

# Word Worth



On line monthly magazine  
and editorials

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August Issue Coming Out July 28

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**From the March Issue:**



*The Peter Pan Generation* by Marien Helz

Photography by David Clark in *The Arts*

*Thyme for the Millennium* (All about herbs) by Susan Johnson in *Columns*

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**From the February Issue:**



*Driven to Distraction* by Susan Johnson

*Bathing is about the only thing we don't do in our cars these days.*



*A Valentine for my Mother*



Photography

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**From the January Issue:**



*Havasupai* by Susan Johnson

At the precipice overlooking the vast arid valley below, a young Havasupai girl stands with her face lifted to the sky. Blades of hair, black as wisps of night, stream behind her, lifted by warm desert winds sweeping thousands of feet up sculptured sandstone walls. Her inscrutable face gives no hint of the oasis hidden a dozen miles away.



*Hale Chatfield, Poet* March 26, 1936 to November 23, 2000 by M. H. Perry

Alfred North Whitehead said, "The habit of art is the habit of enjoying vivid values." Chatfield had the habit of enjoying vivid values. In his poetry, we see someone who is so in love with life, that the ever present reality that that life must end makes experiences all the more intense.

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**From the December Issue:**

*Election 2000* by Marien Helz

*Natural Born Killers* by Susan Johnson

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# Editorials



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**Letters to the Editor**

## *Independence Values*

by Marien Helz

It was the strongly held values of Americans before they were Americans that engendered the day we now honor as Independence Day. A strong sense of values seems to be an American characteristic, yet the antithetical nature of our wide beliefs threatens to engender confrontation rather than creative conflict.

As our country slowly and painfully emerged from the isolationist mind set of the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was crucial for the populace to learn about cultural relativity. As separate as we had been from other countries, we needed to learn that there were several ways of doing things and that different didn't mean wrong. An important part of higher education involved reading Ruth Benedict and other sociologists who revealed diversities that were possible.

The pendulum has swung, however, as pendula do, to the point where anything can be defended as a difference of cultural values. An immigrant living in one of our cities was keeping poorly fed and watered goats and other animals in his yard and slaughtering them in front of neighborhood children when he wanted food. When he was arrested, he claimed that the problem was one of cultural differences. Basically, he was right. If you look through the world, and throughout history, you can find someplace where any activity either was or is acceptable.

Sociologists maintain that values which once lasted longer than generations, now are changing in our culture every fifteen days. No society with that degree of instability can sustain itself for long. The obvious scenario: "What do you mean you're arresting me for killing my wife? It was acceptable last week when I did it."

The important message about cultural diversity got lost in the method, lost in the shock value achieved in the sixties by teaching sophomores about Eskimos and the alleged generosity of their wives to strangers. The important point was that one should not jump to conclusions about a culture and that we should be opened to values different from our own. It does not mean that anything goes or that anything should go. If we are to endure as a culture, we have to develop a means of stabilizing values rather than letting the most bizarre subject on talk show TV or the guy with the slickest lawyers establish what our values are.

Our deepest problem in terms of values, of course, lies in our greatest strength: religious freedom. Historically, values have been attached to religion. That is fine to some degree, except that religious leaders can hold terrible sway over their followers. In instances in which religion has controlled the law, it has led to such things as murdering children for the gods among the Aztecs, routinely burning women as witches in European Christianity, and subjecting half the population to what amounts to worse than enslavement and imprisonment based on gender under the Taliban.

Currently, the only people who talk of values are among a small segment of what is often referred to as the radical right. The vast majority in our culture become very uncomfortable when the word is mentioned. Conscientious people tend to be reminded of those who want to tell everyone else what to do when the word "values" enters conversation. As the mainstream shies away from the subject, more and more of the vagrant fringe take advantage of an "anything goes" mentality, and we beam television programs all over the world that seem to say to people that "anything goes" is mainstream American culture. Under these circumstances we shouldn't be surprised when Middle Eastern village fathers look at their beautiful little children and think with horror, "If Americanism takes over, my children will be like that? Maybe it wouldn't be all that bad to have a radical religious group ruling the country. At least there will be standards."

In our own country, an amorphous value system creates chaos with equity and justice. In some colleges, for example, when cheating or plagiarism occurs, faculty turn the other way especially if the guilty individual is going to kick up a fuss. In a different case, a prestigious college withheld a student's diploma for a year. Recently, in yet another case, a freshman was thrown out of his college at the end of the year, and a year's worth of credit was nullified with all tuition lost. The student in question was suspected of buying a paper from the web and condemned by evidence that fellow students thought was flimsy. Circumstances like these simply give people the idea that the universe is arbitrary and whether or not they are punished for a wrong doing has little to do with what they did or if they did it, but rather is a matter of capricious luck. Despite the fact that until human beings become omniscient, there can never be perfect justice, we can do better than this.

The example of plagiarism is a relatively simple one. As a society, we should be able to come up with a fairly uniform attitude toward it. Is honesty something that we respect, or is it not? With the more complex issues such as abortion and euthanasia, we will become more and more divided unless we can establish more clearly defined basic values. Even such a thing as rape becomes increasingly unclear. Most people are against it, but what it is has become a perplexing question. The statistics on how often women are maimed, mutilated, and murdered by a subhuman attacker are horrifying. Women have to fear walking alone, and often have to fear being alone in their own homes. At the other end of the spectrum, are the recent cases similar to one in which a man was tried when he had sexual relations with a woman who fell asleep on top of him in a drunken stupor. These are not the same crimes.

**Until we do a better job of solidifying our value system, collectively we will be blown about by the winds of fickle feelings, and individually we will be subjected to random injustices of frequently minor, but occasionally, major significance. We have the right to make decisions about what kind of society we want to live in and to take steps to move toward that through our laws and social systems. Just as we have come to the realization that different doesn't mean that something is wrong, we now need to determine that, on the other hand, different doesn't mean that something is necessarily right or even acceptable.**

**In 1776, our country was a grand and noble experiment based on principles and values that the founders hoped, but had no guarantee, would endure. When Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg, the existence of this nation was again sorely challenged. Now we are so well established that it is hard to imagine that we could be seriously threatened. Never-the-less, it is our value system which makes this country great and worthy.**

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# Letters to the Editor



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**Cover**

**Up**

**About the June issue:**

**Thank you ... for the quote!....**

**Just as update, according to the 2000 census Gaithersburg is now the third largest city in Maryland. Our population is 52,613. Frederick was the second largest city with 154 more people than Gaithersburg.**

**Thanks**

**Sidney [Katz, Mayor of Gaithersburg]**

**Word Worth will print letters with (usually) the first name of the sender and the location. We will edit letters and notes for length and content. We also invite you to send in notes to friends for a personal greeting such as this one that appeared in the March issue:**

*Personal to A&E: May the sun shine in your hearts, and the spring of a May morning be in every step you take. May those steps lead you to enhance each other and fulfill all your talents in lives together richly blessed. All of Word Worth sends love and blessings.*

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C ontributing E ditors: B anwell G oddard    Marien Helz

# Columns

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## THE SIXTH EXTINCTION

by Susan Johnson

Spiral aloe (*Aloe polyphylla*) is not extinct. Not yet, anyway. It grows naturally in only one small South African country named Lesotho, where it is the national flower. Considered by many to be among the most unusual plants in the world, it is protected by international treaties and endangered plant trade agreements.

Despite these laws, death stalks the spirals on two fronts. Their unusual habitat is rapidly disappearing, primarily due to erosion caused by over-grazing and, worse yet, poachers and collectors take them illegally, as they are difficult and time-consuming to propagate. Soon, the plants may become part of the earth's sixth mass extinction.

Western New York had its own *Aloe polyphylla* at one time as part of the exotic cactus and succulent display garden at the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens. Now gone from the collection, the disappearance here of this rare succulent echoes its plight in South Africa.

Ironically, Buffalo's crystal palace faced its own extinction, not once but several times in its 100-year history. As chronicled on its website, the Gardens first were nearly snuffed out by soot that floated over from nearby Bethlehem Steel. Settling on the glass houses, the filthy grit starved plants of their necessary sunlight, causing many of them to die. Eventually, the glass was cleaned up but then two world wars came along, temporarily turning everyone's attention to other, more pressing, matters.

From these periods of gloom and neglect, the conservatory grew back only to nearly freeze to death in the Blizzard of '77. Down to a few hours of heating oil and with one greenhouse already a casket of ice, only the sheer will of Burke Glaser, then its overseer, saved the priceless collection. Two years later, Buffalo was a city on the brink of bankruptcy. As one of its properties, the Botanical Gardens were scheduled to have the heat turned off forever.

But then three good things happened. Erie County bought the property for \$1 and began funding its renovation. The Botanical Gardens Society (BGS), a private volunteer organization, was formed to fight the closing of the conservatory. And, finally, the property was listed on and became protected by the National Register of Historic Places.

Last year, two decades after these small miracles, the Gardens were able to celebrate their 100th birthday in style thanks to the continuous cooperative efforts of both Erie County and the BGS. Working hand in hand, the public entity and the private society celebrated the centennial of the vast jungle that thrives beneath over 40,000 square feet of glass.

On the public side of the Gardens are Dr. David Headley, the Director, and a paid staff of six gardeners and six operating engineers. On the private side, Kathryn O'Donnell, President of the Board of the Botanical Gardens Society, represents 800 members, 200 of whom actively donate their time and expertise.

"The volunteers provide a great service by helping us care for thousands of plants. It's hard work and a never ending task to keep the plants in good condition." said Dr. Headley. "The members also put on special fundraising events but their efforts go well beyond even that. At the board level, the members develop our educational programs. With only one paid staff, the sheer quantity of the work performed is unusual."

### Urban Horticulture

After receiving his Ph.D. from Cornell University, Dr. Headley worked for the New York City Parks Department in their Green Guerrillas program. Choosing sites that seemed beyond redemption in Central Harlem and South Bronx, the program used heavy artillery on neighborhood wastelands. Bulldozers were trucked in to clear vacant lots filled with debris. Once the excavations were complete, tractor-trailer loads of topsoil re-filled the craters. When the beds were ready, whole eco-systems were created. Lawns edged with fruit trees replaced rusting refrigerators and desert cactus gardens sprouted where there had been discarded syringes.

Though the eleven-acre park and conservatory that Dr. Headley oversees in Buffalo lack the depth of decay that he found in New York, they aren't without challenges.

"We have many of the same urban problems that every city park faces," he said, "plus the worst possible rural problem. One morning, I arrived to find that, during the night, a party of deer had come over from the Tift Nature Preserve to dine on the buds of 2,000 tulips."

In addition to daily operations, the Gardens Director concerns himself with the future. "I think we have to be conservative about what we can do in the short term. First, we need to concentrate on doing the easy and cheap improvements that would result in a big and immediate impact. I think that's the smartest strategy in a town where it's hard to raise money. Western New York is a tough place for non-profits. Combine that with a fiscally conservative government that doesn't have a lot of money to spend and you'll see that it's important for us to focus on getting those kinds of things done. Buffalo is weary of pie-in-the-sky grandiose plans."

In fact, with \$15,000 we could profoundly improve how greenhouse #5 looks. Right now, it has an 80-foot long tank that was used for hydroponics back in the 1940's.

For that amount of money, half of the space could contain a water feature with a fountainhead feeding into a series of pools. Topiary plants, hanging baskets, and living garlands of ivy would add to the effect. In the other half of the space, we could put a pool of aquatic plants, and a fountain controlled by a console. Pushing different buttons on the console would allow visitors to change the character of the fountain from a bell-shape to a geyser to any number of different formations."

"Looking outside of the building, I'd like more perennial beds," he said. "We have a great deal of room in front of the building but we have surprisingly few things that bloom in May and June. We also need lupines and delphiniums out there. These two plants can be grown to perfection in only a few areas of the world. We're one of those places. It's a crime that we don't have any."

### Horticultural Societies

The BGS has its own aspirations for the Gardens. "We feel that this is a place where we can learn and where we can contribute to the education of others," said Maria Gerbracht, Chairperson of the Plant Collection Committee and the Scientific Advisement Committee of the BGS and past president. "It's a cross-pollination. One of our goals is to make the gardens a true living museum with national accreditation."

In addition to its own work at the Gardens, the BGS coordinates efforts with members of horticultural societies including the Buffalo Daylily Society, The Niagara Frontier Orchid Society, the WNY Herb Study Group and many others.

"The specialized societies that we work with," said Mrs. Gerbracht, "contain experts in cultivars that are suitable, unique, and hardy. They know which plants will adapt to growing and blooming in our climate. Help from members of these societies is also invaluable to our plant identification project. In 1986, we received a grant that enabled us to begin an identification and labelling project. To date, 80% of our collection is identified and 30% are labeled."

The Niagara Frontier Orchid Society is one of the groups helping with plant identification at the Botanical Gardens. "We began volunteering our time in 1997," said Dolores Galbo of the 50-member Orchid Society, "it's come a long way since then. Once a week we go and spend several hours tending to the plants. When we first started, not one orchid was labelled. Now, as soon as one comes into bloom, we identify it and label it. In the meantime, the conservatory has received some tremendous donations of plants to add to their collection. You'll see plants there that you could never hope to see anywhere else. We've also helped them with their misting system and their growing house."

Orchids have the reputation of being nearly impossible to grow in normal household conditions but Mrs. Galbo said the opposite is true. "You don't need anything special. Orchids are really quite happy to exist any way that you do. Some of the members grow them on windowsills or in a nice bright room. Others grow them in their basement with a grow light."

However, Mrs. Galbo couldn't deny the flower's reputation for being habit forming. "If you buy your first one, you may as well consider yourself hooked. You find yourself saying 'well, maybe I'll try one of these and one of those and then one day you find yourself with quite a few. Our president has over 3,000 at last count."

Bonsai share the same exclusive aura that orchids exude but in the case of these picturesque trees and shrubs, their position of being difficult to grow is earned. "They require quite a bit of attention," said Richard Chamberlain, President of Buffalo's Bonsai Society. "We tell new members that you have to kill a few before you get good at it. Sometimes it's frustrating because you can have two identical trees living in the same conditions and one will die and the other will be fine."

Though the Buffalo Bonsai Society's main focus is the education of its members through expert speakers and demonstrations, it also lends an occasional hand to the Botanical Gardens. "The gardens are down to only a few bonsai," said Mr. Chamberlain. "We'd love to set up a display for them but first they need to resolve some of their problems. We'd like to see Dr. Headley given the authority to hire and fire his own people. They've got physical improvements going on that are great but they need to address the management issues. It's not the place for unskilled people to work regardless of their seniority."

Though it's easy to understand the allure of working in a milieu filled with fragrant water lilies and birds of paradise, the volunteers' efforts take them far beyond the palm dome of the conservatory. Members of the society also spend their time applying for grants, holding fundraising events, and seeking donations.

### Government Recognition

In spite of the strong support that the Botanical Gardens receive from the various societies, their owner, Erie County, does not formally recognize the largest society and contributor, the Botanical Gardens Society. Considering the time and money that this society invests, the group feels it warrants a written agreement.

Within the terms of the agreement, the society would like, among other things, to be given the opportunity to set educational and experiential requirements in the paid gardeners' job descriptions. "The orchids that we have here require very specialized care," said Mrs. Gerbracht, "the regular gardening staff could never do it. Three of the six gardeners are retiring soon. Anyone with seniority in the county can apply to replace them. There are no requirements for horticultural experience and no exam. So, we're working with the Parks Commissioner to develop job descriptions."

### The Sixth Extinction

For members of the Botanical Gardens Society, fragrance and beauty may have been the first qualities that drew them to gardening. But for those who persist beyond their initial love affair with flowers, the fundamental connection between plants and humans becomes clearer with every season spent outside.

In his book, *The Sixth Extinction*, Dr. Richard Leakey, paleoanthropologist, describes the first five mass extinctions occurring on earth. The author's good news on the subject is that these ancient events of devastation paradoxically paved the way for humans to evolve as a species. The bad news is that number six threatens, ultimately, to be the end of us.

"The next annihilation ...is happening now," said Dr. Leakey, "and we, the human race, are its cause."

Our human habits of collecting and eating species of plants and animals combine in a deadly way with two of our other bad habits. The first is our destruction of native habitat and the second is our introduction of alien species to a foreign habitat. These three actions are killing off hundreds of species per year. Before humans arrived on the planet, the rate of extinction was between one and four species per year.

The subject of rare plants is sufficiently esoteric to elicit the comment "So what?" It's true that our plant kingdom is so diverse that many plants haven't been identified much less catalogued, but adopting a blasé attitude about plants is dangerous. The world's most effective and safest medicines come from them. There may be dozens of disease-fighting substances growing unknown in tropical plants in South America or, like the spiral aloe, in a high-altitude and rarefied mountain bog in South Africa. These plants are being killed before they have a chance to cure.

Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens  
2655 South Park Avenue  
Lockport, New York  
716-808-3555  
Admission is free however donations are  
welcomed.

Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens  
Society  
President: Kathryn O'Donnell  
2655 South Park Avenue  
Lockport, NY 14218  
827-1884  
www.buffalogardens.com

Buffalo Bonsai Society  
President: Richard Chamberlain 873-8103  
The society meets every third Wednesday  
at Merne's Nursery at 7:30 p.m.  
The public is welcome.

Buffalo Daylily Society  
President: Rachel Martin 876-4009

Erie County Master Gardeners  
Contact: Sally Cunningham 662-6401 x138

WNY Hesta Society  
President: Carolyn Schaffner 827-2285

WNY Iris Society  
President: Joanne Pyszczyk 627-4433

Niagara Frontier Orchid Society  
President: Gretchen Miller Contact: Dolores  
Galbo 993-0370  
Meetings are held the second Saturday at  
7:30 p.m. at Bassett Manor

Weekly hands-on sessions are also held at  
the Botanical Gardens  
The public is welcome.

Fortunately, the accelerating rate of extinctions has not gone unnoticed by the International Botanical Congress. At its 1999 meeting, 5,000 scientists from 100 countries gathered to discuss the relationship between human survival and plants.

Dr. Peter Raven, President of the Congress and Director of the Missouri Botanical Garden, presented a seven-point plan designed to slow the death of our natural world. The second most prominent point in the plan was to increase financial support for the study of plants throughout the world by strengthening the major museums that have holdings of specimens and literature on plants.

In retrospect, saving Buffalo and Erie County's Botanical Gardens from extinction in 1980 were not just grand gestures by our county government and the members of Buffalo's various botanical societies. Their rescue of this rare resource seems prescient in light of the world's need to focus on bio-diversity in order to save not only *Aloe polyphylla*, but to save ourselves.

In addition to programs noted above, the BGS dedicates considerable time to educational efforts with the Olmsted Magnet School as well as other local schools.

Coordinated by Jeanette Williams, the BGS School and Teacher Programming forms an exhaustive list. They include hands-on courses for children in grades 1 through 6. For grades 4 through 7, introductory botany courses have been instituted in response to new Regents science requirements and plant evolution is offered for grades 7 and 8. Junior Green Thumb programs are also offered, along with Teacher Training.

Another part of the educational program offers opportunities for Master Gardeners to fulfill their 50-hour community service requirement while still another offers docent training for those gardeners who would like to help by conducting tours. Mrs. Williams' latest project includes an interactive distance-learning classroom for BOCES.

"It's rewarding to provide test gardens and scientific experiments for the children," said Mrs. Williams. "Some of them have had no experience whatsoever with growing things. Last year, one of the children held up a broccoli seed between two fingers and said, "Do you mean to tell me that this tiny thing is going to grow into something that I love to eat?"

"We try to make it fun for the children. Some classes grow pizza gardens with oregano and onions and tomatoes and basil. Others plant Native American gardens. Some of the children plant bulbs for the spring and force *tete-a-tete* daffodils in the winter," said Mrs. Williams.

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**Cover**

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*The earlier chapters of Father Heart are available in the Archives page April, May, and June 2001*

**FATHER HEART**

by Banwell Goddard

**CHAPTER FOUR**

In the meantime, life had other plans for me. I met and fell deeply in love with a woman named Alice Lowry. We became engaged. At the time, there was no work or prospect of any for civil engineers. Misgovernment since the war was taking its toll on commerce. I became intrigued by the possibilities of the Homestead Act and travelled to Kansas where I bought land, horses and oxen. I planned to send for Alice as soon as I had constructed a proper home.

On February 19, 1878, I was hauling a load of lumber with which to build our house when a man on horseback came riding after me. He handed me a telegram saying that Alice had died of influenza on February 18th.

I hauled my load of lumber to one side of the road, unhitched my horses and rode one of them into Iola. My one thought was to return to Massachusetts for the funeral. On consulting the RR tables, I found I could not make it in time. The loss of Alice and the frustration of being unable to say a final good-bye paralyzed me. I never built our house and don't know what became of the lumber. I became seized with a fever and ague. I hadn't ever before been sick a day of my life and I feared the worst.

For nearly two years, I lived like a nomadic hermit. I spoke to no one, travelling aimlessly from place to place, devoting myself to the uninhibited pursuit of hunting and fishing. I became a marksman of the expert division. The endeavor served to get me through this heartbreaking loss but accomplished nothing further.

Then, in August of 1879, my riding horse died. I bought a three year old wild filly from a herd of Indian ponies. The pretty little animal had never felt a rope, had never been under a roof and did not know what grain was. I led her home that

night, eight miles.

When we arrived, I fastened the lariat rope, not to an immovable object like a stake that might have thrown and hurt her if she took fright and started to run, but to a small log which she might drag a little ways but could not run away with. Pippin and I became pals, as much as it is possible for equine and man to become. Her arrival marked the beginning of my recovery from the loss of Alice.

I built a house and barn on my land in Kansas and planted a small orchard with hardy fruit trees. In the winters, I taught school in Parsons. This income was supplemented by engineering work that I performed for nearby farmers; blasting wells, designing dams and ponds. But my neighbors' aspirations were bounded by their fences. They had no interest in world events or art and literature. So, while they added small amounts to my income, they added nothing to my social life. I became even more hermit-like in my existence, with only work and my books to keep me company.

In 1881, I hired on for a short time as locating engineer for the Fort Scott, Wichita and Western Railroad. After four months of working with the surveying corps without pay, I quit and took with me all of my field notes. The railroad company needed these notes desperately so that it could file for the surveyed line before a competitor obtained the franchise. I boarded at a hotel and slept with a revolver under my pillow until the railroad sent a man to pay me in full.

One year later, I received a letter from the owner of McIver Bros. Machine Shop back in Massachusetts offering me a job. It appealed to me at the time, and so I left my property and Pippin in the hands of my neighbor.

The work back home was congenial and I had the chance to invent several pieces of labor-saving machinery, finally putting my engineering education to use. Spring came and I found life much more pleasant in Boston than in Kansas. There were libraries, reading rooms, churches and more educated society.

I again set my sights on finding a suitable wife and mother for my children. My present life seemed hopelessly incomplete and fragmented. I had no desire to go through life a childless bachelor.

I began pursuing a Miss Anna Fifield. Anna was the Latin teacher at the Worcester High School who boarded at the same house as I. When she saw me reading French and German newspapers, she introduced herself and suggested we read certain foreign classics together. We spent many weeks enjoying each other's company until I discovered in some way that she was engaged to someone who lived out of town. When I asked her if this was true, she said yes. Perhaps I could have continued seeing her but I wanted someone of my own.

However, the time I'd already spent with Anna was not a loss. One bitterly cold December day, she approached me as I sat in a library in Worcester.

"Why Philip, what a lovely surprise to find you sitting here." Anna said. "I would like

to present to you my dear friend, Miss Annie Eliza Keith."

"I'm pleased to meet you," I said, standing.

"Annie, this is my good friend, Philip Hathaway Clark of Assonet," she said.

"Mr. Clark, I am pleased to meet you. But I must admit," she said, "we've met before."

"Have we?" I said. "It seems hard to believe I could meet you and not remember the occasion. Where did we previously meet?"

"You came to the Upton school district ten years ago to be our new Principal. We were all so interested in seeing how you looked. I was in fifth grade and my school chums and I walked past your office a dozen times to look at you. I couldn't forget your face." Annie said.

Of course, little else could have made me look at Miss Keith so carefully as a statement like that. She was of medium height, perhaps 5'3" and had glossy thick chestnut hair that hung in waves to her waist. She was in training to be a nurse.

Anna and Annie sat down in the library and we chatted for awhile on foreign languages. I invited them out for bowls of oyster stew. Afterwards, Anna asked if I would walk her and Annie to their respective homes as it was by that time late and dark. Anna's home was closer and so she suggested we go there first.

The night was cold and the walkways uneven. After leaving Anna at her home, I took Annie's right arm to steady her and she responded with a smile. I don't remember a word of what we said on the walk but I remember to this moment something Annie did. She slid her left hand up into the coat sleeve of my left arm. Her fingertips rested on that tender bare area that is on the underside of the forearm. This gesture spoke directly to my lonesome heart. Alone for so long, my skin was starved for a kind and gentle touch.

There are two kinds of beauty in a woman. One kind which is perceived by the eye, the other by the mind and soul. A man is nearly always attracted at first to a woman by her outward appearance but she cannot win a lasting conquest over him unless he sees in her an inner beauty. A something invisible, indefinable which answers to his soul's hunger. There can be no lasting outward ties unless there be a union of the inner unseen-selves. I felt this connection with Annie on the first night.

On May 31, 1884, I married Annie in Upton, Massachusetts in her grandfather's brick house. From the first, she brought happiness to my existence. Everybody who came in contact with her judged her to have a sunny friendship-winning disposition. She had a gift of looking at people's faults through the big end of a telescope and their good qualities through the little end. She minimized one and magnified the other. What a precious gift it was. How it smoothed the roughness of life to see the good with clearer vision than the bad.

I looked forward to our wedding night with an odd mixture of anticipation and

anxiety. I was inexperienced and worse, ignorant. Annie found my discomfort highly amusing.

"Would you like the dressing room first, Annie?" I asked.

"I would not like the dressing room at all, Philip."

"Shall I go in first then?"

"You shall not go anywhere. You shall stay here and undress me. I have waited a long time for this and I am not going to miss one moment of it. Besides, there are so many buttons on this dress that I won't be able to get them all undone. It took two bridesmaids to do them up."

"Very well."

I began unbuttoning her dress and she began to unbutton my shirt.

"Shall I turn the lamp out?" I offered.

"Absolutely not. I want to see you. Every part of you."

"And here I thought I was marrying a shy young thing."

"Young but not shy. When you marry a nurse, you're marrying someone who has seen everything and knows what everything is called. Shall I give you an anatomy lesson while you're working on my buttons?"

"Annie!" I exclaimed. My demure bride was suddenly a saucy flirt.

"Would you prefer your anatomy lesson in English or Latin, Mr. Clark? And shall we begin with your head or with your toes? Either way, we shall get to the middle at about the same time."

"You are the devil!"

"Nonsense, I'm an angel of mercy. Now get on with it or I shall tell you what we nurses call things."

Suddenly, I felt old and inadequate in the face of my young bride who must be expecting more from someone so much older than she. I felt myself swelling with desire but unsure of where to begin.

"Annie?" I said.

"Philip," she said firmly, somehow knowing or suspecting the cause of my awkwardness. "All women love to be touched and kissed - gently and lovingly - and if you do that, you can't go wrong. Let me show you some of the places I especially like to be touched. And then you can show me where your favorite places are."

Annie smiled as she guided my hands under the covers. How lucky I felt at that moment to be married to her. Someone who loved me and trusted me with her

deepest desires. A woman who knew all about the lusts of men and women, the secret places that gave them pleasure. She was willing to go with me to the outer limits of enjoyment. She willingly, no, not willingly - wholeheartedly - participated in the physical acts of our marriage. She felt that God had given us physical bodies for this purpose. She loved receiving my attentions as much as she loved giving pleasure to me. On that first night, when neither of us had an ounce of restraint left in our will, we made love. All of my conscious thought was erased by a shuddering ecstasy.

Afterwards, Annie put her head in the cradle of my shoulder, her lips against my neck and her arm across my chest. I said a silent prayer to God, thanking him for this girl, for her love and I prayed to him to make her love me. It was a prayer I repeated often as my heart grew to love and trust this girl more with each day that passed.

In late April of that year, work at the plant was slow and there were talks of layoffs. It seemed to be a good time to return to Kansas to fix up my property and sell it. I planned to go alone, leaving Annie with her grandfather.

"Annie," I began, "I think I ought to go to Kansas and sell my property there so we can buy a proper home here. It will probably take several months. The property will need some attention first to put it in shape and then I'll need to find a buyer."

"I've always wanted to go to Kansas."

"Kansas is no place for a Boston girl. You'd be unhappy. There's no ocean and there are no libraries, no neighbors, no colleges, no help, and no streets."

"I thought you said you had a lake."

"I do have a lake."

"Well, I shall make do with a lake then instead of the ocean."

"There is no one to visit with."

"Won't you be there?"

"Yes, but you'll have none of your family or friends. It will be dull."

"It will be duller here without you. I didn't wait ten years to meet you and then to have you go off and leave me. I am not staying here without you," she said, "and that's final."

We took the train from New York City to Kansas City and then down to Parsons, sleeping in a cramped curtained berth at night. The rhythmic swaying of the car and the muted clack of the rails lulled us to sleep. The trip took four days and cost under \$40.00 for both of us. In Parsons, I hired a man with a horse and wagon to drive us out to the farm. Spring had arrived in Kansas just ahead of us. My fruit trees were in bloom along with wildflowers and flowering shrubs.

"Lilacs!" Annie said as she jumped down from the wagon. "Just like home." She pulled a branch down to her nose and inhaled. "Mmmm."

I reached over her head and cut three branches with my knife.

"Welcome to Kansas, Mrs. Clark," I said, handing her the bouquet.

"Why thank you, Mr. Clark," she said. "How nice that you planted lilacs. It shows that you aren't just a cold calculating engineer."

"Actually, I felt sorry for the travelling plant salesman who drove all the way out here. I couldn't send him away without buying something."

"Something else smells wonderful too," she said looking about. "What is that? It's delicious. "

"Those are the clove currants on either side of the door. They're shaggy looking things but they smelled so good, I bought two of them," I answered.

Unlocking the door, I stepped aside so Annie could enter. The house smelled musty and dank after the sweet smell of spring outside. There was a thick layer of dust on the large white sheets that covered our furniture.

The driver helped me bring in our travelling trunks. When he'd left, I opened all of the windows and propped open the doors. Annie helped me uncover the furniture and bookshelves and we took the coverlets outside to shake them free of the dust and dirt that had settled itself in my absence.

"If you'll look through the trunks in the bedroom for sheets, I'll bring in wood for the stove so you can have a bath," I said. "I think we're both a little dirty."

Annie went off to find the sheets, then came back out to the main room, carrying a stack of linens. "Philip, these are deluxe. Did your mother make these?"

"Yes. A legacy from her prison stay. Warden Moss was kind to her. He let her have her big loom in the prison laundry area. Of course, he benefited, since she made many fine things for his family but when she had extra time, she devoted herself to filling a hope chest for me. If we live to be a hundred, we'll still have new linens."

"What a lot of books you have here," she said pulling them one by one from the shelves and blowing the dust off them. "Latin, French, German, grammar. Did you have much need to speak French out here in Kansas?" she asked. "Parlez-vous Francais?"

"As a matter of fact, young lady, I have a French-speaking Indian pony whom you will meet shortly," I retorted. "If you wish to speak to her yourself, you will need to learn some French phrases. Plus, I subscribe to German and French newspapers. It's a good way to keep one's foreign languages limber. Any wife of mine is expected to be multi-lingual."

Annie ignored me. "An atlas, Heloise and Abelard, math books. Who are Heloise

and Abelard?" she asked.

"Doomed lovers, Intellectuals. A man and a woman who loved each other all of their lives but society kept them apart."

"Well, you and I are perfectly safe out here aren't we? Society won't be able to find us," she said continuing her investigation of the bookshelves. "Dickens, Scott, Twain, engineering books, the properties of dynamite, astronomy," she continued. "Why, I'd bet you have more books than the public library."

"It's a weakness. They've been my transport to the world," I said. "Good company when a person is as alone as I've been all of my life."

"You'll never have to be alone again, my darling," she said reaching up to kiss me.

On our first morning in Kansas, I got up early, made coffee for Annie, and walked the four miles to the Taylor's house to retrieve Pippin from her foster home. The path cut across a good part of my 100 acre farm, so the walk served a second purpose - I had a chance to assess some of the damage a year's worth of neglect had wrought.

When I was 100 yards from Taylor's pasture, I whistled to Pippin who grazed along the fence line. Her ears swiveled forward and she raised her head sharply. I whistled again and this time she saw me. She cantered to the rail, whinnying a greeting. I climbed through the railings and the Indian pony nibbled me on the cheek while I hugged the arch of her neck. Frisky with the scent of spring, she sashayed in circles around me - like an overgrown puppy - as I walked towards the house.

Fixing up the property took longer than I thought it would. Fences needed repair, all of the fruit trees needed pruning, and the whole place was overgrown with weeds. I bought Annie her own Indian pony, a handsome paint we named Jacques, so she could come and go as she wished without waiting for me.

While we worked on making the house comfortable and restoring the orchard, the weather was unseasonably pleasant, making us decide that there was no hurry to return to Massachusetts. We came to enjoy a quiet contentment on the farm.

Wild game was plentiful. We had a full larder of rabbit, duck and partridge. I tilled the yard near the house and we planted more flower and vegetable gardens and bought chickens and lambs. Annie made friends with a few of the neighbors and once a week we rode into town for supplies and to pick up our subscriptions to newspapers that came by train from New York.

My education had opened the worlds of sights and sounds to me. Annie brought to my life the tactile senses. Perhaps her training as a nurse made her understand the powers of a gentle touch. But I think it's more likely that she simply had a need for it herself. The moment she heard me ride into the yard, she came outside, hurrying to greet me even as I dismounted. She hugged and kissed me as soon as I was on

the ground. I loved coming home to her.

And she always had something baking – apples or cake – that smelled wonderful. Sometimes, when the wind was right, the aroma of a pie baking or peaches stewing would waft to the far end of the orchard luring me back to the house.

One night when I came in stiff from digging fence-post holes, Annie said, "After your bath, I'll give you a backrub." She brought out a thick glass jar that seemed strangely familiar. It was filled with an exotic smelling creamy unguent. She massaged the balm into my skin, slowly probing my knotted muscles into releasing their hold.

I grew to love the sight and smell of that jar. I asked her what it was. "I got it from that medicine woman in Assonet. Your mother told me about her when we were visiting one day," she answered. "Her name was Joy, I think. She was kind to me. Wouldn't take any money from me. When I told her who I was married to, she took my hands in hers and said she'd wanted to meet me. And she asked about you especially."

"I remember her. Oddly enough, I haven't formally met her but Mother gets all of her dyes from the woman," I said. "They've been friends a long time."

Three months after we arrived in Kansas, we discovered that Annie was pregnant. I added a large room onto our house in anticipation of the baby. We hadn't expected a child so soon - we thought we'd have more time to get settled, but we adjusted our expectations happily. Annie told me the sort of furniture she'd like for the nursery. We spent evenings sitting near a large oil lamp at the dining table, sketching out her descriptions. I used cherry and oak logged from our woods for a standing cradle, changing table, and chest of drawers. Annie bought an old rocking chair and wove a new seat and back with dried reeds from the lake.

Phyllis came to us in the spring of 1885, a vibrant baby who made our already happy days that much better. We marvelled at her peach-colored skin, perfect as a picture, laughed at her toothless smile. Within a week though, before our lives had adjusted to this new member of our family, we knew something was wrong. As quickly as she appeared, she faded away, leaving us with the memory of her love and a promise of children to come. For us, she was like a shooting star, lighting our lives with a brilliance that could only be fleeting. When she was gone, we sat outside at night and studied the stars in the southern sky, telling each other that Phyllis was up there with the other stars, just a little too bright to reside in this earthbound atmosphere.

Though we mourned this loss, our lives soon returned to their former rhythms. We were so young that we felt confident that other children would be born to us. Children who would thrive, fulfilling our hopes and dreams.

On our remote farm, far from neighbors and farther from family, we had the luxury of learning about one another without the interference that some couples endure. Annie had first attracted me with the sweetness of her nature, her kindness and

generosity to strangers. But I soon learned that strong principles resided in her as well. Principles that abhorred meanness in others.

Visitors to our farm were rare but occasionally, we had callers. Annie welcomed them and insisted that they stay for a meal, relishing the chance to offer our hospitality. However, not all of these calls were social in nature. One afternoon when I was outside pruning the fruit trees, a young girl arrived in a pony cart.

"Mr. Clark, I've been told that your wife is a nurse," she said in a breathless voice. "My neighbor, Mrs. Mitchell, is terribly sick and the doctor is away in Kansas City. Could your wife come?"

I had no wish for Annie to be exposed to anyone with an unknown illness.

"My wife is no longer a practicing nurse," I said. "I'm sorry but I think you had better wait until Doctor Andrews returns."

Annie, hearing voices, came out on the porch.

"What is it, Philip?" she called.

"Mrs. Mitchell, who lives in the farm near the quarry, is ill. They're asking if you'd come," I said. "I've explained to the young lady that it would be better if they waited until the doctor returns from his trip."

Annie spoke to the young girl. "Are you her daughter?" she asked.

"No miss, her neighbor. We've just gone to call and she's in a terrible way. We hadn't seen her in weeks. She's awful sick."

"What are her symptoms?" Annie said.

"I don't know about symptoms but she's delirious with pain. She needs help," the girl said, her eyes pleading with Annie.

Annie took a deep breath, and said, "Philip, may I take Pippin?"

"If you must go, I'll drive you in the trap," I said. "I don't want you going there alone."

Annie went back inside the house to find her small nursing valise in one of the trunks while I hitched Jacques to the cart. We followed the young girl back to Mitchell's farm. As we approached, we heard a terrible loud moaning as though someone were being eaten alive. Mitchell was out in the yard, sitting under a tree, scratching on a piece of wood with a small whittling knife, acting as though he heard none of what was filling the air.

We followed the young girl as she hurried into the house and proceeded to a room that reeked of unspeakable filth. The bedroom had no light and at first, I couldn't see clearly the source of the harrowing noise. When my eyes adjusted to the darkness, I made out a heap of rags on the floor atop a mound of soiled fetid straw.

Finally, my eyes focused on a figure curled into a fetal position beneath the rags; matted snarls of hair obscured the woman's dirty face but did not muffle her agonized cries.

An older woman and the young girl who came for Annie stood in a corner, afraid to go closer. The combination of stench and loud moaning were intolerable. I lurched back outside retching and gagging.

Annie stayed inside, I don't know how, to examine the sick woman. When she finished, she came out and stood before me. She had a look on her face that I hadn't seen before. It was frightening to behold. She said, "Is that Mitchell?" pointing to the man under the tree.

"Yes, I believe it is," I answered.

She strode over to him.

"How long has your wife been in this condition, Mr. Mitchell?" she demanded.

"Couldn't rightly say. A few days or so," he muttered.

"A few days or so! More like a few weeks. Did you intend to let her die like that?" she said.

"Like what?" he said.

"Lying alone on the floor in filthy straw in a dark room. To die like an animal?" she hissed.

"What could I do? She can't help me with the farm no more," he said, "and I can't stand all the howling."

"You could treat her like a decent human being with some compassion and sympathy, you disgusting beast," she said, her teeth grinding on the words.

Annie marched back into the house, looking formidable. She asked for water to be boiled. I took a deep breath and went in to help her move the woman to the kitchen where the three women bathed her. Then we carried her to a clean bed in another room. When we were finished, Annie gathered up the woman's soiled garments, took them outside and thrust them into the man's face.

"Burn these," she barked.

When Mitchell did not respond or move, she lowered her face to the level of his.

"If you do not get up this minute and do as I say, my husband will make you sorry that you were ever born," she said with her brown eyes narrowed to slits and her mouth set in a fierce grimace. "And, if I had my little gun with me, I'd shoot you myself for cruelty to a human being."

Mitchell looked at me for a moment and must have decided that I was capable of and willing to carry out Annie's threats, for he got up and carried the filthy

assortment of rags to a wire cage. He managed, after several attempts, to set them afire with flint and rock, leaning as far away from the stinking heap as he could.

Annie went back in the house and spoke to the woman and her daughter.

"How long can you stay with Mrs. Mitchell?" Annie asked.

"Three days at the most, Miss. Then I have to be back with my own family," she answered.

Annie reached into her bag and brought out a vial.

"I'll give her two of these now. It will kill the worst of the pain," she explained. "If you will give her one tablet every eight hours with some cool water, she ought to be comfortable."

"Who will take care of her when we leave?" asked the woman.

"She won't live more than two or three days," Annie answered in a low voice. "She's filled with cancerous growths. But, these tablets are strong and will let her endure the time remaining. Try to have someone here with her - she needs to know someone is nearby. It's terrifying to die alone. Perhaps you could call her minister to read the Bible for her."

Annie went back in to see Mrs. Mitchell where she held a glass of water to the dying woman's cracked lips and asked her to try to swallow the tablets. Already Mrs. Mitchell seemed calmer. As Annie turned to leave, the woman held out her hand. Annie took it and waited for her to speak.

"God bless you, my child," Mrs. Mitchell whispered.

Annie climbed back into the carriage in a swirl of skirts and said, "Please, take me home now, Philip," her face still set in a mask of hatred and disgust for Mrs. Mitchell's husband. When we were well off their property, she let her tears come. I stopped the wagon and let her sob against my chest, stroking her silken hair. The poor girl hadn't ever encountered the heartless neglect of an ignorant, uneducated farmer.

The women folk of Kansas were not quite as unpolished as their husbands, yet some of their manners grated on Annie's ears. Frequently their conversations were not on a high level and sometimes, if not often, had a malicious flavor of scandal. At one community social gathering, a group of women cornered Annie, trying to ingratiate themselves with the newcomer by means of racy gossip about an absent couple.

"Have you had the pleasure of meeting Mr. and Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Clark?" one of the women asked as they gathered in a little semi-circle around Annie, sizing her up.

"Why yes, I have. They seem quite nice, I thought," said Annie

"Perhaps you didn't know that Mr. Adams was married once before. He was married

**to an Indian squaw," said the woman.**

**"Yes, actually, Philip told me that," said Annie, who by now had guessed the mean intention of the woman. "He told me Mr. Adams was quite devoted to her but that unfortunately, she died of a fever."**

**"Rather shocking don't you think, that he preferred an Indian woman?" persisted the woman, not recognizing the warning tone in Annie's voice.**

**"Perhaps some people might find it surprising but since meeting some of the women here in town, it doesn't surprise me a bit that he preferred an Indian woman," said Annie who then turned and walked back to me.**

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