "nothing chronic except malaria and accidents. Why?"

"Then you might turn around," says I, "and have a look behind you."

Bill turns and sees the boy, and loses his complexion and sits down plump on the ground and begins to pluck aimlessly at grass and little sticks. For an hour I was afraid for his mind. And then I told him that my scheme was to put the whole job through immediately and that we would get the ransom and be off with it by midnight if old Dorset fell in with our proposition. So Bill braced up enough to give the kid a weak sort of a smile and a promise
to play the Russian in a Japanese war with him as soon as he felt a little better.

I had a scheme for collecting that ransom without danger of being caught by counterplots that ought to commend itself to professional kidnappers. The tree under which the answer was to be left and the money later on was close to the road fence with big, bare fields on all sides. If a gang of constables should be watching for anyone to come for the note, they could see him a long way off crossing the fields or in the road. But no, sirree! At half-past eight I was up in that tree as well hidden as a tree toad, waiting for the messenger to arrive.

Exactly on time, a half-grown boy rides up the road on a bicycle, locates the pasteboard box at the foot of the fence post, slips a folded piece of paper into it, and pedals away again back toward Summit.

I waited an hour and then concluded the thing was square. I slid down the tree, got the note, slipped along the fence till I struck the woods, and was back at the cave in another half an hour. I opened the note, got near the lantern, and read it to Bill. It was written with a pen in a crabbed hand, and the sum and substance of it was this:

Two Desperate Men

Gentlemen: I received your letter today by post, in regard to the ransom you ask for the return of my son. I think you are a little high in your demands, and I hereby make you a counter-proposition, which I am inclined to believe you will accept. You bring Johnny home and pay me two hundred and fifty dollars in cash, and I agree to take him off your hands. You had better come at night, for the neighbors believe he is lost, and I couldn't be responsible for what they would do to anybody they saw bringing him back.

Very respectfully,

Ebenezer Dorset

"Great pirates of Penzance!" says I; "of all the impudent--."

But I glanced at Bill and hesitated. He had the most appealing look in his eyes I ever saw on the face of a dumb or a talking brute.

"Sam," says he, "what's two hundred and fifty dollars after all? We've got the money. One more night of this kid will send me to a bed in Bedlam. Besides being a through gentleman, I think Mr. Dorset is a spendthrift for making us such a liberal offer. You ain't going to let the chance go, are you?" "Tell you the truth, Bill," says I, "this little he ewe lamb has somewhat got on my nerves too. We'll take him home, pay the ransom, and make our
We took him home that night. We got him to go by telling him that his father had brought a silver-mounted rifle and a pair of moccasins for him, and we were going to hunt bears the next day.

It was just twelve o'clock when we knocked at Ebenezer's front door. Just at the moment when I should have been abstracting the fifteen hundred dollars from the box under the tree, according to the original proposition. Bill was counting out two hundred and fifty dollars into Dorset's hand.

When the kid found out we were going to leave him at home he started up a howl like a calliope and fastened himself as tight as a leech to Bill's leg. His father peeled him away gradually, like a porous plaster. "How long can you hold him?" asks Bill. "I'm not as strong as I used to be," says old Dorset, "but I think I can promise you ten minutes."

"Enough," says Bill. "In ten minutes I shall cross the Central, Southern, and Middle Western States, and be legging it trippingly for the Canadian border."

And, as dark as it was, and as fat as Bill was, and as good a runner as I am, he was a good mile and a half out of Summit before I could catch up with him.
A HORSEMAN IN THE SKY
Ambrose Bierce

One sunny afternoon in the autumn of the year 1861, a soldier lay in a clump of laurel by the side of a road in Western Virginia. He lay at full length upon his stomach, his feet resting upon the toes, his head upon the left forearm. His extended right hand loosely grasped his rifle. But for the somewhat methodical disposition of his limbs and a slight rhythmic movement of the cartridge-box at the back of his belt, he might have been thought to be dead. He was asleep at his post of duty. But if detected he would be dead shortly afterward, that being the just and legal penalty of his crime.

The clump of laurel in which the criminal lay was in the angle of the road which, after ascending southward, a steep acclivity to that point, turned sharply to the west, running along the summit for perhaps one hundred yards. There it turned southward again and went zig-zagging downward through the forest. At the salient of that second angle was a large flat rock, jutting out from the ridge to the northward, overlooking the deep valley from which the road ascended. The rock capped a high cliff; a stone dropped from its outer edge would have fallen sheer downward one thousand feet to the top of the pines. The angle where the soldier lay was on another spur of the same cliff. Had he been awake he would have commanded a view, not only of the short arm of the road and the jutting rock, but of the entire profile of the cliff below it. It might well have made him giddy to look.

The country was wooded everywhere except at the bottom of the valley to the northward, where there was a small natural meadow, through which flowed a stream scarcely visible from the valley's rim. This open ground looked hardly larger than an ordinary dooryard, but was really several acres in extent. Its green was more vivid than that of the enclosing forest. A way beyond it rose a line of giant cliffs similar to those upon which we are supposed to stand in our survey of the savage scene, and through which the road had somehow made its climb to the summit. The configuration of the valley, indeed, was such that from our point of observation it seemed entirely shut in, and one could not but have wondered how the road which found a way out of it had found a way into it. No country is so wild and difficult but men will make it a theater of war; concealed in the forest at the bottom of that military rat-trap, in which half a hundred men in possession of the exits might have starved an army to submission, lay five regiments of Federal infantry. They had marched all the previous day and night and were resting. At nightfall they would take to the road again, climb to the place where their unfaithful sentry now slept, and, descending the other slope of the ridge, fall upon a camp of the enemy at about midnight. Their hope was to surprise it, for the road led to the rear of it. In case of failure their position would be perilous in the extreme; and fail they surely would should accident or vigilance apprise the enemy of the movement.

The sleeping sentinel in the clump of laurel was a young Virginian named Carter Druse. He
was the son of wealthy parents, an only child, and had known such ease and cultivation and high living as wealth and taste were able to command in the mountain country of Western Virginia. His home was but a few miles from where he lay. One morning he had risen from the breakfast-table and said, quietly and gravely. "Father, a Union regiment has arrived at Grafton, I am going to join it."

The father lifted his leonine head, looked at the son a moment in silence, and replied: "Go, Carter, and, whatever may occur, do what you conceive to be your duty. Virginia, to which you are a traitor, must get on without you. Should we both live to the end of the war, we will speak further of the matter. Your mother, as the physician has informed you, is in a most critical condition; at the best she cannot be with us longer than a few weeks, but that time is precious. It would be better not to disturb her."

So, Carter Druse, bowing reverently to his father, who returned the salute with a stately courtesy which masked a breaking heart, left the home of his childhood to go soldiering. By conscience and courage, by deeds of devotion and daring, he soon commended himself to his fellows and his officers; and it was to these qualities and to some knowledge of the country that he owed his selection for his present perilous duty at the extreme outpost. Nevertheless, fatigue had been stronger than resolution and he had fallen asleep. What good or bad angel came in a dream to rouse him from his state of crime who shall say? Without a movement, without a sound, in the profound silence the languor of the late afternoon, some invisible messenger of fate touched with unsealing finger the eyes of his consciousness-whispered into the ear of his spirit the mysterious awakening words which no human lips have ever spoken, no human memory has ever recalled. He quietly raised his forehead from his arm and looked between the masking stems of the laurels, instinctively closing his right hand about the stock of his rifle.

His first feeling was a keen artistic delight. On a colossal pedestal, the cliff, motionless at the extreme edge of the capping rock and sharply outlined against the sky, was an equestrian statue of impressive dignity. The figure of the man sat the figure of the horse, straight and soldierly, but with the repose of a Grecian god carved in the marble which limits the suggestion of activity. The gray costume harmonized with its aerial background; the metal of accoutrement and caparison was softened and subdued by the shadow; the animal's skin had no points of high light. A carbine, strikingly foreshortened, lay across the pommel of the saddle, kept in place by the right hand grasping it at the "grip"; the left hand holding the bridle rein, was invisible. In silhouette against the sky, the profile of the horse was cut with the sharpness of a cameo; it looked across the heights of air to the confronting cliffs beyond. The face of the rider, turned slightly to the left, showed only an outline of temple and beard; he was looking downward to the bottom of the valley. Magnified by its lift against the sky and by the soldier's testifying sense of the formidableness of a near enemy, the group appeared of heroic, almost colossal, size.
For an instant Druse had a strange, half-defined feeling that he had slept to the end of the war and was looking upon a noble work of art reared upon that commanding eminence to commemorate the deeds of a heroic past of which he had been an inglorious part. The feeling was dispelled by a slight movement of the group; the horse, without moving its feet, had drawn its body slightly backward from the verge; the man remained immobile as before. Broad awake and keenly alive to the significance of the situation, Druse now brought the butt of his rifle against his cheek by cautiously pushing the barrel forward through the bushes, cocked the piece, and, glancing through the sights, covered a vital spot of the horseman's breast. A touch upon the trigger and all would have been well with Carter Druse. At that instant the horseman turned his head and looked in the direction of his concealed toe-man seemed to look into his very face, into his eyes, into his brave, compassionate heart.

Is it, then, so terrible to kill an enemy in war an enemy who has surprised a secret vital to the safety of oneself and comrades an enemy more formidable for his knowledge than all his army for its numbers?

Carter Druse grew deathly pale; he shook in every limb, turned faint, and saw the statuesque group before him as black figures, rising, falling, moving unsteadily in arcs of circles in a fiery sky. His hand fell away from his weapon, his head slowly dropped until his face rested on the leaves in which he lay. This courageous gentleman and hardy soldier was near swooning from intensity of emotion.

It was not for long: in another moment his face was raised from earth, his hands resumed their places on the rifle, his forefinger sought the trigger; mind, heart and eyes were clear, conscience and reason sound. He could not hope to capture that enemy; to alarm him would but send him dashing to his camp with his fatal news. The duty of the soldier was plain; the man must be shot dead from ambush without warning, without a moment's spiritual preparation, with never so much as an unspoken prayer, he must be sent to his account. But no there is a hope; he may have discovered nothing perhaps he is but admiring the sublimity of the landscape. If permitted, he may turn and ride carelessly away in the direction whence he came. Surely it will be possible to judge at the instant of his withdrawing whether he knows. It may well be that his fixity of attention Druse turned his head and looked below, through the deeps of air downward, as from the surface to the bottom of a translucent sea. He saw creeping across the green meadow a sinuous line of figures of men and horses some foolish commander was permitting the soldiers of his escort to water their beasts in the open, in plain view from a hundred summits!

Druse withdrew his eyes from the valley and fixed them again upon the group of man and horse in the sky, and again it was through the sights of his rifle. But this time his aim was at the horse. In his memory, as if they were a divine mandate, and the words of his father at
their parting: "Whatever may occur, do what you conceive to be your duty." He was calm now. His teeth were firmly but not rigidly closed; his nerves were as tranquil as a sleeping babe's; not a tremor affected any muscle of his body; his breathing, until suspended in the act of taking aim, was regular and slow. Duty had conquered; the spirit had said to the body: "Peace, be still." He fired.

At that moment an officer of the Federal force, who, in a spirit of adventure or in quest of knowledge, had left the hidden bivouac in the valley, and, with aimless feet, had made his way to the lower edge of a small open space near the foot of the cliff, was considering what he had to gain by pushing his exploration farther. At a distance of a quarter-mile before him, but apparently at a stone's throw, rose from its fringe of pines the gigantic face of rock, towering to so great a height above him that it made him giddy to look up to where its edge cut a sharp, rugged line against the sky. At some distance away to his right it presented a clean, vertical profile against a background of blue sky to a point half of the way down, and of distance hills hardly less blue, thence to the tops of the trees at its base. Lifting his eyes to the dizzy altitude of its summit, the officer saw an astonishing sight—a man on horseback riding down into the valley through the air!

Straight upright sat the rider, in military fashion, with a firm seat in the saddle, a strong clutch upon the rein to hold his charger from too impetuous a plunge. From his bare head his long hair streamed upward, waving like a plume. His right hand was concealed in the cloud of the horse's lifted mane. The animal's body was as level as if every hoof-stroke encountered the resistant earth. Its motions were those of a wild gallop, but even as the officer looked they ceased, with all the legs thrown sharply forward as in the act of alighting from a leap. But this was a flight!

Filled with amazement and terror by this apparition of a horseman in the sky, half believing himself the chosen scribe of some new apocalypse, the officer was overcome by the immensity of his emotions; his legs failed him and he fell. Almost at the same instant he heard a crashing sound in the trees—a sound that died without an echo—and all was still.

The officer rose to his feet, trembling. The familiar sensation of an abraded shin recalled his dazed faculties. Pulling himself together, he ran rapidly obliquely away from the cliff to a point a half-mile from its foot; thereabout he expected to find his man; and thereabout he naturally failed. In the fleeting instant of his vision his imagination had been so wrought upon by the apparent grace and ease and intention of the marvelous performance that it did not occur to him that the line of march of aerial cavalry is directed downward, and that he could find the objects of his search at the very foot of the cliff. A half-hour later he returned to camp. This officer was a wise man; he knew better than to tell an incredible truth. He said nothing of what he had seen. But when the commander asked him if in his scout he had learned anything of advantage to the expedition, he answered,
"Yes, sir; there is no road leading down into this valley from southward."

The commander, knowing better, smiled. After firing his shot Private Carter Druse reloaded his rifle and resumed his watch. Ten minutes had hardly passed when a Federal sergeant crept cautiously to him on hands and knees. Druse neither turned his head nor looked at him, but lay without motion or sign of recognition.

"Did you fire?" the sergeant whispered.

"Yes."

"At what?"

"A horse. It was standing on yonder rock—pretty far out. You see it is no longer there. It went over the cliff."
THE HIGHWAYMAN
Part one

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding-
Riding-riding
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

He=d a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up to the thigh!
And he rode with a jeweled twinkle,
His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jeweled sky.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
Where Tim, the ostler, listened; his face was white and peaked;
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like moldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's red-lipped daughter;
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say,

"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize tonight,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light;
Yet, if they press me sharpenly, and harry me through the day
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way."
He rose upright in the stirrups; he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair i’ the casement; his face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
(Oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his reins in the moonlight, and galloped away to the West.

Part two

He did not come in the dawning; he did not come at noon;
And out o’ the tawny sunset, before the rise o’ the moon,
When the road was a gypsy’s ribbon, looping the purple moor,
A red-coat troop came marching

King George’s men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

They said no word to the landlord, they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed;
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!
There was death at every window;
And hell at one dark window;
For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that he would ride.

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest;
They had bound a musket beside her, with the barrel beneath her breast!
"Now keep good watch!" and they kissed her. She heard the dead man say

"Look for me by moonlight;
Watch for my by moonlight;
I’ll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat and blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, now on the stroke of midnight,
Cold on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!
The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more for the rest!
Up, she stood up to attention, with the barrel beneath her breast!
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain.

Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding
Riding, riding!
The red-coats looked to their priming! She stood up straight and still!

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! Tlot-tlot in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer! Her face was like a light!
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight;
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him with her death.

He turned; he spurred him westward; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own red blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, his face grew gray to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

Back he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him, and his rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs in the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet coat,
When they shot him down on the highway,
Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with a bunch of lace at his throat.

And still of a "winter's night, they say, "when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
A highwayman comes riding-
Riding-riding-
A highwayman comes riding up to the old inn-door.
Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard;
And taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred;
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be “waiting there
But the landlord’s black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord’s daughter,
Plaiting a dark-red love-knot into her long black hair.

Alfred Noyes

At first glance, you must have noticed that ’The Highwayman” looks like a poem. Some lines are indented; others are not. Each line begins with a capital letter. Some lines are shorter than others. Now, if you look more closely, you will notice that after each group of six lines, the poet starts a new paragraph or section which, in a poem, is called a stanza.

As you were reading the poem, or hearing it read, did you feel the rise and fall of "a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas”? Could you sense the movement of the soldiers marching and of the horse galloping? If you did, this impression was created by the rhythms, which the poet had built into lines like these:

"The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees..."
"Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard..."
"A red-coat troop came marching
Marching-marching"

So definite are these rhythms that you cannot ignore them any more than you can ignore the rhythms of a popular tune. Of course, the feelings you experienced as you read or heard ’The Highwayman” were not due entirely to the rhythm. They were due also to the language chosen by the poet. Note, for example, the pictures he has painted for you with these words: jeweled sky, the road is a ribbon by moonlight, hair like moldy hay

Some of the words he used even suggest the actual sounds you might have heard if you had been present at the scene: clatters and clangs, trot-trot, shrieking a curse

Though most of these words may seem unusual to you, words you do not often hear or use, they are probably not entirely strange. In this poem, each word is so perfectly chosen that even if you do not know its literal or dictionary meaning, you can sense the color, the action, and the excitement that it contributes to the story told in the poem.
LONE DOG

I'm a lean dog, a keen dog, a wild dog, and lone;
I'm a rough dog, a tough dog, hunting on my own;
I'm a bad dog, a mad dog, teasing silly sheep;
I love to sit and bay the moon, to keep fat souls from sleep.

I'll never be a lap dog, licking dirty feet,
A sleek dog, a meek dog, cringing for my meat,
Not for me the fireside, the well-filled plate,
But shut door, and sharp stone, and cuff and kick and hate.

Not for me the other dogs, running by my side,
Some have run a short while, but none of them would abide,
Oh, mine is still the lone trail, the hard trail, the best,
Wide wind, and wild stars, and hunger of the quest!

Irene Rutherford McLeod

Perhaps you have heard a person described as a "lone dog." What kind of person is he? What words did the poet use to describe a "lone dog?"

Reread lines 5 through 8. What way of life is criticized in these lines? Also reread lines 11 and 12. Do you share the poet's preference for the "lone trail"? Why or why not?

What is the effect of the repetition in the first stanza? What does it reveal about the poet's attitude?

In addition to end rhymes, the poet used several internal rhymes, such as "a lean dog, a keen dog." Point them out.

As a rule, a serious poem does not contain so many rhymes. Is this a serious poem? What is its purpose? Does the language of the poem suit the purpose?
APPOINTMENT IN SAMARRA

William Somerset Maugham (1874-1966), British author, was born in Paris and attended Heidelberg University. He was educated to be a doctor, achieved financial success through his dramas and popular success as a novelist. His greatest novel, *Of Human Bondage*, 1915, like most of his writing, treats the unpredictability of human conduct and the thralldom of man by his passions. His first published novel was *Lisa of Lambeth*, 1897. His writings include more than forty novels, several collections of short stories, books of literary criticism, and other nonfiction: *The Gentleman in the Parlour*, 1930; an autobiography, *The Summing Up*, 1938, and *A Writer's Notebook*, 1949, excerpts from his journals. *Points of View*, 1958, reflected his interest in appraising fiction and its practitioners. His twenty-odd plays are chiefly drawing-room comedies.

"Appointment in Samarra" fulfills the essential requirements of a short story: it has strict unity, intensity, and, of course, brevity. Mr. Maugham's restraint gives the story a gem-like quality. Perhaps no story has ever made better use of dramatic irony.

APPOINTMENT IN SAMARRA

There was a merchant in Baghdad who sent his servant to market to buy provisions, and in a little while the servant came back, white and trembling, and said, "Master, Just now when I was in the market-place I was jostled by a woman in the crowd and when I turned I saw it was Death that jostled me. She looked at me and made a threatening gesture; now, lend me your horse, and I will ride away from this city and avoid my fate. I will go to Samarra and there Death will not find me." The merchant lent him his horse, and the servant mounted it, and he dug his spurs in its flanks and as fast as the horse could gallop he went. Then the merchant went down to the market-place and he saw Death standing in the crowd and he came to Death and said, "Why did you make a threatening gesture to my servant when you saw him this morning?" "That was not a threatening gesture," Death said. "It was only a start of surprise. I was astonished to see him in Baghdad, for I had an appointment with him tonight in Samarra."
HOW DO I LOVE THEE?

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

1. There are no fewer than seven attempts in this poem to describe the quality of a person's love. Try to explain each in your own words.
2. What is the effect of the repetition of "I love thee"?
3. Study the rhymes. Which seem to you less than perfect?
A RED, RED ROSE
By Robert Burns

O, my luve is like a red, red rose.
That's newly sprung in June.
O, my luve is like the melodie,
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I,
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun!
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

1. Compare this poem with "How Do I Love Thee?" Is there a difference in the sincerity of the two poets? Is there a difference because one is written by a woman, the other by a man?
2. Note the hyperbole or exaggeration in line 8. Point out other hyperboles in the poem. What is the purpose of exaggeration?
3. Which of the two poems is better adapted to singing? Why? What words are repeated throughout the Burns poem? Would you agree that repetition occurs in most songs?
VICTORY POEMS

IT COULDN'T BE DONE

Somebody said that it couldn't be done
But he with a chuckle replied,
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried;

So he buckled right in with a trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried, he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

Somebody scoffed, "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;"
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.

With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you;

But just buckle in with a bit of a grin
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done," and you'll do it!

Edgar A. Guest
DON'T QUIT

"When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, and you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit!

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up, though the pace seems slow,
You may succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering man,
Often the struggler has given up,
When he might have captured the Victor's cup;
And he learned too late, when the night slipped down
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you can never tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,
It's when things seem worse that you mustn't quit."
**I WILL!**

There are doors forever closed against  
The weak and timid one,  
There are mountain peaks he cannot climb,  
There are tasks he'll ne'er get done;  

But all things wait for him who smiles,  
As steady he pulls the hill,  
Through others say it can't be done,  
His answer is, "I Will!"

There are throngs to take the broad highway  
That winds 'neath shady trees,  
The world is full of jostling crowds,  
Seeking ways of ease;  

But where the way is steep and rough  
And getting rougher still,  
There walk a few determined souls  
Who dare to say, "I Will!"
THE SCOUT WHO STICKS

"You may talk of your Scouts who are strong on the hike,
Who are there on the trail in the woods and the like;
You may have all the signalers, eagles, and stars,
First aiders, athletes, and sea-scouting tars;
But if from all Scouts you will give me my pick,
I'll fasten my choice on the Scout who will stick.

There's a job to be done, it's a tough one, I fear,
It may take a week, it may take a year,
Who's going to do it? Here comes the chap,
He takes off his coat, he throws down his cap,
Looks at the job, shuts his jaws with a click-
Fellows, that's him, the Scout who will stick.

Problems arise as the job goes along,
Nothing works right and everything's wrong;
When things look at the blackest some Scouts will say-
'Oh, yes, what's the use?' and then beat it away;
But someone fights on through the thin and the thick,
And we find at the end the Scout who will stick."

RESULTS AND ROSES

"The man who wants a garden fair,
Or small or very big,
With flowers growing here and there,
Must bend his back and dig.

The things are mighty few on earth
That wishes can attain;
Whate'er we want of any worth
We've got to work to gain.

It matters not what goal you seek;
Its secret here responses;
You've got to dig from week to week
To get results or roses."
BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY

In speaking of a person's faults,
Pray don't forget your own;
Remember those with homes of glass
Should seldom throw a stone;
If we have nothing else to do,
But talk of those who sin,
'Tis better we commence at home,
And from that point begin.

We have no right to judge a man
Until he's fairly tried;
Should we not like his company,
We know the world is wide;
Some may have faults— who has not?
The old as well as young—
Perhaps we may, for aught we know,
Have fifty to their one.

I'll tell you of a better plan,
You'll find it works full well;
To try my own defects to cure
Before of others' tell;
And though sometimes I hope to be
No worse than some I know,
My own shortcomings bid me let
The faults of others go.

Then let us all, when we commence
To surrender friend or foe,
Think of the harm one word would do
To those we little know,
Remember, curses, sometimes, like
Our chickens, "roost at home,"
Don't speak of others' faults until
We have none of our own.

James J. Boucher
"The boneless tongue so small and weak
Can crush and kill," declared the Greek;
"The tongue destroys a greater horde,"
The Turk asserts, "than does the sword."

The Persian proverb wisely saith;
"A lengthy tongue can early death,"
Or sometimes takes this form instead,
"Don't let your tongue cut off your head."

"The tongue can speak a word, whose speed"
Says the Chinese, "outstrips the steed;"
While Arab sages this impart:
"The tongue's great storehouse is the heart:"

From Hebrew wit the maxim sprung:
"Though feet may slip, ne'er let the tongue;"
The sacred writer crowns the whole:
"Who keeps his tongue, doth keep his soul."
WINNER VS LOSER

The Winner is always part of the answer.
The Loser is always part of the problem.

The Winner always has a program.
The Loser always has an excuse.

The Winner says, "Let me do it for you."
The Loser says, "That's not my job."

The Winner sees an answer for every problem.
The Loser sees a problem for every answer.

The Winner sees a green near every sand trap.
The Loser sees two sand traps near every green.

The Winner says, "It may be difficult."
The Loser says, "It may be possible, but it's too difficult."

The Winner says, "Let's find out."
The Loser says, "Nobody knows."

The Winner makes commitments.
The Loser makes promises.

The Winner says, "I'm good, but not as good as I ought to be."
The Loser blames his "bad luck" for losing even though it wasn't luck.

The Winner listens.
The Loser just waits until it's his turn to talk.

The Winner respects his superiors and tries to learn from them.
The Loser resents others' superiority and tries to find their weakness.

The Winner does more than his job.
The Loser says, "I only work here."

The Winner says, "I fell."
The Loser says, "Somebody pushed me."

The Winner is never surprised to win.
The Loser is never surprised to lose.
FABLE

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter "Little Prig"
Bun replied,
"You are doubtless very big;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together,
To make up a year
And a sphere.

And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half as spry.
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track;
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut."
-Ralph Waldo Emerson
Casey at the Bat
By Ernest L. Thayer

You don’t have to be a baseball fan to appreciate how the Mudville spectators felt when "mighty Casey" came to bat in the crucial ninth inning.

The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day; 
The score stood four to two, with but one inning more to play; 
And so, when Cooney died at first, and Burrows did the same, 
A sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest 
Clung to the hope which springs eternal in the human breast; 
They thought, if only Casey could but get a whack, at that, 
They'd put up even money now, with Casey at the bat.

But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake, 
And the former was a pudding and the latter was a fake; 
So upon that stricken multitude grim and melancholy sat, 
For there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to the bat.

But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all, 
And Blake, the much despised, tore the cover off the ball; 
And when the dust had lifted, and they saw what had occurred, 
There was Jimmy safe on second, and Flynn a-hugging third.

Then from the gladdened multitude went up a joyous yell, 
It bounded from the mountain top, and rattled in the well; 
It struck upon the hillside, and recoiled upon the flat; 
For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place, 
There was pride in Casey's bearing, and a smile on Casey's face; 
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat, 
No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt. 
Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on this shirt; 
Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip, 
Defiance gleamed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.
And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,
And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there;
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped.
That ain't my style," said Casey. "Strike one," the umpire said.

From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,
Like the beating of the storm-waves on a stem and distant shore;
"Kill him! Kill the umpire!" shouted someone on the stand. 35
And it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;
He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;
He signaled to the pitcher, and once more the spheroid flew,
But Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, "Strike two."

"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and the echo answered, "Fraud!"
But a scornful look from Casey, and the audience was awed;
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,
And they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey's lips, his teeth are clenched in hate,
He pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate;
And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,
And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.

Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright,
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light;
And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout,
But there is no joy in Mudville — mighty Casey has struck out.
SOMEBODY = S MOTHER

WORDS FOR YOU TO LEARN
comrade: an intimate friend; a companion
throng: a crowd; great numbers

BEFORE YOU READ THIS POEM
You have heard of moral courage, but perhaps you do not exactly understand what is meant by it. This poem may help you. Try to imagine the scene and what was said when the boy went back to his comrades.

Decide for yourself whether his answer to them is the kind a boy ought to give.

AS YOU READ THE POEM
Look for the following points:
1. An act of courtesy and kindness
2. The boy's answer to his companion.

The woman was old and ragged and gray,
And bent with the chill of the winter's day.
The street was wet with the recent snow,
And the woman's feet were aged and slow.

She stood at the crossing and waited long,
Alone, uncared for, amid the throng
Of human beings who passed her by,
Nor heeded the glance of her anxious eye.

Down the street with laughter and shout,
Glad in the freedom of school, "let out,"
Came the boys like a flock of sheep.
Hailing the snow piled white and deep.

Past the woman so old and gray,
Hastened the children on their way,
Nor offered a helping hand to her,
So meek, so timid, afraid to stir,
Lest the carriage wheels of the horses' feet
Should crowd her down in the slippery street.
At last came one of the merry troop,
The gayest laddie of all the group;
He paused beside her and whispered low,
"I'll help you across if you wish to go."

Her aged hand on his strong young arm
She placed, and so, without hurt or harm,
He guided her trembling feet along,
Proud that his own were firm and strong.

Then back again to his friends he went,
His young heart happy and well content.
"She's somebody's mother, boys, you know,
For all she's aged and poor and slow;

"And I hope some fellow will lend a hand
To help my mother, you understand,
If ever she's poor and old and gray,
When her own dear boy is far away."

And "somebody's mother" bowed low her head,
In her home that night, and the prayer she said
Was, "God be kind to the noble boy,
Who is somebody's son and pride and joy."
WASHINGTON IRVING
1783-1859

Named after the first American President, Washington Irving became the first American writer to achieve an international reputation. Born into a wealthy New York family, Irving began studying law at the age of sixteen. He had little interest in his studies, however, and spent much time traveling throughout Europe and New York's Hudson Valley and reading European literature. Irving also wrote satirical essays using the pen name Jonathan Oldstyle. When Irving was twenty-four, he and his brother began publishing an anonymous magazine, *Salmagundi* (the name of a spicy appetizer), which carried humorous sketches and essays about New York society.

In 1809 Irving published his first major work, *A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty*, using the pseudonym Diedrich Knickerbocker. The *History*, a humorous examination of New York during colonial times, was popular and made Irving famous.

From 1815 to 1832, Irving lived in Europe, traveling extensively and learning about European customs, traditions, and folklore. Inspired by the European folk heritage, Irving created two of his most famous stories, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle," transforming two traditional German tales into distinctly American stories set in the Hudson Valley. When Irving published these two stories in *The Sketch Book* (1820) under the pseudonym Geoffrey Crayon, writers and critics throughout Europe and the United States responded enthusiastically.

Irving produced other books while living in Europe, including *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), *Tales of a Traveller* (1824), and *The Alhambra* (1832). Another of Irving's more famous stories, "The Devil and Tom Walker," an American adaptation of a German legend about a man who sells his soul to the devil, appeared in *Tales of a Traveller*.

Irving's lengthy stay in Europe prompted some to question his loyalty to his native land. Irving responded, "I am endeavoring to serve my country. Whatever I have written has been written with the feelings and published as the writing of an American. Is that renouncing my country? How else am I to serve my country by coming home and begging an office of it: which I should not have the kind of talent or the business habits requisite to fill? If I can do any good in this world it is with my pen."

Although Irving continued to write after returning to the United States in 1832, he is remembered mainly for a few of the stories he wrote while in Europe. Like the folk tales from which they were adapted, these stories have remained popular for
generations, becoming an important part of the American literary heritage.

GUIDE FOR INTERPRETING
USES OF IMAGINATION

Literary Forms

Folk Tales.
Folk tales are stories handed down orally among the common people of a particular culture. These stories often relate events that are unrealistic or unlikely to happen in the real world in order to teach a lesson or express a general truth about life. The characters in folk tales tend to be stereotypes or stock characters embodying a single human trait, quality, or emotion. For example, a character in a folk tale may embody hatred or greed.

Washington Irving created "The Devil and Tom Walker" by reshaping a German folk tale about a man who sells his soul to the devil. Irving makes the tale distinctly American by setting it in New England during the late 1720's—a time when Puritanism, especially the belief that a person's life should be devoted to God, was being replaced by commercialism and the desire for personal gain. Like the tale from which it was adapted, Irving's story relates a series of unlikely events, involves stereotyped characters, and teaches an important lesson about life. Because Irving's story is grounded in a specific time and place, it also reveals a great deal about life in New England in the 1720's.

Focus
Do you think that some people today sometimes become so concerned with acquiring money and power that they forget to be sympathetic and compassionate toward other people? FreeLYPE write about your thoughts regarding this question.

Primary Source
In "The Devil and Tom Walker," Irving dramatizes the colonists' attitudes toward Native Americans in a number of passages. Irving commented on the attitudes of colonial Americans in an essay called "Traits of Indian Character." These attitudes were reflected in their treatment of the Indians and in the way early American writers portrayed them in their works. The Indians were "doubly wronged by the white men. They have been dispossessed of their hereditary possessions by mercenary and frequently wanton warfare; and their characters have been traduced by bigoted and interested writers. The colonist has often treated them like beasts of the forest; and the author has endeavored to justify him in his outrages. The former found it easier to exterminate than to civilize; the latter to vilify than to discriminate. The appellations of savage and pagan were deemed sufficient to sanction the hostilities of both; and thus the poor wanderers of the forest were persecuted and
defamed, not because they were guilty, but because they were ignorant."
THE DEVIL AND TOM WALKER
By Washington Irving

A few miles from Boston in Massachusetts, there is a deep inlet winding several miles into the interior of the country from Charles Bay, and terminating in a thickly wooded swamp or morass. On one side of this inlet is a beautiful dark grove; on the opposite side the land rises abruptly from the water's edge into a high ridge on which grow a few scattered oaks of great age and immense size. Under one of these gigantic trees, according to old stories, there was a great amount of treasure buried by Kidd the pirate. The inlet allowed a facility to bring the money in a boat secretly and at night to the very foot of the hill; the elevation of the place permitted a good look-out to be kept that no one was at hand; while the remarkable trees formed good landmarks by which the place might easily be found again. The old stories add, moreover, that the Devil presided at the hiding of the money, and took it under his guardianship; but this it is well known he always does with buried treasure, particu larly when it has been ill gotten. Be that as it may, Kidd never returned to recover his wealth; being shortly after seized at Boston, sent out to England, and there hanged for a pirate.

About the year 1727, just at the time that earthquakes were prevalent in New England, and shook many tall sinners down upon their knees, there lived near this place a meager, miserly fellow, of the name of Tom Walker. He had a wife as miserly as himself; they were so miserly that they even conspired to cheat each other. Whatever the woman could lay hands on, she hid away; a hen could not cackle but she was on the alert to secure the new-laid egg. Her husband was continually prying about to detect her secret hoards, and many and fierce were the conflicts that took place about what ought to have been common property. They lived in a forlorn-looking house that stood alone, and had an air of starvation. A few straggling savin trees, emblems of sterility, grew near it; no smoke ever curled from its chimney; no traveler stopped at its door. A miserable horse, whose ribs were as articulate as the bars of a gridiron, stalked about a field where a thin carpet of moss, scarcely covering the ragged beds of puddingstone, tantalized and balked his hunger; and sometimes he would lean his head over the fence, look piteously at the passerby, and seem to petition deliverance from this land of famine.

The house and its inmates had altogether a bad name. Tom's wife was a tall termagant, fierce of temper, loud of tongue, and strong of arm. Her voice was often heard in wordy warfare with her husband; and his face sometimes

1.Kidd the pirate: Captain William Kidd (1645-1701)

showed signs that their conflicts were not confined to words. No one ventured,
however, to interfere between them. The lonely wayfarer shrunk within himself at the horrid clamor and clapperclawing, eyed the den of discord askance, and hurried on his way, rejoicing as if a bachelor in his celibacy.

One day that Tom Walker had been to a distant part of the neighborhood, he took what he considered a shortcut homeward through the swamp. Like most shortcuts, it was an ill-chosen route. The swamp was thickly grown with great gloomy pines and hemlocks, some of them ninety feet high, which made it dark at noonday, and a retreat for all the owls of the neighborhood. It was full of pits and quagmires, partly covered with weeds and mosses, where the green surface often betrayed the traveler into a gulf of black, smothering mud; there were also dark and stagnant pools, the abodes of the tadpole, the bullfrog, and the water-snake; where the trunks of pines and hemlocks lay half-drowned, half-rotting, looking like alligators sleeping in the mire.

Tom had long been picking his way cautiously through this treacherous forest; stepping from tuft to tuft of rushes and roots, which afforded precarious footholds among deep sloughs, or pacing carefully, like a cat, along the prostrate trunks of trees; startled now and then by the sudden screaming of the bittern, or the quacking of a wild duck, rising on the wing from some solitary pool. At length he arrived at a piece of firm ground, which ran out like a peninsula into the deep bosom of the swamp. It had been one of the strongholds of the Indians during their wars with the first colonists. Here they had thrown up a kind of fort, which they had looked upon as almost impregnable, and had used as a place of refuge for their squaws and children. Nothing remained of the old Indian fort but a few embankments, gradually sinking to the level of the surrounding earth, and already overgrown in part by oaks and other forest trees, the foliage of which formed a contrast to the dark pines and hemlocks of the swamp.

It was late in the dusk of evening when Tom Walker reached the old fort, and he paused there awhile to rest himself. Any one but he would have felt unwilling to linger in this lonely, melancholy place, for the common people had a bad opinion of it, from the stories handed down from the time of the Indian wars; when it was asserted that the savages held incantations here and made sacrifices to the evil spirit.

2. *clapperclawing* (klap’ er klō\ ing) Clawing or scratching.

Tom Walker, however, was not a man to be troubled with any fears of the kind. He reposed himself for some time on the trunk of a fallen hemlock, listening to the
boding cry of the tree toad, and delving with his walking staff into a mound of black mold at his feet. As he turned up the soil unconsciously, his staff struck against something hard. He raked it out of the vegetable mold, and lo! a cloven skull, with an Indian tomahawk buried deep in it, lay before him. The rust on the weapon showed the time that had elapsed since this deathblow had been given. It was a dreary memento of the fierce struggle that had taken place in this last foothold of the Indian warriors.

"Humph!" said Tom Walker, as he gave it a kick to shake the dirt from it.

"Let that skull alone!" said a gruff voice. Tom lifted up his eyes and beheld a great black man seated directly opposite him on the stump of a tree. He was exceedingly surprised, having neither heard nor seen anyone approach; and he was still more perplexed on observing, as well as the gathering gloom would permit, that the stranger was neither Negro nor Indian. It is true he was dressed in a rude half-Indian garb, and had a red belt or sash swathed round his body; but his face was neither black nor copper color, but swarthy and dingy, and begrimed with soot, as if he had been accustomed to toil among fires and forges. He had a shock of coarse black hair that stood out from his head in all directions, and bore an ax on his shoulder. He scowled for a moment at Tom with a pair of great red eyes.

"What are you doing on my grounds?" said the black man, with a hoarse growling voice.

"Your grounds" said Tom with a sneer, "no more your grounds than mine; they belong to Deacon Peabody."

"Deacon Peabody be d---d," said the stranger, "as I flatter myself he will be, if he does not look more to his own sins and less to those of his neighbors. Look yonder, and see how Deacon Peabody is faring."

Tom looked in the direction that the stranger pointed, and beheld one of the great trees, fair and flourishing without, but rotten at the core, and saw that it had been nearly hewn through, so that the first high wind was likely to blow it down. On the bark of the tree was scored the name of Deacon Peabody, an eminent man, who had waxed wealthy by driving shrewd bargains with the Indians. He now looked round, and found most of the tall trees marked with the name of some great man of the colony, and all more or less scored by the ax. The one on which he had been seated, and which had evidently just been hewn down, bore the name of Crowninshield; and he recollected a mighty rich man of that name, who made a vulgar display of wealth, which it was whispered he had acquired by buccaneering.
"He's just ready for burning!" said the black man, with a growl of triumph. "You see I am likely to have a good stock of firewood for winter."

"But what right have you." said Tom, "to cut down Deacon Peabody's timber?"

"The right of a prior claim," said the other. "This woodland belonged to me long before one of your white-faced race put foot upon the soil."

"And pray, who are you, if I may be so bold?" said Tom.

"Oh, I go by various names. I am the wild huntsman in some countries; the black miner in others. In this neighborhood I am known by the name of the black woodsman. I am he to whom the red men consecrated this spot, and in honor of whom they now and then roasted a white man, by way of sweet-smelling sacrifice. Since the red men have been exterminated by you white savages, I amuse myself by presiding at the persecutions of Quakers and Anabaptists. I am the great patron and prompter of slave dealers, and the grandmaster of the Salem witches."

"The upshot of all which is, that, if I mistake not," said Tom, sturdily, "you are he commonly called Old Scratch."

"The same, at your service!" replied the black man, with a half-civil nod.

Such was the opening of this interview, according to the old story; though it has almost too familiar an air to be credited. One would think that to meet with such a singular personage in this wild, lonely place, would have shaken any man's nerves; but Tom was a hard-minded fellow, not easily daunted, and he had lived so long with a termagant wife, that he did not even fear the Devil.

It is said that after this commencement they had a long and earnest conversation together, as Tom returned homeward. The black man told him of great sums of money buried by Kidd the pirate, under the oak trees on the high ridge, not far from the morass. All these were under his command, and protected by his power, so that none could find them but such as propitiated

3. **Quakers and Anabaptists**: Two religious groups that were persecuted for their beliefs.

his favor. These he offered to place within Tom Walker's reach, having conceived an especial kind-ness for him; but they were to be had only on certain conditions. What these conditions were may easily be surmised, though Tom never disclosed them publicly. They must have been very hard, for he required time to think of them,
and he was not a man to stick at trifles where money was in view. When they had reached the edge of the swamp, the stranger paused: "What proof have I that all you have been telling me is true?" said Tom. "There is my signature," said the black man, pressing his finger on Tom's forehead. So saying, he turned off among the thickets of the swamp, and seemed, as Tom said, to go down, down, down, into the earth, until nothing but his head and shoulders could be seen, and so on, until he totally disappeared.

When Tom reached home, he found the black print of a finger, burnt, as it were, into his forehead, which nothing could obliterate.

The first news his wife had to tell him was the sudden death of Absalom Crowninshield, the rich buccaneer. It was announced in the papers with the usual flourish, "A great man had fallen in Israel." Tom recollected the tree, which his black friend had just hewn down, and which was ready for burning.

"Let the freebooter roast," said Tom, "who cares!" He now felt convinced that all he had heard and seen was no illusion. He was not prone to let his wife into his confidence; but as this was an uneasy secret, he willingly shared it with her. All her avarice was awakened at the mention of hidden gold, and she urged her husband to comply with the black man's terms and secure what would make them wealthy for life. However Tom might have felt disposed to sell himself to the Devil, he was determined not to do so to oblige his wife; so he flatly refused, out of the mere spirit of contradiction. Many and bitter were the quarrels they had on the subject, but the more she talked, the more resolute was Tom not to be damned to please her.

At length she determined to drive the bargain on her own account, and if she succeeded, to keep all the gain to herself. Being of the same fearless temper as her husband, she set off for the old Indian fort towards the close of a summer's day. She was many hours absent. When she came back, she was reserved and sullen in her replies. She spoke something of a black man that she had met about twilight, hewing at the root of a tall tree. He was sulky, however, and would not come to terms; she was to go again with a propitiatory offering, but what it was she forbore to say.

4. A ... Israel: A reference to II Samuel 3:38 in the Bible. The Puritans often called New England "Israel."

The next evening she set off again for the swamp, with her apron heavily laden. Tom waited and waited for her, but in vain; midnight came, but she did not make her appearance; morning, noon, night returned, but still she did not come. Tom now grew uneasy for her safety, especially as he found she had carried off in her apron the silver teapot and spoons, and every portable article of value. Another night
elapsed; another morning came, but no wife. In a word, she was never heard of more.

What was her real fate nobody knows, in consequence of so many pretending to know. It is one of those facts which have become confounded by a variety of historians. Some asserted that she lost her way among the tangled mazes of the swamp, and sank into some pit or slough; others, more uncharitable, hinted that she had eloped with the household booty, and made off to some other province; while others surmised that the tempter had decoyed her into a dismal quagmire, on the top of which her hat was found lying. In confirmation of this, it was said a great black man, with an ax on his shoulder, was seen late that very evening coming out of the swamp, carrying a bundle tied in a checked apron, with an air of surly triumph.

The most current and probable story, however, observes that Tom Walker grew so anxious about the fate of his wife and his property, that he set out at length to seek them both at the Indian fort. During a long summer-afternoon he searched about the gloomy place, but no wife was to be seen. He called her name repeatedly, but she was nowhere to be heard. The bittern alone responded to his voice, as he flew screaming by; or the bullfrog croaked dolefully from a neighboring pool. At length, it is said, just in the brown hour of twilight, when the owls began to hoot, and the bats to flit about, his attention was attracted by the clamor of carrion crows hovering about a cypress tree. He looked up, and beheld a bundle tied in a checked apron, and hanging in the branches of the tree, with a great vulture perched hard by, as if keeping watch upon it. He leaped with joy, for he recognized his wife's apron, and supposed it to contain the household valuables.

"Let us get hold of the property," said he, consolingly to himself, "and we will endeavor to do without the woman." As he scrambled up the tree, the vulture spread its wide wings, and sailed off screaming into the deep shadows of the forest. Tom seized the checked apron, but woeful sight! found nothing but a heart and liver tied up in it!

Such, according to the most authentic old story, was all that was to be found of Tom's wife. She had probably attempted to deal with the black man as she had been accustomed to deal with her husband; but though a female scold is generally considered a match for the Devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it. She must have died game, however; for it is said Tom noticed many prints of cloven feet deeply stamped about the tree, and found handfuls of hair, that looked as if they had been plucked from the coarse black shock of the woodsman. Tom knew his wife's prowess by experience. He shrugged his shoulders, as he looked at the signs of a fierce clapperclawing. "Egad," said he to himself, "Old
Scratch must have had a tough time of it!"

Tom consoled himself for the loss of his property, with the loss of his wife, for he was a man of fortitude. He even felt something like gratitude towards the black woodsman, who, he considered, had done him a kindness. He sought, therefore, to cultivate a further acquaintance with him, but for some time without success; the old blacklegs played shy, for whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for calling for he knows how to play his cards when pretty sure of his game.

At length, it is said, when delay had whetted Tom's eagerness to the quick, and prepared him to agree to anything rather than not gain the promised treasure, he met the black man one evening in his usual woodsman's dress, with his ax on his shoulder, sauntering along the swamp, and humming a tune. He affected to receive Tom's advances with great indifference, made brief replies, and went on humming his tune.

By degrees, however, Tom brought him to business, and they began to haggle about the terms on which the former was to have the pirate's treasure. There was one condition, which need not be mentioned, being generally understood in all cases where the Devil grants favors; but there were others about which, though of less importance, he was inflexibly obstinate. He insisted that the money found through his means should be employed in his service. He proposed, therefore, that Tom should employ it in the black traffic; that is to say, that he should fit out a slave ship. This, however, Tom resolutely refused; he was bad enough in all conscience, but the Devil himself could not tempt him to turn slave-trader.

Finding Tom so squeamish on this point, he did not insist upon it, but proposed, instead, that he should turn usurer; the Devil being extremely anxious for the increase of usurers, looking upon them as his peculiar people.

5. peculiar: Particular, special.

To this no objections were made, for it was just to Tom's taste.
"You shall open a broker's shop in Boston next month," said the black man.
"I'll do it tomorrow, if you wish," said Tom Walker.
"You shall lend money at two per cent a month."
"Egad. I'll charge four!" replied Tom Walker.
"You shall extort bonds, foreclose mortgages, drive the merchant to bankruptcy;"
"I'll drive him to the Dcl," cried Tom Walker.
"You are the usurer for my money!" said the blacklegs with delight. "When will you want the rhino?"¹⁶
"This very night."
"Done!" said the Devil.
"Done!" said Tom Walker. So they shook hands and struck a bargain.

A few days' time saw Tom Walker seated behind his desk in a countinghouse in Boston.

His reputation for a ready-moneyed man, who would lend money out for a good consideration, soon spread abroad. Everybody remembers the time of Governor Belcher.⁷ when money was particularly scarce. It was a time of paper credit. The country had been deluged with government bills; the famous Land Bank⁸ had been established; there had been a rage for speculating; the people had run mad with schemes for new settlements, for building cities in the wilderness; land jobbers⁹ went about with maps of grants, and townships, and El Dorados¹⁰ lying nobody knew where, but which everybody was ready to purchase. In a word, the great speculating fever which breaks out every now and then in the country, had raged to an alarming degree, and everybody was dreaming of making sudden fortunes from nothing. As usual the fever had subsided; the dream had gone off, and the imaginary fortunes with it; the patients were left in doleful plight, and the whole country resounded with the consequent cry of "hard times."

At this propitious time of public distress did Tom Walker set up as usurer in Boston. His door was soon thronged by customers. The needy and adventurous, the gambling speculator, the dreaming land jobber, the thriftless tradesman, the merchant with cracked credit, in short, every-one driven to raise money by desperate means and desperate sacrifices, hurried to Tom Walker.

Thus Tom was the universal friend of the needy, and acted like a "friend in need;" that is to say, he always exacted good pay and good security. In proportion to the distress of the applicant was the hardness of his terms. He accumulated bonds and mortgages; gradually squeezed his customers closer and closer, and sent them at length, dry as a sponge, from his door.

In this way he made money hand over hand, became a rich and mighty man, and exalted his cocked hat upon "Change."¹¹ He built himself, as usual, a vast house, out of ostentation; but left the greater part of it unfinished and unfurnished, out of

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¹⁶ rhino (ri' no): Slang term for money.
¹⁷ Governor Belcher: Jonathan Belcher, the governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony from 1730 through 1741.
¹⁸ Land Bank: A bank that financed transactions in real estate.
¹⁹ land Jobbers: People who bought and sold undeveloped land.
²⁰ El Dorados (el dór' u dés): Places that are rich in gold or opportunity. El Dorado was a legendary country in South America sought by early Spanish explorers for its gold and precious stones.
parsimony. He even set up a carriage in the fullness of his vainglory, though he nearly starved the horses which drew it; and as the ungreased wheels groaned and screeched on the axle-trees, you would have thought you heard the souls of the poor debtors he was squeezing.

s Tom waxed old, however, he grew thoughtful. Having secured the good things of this world, he began to feel anxious about those of the next. He thought with regret on the bargain he had made with his black friend, and set his wits to work to cheat him out of the conditions. He became, therefore, all of a sudden, a violent churchgoer. He prayed loudly and strenuously, as if heaven were to be taken by force of lungs. Indeed, one might always tell when he had sinned most during the week, by the clamor of his Sunday devotion. The quiet Christians who had been modestly and steadfastly traveling Zionward, were struck with self-reproach at seeing themselves so suddenly outstripped in their career by this new-made convert. Tom was as rigid in religious as in money matters; he was a stern supervisor and censurer of his neighbors, and seemed to think every sin entered up to their account became a credit on his own side of the page. He even talked of the expediency of reviving the persecution of Quakers and Anabaptists. In a word, Tom=s zeal became as notorious as his riches.

Still, in spite of all this strenuous attention to forms, Tom had a lurking dread that the Devil, after all, would have his due. That he might not be taken unawares, therefore, it is said he always carried a small Bible in his coat pocket. He had also a great folio Bible on his countinghouse desk, and would frequently be found reading it when people called on business; on such occasions he would lay his green spectacles in the book, to mark the place, while he turned round to drive some usurious bargain.

11. >Change: The exchange, where bankers and merchants did business.
12. Zionward (zi'ın word) Toward heaven

Some say that Tom grew a little crack-brained in his old days, and that fancying his end approaching, he had his horse newly shod, saddled and bridled, and buried with his feet uppermost; because he supposed that at the last day the world would be turned upside down, in which case he should find his horse standing ready for mounting, and he was determined at the worst to give his old friend a run for it. This, however, is probably a mere old wives' fable. If he really did take such a precaution, it was totally superfluous; at least so says the authentic old legend, which closes his story in the following manner.

One hot summer afternoon in the dog days, just as a terrible black thunder-gust was coming up, Tom sat in his countinghouse in his white linen cap and India silk
morning gown. He was on the point of foreclosing a mortgage, by which he would complete the ruin of an unlucky land speculator for whom he had professed the greatest friendship. The poor land jobber begged him to grant a few months' indulgence. Tom had grown testy and irritated, and refused another day. "My family will be ruined and brought upon the parish," said the land jobber. "Charity begins at home," replied Tom. "I must take care of myself in these hard times."

"You have made so much money out of me," said the speculator.

Tom lost his patience and his piety: "The Devil take me," said he, "if I have made a farthing!"

Just then there were three loud knocks at the street door. He stepped out to see who was there. A black man was holding a black horse, which neighed and stamped with impatience.

"Tom, you're come for," said the black fellow, gruffly. Tom shrunk back, but too late. He had left his little Bible at the bottom of his coat pocket, and his big Bible on the desk buried under the mortgage he was about to foreclose; never was a sinner taken more unawares. The black man whisked him like a child into the saddle, gave the horse the lash, and away he galloped, with Tom on his back, in the midst of the thunderstorm. The clerks stuck their pens behind their ears, and stared after him from the windows. Away went Tom Walker, dashing down the streets, his white cap bobbing up and down, his morning gown fluttering in the wind, and his steed striking fire out of the pavement at every bound. When the clerks turned to look for the black man he had disappeared.

Tom Walker never returned to foreclose the mortgage. A countryman who lived on the border of the swamp, reported that in the height of the thunder-gust he had heard a great clattering of hoofs and a howling along the road, and running to the window caught sight of a figure, such as I have described, on a horse that galloped like mad across the fields, over the hills and down into the black hemlock swamp towards the old Indian fort; and that shortly after a thunderbolt falling in that direction seemed to set the whole forest in a blaze.

The good people of Boston shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders, but had been so much accustomed to witches and goblins and tricks of the Devil, in all kind of shapes from the first settlement of the colony, that they were not so much horror struck as might have been expected. Trustees were appointed to take charge of Tom's effects. There was nothing, however, to administer upon. On searching his coffers all his bonds and mortgages were found reduced to cinders. In place of gold and silver his iron chest was filled with chips and shavings; two skeletons lay in his stable instead of his half-starved horses, and the very next day his great house took
Such was the end of Tom Walker and his ill-gotten wealth. Let all griping money brokers lay this story to heart. The truth of it is not to be doubted. The very hole under the oak trees, whence he dug Kidd's money, is to be seen to this day; and the neighboring swamp and old Indian fort are often haunted in stormy nights by a figure on horseback, in morning gown and white cap, which is doubtless the troubled spirit of the usurer. In fact, the story has resolved itself into a proverb, and is the origin of that popular saying, so prevalent throughout New England, of "The Devil and Tom Walker."

RESPONDING TO THE SELECTION

Your Response:
1. What do you like best about this story? What do you like least? Why?
3. What lessons could you learn from this story?

Recalling:
4. Describe Tom Walker's first encounter with the devil.
5. In all likelihood, what was the fate of Tom's wife?
6. (a) What bargain does Tom finally strike with the devil?
   (b) What does he do when he begins to regret his bargain?

Interpreting:
7. What does Irving's description of the Walkers' house and the surrounding land indicate about their kind of people?
8. What details indicate that while Tom Walker's condition changes during the story his nature remains the same?
9. (a) What does Irving mean when he says that Walker became "a violent church-goer"?
   (b) How is the manner in which Walker approaches religion similar to the way he approaches his financial dealings?

Applying:
10. Would this story be effective if it were set in contemporary America? Why or why not?

ANALYZING LITERATURE

Recognizing Folk Tales:

Folk tales are stories passed down from generation to generation in a particular
culture. These stories usually relate unlikely or unrealistic events, involve stereotypes or stock characters, and teach a lesson or express a general truth about life.

1. What trait does Tom Walker embody?
2. What trait does Tom Walker’s wife embody?
3. What general truth about life does the story express?

CRITICAL THINKING AND READING

Inferring Cultural Attitudes:

"The Devil and Tom Walker" reveals many of the attitudes of the people living in New England in the late 1720's and early 1730's. Because these attitudes are revealed indirectly, you must make inferences, or draw conclusions, about them by examining the evidence presented in the story. For example, when describing the old Indian fort, Irving states that "the stories handed down from the time of the Indian wars . . . asserted that the savages held incantations here, and made sacrifices to the evil spirit." From this passage you can infer that the colonists had a suspicious attitude toward the Native Americans and a firm belief in the devil.

What inferences about the cultural attitudes of the New Englanders of this period can you make from each of the following passages?

1. "... the great speculating fever which breaks out every now and then in the country had raged to an alarming degree, and everybody was dreaming of making sudden fortunes from nothing"
2. "The quiet Christians who had been moving modestly and steadfastly traveling Zionward were struck with self-reproach at seeing themselves so suddenly outstripped of their career by this new-made convert."

THINKING AND WRITING

Adapting a Folk Tale:

In your library, find a folk tale that interests you, perhaps the tale of John Henry, for example. In what ways would this tale be different if it were set in twentieth-century America? Think about how you can reshape the characters and events to make them fit into a contemporary setting. List the qualities that each character in your adaptation will embody, prepare an outline of events, and decide what lesson your tale will teach. When you write your tale, include details of the setting that will ground it in time and place. After you finish writing, revise your tale and prepare a final copy.
ROBERT FROST
1874-1963

In becoming one of America's most loved and respected poets, Robert Frost displayed the same rugged persistence and determination exhibited by the rural New Englanders he depicted in his poems. Although he eventually received four Pulitzer Prizes and read at a Presidential Inauguration, Frost had a difficult time achieving success as a poet. Only after years of rejection by book and magazine publishers did he finally receive the acceptance for which he worked so hard.

Frost was born in San Francisco, but his father died when he was eleven, and his mother moved the family to Lawrence, Massachusetts. After graduating from high school, he briefly attended Dartmouth College. Disliking college life, he left school and spent time working as a farmer, a mill hand, a newspaper writer, and a schoolteacher. During his spare time, he wrote poetry and dreamed of someday being able to support himself by writing alone.

After marrying and tending a farm in New Hampshire for ten years, Frost moved to England in 1912, hoping to establish himself as a poet. While in England he became friends with a number of well-known poets, including Ezra Pound, and published two collections of poetry, A Boy's Will (1913) and North of Boston (1914). When he returned home in 1915, he discovered that his success in England had spread to the United States.

Frost went on to publish five more volumes of poetry, for which he received many awards. He also taught at Amherst, the University of Michigan, Harvard, and Dartmouth; lectured and read at dozens of other schools; and farmed in Vermont and New Hampshire.

In 1960, at John F. Kennedy's invitation, Frost became the first poet to read his work at a Presidential Inauguration.

Frost's poetry was popular not only among critics and intellectuals, but also among the general public. In his poems he painted vivid portraits of the New England landscape and captured the flavor of New England life using traditional verse forms and conversational language. Despite their apparent simplicity, however, his poems are filled with hidden meanings, forcing us to delve beneath the surface to fully appreciate his work.

Writing about the effect a poem should have on the reader, Frost once said, "Like a
piece of ice on a hot stove the poem must ride on its own melting. A poem may be worked over since it is in being, but may not be worried into being. Its most precious quality will remain its having run itself and carried away the poet with it. Read it a hundred times; it will forever keep its freshness as a petal keeps its fragrance. It can never lose its sense of a meaning that once unfolded by surprise as it went."

GUIDE FOR INTERPRETING VALUES AND BELIEFS

Robert Frost=s Poetry

Writers= Techniques

Symbols
A symbol is a person, place, or thing that has a meaning in itself and also represents something larger than itself. Frequently, an event or activity in a literary work may have a symbolic meaning. For example, the voyage of the Pequod in Herman Melville's Moby-Dick symbolizes humanity's quest to conquer everything in nature that seems paradoxical, unexplainable, and uncontrollable. Symbols create different layers of meaning in a literary work. Because they generally contain symbols, Robert Frost's poems can usually be interpreted in more than one way. On the surface the poems seem straightforward and easy to grasp. Yet by analyzing Frost's use of symbols, we become aware of larger meanings that are hidden beneath the surface.

Literary Forms

Narrative Poetry
A narrative poem is one that tells a story. Like a short story, a narrative poem describes an event or a series of events and has one or more characters, a setting, and a conflict. In a narrative poem, the story is told by a single speaker, which may be the voice of the poet or that of a fictional character. Many of Frost's poems are narratives.

Dramatic Poetry Focus
Unlike narrative poetry, in which events are described in the words of the speaker, dramatic poetry recreates an event using dialogue or monologue as well as description. In a dramatic poem we see the characters interacting with and talking to one another, and as a result it seems as if we are actually witnessing the event. Frost's "The Death of the Hired Man" is a dramatic poem.
In Frost's poem "Birches," the speaker fondly remembers swinging on the branches of birch trees during his childhood. List some of the activities you enjoyed during the early part of your childhood. Then write down some of your reasons for liking each of these activities.

**BIRCHES**

*By Robert Frost*

When I see birches bend to left and right across the lines of straighter darker trees.  
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.  
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay  
As ice storms do.

Often you must have seen them  
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning  
after a rain. They click upon themselves  
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored  
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.

Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shell  
Shattering and avalanching on the snow crust  
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away  
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.  
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load.

And they seem not to break, though once they are bowed  
So low for long, they never right themselves:  
You may see their trunks arching in the woods  
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground  
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair

Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.  
But I was going to say when Truth broke in  
With all her matter of fact about the ice storm.  
I should prefer to have some boy bend them  
As he went out and in to fetch the cows

Some boy too far from town to learn baseball.  
Whose only play was what he found himself.  
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his fathers trees
By riding them down over and over again

Until he took the stiffness out of them.
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away

Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first with a swish.

Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations.
And life is too much like a pathless wood

Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.

May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth s the right place for love;
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree.

And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more.
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

Mending Wall
By Robert Frost
Something there is that doesn't love a wall.
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it
And spills the upper boulders in the sun.
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.

The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone.
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding.
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean.

No one has seen them made or heard them made.
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill:
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.

We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"

We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh. just another kind of outdoor game.
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it Is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines. I tell him.
He only says. "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:

"Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows."
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out.
And to whom I was like to give offense.

35Something there is that doesn't love a wall.
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him.
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there.
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top

40In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying.
And he likes having thought of it so well

45He says again. "Good fences make good neighbors."

RESPONDING TO THE SELECTION:

Your Response:
1. What is your reaction to each poem?
2. In "Birches" the speaker maintains that "One could do worse than be a swinger of birches." Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
3. In "Mending Wall" how would you define the "something" that "doesn't love a wall"?

Recalling:
4. (a) What does the speaker of "Birches" like to think when he sees birches "bend to the left and right?"
   (b) When does he dream of going back to be a "swinger of birches?"
5. (a) Why does the speaker of "Mending Wall" feel that the wall is unnecessary?
   (b) What is his neighbor's attitude?

Interpreting:
6. (a) How would you characterize the boy described in "Birches"?
   (b) How would you describe his relationship with nature?
   (c) Whom do you think he represents?
7. (a) How would you characterize the speaker of "Mending Wall"?
   (b) How would you characterize his neighbor?
   (c) What is the speaker's attitude toward his neighbor?
8. In "Mending Wall" what is the significance of the fact that nature breaks apart the
Applying:
9. (a) Why might a wall be unnecessary in the environment described in "Mending Wall"?
    (b) In what types of environments do you think a wall would be necessary?

ANALYZING LITERATURE

Interpreting Symbols:
A symbol is a person, place, object or action that has a meaning in itself and also represents something larger than itself. For example, in "Birches" the activity of swinging on birch trees symbolizes both a unity between humanity and nature and the notion of a temporary escape from reality.

1. Explain the following line: "One could do worse than be a swinger of birches."
2. What details in the poem suggest that the swinging on birches symbolizes the unity between humanity and nature?
3. What details suggest that the activity symbolizes a temporary escape from reality?

THINKING AND WRITING

Writing about a Symbol:
Write an essay in which you discuss the symbolic meaning of the swinging on birches in Frost's poem "Birches" Review your answers from the Analyzing Literature activity. Prepare a thesis statement. Then write your essay, using passages from the poem to support your thesis. When you revise, make sure your body paragraphs are arranged in a logical order. Proof read your essay and share it with your classmates.

LEARNING OPTION

Art
Which line from "Mending Wall" captures your thoughts about walls? Choose the
line that expresses your point of view and design a poster to illustrate it. Find a wall on which you can hang your poster.

Edgar Allen Poe

Throughout the years following Edgar Allan Poe's death, there have been disagreements among writers and critics concerning the quality of his work. In spite of these disagreements, Poe has remained the most influential and widely read American writer of his time.

Poe was born in Boston in 1809, the son of impoverished traveling actors. Shortly after Poe's birth, his father deserted the family. A year later, Poe's mother died. Young Edgar was taken in, though never formally adopted, by the family of John Allan, a wealthy Virginia merchant. The Allans provided for Poe's education, and in 1826 Poe entered the University of Virginia. However, when he contracted large gambling debts which his stepfather refused to pay, Poe was forced to leave the school.

In 1827, after joining the army under an assumed name, Poe published his first volume of poetry, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, and in 1829, he published a second volume, *Al Aaraaf*. The following year Poe's stepfather helped him to win an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Poe was expelled for academic violations within a year, however, and his dismissal resulted in an irreparable break with his stepfather.

During the second half of his life, Poe pursued a literary career in New York, Richmond, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, barely supporting himself by writing and working as an editor for a number of magazines. After his third volume of poetry, *Poems* (1831), failed to bring him either money or acclaim, he turned from poetry to fiction and literary criticism. Five of his short stories were published in newspapers in 1832, and in 1838 he published his only novel, *Life & Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. Though Poe's short stories gained him some recognition and his poem "The Raven" (1845) was greeted with enthusiasm, he was never able to escape from poverty. In 1849, two years after the death of his beloved wife Virginia, Poe died alone and unhappy.

In the years since his death, Poe's work has received much attention. Some writers and critics have harshly criticized Poe's writing. Others have praised his use of vivid imagery and sound effects and his exploration of altered mental states and the dark side of human nature. Despite Poe's uncertain status among writers and critics however, his work has remained extremely popular among generations of American readers.
The Raven

Writers= Techniques

Sound Devices
Alliteration, consonance, and assonance are three sound devices that poets use to give their writing a musical quality. Alliteration is the repetition of similar sounds, usually consonants, at the beginnings of words or accented syllables. Notice the repetition of the \textit{n} sound in the following line from "The Raven": "While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping. " Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds at the ends of words or accented syllables. For example, Poe ends several stanzas of "The Raven" with a line containing a repeated \textit{v} sound: "Quoth the Raven, 'Neyermore.'" Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds. For example, the \textit{ur} sound is repeated in line 13 of "The Raven": "And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain."

The repetition of similar sounds in poetry pleases the ear and reinforces meaning by emphasizing important words. Poe's use of alliteration, consonance, and assonance throughout "The Raven" creates a hypnotic effect that draws us into the speaker's irrational world. As a result, we are persuaded temporarily to abandon our conception of reality and accept the speaker's vision as reality. At the same time the repetition of sounds emphasizes certain words that contribute to the mood and reinforce the meaning of the poem.

Focus

Describe a creature that you find frightening or mysterious. Try to use descriptive details that convey the fear or uncertainty that you associate with this creature.

Primary Source

In \textit{The Philosophy of Composition}, Poe described how he used the repetition of the Raven's response. "Nevermore":

I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover the first query to which the Raven should reply "Nevermore" that I could make this first query a commonplace one the second less so the third still less, and so on until at length the lover, startled from his original nonchalance by the melancholy character of the word itself by its frequent repetition and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it is at length excited to superstition, and wildly
propounds queries of a far different character because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modeling his questions as to receive from the expected "Nevermore" the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrow.
The Raven
By Edgar Allan Poe

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
5 "Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door
Only this, and nothing more."

Ah distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow vainly I had tried to borrow
10 From my books surcease of sorrow sorrow for the lost Lenore
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
15 So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,
"Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door
This it is, and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
20 "Sir." said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you" here I opened wide the door
Darkness there, and nothing more.

25 Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the darkness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore!"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word. "Lenore!"
30 Merely this, and nothing more.

1. surcease (sər ˌsēz): End
Then into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning.
Soon I heard again a tapping somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I. "surely that is something at my window lattice:
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore.
35 Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore.
Tis the wind, and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of yore;
Not the least obeisance made he; not an instant stopped or stayed he;
40 But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door.
Perched upon a bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door.
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore.
45 "Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven.
Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the Nightly shore.
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Nights Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
50 Though its answer little meaning bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no sublunary being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door.
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

55 But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing farther then he uttered; not a feather then he fluttered-
Till I scarcely more than muttered, "Other friends have flown before.
On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."
60 Quoth the raven. "Nevermore."

2. Pallas (pal’ as): Pallas Athena, the ancient Greek goddess of wisdom.
3. Plutonian (ploo to’ n an) adj.: Referring to Pluto, the Greek and Roman god of
Wondering at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster, so, when Hope he would adjure.
65 Stem Despair returned, instead of the sweet Hope he dared adjure
That sad answer, "Nevermore!"

But the raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust, and door;
Then upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
70 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore-
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
75 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion=s velvet lining that the lamplight gloated over,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating over,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, me thought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
80 Swung by angels whose faint foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!
Let me quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

85 "Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet still, if bird or devil!
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate, yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted
On this home by Horror haunted tell me truly, I implore
Is there is there balm in Gilead? tell me, tell me, I implore!"
90 Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."
4. nepenthe (ni pen' thɛ) n.: A drug that the ancient Greeks believed could relieve sorrow.
5. balm in Gilead (gil' ɪd): In the Bible, a healing ointment was made in Gilead, a region of ancient Palestine.

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us by that God we both adore
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore.
95 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, up starting
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
100 Leave my loneliness unbroken! quit the bust above my door'
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"
Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
105 And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted nevermore!

6. Aidenn (ɪ'den): Arabic for Eden or heaven.

RESPONDING TO THE SELECTION

Your Response:
1. What effect does the poem have on you? Why?
2. What actor or speaker would you like to hear read the poem? Explain.

Recalling:
3. How does the speaker respond to the noise he hears?
4. What does the speaker want to forget?
5. How does the raven get into the chamber?
6. (a) What does the speaker ask the raven?
(b) What is its response?
(c) What does the speaker order the raven to do?

Interpreting:
7. (a) What is the mood?
   (b) How is the mood established in the first two stanzas?
8. (a) During the course of the poem, what changes occur in the speaker's attitude toward the raven? (b) What brings about each of these changes? (c) What does the raven finally come to represent?
9. (a) How does the speaker's emotional state change during the poem? (b) How are these changes related to the changes in his attitude toward the raven?
10. How is the word spoken by the raven related to the speaker's emotional state at the end of the poem?

Applying:
11. "The Raven" has been popular for well over one hundred years. What do you think accounts for its continuing appeal?

ANALYZING LITERATURE

Using Sound Devices:
Alliteration, consonance, and assonance are three sound devices used in poetry. Alliteration is the repetition of similar sounds, usually consonants at the beginnings of words or accented syllables (for example "su introduce sorrow," line 10). Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds at the ends of words or accented syllables (for example "chamber door," line 14). Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds (for example, "weak and weary," line 1).

Find three more examples of each of these techniques in "The Raven." Explain how each contributes to the poem's hypnotic effect.

THINKING AND WRITING

Responding to a Statement:
Poe stated, "A poem, in my opinion, is opposed to a work of science by having, for its immediate object, pleasure, not truth."
Review the poem, considering how Poe's use of sound devices and his choice of subject relate to the poem's immediate purpose. Try to determine the general truth, or theme, the poem expresses. Think about how the theme relates to the poem's overall purpose. Then, after deciding how you will respond to Poe's statement, find passages from the poem to support your response. Start your essay with Poe's statement, followed by your response.
Then develop an argument supporting your response. When you finish writing, revise your essay and prepare a final copy.
ONE WRITER'S PROCESS

*Edgar Allan Poe and "The Raven"

PREWRITING:

Explaining Poe's Method.

As much as we enjoy many great poems from the past, we seldom have an opportunity to learn about how they were created. Homer gave no newspaper interviews to explain how the *Odyssey* came into being. Nor did Dante appear on television to discuss the origins of the *Divine Comedy*.

We are lucky, then, that Poe left a detailed account of how he composed "The Raven." In an essay called "The Philosophy of Composition," the author set out not only his ideas about the goals of poetry, but a step-by-step account of how his most famous poem was written.

No Accidents

Often, poets will point out how "accidents" or sudden impulses contribute to their poetry. Poe, however, insisted that there was nothing accidental about his poem: "The work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem."

What were these steps? According to Poe, he first chose a proper length for his poem. Poe thought a poem should be relatively short in order to retain its intensity. "If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting," he wrote, "we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression."

Taking such thoughts into account, Poe soon made his decision: "I reached at once what I conceived the proper length for my intended poem—a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight."

"The Choice of an Impression."

Poe’s next step was to choose "an impression, or effect, to be conveyed." Before Poe even selected a character, setting, or voice for his poem, he decided which philosophical effect he wanted the poem to have upon its readers. "The Raven," he decided, would aim for neither Truth nor Passion. Instead he set his sights on Beauty, which he defined as an "intense and pure elevation of the soul." Do you think that Poe achieved his goal? Did any truth or passion slip in by accident?
Having chosen beauty as his effect, Poe also settled on a specific tone—sadness. "Beauty of whatever kind," he wrote, "in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears."

"The Nature of My Refrain."

Next, the poet began to consider actual words—or at least one word. Can you guess which word in "The Raven" Poe considered first of all?

If you guessed "Nevermore," you were right. Poe quickly decided that his poem would benefit from a refrain—that is, a word or phrase that is repeated regularly throughout. Because this refrain would be the closing line of each stanza, it would have to be a forceful, memorable word. "That such a close . . . must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis." Poe wrote, "admitted no doubt; and these considerations inevitably led me to the long o as the most sonorous vowel, in connection with r as the most producible consonant." Once Poe had decided on these sounds, it was a short leap to "Nevermore."

Strictly for the Birds.

Poe now had his refrain: "Nevermore." But he wondered whether any human being would credibly repeat the word "so continuously or monotonously." He soon hit upon a solution: "Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a non-reasoning creature capable of speech; and very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded forthwith by a Raven, as equally capable of speech and infinitely more in keeping with the intended tone."

Poe now had his refrain and his "ebony bird beguiling"—the Raven. These elements combined to generate the poem's situation: "a lover lamenting his deceased mistress." The poet was ready, finally to start writing.

DRAFTING:

Beginning at the End

Poe began with the last stanza. "Here then, " he wrote, "the poem may be said to have its beginning at the end, where all works of art should begin."

According to Poe, the final stanza should produce a poem's moment of climax. The preceding stanzas should merely inch toward this level of intensity, and if necessary, the poet should deliberately water down his or her work. "Had I been
able, in the subsequent composition, to construct more vigorous stanzas, I should, without scruple, have purposely enfeebled them so as not to interfere with the climactic effect."

**The Meter Is Running**

As he composed this final stanza, Poe also made decisions about the meter of his poem. As always, he sought to be original. Looking over the history of poetry, Poe felt that originality was in short supply; "Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere rhythm, it is still clear that the possible varieties of meter and stanza are absolutely infinite and yet for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing."

Needless to say, Poe was exaggerating, and as he was quick to point out, the trochaic meter of "The Raven" broke no new ground. Nevertheless, the poet did obtain an original effect by combining lines of different lengths within each stanza. "Each of these lines, taken individually, has been employed before." Poe pointed out, "and what originality 'Raven' has, is in their combination into stanzas; nothing even remotely resembling this combination has ever been attempted.

For some readers these varying line lengths produce a feeling of unpredictability, which mirrors in turn the confusion of the narrator. What effect do these varying line lengths have on you as you read the poem?

**PUBLISHING:**

**Breaking Into Print**

Poe wrote nothing in his essay about publication, he was concerned entirely with the process of poetic composition. At least once, however, he mentioned the audience at which he was aiming his poem. In his discussion of the proper length for "The Raven," he wrote of his wish to satisfy "that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular, while not below the critical, taste." In other words Poe wanted to satisfy both critics and a large audience.

In this he succeeded. You may be interested to know that 'The Raven" first appeared in 1845 in a newspaper, *The New York Mirror*. The poem made Poe's reputation, and his new fame enabled him to get a job at yet another newspaper, the *Broadway Journal*. Here he wrote essays, stories, and poems, for which he was paid at the rate of $1.00 per newspaper column!

**THINKING ABOUT THE PROCESS:**
1. To some people Poe’s writing process may seem to operate backward—that is, he decided on the sounds in the word “Nevermore” before hitting upon the word itself. How do you think this kind of process could be helpful to a writer?

2. Do you agree with Poe that a poem must be short to be effective?

3. Try writing a single line of poetry, and then use it for the first line of one poem and the last line of another. How did you use the line differently in each case?