

## PORTRAIT IMPRESSION

GEORGE SAND

*by Margaret Tod Ritter*

Dear friend, be sure I look at love through eyes  
Heavy with ennui, and disgust, and tears;  
With one of my experience and years  
Desire is an emotion to despise.  
No disillusionment but I have known,  
No shame, no grief but I have drunk the lees;  
To write you full confessional of these  
Strips vanity from weary flesh and bone.  
And yet, in spite of all, I love again!  
Imagination, deadly as the snake,  
Employs a new device wherewith to break  
A proud and bitter heart. To ascertain  
My madness, know that I am helpless, spent,  
Conscious of certain doom, and well content!

## MY DOUBLE AND HOW HE UNDOES ME

OR, NOT GETTING THE CASH AND LET-  
TING THE CREDIT GO JUST THE SAME

*by David Frederick McCord*

NINETEEN-EIGHTEEN. War time. The roar of artillery, the desperate charge across No Man's Land. The hand-to-hand conflict in the trenches. The shock and recoil of troops. All is not so quiet on the western front. I am sitting at a desk in the headquarters of the officers' training school at Camp Taylor, Louisville, Kentucky, being pretty efficient with a pile of cards and hoping that the war will be made safe for me before I am booted out of a job that is monotonous and inglorious, but by no stretch of the imagination dangerous. The cards with which I am dealing bear the names and histories of candidates for commissions who will enter the school the next day.

Suddenly the monotony is broken. I turn over the top card with an experienced flip and find my own name staring up at me.

My first reaction is one of pleasure. My ability and devotion to duty as a private have been recognized. As a surprise testimonial from my superiors I am to be put in training for a commission, in spite of the verdict, handed down when I applied for admission to the school, that I wouldn't make a good officer because I couldn't bluff. But the pleasure lasts only for a moment. Even before I reflect that a commission would end this soft, safe assignment, I discover that this David McCord is not I. He is from Cambridge and is a Harvard man. I am from Vandalia and am a Wabash man. So I smile, deciding that it is amusing that there should be two David McCords. I hope that I'll meet this other bearer of the name and wonder if we'll be confused. I did not meet the charming poet and essayist, David T. W. McCord, at Camp Taylor, but we have been confused beyond my wildest dreams. From that day in 1918, my life has been a long, sustained denial.

After the war I believed that our paths, having once crossed, would not meet again. I did not know what had become of my "double". For my own part I went literary to the extent of getting a job as reporter on the Moline, Ill., *Dispatch* and contributing rather juvenile poems to a column. But I was living in a fool's paradise. One day the telephone rang and presently I was listening to a friend's congratulations on the piece I had in *Life*. Truthfully I denied any such success, not because I am so meticulously honest but because of a conviction that sooner or later Mascarille and his kin are unmasked. If it only seemed safe I should be delighted to accept the compliments that are paid me on the other (perhaps I should say *the*) David McCord's work.

From this point there is no need to go into details. Picture me, please, adopting the side-step as my natural gait. And picture my incredulous friends—for I was being a promising young man in those days—wondering what complex led me to disown a series of delightful essays, poems and book reviews.

Let us jump to 1926. I was reporter on the Fitchburg, Mass., *Sentinel*, not far from Boston and in my "double's" own bailiwick. By this time I had David McCord's first book, *Oddly Enough*, to worry about. There were polite, regretful letters to be written to friends who had told me that they were swelling my royalties by scattering copies broadcast as Christmas gifts. There were explanations to be made to all the newspapers that had employed me and that now broke out with a rash of stories about the success of a "former well-known local newspaper man". Multiply this by three to get the total of what I had gone through by the time *Floodgate* and *Stirabout* had been adequately denied. Even yet a columnist friend in Davenport, Iowa, gets himself over a dull day by writing of my phenomenal literary victories.

But something of a revenge was on its way to me. By writing quite a few book reviews myself and by the composition of several novels which were praised, but rejected with startling unanimity, I had rolled up some literary friendships in New York. One of these resulted in marriage. It was comparatively unimportant that once or twice it was announced that my wife had been married to the author of *Oddly Enough*. What was important was what happened to its real author. Aunts and grandmothers, I am reliably informed, waggishly reproved him for having been so secretive about his nuptials, and rejoiced just as waggishly that at last he had decided to settle down. Also, I hear, there were pickle dishes, salad forks and hand-painted bread-and-butter plates to be returned. He was, for a short time, suffering as I had suffered—and good enough for him, too.

But this revenge was short-lived. It happened not long after that I was going through some papers and came upon two poems I had written years before. These poems were unique among my compositions. Long after the writing I was able to read them without feeling faintly ill. In a burst

of enthusiasm I sent them away to *The New Yorker*, to which THE David McCord contributes. Two weeks later, to my surprise, I received not a rejection slip but proofs. These corrected, I sat back to await the check, which didn't come—for a long time. When it did arrive it was accompanied by a note explaining that it had been sent to Cambridge, whence it had been returned. Here let me pause to pay a tribute to David T. W. McCord's character. He is an honest man. He doesn't play tricks with his income tax blanks or engage in other obnoxious practices. At least I have never been accused of anything of the sort, and that is proof enough for me. But, returning to this note: It made the reasonable suggestion that I do something to my name which would make it possible to tell my work from that of the more distinguished David McCord.

To settle the question I went into a huddle with some friends. The use of my middle name or initial was ruled out as being insufficiently distinguishing. I refused to take a pseudonym because, after all, I argued, my name *is* David McCord; and for the moment I was in a mood to fight it out on that line if it took all summer. Then someone had an inspiration. I should keep the McCord, but I should add to it, for purely business reasons, my wife's name. I emerged as Raphael McCord.

Well, that didn't help much either. My bank account was in my real name, the few checks editors sent me were made out to Raphael McCord, and the bank refused to cash them. Every check I received had to be sent back to be made over, not a large job, but a nuisance. There was another drawback. What had been done for purely commercial convenience was interpreted as another milestone in the Feminist Movement. To my surprise and embarrassment, I found myself being pointed out as the greatest husband the Lucy Stone League has had since Heywood Broun. A syndicated woman's page writer did an article about me and Walter Winchell

pronounced the arrangement "duddy". So I went into another huddle, with myself alone this time. I came out as David *Frederick* McCord—and let the checks fall where they may!

My friends have kindly tried to help me in my trials. Harry Hansen explained the situation in "The First Reader". So did Isabel Paterson in "Turns With a Bookworm". So did Dorothea Lawrance Mann in *THE BOOKMAN*. But it has not helped much. My trials continue unabated. One morning there came a letter from a representative of the publishing house of Bobbs-Merrill. Someone had told them about my poems for and about children. A few well-chosen tears were shed over the fact that A. A. Milne had just beaten me to it with *Now We Are Six*. Anyway, wouldn't I send these verses in? I, who, in the days when I wrote poetry, was as likely as not to be pretty bitter! When I met Dick Simon at Selma Robinson's party for Joan Lowell, he jumped up with cries of joy. Noble Cathcart had told him all about me. Before an Inner Sanctum contract could be produced the mistake was explained, and I am glad to report that he said he was glad to meet me just the same. Lately one of my most cherished friendships was almost ruined by my efforts to establish an alibi in regard to an article in *The Saturday Review*.

This new book of essays, *Once And For All*, which David McCord has edited, is causing just as much trouble. The other day the *Union of Vandalia*, Illinois, where I spent my youth, hailed it with a "Home-Town Boy Makes Good" editorial reviewing my career. I do not quote it because I should feel it necessary to correct all the inaccuracies—inaccuracies which depress me with the thought that the home folks have not, after all, followed my life with bated breath. Of course, I wrote my usual letter of denial. Rather a good one, too. I am thinking of having it printed with blanks for filling in names, because I hate to write letters under any circumstances.

After eleven years of this Comedy of Errors I met David McCord the other day, and just in time. I was beginning to be irritated with him. I had about decided that there was no such person, that the name merely covered a syndicate of international crooks bent on stealing the McCord jewels—which would be a good joke on anyone who tried it. But now I am satisfied. He has all the qualifications for being David McCord that I have—in other words, a swell guy. We are trying to discover whether we are related. I hope we are, for such monumental charms as we possess should all be in one super-family.

## ALWAYS A WRITER

NOT BY SHERWOOD ANDERSON

by Geoffrey Stone

I HAVE always wanted to write. When I was a boy I wanted to write. Once I went out and wrote things on the rear wall of the privy. My father saw me do it. After he carefully read what I had written he beat me with a stick of kindling wood. That is why I do not like literary critics. My father was the first literary critic I knew.

My father loved art. Some men are like that.

Once I saw my father in the woodshed looking at reproductions of Venuses by Boucher. All that day I walked the dirt country roads. I walked as far as my legs would carry me. The roads were not paved; they were just dirt country roads. I did not know why I walked them then. I did not know why I felt so sad. I know now. I walked and felt sad because I hadn't any Boucher Venuses. All I had were some pictures of burlesque dancers. I got them from cigarette boxes. You see I loved art too.

The different ways in which people love art come out in different ways. With me it comes out in writing. With my father it came