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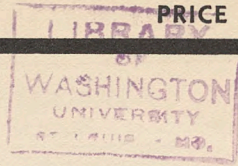
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#### Recommended Citation

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## WHITE MAN'S COUNTRY

I walked slowly along the country road, my eyes contracted against the brilliance of the highway. The sticky heat of the lowlands seemed to brush my face and clog my nostrils, and I had to breathe deeply, feeling the thick air slide down my throat. In the low bushes along the road-side sparrows made pattering sounds on the dead leaves. A crow cawed occasionally in a distant tree top.

There was little traffic on the road, for it was a hot week-day, and all the farmers who had their first hoeing laid by were dozing in their rawhide bottom chairs. In the towns the plantation owners were sitting on their high verandahs talking politics or sleeping over their papers. Only the Negroes were in the fields, or some poor whites.

My head jerked up — *swish — swish — swish* — hoofs cutting through the loose gravel, the slapping sound of harness, and the creak of wheels. Stepping to the side of the road, I turned around and saw the bobbing head of an old horse coming over the ridge behind me. A little cart with two high wheels came into view, the carriage-body hidden by the high flanks of the horse. The shapeless hat of the occupant of the cart seemed to ride the bony flanks like some tubbish boat on the sea horizon. As the vehicle drew nearer, I saw that the rider was an old Negro. His large black face was smooth-shaven and there was a ring of white hair showing beneath his straw hat.

"What about a ride?" I called as the creaking cart came toward me.

The old man slowed his horse to an easy walk. Coming abreast of me, he pulled back heavily on the reins. The buggy made a grating stop and the horse stood still, head down and eyes blinking against the flies. The Negro looked down, silent.

"What did you say?" he asked in a low voice, as if he had not understood me.

"Would you mind giving me a ride?" I asked smiling.

*Continued on Page 4*

FEEL  
LOT

STORIES · ARTICLES  
REVIEWS · POEMS

Contributors

- Joseph Crocker
- Forrest Campbell
- Gold Vinal
- Margaret Evans
- Mark Mills
- Vernon Meyer

## THE ELIOT

Published Monthly by Students at  
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
Saint Louis, Mo.

*Editor:* Clark Mills McBurney.

*Associates:* Leigh White, Gordon Sager, Dorothy Weiner.

*Managing Editor:* William Edgar.

*Distribution Manager:* Melvin Roman.

*Staff:* Robert Campbell, Virginia Price, Berenice Purcell, William Swindler, James Gibson, Selwyn Pepper, Dorothy Rauscher, Charlotte Anschuetz, Mary Catherine Trueblood, Jeanne Milam, Russel Crider, Mildred Molasky.

Price 10 cents; the year, 75 cents.

## ELEVATOR GIRL

The elevator went up on its last trip—not dragging its way up as on week days, but with a vigor that bespoke energy on the part of its driver, and the fact that this was Saturday night. Aniele shot the barred door close on the fourth and went on to the fifth floor.

"Yeh—dance at the Republican Club tonight. Wanta come?" she asked over her shoulder.

"Who's goin'?" The other girl leaned languidly in the corner of the elevator, chewing her gum with a long slow movement.

"The gang. There's gonna be a swell orchestra and I'm wearing my green lace that I got on sale. Say, it's a knock-out!"

"Guess your special weakness'll be there, huh?" the other said.

"Top floor. Last time down!" sang out the elevator girl to the scurrying figures coming from lockers which filled the floor.

"Well, ya comin'?" she asked her companion again.

"I guess. But Gees, I'm dead. My feet feel like raw blisters."

"Soak 'em when you get home," Aniele advised. "You'll be O. K. We'll have a keen time. Be over at eight . . . Goin' da'own!" she bawled.

"Wait a minute!" rang out in various keys.

"Come on—What do ya think this is—an all night party?"

The late ones ran into the elevator. Down to the first floor it went, discharged its load, and the day was done.

Aniele sang softly, "How'm I doin', hey hey," as she rammed a black felt hat down on her head, twisted her narrow skirt around and pulled a skin-tight sweater over her thin hips. She was of medium height and had the distinct features of the young Polack—high cheek bones, small eyes, broad mouth and a flat nose that was "cute" now, but would, in a few years, broaden into coarseness. Her hair was jet black, artificially waved, and she wore it hanging, in the approved Greta Garbo coiffure of the day.

She walked home. In ten minutes she was in the dim hallway of her house. It gave forth the menu for the evening dinner in pungent odors.

"Aniele!" a voice called.

"It's me, Mom," she answered. "Let's eat. I gotta fix my hair and sew my dress—and I only got an hour."

She ran into the kitchen and began to serve herself a dinner of cabbage and hamburger, brown bread and coffee, while a curling iron heated on the gas range.

Then she ran into her bedroom, shared with two younger sisters, and tore off her clothes, washed from the face down to the waist in the dingy bathroom which boasted a long mirror, then waved her hair. After that came the thrilling moment of slipping the stiff lace dress over her head and hooking it caressingly to her slim body and the final make-up of powder and heavy rouge.

Her final appearance was that of the usual commoner, over-dressed, over-rouged, but her slits of eyes twinkled, her skin flushed under its covering and her cheap lace garb made her body look enticing in its ordinary woman curves.

(Continued on Page 6)

## A SCIENTIFIC DEFINITION OF POETRY

Anyone who has ever been interested in the study of literature knows that there are many and varied definitions of poetry. Anyone who has attempted to write a poem has formed, consciously or unconsciously, some sort of definition the moment he begins to compose. The accumulation of these definitions over the centuries and from all sources reveals that poetry has been regarded as the sublime expression of truth, as the expression of pure fantasy, as madness and as sanity, as the communication of pleasure, of emotion, as the essence of divinity and as the lure of the devil, as mere metaphor, as metrical speech. Worthy examples can be brought forward to support each of these and its contrary.

Modern poets and critics for the most part are inclined to regard its definition as impossible. T. S. Eliot asks, "What is man to describe what poetry is!" and seems by his own works to be insuring that man will not commit that sacrilege. E. A. Robinson dismisses it as "indefinable." Even Santayana can distinguish it no further than as metrical discourse. Perhaps it is the triumphant advance of science on so many fronts that has driven the modern literati to seek to preserve the muse in this realm of impenetrable vagueness. However, Max Eastman calls science "but a persistent and organised effort to talk sense," and so taken, scientific technique displays no irreconcilable enmity to poetry but, I think, much hope for solving the problem of its definition.

My comments are all based on Mr. Eastman's discussion of the question, and his solution is, in my opinion, the most comprehensive and satisfying I have yet seen. He says that poetry is occupied with suggesting the qualities of experience "more than is practically necessary, or necessary to theoretic understanding." This definition is scientific in what many would regard as

its disregard of values. It is not designed, as most definitions are, to serve as a standard by which "good" poetry can be distinguished from "bad." It is only concerned with the distinction of the poetic element itself.

Dirty stories and religious dithyrambs, Shelley's lyrics and the eloquent imagery of the longshoremen, descriptions of moonlight, slaughter, pleasure, horror—these are all manifestations of the same basic impulse of tasting life to the full. "Poetry," Mr. Eastman says, "is a condition of search, a search for nothing more specific than increased or intensified existence." The scientist or man bent on a practical end brushes aside everything that is not connected with his purpose. He makes a rigid selection from his experiences of those qualities that will enable him to approach his goal. The poet, on the other hand, and his audience, value the qualities of experience for themselves. They wish as Edith Sitwell says, to "heighten consciousness" of them.

Older definitions lend themselves to the sad conclusion that poetry is dying with the progress of civilization. But so long as man seeks reactions for their own sake and so long as we can keep the behaviorists from proving their point, there will be commerce for poetry in a field wide as life itself.

Poetry is the attempt to make words suggest the experience, and this is where Mr. Eastman finds the extreme moderns failing. They have the poetic instinct, but are so enraptured with the qualities of being that they refuse to violate this privacy by the use of terms common to understanding. So, he charitably reasons, the chaotic utterances, the purposely original punctuation, are means jealously taken to keep their experiences from straying out of their own backyards.

Words themselves illustrate the poetic principle. "Precocious," "sar-

casm," "gymnasium," are general terms now, but once, to the speaker who used them they meant "half-baked," "tearing of the flesh," "place of nakedness." Words are used for their practical and their poetic content at the same time. In the same way, poetry and the scientific or practical are found in many degrees of mixture. The poet may use his ability of arousing a heightened consciousness of qualities in order to further some end of his own. The scientist may warm his abstractions with an image that rouses the sense of experience in the reader.

To prove that this search for intensified and varied existence is not confined to man alone, Mr. Eastman cites the case of the Flatworm. Some scientist has reported that this animal exercises itself for two or three hours

at a time in a condition of "general motility" for which experiment has shown no practical purpose. Here, Mr. Eastman exults, is the poetic instinct at work.

Whether he has correctly judged the Flatworm I am unable to say, but that the poetic impulse is primarily the desire to seek out and enhance the experience of life in all its phases from beauty to beastliness, and from pain to pleasure, and that poetry is the attempt to communicate the qualities of existence, I believe to be true and enlightening. If this definition be accepted, the finger of scorn can no longer be pointed at the poet who, while gazing at the stars falls into the puddle, since he is searching for experiences—and getting them.

—FORREST CAMPBELL.

## WHITE MAN'S COUNTRY

(Continued from page 1)

"Yes, suh," he said slowly.

I threw my satchel under the seat, and gripping the sideboard, jumped into the cart. The seat was thinly padded and hot from long exposure to the sun. When I got in the cart the Negro made a clucking sound and slapped the reins. He didn't say anything, but kept looking straight ahead.

"What's the matter?" I finally said.

"Oh, nothin' boss, nothin'."

"You've got me all wrong." The Negro made no reply. "I'm from the north. Beating my way through this section of the country. Always wanted to see what Alabama was like. A man's color doesn't mean a thing to me."

Turning his head slightly and looking down at the footboard he said "Are all the white folks up north like you is?"

"No, I'm afraid that most of them are like most of the southerners."

"Well, they sure is bad down here. It's a fact . . . we is worse off now

than we was fore the civil wah." The old Negro paused and gazed thoughtfully at the reins in his hands. "We ain't got a chance—not a chance—" The white tail of a rabbit flicked across the road in front of us. "You see that cotton-tail, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Well . . . us niggers is jest like them cottontails. You know there ain't no season on cottontails. You kin shoot 'em in season and outa season. Nobody keers! Nobody has any use for 'em. And that's the way it is with us folks. There ain't no season on us. They hunts us all the time. Rabbit justice! That's what we gits. Rabbit justice!" The old man sat hunched forward, his face dark.

With eyes narrowed against the heat, I watched the thick dust splatter under the cart wheel. There was nothing I could say.

In the stillness I could hear the low hum of a distant car. The noise increased . . . The road before us was empty. Looking behind, I saw a long

dust cloud rising above the scrub oak. Then a black sedan swirled around the corner. The Negro hurriedly jerked the horse to the side of the road as the car roared by. I caught a flash of white suits and soft summer dresses. With the slish of rubber on gravel the car came to an abrupt stop, the brakes creaking slightly. The Negro looked at me.

"Are they stopping 'cause of us?" he asked in a low tone.

"I don't know," I said.

He had a worried expression on his face as we drew abreast of the car. I could see two women seated in the rear. One of them was young and pretty. There were two men in the front seat; a young college fellow behind the wheel, and seated beside him an old man with white hair and a heavy red face. He had on a white panama suit. The college fellow seemed amused about something, but the old man with the red face stuck his head out of the car window.

"Young man," he bellowed, "are you a white man?"

"I was so surprised that I hardly knew what to say.

"Speak up, damn it," he roared again.

I was getting mad but I just said, "Yes, I'm white."

"Then get the hell out of that cart!"

"But I don't understand . . ." I said.

"You heard me . . . This is white man's country and you can't ride with a damn nigger."

"Why you dirty—" I began, but the Negro caught at my sleeve. When I saw that look on the Negro's face I stopped. "Boy," the Negro said, "please don't make trouble—please don't—they'll get me sho—please white boy, don't make no trouble."

"That's better." With these words the old man withdrew his head and the car jumped forward with a backward spurt of gravel. In a minute it had disappeared.

## VARIATIONS ON A THEME

### Song

*The room is hollow  
and our voices chime  
about its dusty space  
like muttering.*

*We argue Joyce and Proust,  
eat cakes, disperse,  
hands grasping hands—  
no vacuum equals this.*

*One says 'Turner was great,'  
smiles and inhales—  
faint through gray windows rise  
cathedral bells.*

*It is a herd of garbed  
cattle noisily loving  
one another and breathing.  
Smoke hangs above us.*

### The Polite Inane

*There are too many kind faces  
wedging the time between us, too  
many hands touching with caresses  
myself, like white strangling snow.*

*At length you hold a steadfastness  
of mind that ever has been yours  
calmly, while over me hands pass  
and speech and lovers' taut fears.*

*There is no doorway, no escaping  
to your land out of this bright room  
where I recall green rain, stepping  
shaken through tea and polite hum.*

### Incident

*The wooden country store on fire  
brings to mind flypaper, pans,  
artificial flowers burning. Darkens  
memory, stills dead voices that talk.  
Her love and malice fade. Here is  
a calm spot for the mind while ashes  
rumble and pour out of the roof.  
And it turns to the other fire,  
loosed from inner conflagration.*

—CLARK MILLS.

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In front of me the dust-sprayed horse plopped along, the Negro keeping his face rigid to the front.

—JOSEPH CROCKER.

## Elevator Girl

(Continued from page 2)

Pimple-faced Polish youths and sombre Russians would press their hands many times against her body that evening, but Aniele would disregard all of their implications with an indifference that had won her the name "cold baby" among the young men of her acquaintance. She manifested the same indifference when Anatole encircled her waist nonchalantly with his arm which he did not press closely. She adored him because he didn't. It separated him from the pack and made him a gentleman and herself a lady.

There was a swish in the hall and a voice that announced the arrival of Aniele's friend. They had no escorts to the dance. No girl went with a man unless she was engaged to him and danced only with him. Free-lancing was much preferred. And no girl went home with a man. There was safety in numbers—for pressing hands was safe on a dance floor, but not in dark streets with only an occasional flickering light at a corner.

The girl came into the room, a picture of Polish elegance. But Aniele far out-shone her.

"Gee, Anie—That looks swell! Mrs. Anatole Ripiza for sure after tonight!" she cried.

"That man is nothing in my life," she answered.

The dance hall was only a few blocks away upstairs from a couple of stores. The girls reached it in a few minutes. Around the dimly lighted entrance a few of the beaux of the neighborhood leaned against the sides of the doors eyeing the newcomers with practiced glances.

Aniele did not even notice them but ran up the shaky wooden stairs to meet Anatole. The dance hall was fairly large. A huge stove stood in the center—unlit, for it was still September. A false ceiling had been built around the sides of the room, leaving a circular gap in the center from

## PARABLE

*Eric, the foul and evil brain  
Has plotted to outwit the weak,  
But though the slight tree fall again,  
A leaf is streaming from its cheek.*

*A dreaming emerald shall rise  
From the small acorn that is shed  
And lift against the curving skies  
Its lovely and triumphant head.*

*Think not the weak are overthrown,  
Their roots are sturdier than most,  
They tower steadfast out of stone,  
Imperishable, never lost.*

*And beautiful as all things are  
Fed by a faith, their plumes lift high;  
In vain the axe shall leave a scar,  
They flourish though they seem to die.*

*Eric, observe the slender tree  
Rooted in granite; at its core  
Some dream is sleeping patiently  
And it shall spread its leaves once  
more.*

*The strong are garlanded in vain,  
Though bright and terrible they tower;  
Once fallen, they shall lift again  
No breaking bud, no gleaming flower.*

*The worm already at their root  
Crawls like corruption underneath  
And whosoever eats their fruit  
Savors the bitter rind of death.*

*The sluices of their being spread  
With poison early, they are lost  
Before the bough has turned to red  
Or the first leaf salutes the frost.*

—HAROLD VINAL.

which hung a garish chandelier decorated with crepe paper. Several windows made up the north wall in which a broken pane showed the evidence of a drunk's fist. A sort of haze hung over the room softening the harsh reds and yellows and greens of the girls' dresses, making their faces look pasty like heavily frosted cakes decorated with colors. And everyone was dancing in a sort of frenzy—hopping, twisting, swaying—while the room rang with the sound of feet and laughter,

and now and then a string of friendly cursing as one couple bumped into another. A red-head without an underskirt on was the center of attraction, doing a sort of slither and shake, which caused the entire personnel of the orchestra to sway after her each time she passed.

Aniele stood in the doorway peering into the mob toward the opposite wall near the orchestra where Anatole usually stood. He was there. In a few moments he saw her. He gave her only a glance and his eyes shifted on. But Aniele was satisfied. In a moment he would slowly make his way to her. He was coming. She affected a role of indifference.

"Hy Babe," he said softly to her. "How about finishin' the dance?"

"Hello, big boy," she answered. "Sure you can wrestle with that mob?"

"They don't bother me, if you're willin'," he smiled. "Let's go." Aniele was happy.

As they passed the entrance to the hall they both saw a group of newcomers that looked foreign to the surroundings. Three girls stood gazing out into the crowd of dancers while three men stood behind them also watching and commenting to the girls. They were dressed smartly in sport clothes and bore the stamp of "slummers." Aniele gave them a scornful glance in passing but Anatole was looking back intently at the girls. The music stopped. He squeezed her arm gently and with a "Thanks, Babe," was gone. She saw him go slowly toward the group at the door. She felt a slow beat in her temples that always came when she was angry.

A drunk grabbed her and she began to dance automatically, trying to watch Anatole at the same time. He had reached the newcomers and with a bow that he had acquired from a movie hero, addressed the smallest girl of the group.

"Dance, sister?" he asked.

The girl turned to him, startled. Her

companions nudged each other and watched.

"But—I don't know how to dance like that."

"I'll teach you," he smiled. "It's easy."

"I dare you," whispered one of the other girls to her. The brunette slipped into Anatole's arms. Slowly Anatole did his step. His companion followed his movements hesitatingly, then more confidently as she caught on to it. Soon she and Anatole were going at full speed through the intricate step.

Aniele twisted her head from side to side to watch them. Her eyes never left the two, even though she was in danger of cracking up hard against any of the dancers as she turned from right to left. The dance ended and she saw Anatole stand and talk to his partner while waiting for the next burst of music. They were dancing again. Aniele slipped off into a small anteroom where they were selling beer and sandwiches. Her eyes glittered with tears. Anatole hadn't danced with another girl for a month. He had danced only with her just like he was her "steady." She looked at her dress with a bitter resentment now, as though it had failed her. She thought of her rival's clothes and a baffled feeling came over her—then a fierce anger. "Damn 'em—damn 'em," she muttered. She looked around her helplessly. On the sandwich counter the waiter was slicing bread for sandwiches. He finished and put the knife down. It lay there a foot from her, its blade shining. She glanced around and saw no one looking, reached out, took the knife and went quickly into the dance hall. She made her way to the doorway holding the knife by her side toward the wall.

The dance ended and Aniele saw the brunette shake her head as Anatole tried to keep her for another dance. Then the two came toward the doorway, Anatole with a loose arm



around her waist. When they reached the entrance the brunette thanked Anatole and laughing, stepped on her toes and placed a light kiss, for the astonished benefit of her companions, on the lips of Anatole.

The innocent action was the signal for Aniele. She rushed forward, struck the knife into the shoulder of her rival, turned like a flash and ran down the steps into the darkness.

Upstairs the hall rang with the cry of the injured girl. The dancers stopped to look but could only see a girl being lifted and carried into the anteroom. The orchestra played on, thinking, as did the rest, that it was only a proprietary escort resenting the trifling of his fiancé, or a drunken brawl.

Anatole carried the girl into the anteroom, her companions horror-stricken, following. Someone called a policeman. There was the shriek of an ambulance siren and the music was playing, "I Ain't Got Nobody to Love."

#### SOCIETY GIRL STABBED ON SLUMMING EXPEDITION

Motive Unknown — Culprit Escapes featured the morning newspapers. In an elevator downward, a pale black-haired girl with dark rings under her eyes, that only bespoke a previously big night to the casual observer, called wearily "Goin' Up."

—MARGARET EVANS.

## TWO BOOKS

"A Short Introduction to the History of Human Stupidity," by Walter B. Pitkin, New York, Simon & Schuster.

To Mr. Pitkin Walt Whitman was an extraordinary humbug, Francis Thompson did not have sense enough to come in out of the rain, and the whole human race has a physical and spiritual affinity with that good old Greek figure, Cyclops. Cyclops takes it in the eye as Mr. Pitkin holds his stupidities to light in the "Short Introduction" to a history which he hopes will fill at least thirty or forty volumes.

"White House Blues," by Felix Ray (pseud. for Howard Brubaker); illustrations by Frueh; Vanguard Press.

Though it lacks the scholarly thoroughness of attack which marked "The Strange Career of Herbert Hoover," and the broad scope and variety of the excellent "Merry-Go-Round" series, the "White House Blues" is unique in one respect. Page after page is packed with the quintessence of journalistic slang and catch-words, the style even tending to become euphuistic. We believe this journalistic style is its chief merit, since its subject matter consists of a recital of the sins of the past administration—which sins the Republicans will not care to read, and which the Democrats have already by heart.

VERNON MEYER.

## CALENDAR

April 3—"The Land of Coffee and Bananas," W. U. Association Lecture by Carrol W. Dodge, *Soldan Auditorium*.

April 5-14.—"The Pursuit of Happiness," play at the *Little Theatre*.

April 11-12.—Thyrus Little Theatre play, "Lightnin'," *January Court Room*.

April 15.—Organ Recital, 3 P. M. in the *Graham Memorial Chapel*.

April 17.—"Science and Progress," W. U. Association Lecture by Robert Millikan, *Soldan Auditorium*.

April 18.—Exhibition of early impressionistic Paintings, *City Art Museum*.