

A short story by Joyce Cary

A glory of the moon

"We are like the grass,"

the child chanted

Walter Ferro



The children were playing funerals. A small dark boy of about six was lying in an orange box at the edge of the leaf pit. His eyes were closed; his hands crossed on his breast. The box was too short for him and he had to draw up his knees, but he

held them sideways in the effort to make himself as flat and dead as possible.

A square-shouldered girl of about ten, with a very round brown face, was holding one end of a skipping rope which was passed under the box. The other end was in the hand of the parson, a thin fair boy, the same height as the girl, with a singularly long thin nose and large gray eyes which seemed to bulge with impatience. A maid's apron, pinned to the shoulders of his jersey, made a surplice. He was holding a piece of folded newspaper from which he was pretending to read, using such striking phrases as he had picked up in church or from broadcasts. He intoned these words in High Church style with a peculiar quivering intensity, excited both by their quality and his own success as a parson. "We are like the grass. It is green in the morning but in the evening it is cut and withered—and worms will eat our body."

The little boy in the orange box fluttered his long lashes and blinked. A smaller, very fair little girl, standing beside the box as mourner, did not look at him but stared with round fascinated eyes at the

speaker. Her lips moved now and then as she tried to repeat the words after him.

The parson, after a moment's pause for recollection, shrilled with the same dramatic emphasis: "The last enemy is death for he puts everything under his feet—come on, Mag."

This was to the brown-faced girl, who had been attending with a nervous frown and kept her eyes fixed anxiously on the boy in the coffin.

"Come on, Mag," the parson repeated sharply, jerking his end of the rope. "Wake up."

The girl started and pulled on the rope. The head of the box was lifted slightly and together they dragged it down the ramp of the pit until it was resting among the dead leaves and yellowed grass cuttings, withered flowers and bracken which filled the hole.

The brown girl said to the little boy, "You all right, David?" whereupon the parson turned upon her and exclaimed angrily, "Do shut up, Mag."

"But I only——"

"He's dead—he's dead, I tell you—how can he talk to you? And he's absolutely all right if you'd only let him alone. He doesn't mind a bit."

At this David pressed his lips together more tightly. The parson said loudly: "In the midst of life we are in death."

Suddenly the corpse scrambled out of the box. The parson threw down the paper and shouted in disgust, "Oh, what's the good."

The little boy was climbing up the ramp. He thrust out his lower lip and [Continued on page 156]

A short story by Robert Bassing

Summer evening

*She wanted what they were having
but she didn't even
know what it was*

Walter Ferro



It was the first hot night of summer, and the Scowcrofts, Walter and Irene, came in late after an evening of canasta with their friends the O'Briens. They were weary and hot and because the elevator was out of order they had to climb three flights to their apartment.

Irene snapped on the kitchen light and paused in the doorway, resting one arm across the portion of her middle that was just beginning to be noticeably pregnant. She stared glassy-eyed at the dinner dishes stacked in the sink. She listened to Walter double-lock the front door and when she heard his footsteps in the carpeted hallway she moved a few steps into the small kitchen and reached up to remove the hatpins from her white beanie.

She was acutely aware of how carefully Walter eased himself past her, managing not to touch her. She watched him go to the sink, carrying his silence like a heavy stone that he would not set down even as he rolled up his sleeves and began to shift the dishes around. She took off her beanie and replaced the hatpins.

"The weather," she said finally, edging her tone with a lacing of sarcasm, "is not the only thing that's suffocating tonight, Walter. You didn't say one word all the way home. You didn't swear when the elevator was out of order. And now you're doing the dishes. Why don't you tell me what's the matter?"

Walter pushed the faucets closed but remained facing the sink with his back to her. "I'm sorry," he said, curtly. "I didn't hear you. It's very difficult to wash dishes and carry on a conversation."

"Why don't you leave the dishes and I'll do them in the morning."

"That would be too intelligent," Walter said. "We're not allowed to do that sort of thing in this house. In this house we have to *worry* about dishes." He splashed a wet dishcloth over one of the plates.

Irene walked wearily to the small, tan enamel-topped table by the window and sat down. She dropped her beanie on the catchup bottle, then corrected its tilt, squinting at it this way and that and moving the catchup bottle until it displayed the hat properly. Then she looked out the window at the wall opposite, not twenty feet away. She ran her fingernail down the new screen the superintendent had installed the day before. The sound made her shudder and she looked quickly over at Walter.

"I suppose I did something," she said. "You might as well tell me what I did."

She knew what it was going to be. It was that long story she told the O'Briens about Dick Dallas. She had this habit of proffering an anecdote and then, beginning to observe a faint expression of uncertainty on the faces of the listeners, would be hopelessly driven to fashion an oil painting out of the sketch. Sometimes, as tonight, she would sink into such a mire of embellishments, qualifications and "further evidences" [Continued on page 160]

"Someone
lovely*
just
passed
by!"



*SOMEONE WEARING
THE CHAMPAGNE FRAGRANCE

Intoxication
D'ORSAY

Contributors to this issue

Mlle passports

Kenneth
Tynan



Kenneth Tynan makes his third MLE appearance on page 108. Only twenty-eight years old, he was "actor, editor, critic, writer and smarty" at Oxford, has been director, author, critic since his graduation in 1949. He loves "curry, New York, bullfights" (his fourth book, *Bull Fever*, appeared in England last month) and the theatre (he's drama critic for the *London Observer*). Left, with his actress-wife and their daughter, whose godparents are the "unbeatable triumvirate" of Cecil Beaton, Katharine Hepburn and Richard Watts, Jr.!

A. C.
Spectorsky



A. C. Spectorsky lives in Connecticut "just about the way the people on page 102 do"—and likes it. He works for N.B.C., has written stories and articles for some dozen magazines, worked on the editorial staffs of four—and prefers sailing. Page 102 is a chapter from his fourth book, *The Limited Dream*, "a compassionate vivisection of New York's commuter communities," which Lippincott will publish in the fall.

Robert C.
Osborn



Robert C. Osborn also lives in Connecticut, although he was born in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He remembers getting up often at 3:30 A.M. and catching a train to Chicago to look at the Art Institute paintings. After Yale (he was thrown out of a class for turning an egg-shaped cast into a caricature of G. B. Shaw), he studied with Despiau and Friesz in Paris, returned to this country to teach painting and Greek philosophy, coach football and trap shooting. Since then, besides a stint with the Navy, which won him the Legion of Merit for 2,000 visual education posters and 1,800 cartoons, he's published several books of cartoons. For us, turn to page 103.

Geri Trotta
and
Mark Shaw



Writer **Geri Trotta**, photographer **Mark Shaw**, both regular MLE contributors, are husband and wife. They often travel together (the Topolino, left, took Italian hills like a mountain goat), seldom work together as they did on pp. 116-17.

Robert
Bassing



Robert Bassing "tore into New York" after two years at Brown "because that's where the Theatre was." In three years here he was assistant producer, playreader, then went on the road as stage manager and actor. He met his wife (also a writer) in Hollywood, where he was assistant story editor at Columbia Pictures, took off with her for Mexico to write (left, on the shores of Lake Chapala). Since his return he's been working away at television scripts, writing a play. Page 128.

Joyce
Cary



Joyce Cary, Irish-born and English-educated, wrote and destroyed novel after novel for ten years before he finally relinquished *Aissa Saved* to a publisher in 1930. Distinguished novels have followed regularly, all concerned with "the fundamental situation of people in the world." His latest, *Not Honour More*, will be published by Harper this month. P. 101.

Walter
Ferro



Walter Ferro, still in his twenties, won his first sketching prize at thirteen. After the Navy and art school, he painted stage scenery and art-directed for a while before striking out on his own to free-lance; illustrates now for books, magazines, ad agencies. Most of his time is devoted to engraving on wood (pages 101, 128), a lost art since the advent of photo-mechanical engraving. He's married and living in a suburb of New York, becomes a father for the first time this month.

Genevieve
Naylor



Genevieve Naylor started as a painter, later switched to photography. She photographed in Brazil for the Library of Congress, returned to have a one-man show at New York's Museum of Modern Art. Now she's free-lancing, some fashion but mostly documentary (pages 142-45), lives with her artist-husband and two sons in a converted stable in New York City.