

## EMILY DICKINSON

### II

IT WAS when she began to live too much with the fairy folk that They became concerned. They tried to teach her that "A" was for "apple" and "B" for the bees which hung on their gossamer wings above the honeysuckle on the stone wall; but she would smile her sweet, not quite earthly smile, and her great, pansy eyes would have a faraway look, as though she were gazing into worlds which They could only dream of. She would slip from Their arms and flit among the flowers, peeking into their vivid, fragrant cups, playing among the whispering weeping-willow fronds, looking for the fairies.

It was the sixth year of the Cape jasmine, from which They dated everything since the advent of her coming, when she became so ill They thought They would surely lose her, but when she was better They took her away to see a friend of Theirs. He was a tall man in a white coat, a little like Him, so that she wasn't frightened. After a while, he told Them in his gentle, kindly way that she would never be like other children. She would always be just "nearly five." When They came back to the garden, They were different too. They were sad for the little one, who could never grow into the full morning of life, but They were happy for the lovely spirit which had been Theirs for a while.

At first They brought her toys like other children's — balls and wagons and dolls with real hair and eyes that would open and shut. She accepted them politely, as They had taught her, but she did not care for them. She would sit quietly with them in her hands until They had turned their attention away and then she would hide them beneath the Cape jasmine and slip off to play with the things that she understood, the live things in the garden.

They stopped reading to her of fairies and of elves, and she missed it at first but, when They read of other things, she didn't seem to understand. They clipped off her long curls one day, for They said that all her strength was going to her hair. It made her look more like a little sprite than ever, with the ringlets clustering closely, lovingly about her small, piquant face.

One day They stopped giving her strange hard toys, and He brought her a wee white kitten with china-blue eyes and a bow of ribbon around its neck. She adored it. She would cuddle it in her arms and sing funny little songs of her own making but she never pulled its tail. They tried reading fairy tales again, but she would only sit and wait for them to finish. The gift of concentration which had once seemed so amazing in the child had faded away. She was no longer interested in fairies out of books — she had created her own world and peopled it with creatures of her own imaginings.

Somehow as the years went on she lost all curiosity about what lay beyond those garden walls — the old garden was her world. She loved it in all its moods but she seemed to love it best in moonlight. When the moon hung in the night sky, a shining bauble or a thin, pale sickle of light, and They had gone to sleep, she would slip down the ivy trellis and dance with the fairies in the garden — a frail, lovely spirit in the eerie light, her bare feet sparkling with dewdrops, her hair garlanded with flowers.

And thus They found her one morning, in the fifteenth year of the Cape jasmine, lying as if asleep beside the little stream, her hair garlanded with a wreath of white Cape jasmine still fresh and heavy with that strange, exotic perfume, her slim fingers trailing in the cool, murmuring waters of the stream.

At dawn she had left Them. They remembered her with longing and with tears.

### *Emily Dickinson*

*She climbed above the snow-bound clouds  
And stumbled over stars;  
She tripped along through purple shrouds —  
And spun her golden bars.*

**Eunice Brady**

COLLEGE OF ST. TERESA; WINONA, MINN.

# Callie Long's Boy Huey

Continued from page 79

instructed to vote *against* secession; he *did* vote against secession; and, thereafter, although the power of the planters swept Louisiana into the Confederacy, Winnfield Parish was popularly referred to as the *Free State* of Winn.

Hamilton Basso, in a recent magazine article, sketches the broad background of the still-unresolved struggle of planter versus backwoods farmer, with the post-Civil War upsurge of the middle class which brought into national prominence such figures as "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, Eugene Talmadge, Olin D. Johnson, Theodore G. (The Man) Bilbo, and Bibb Graves. None of them derives more clearly from this century-old tradition of hillbilly revolt than does Huey P. Long, Jr.

What did they want, these abolitionist, antiseccessionist, Unionist yeoman farmers of the Free State of Winn? In the words of Huey Long's own father, they wanted to "get the niggers off our necks." There were practically no Negroes in Winn Parish then and there are no Negroes now. But there were Negro slaves in the delta lands of Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, whence these poor whites emigrated, and it was the competition of slave labor that forced them back into the hills. There are Negroes, hundreds of thousands of them, in the Yazoo Delta today, working as share croppers under conditions which are the practical equivalent of slavery and forcing out the white share croppers. When I drove through the Delta, the poor whites I picked up along the road told me: "It's hard for a white man to get a home these days. The owners would rather have the niggers."

Perhaps the ultimate working out of this conflict is expressed in the attempt of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, in Arkansas and elsewhere, to organize white and black share croppers together. To "get the niggers off their backs," the white share croppers are obliged to make common cause with the Negro share croppers on terms of economic equality, which means ultimately, of course, social equality.

Both before and after the Civil War, the hill farmers of Winn Parish proposed a different solution. They wanted the Negroes colonized on reservations, like

the Indians. But the story of this struggle can best be told in the words of the octogenarians who lived through most of it. To them the past is ever present in the contemporary conflicts; there is no break in the historical continuity; they are still fighting, and never so blindly as today, when the star of Huey Long seems destined ultimately to lead them again to betrayal and defeat.

## THEY KNEW HUEY

THERE IS a side road out of Sikes that leads for ten miles through cut-over country, becoming progressively worse. When it became totally impassable, I left my car and followed a rough wagon trail nearly a mile through the ragged second growth of birch and oak. At the end of the trail was a three-room cabin, and in the cabin a bright-eyed ancient of ninety-one, sitting bent over his fireplace. His whiskers were white and Jovian, but his hair, like that of his eighty-seven-year-old brother, Uncle Percy Smith, whom I had seen in Sikes, showed scarcely a trace of gray. These two were the wheel horses of the Socialist Party in Winn Parish, which in 1908, when Eugene Debs spoke in Winnfield, elected better than half the Parish officials. I wanted the old man to talk about Huey, but J. P. Smith is not a Long man, although Huey's grandmother was his first cousin.

"I'm a dyed-in-the-wool socialist. But we can't put it in soon enough to save the nation. Share the Wealth won't do enough soon enough. We're done. There's been a war after every big panic except one. I don't believe it will make much difference whether we elect a Democrat or a Republican president. We'll go into a war anyway, right after the next presidential election. Son, you say you've been around over the country. Don't you agree with me?"

I admitted a similar apprehension, while, as became my youth, I evaded the responsibilities of the prophet. The old man pondered and poked his meager fire. When he spoke again, it was the older memories, the ancient hatreds that flared in him.

"They call it the Civil War. I call it the most degradingest thing that

ever happened to a nation. When they came to conscript us, my brother, J. W. Smith, said to me: 'I'll lie in the woods till the moss grows over my back before I fight for the other man's niggers.'"

I had heard the phrase before from other ancients. If their memories are accurate, about half the able-bodied males of Winn Parish "took refuge in the arms of General Green" rather than fight in the Confederate army. In other words, they took to the woods, where the Confederate cavalry hunted them and shot them down like wild shote. Some of them, like J. W. Smith, who was killed at Vicksburg, enlisted in the Union army.

After the War, Winn Parish joined with the Southern planters to throw out the carpetbaggers. But again they were tricked and baffled. The Negroes weren't colonized like the Indians — the planters still held the whip hand. So, twenty years later, when Charles Vincent organized Winn Parish for the Populists, the old slogan was still to the fore: "Get the niggers off our necks." In 1892 or thereabouts, Winn Parish elected a full Populist ticket. But gradually this tide receded; Harley Bryant, elected State Representative, tried, according to J. P. Smith, to sell the Parish down the river to the railroad. The Smith brothers fought him and ten years later carried the Ward of Sikes for the Socialist Party, which also elected about half the police jurors and school-board members for Winn Parish.

Where was the Long family in this history? I collected various legends, none of them scandalous or even discreditable, although the Senator makes no use of them in his autobiography, *Every Man a King*.

So far as I could make out, the talent and force of the Long family — it is genuine; all of Huey's five brothers and sisters are clever and more or less successful people — are derived chiefly from the female side.

Huey's grandmother, the mother of Huey Long, Sr., was a Lee, whose people came to Winnfield Parish from Virginia in 1836. The old-timers remember her as a "very determined woman." It seems that her husband, John Long, who was, incidentally, a Unionist, shared

## CALLIE LONG'S BOY HUEY

the liking of many another leading citizen for gambling and liquor. But Mary Long was the leading woman Baptist of Winnfield. She led the fight to vote liquor out of Winnfield Parish and won it by a spectacular and well-remembered campaign which included parading the town, waving a bloody bridle. The blood, she declaimed, was from her husband's hands, cut while he was drunk. In the words of one of the old-timers, "that old lady and her gang whooped and hollered at the polls until a man could scarcely think, let alone vote right." John Long seems to have been philosophic. After the election he is reported to have commented admiringly: "Doggone if Mary ain't beat me out of my liquor."

But it is concerning the Senator's mother, Caledonia Tyson Long, that the people of the Parish speak with unqualified admiration. "A bright woman," they say, "a noble woman, very religious and very ambitious for her children." Many is the time they saw her driving Huey to school at the end of a peach-tree sprout.

Huey was a smart and enterprising boy — it is true, as recounted in his autobiography, that twice in his early 'teens he ran away from home. Was he a leader of the boys? Yes, in a way. "If Huey couldn't pitch, he wouldn't play." A braggart, it appears, but not good in a fight. "Huey would always run like a turkey." All over Louisiana I heard that phrase. But in Winn Parish, used to describe Huey's behavior as a boy, it acquired a special significance. Perhaps it is true, I reflected, that Huey's well-known aversion to physical combat has an early and more or less neurotic basis.

### MULE WITH A ROMAN NOSE

**T**HE OFFICE of the country doctor was empty. On the wall I saw the diploma of an excellent medical college; near it was a scroll of neatly engraved verses:

"I stick to those who stick to me,  
All others need not bother me.  
Altho of patients I've no lack  
It takes the cash to run this shack.  
If I'm to be your doctor still  
You must keep paid up your bill."

Perhaps because of the failure of his patients to observe this injunction, I found the doctor putting in a corn crop. After some persuasion, he consented to talk to me. Did he know the Longs? Yes, he was born in Winnfield Parish, and had practiced there for forty years. Was he for Huey?

The doctor said, "Whoa," to his mule, spat, and regarded me somberly.

"Son," he said, "did you ever take a good look at Huey? Did you ever even take a good look at a mule? A mule with a Roman nose is no good; any farmer with any sense knows he's no good. He's just high-strung and he'll never be any good."

With which homespun preliminary, this country doctor, who had lived and worked wholly outside the currents of modern psychiatry and psychoanalysis as practiced in the great cities, proceeded to give me a cogent and rather convincing analysis of Huey's physical and psychological characteristics, including detailed comparisons with Hitler and Mussolini. A twisted psychological type, he thought, with a power fixation dating from boyhood — even then he always insisted he would be President some day. Physical cowardice balanced by malice and vindictiveness. A volcanic flow of neurotic energy — but he might blow up at any minute.

I quoted the judgment of a Southern man of letters — a Catholic — whom I had interviewed in New Orleans: "He has all the attributes of the mind of Satan — anger, pride, malice, vengefulness, lust."

The doctor snorted and brushed the ecclesiastical adjectives aside. Callie Long was a fine woman, but Callie Long's boy Huey was just a bad animal hopelessly off center and not to be trusted. With which the doctor bade me good day and returned to his plowing.

A few miles out of Sikes I passed Mineral Springs, where, in the Baptist Church and schoolhouse, Huey Long had debated socialism with Uncle Percy Smith, J. P. Lucas, and Little John Peters. Huey was in his 'teens then but already an aspiring orator. He took the democratic side of the debate, being teamed with Harley B. Bozeman, now one of his chief political opponents in Winnfield Parish. Huey lost that debate — the crowd was all for socialism. Now, however, the hill farmers were swinging to Huey. The towns too.

In Winnfield one of the leading lawyers assured me that Huey would win the primaries next January by a hundred-thousand majority. He was a Long man now. He hadn't always been. He had competed with Huey when the latter first started practicing law in Winnfield. Within two years Huey had grabbed the lion's share of the business away from the veterans. No, Huey hadn't been ethical. He hadn't waited for business to come to him. He had gone out and hustled for it. But you had to hand it to him. Everything they said was impossible Huey had done. Louisiana had never before produced a politician who could touch him.

### BITTER LOGIC

**D**RIVING NORTH into the Yazoo Delta, I tried to put together what I had learned about Callie Long's boy Huey. Unquestionably the lawyer was right: he is the ablest, the most formidable politician the South has produced since the Civil War — also the most ruthless. The doctor, I felt, was also right. Fragments of Huey's speeches occurred to me. What had he said when, after some minor political victory, his vanquished and chastened opponent sat on the platform with him? "There sits B——. I bought him the way you buy a sack of potatoes." If that isn't sadism, what is?

Again: "It is not true that I coerced Shreveport into accepting free schoolbooks and an airport. I stomped 'em into it."

What an ironic consummation — that the authentic, century-old revolt of the Southern hill farmers, first abolitionist, then Populist, then socialist, should spawn this neurotically galvanized superpolitician, this frail-ferocious potential dictator of the United States!

Yet how logical, how almost inevitable, after all. As Hamilton Basso has shown, Huey Long is not the first of his kind to arise in the South; he is merely the most forceful, the most imaginative, the most daring, the ablest. The tools to him who can use them.

Who can say, contemplating the career of Huey Long, that he has not proved himself adept at manipulating the materials of the current economic and political situation? The crowd, the vast American crowd, with its literate moronism, its simple faiths, its primitive greeds, its latent fears and hatreds, its worship of success, of the thing done, no matter what or how; the dilemma of big business, facing the accelerating anarchic chaos of its obsolete institutions, legalities, and processes — needing more and more urgently someone to pour the strong liquor of demagoguery that will keep the crowd still hoping but still fooled and frustrated.

And now behold the man, Huey P. Long, Jr., born with hatred in his bones and spurred by the fear which is hatred's other face; Huey Long, the man of many voices, the lawyer among lawyers, the hillbilly among hillbillies, the businessman among businessmen, above all, the politician among politicians, wanting power as a normal man wants bread or sex, brutal in victory, crafty and dangerous in defeat.

In New Orleans, when I asked about Huey, they said: "Louisiana is the rotten dog that bred the maggot." Will this be said one day of the nation?

# A Page for Poets

Conducted by Henry Goddard Leach  
President, Poetry Society of America



## A POETRY DEPARTMENT

**B**EGINNING in March, 1925, and continuing through 1926, *THE FORUM* maintained a rather distinguished poetry department. Four pages of each issue were devoted exclusively to poetry. The department was edited by Mr. Walter S. Hinchman. He culled from an average of three hundred poems submitted each week as many as two or three for publication in *THE FORUM*. At the same time he gave many of the unsuccessful candidates free advisory service in technical criticism of their verse.

In 1927 the staff of the magazine voted that public interest was not sufficient to continue the publication of four solid pages of verse. Were we wrong? Will all readers who feel that we ought to devote more pages to verse in *THE FORUM* in 1935 please write the Editor a postcard or a letter?

Here is what a veteran poet, Edgar Lee Masters, writes: "Dear Mr. Leach: I'd revive the poetry pages in *THE FORUM* by printing nothing but very excellent poems — no average stuff at all. I'd cut out all those who pull and haul and play politics to get printed. I'd try to voice the country and the age. I'd do it by doing it. Sculpture, painting, even illustrating are all honored. Short-story writing is remunerative; and the short story is an inferior art. A good poet can tell more in two pages than a short-story writer can in ten."

## A COLLEGE OF POETS

**N**OTHING OF late has given me more joy than a consignment of pamphlets, magazines, and books of verse published by the English Club of Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa. I had never heard of this college until last spring, when one of its students, Charlotte Radsliff, won third prize in *THE FORUM* Intercollegiate Poetry Contest. One judge gave her sonnet, "Pigeons," first place. I now find that a score of her fellow students write ingratiating verse. Here one stumbles on competence, freshness, gay, placid humor, sophisticated adult imagination, and every variety of theme without a hint of resorting to the bizarre. I almost wonder if both Emily Dickinson and Whittier are hovering about this happy campus. I am sure Lewis Carroll would enjoy "The Ballad of the Pink Umbrella" in the *Cornell Kiddie Book*.

## SOME RECENT BOOKS

**D**ANCE OF FIRE, by Lola Ridge (Smith & Haas, \$2.00). When a poet improves, he exchanges one audience for another. The opening sequence is in the tradition of the sonnet, conceived as a cascade of verbal loveliness through which can be seen glints of an idea too intangible for a literal, downright approach. For sheer sound, it would be hard to find contemporary sonnets more beautiful than these, but the effect is a little hypnotic; it is hard to concentrate on the idea, which is both social and religious. The rest of the book is on ground made reverent by *Firehead* and familiar to old, admiring readers of Lola Ridge. The poem called "Three Men Die" links with the Sacco-Vanzetti case.

**LICHEN**, by Warren B. Horner (Published by the author, Shepherds-town, West Virginia, \$1.00). This is one of the better examples of the present outpouring of regional American verse. There is nothing pretentious in this native stuff, only natural beauty. Gentle brooks have quenched the thirst of many a panting hart:

### Yellow Root

*Back in the hills where I was reared  
There was a kind of plant called yellow  
root:*

*People chewed and gargled it  
For colds and sore throat;  
It had a bitter pucker in its juice  
That left grimaces for an hour.  
Old grannies made foul mixtures of the  
stuff  
And made the children take it.  
And often I have hunted in the woods  
To find the fragile, veined leaf  
And dig down into the black dirt  
For the roots to chew and gargle  
As all my grandsires had before me.  
Even so a sickened spirit might be cured  
With the bitter healing of the hills.*

**THE POEMS OF W. H. DAVIES** (Oxford, \$3.00). **LOVE POEMS**, by W. H. Davies (Oxford, \$1.25). The new collection of love lyrics by this veteran Welsh poet seems somewhat anemic, compared with his collected verse. I prefer No. 294 from the larger volume:

### Her Body's a Fine House

*Her body's a fine house,  
Three stories I have reckoned;*

*Her garter marks the first,  
A belt of silk the second:  
Her necklace marks the third,  
And know — before I stop —  
The garden of that house  
Is planted on the top.*

Mr. Davies is distinctly a "right winger," a veritable tory among contemporary poets. He uses the familiar rhymes, the familiar meters, even the familiar themes. But all old things are always new and wonderful to the true poet. Mr. Davies is a creator of ever-present creation.

**THE TRAGEDY OF MAN**, by Imre Madách, trans. from the original Hungarian by Charles Henry Meltzer and Paul Vajda (Macmillan, \$2.50). I am on Macmillan's list for all books of verse published by them. In the past few months this house has added to its laurels new poetry by Marianne Moore, Mark Van Doren, Harriet Monroe, Tristram Coffin, Yeats, and Masfield and now introduces adequately for the first time in English the solemn mystery drama which for the past seventy years has been the most popular play on the Hungarian stage.

The grandeur of Milton, the passion of Goethe, the psychology of Ibsen are all duplicated in Madách; but his original theme of man's destiny does not yield to imitation. In a series of visions ordered by Lucifer, Adam sees himself reincarnate with Eve, as these two — humanity — descend the ages. Adam is Pharaoh; he is a Roman; he is capitalist, communist; and Eve is a princess and a whore. Adam descends to an Eskimo who offers him his woman. But in the end Lucifer — eternal negation — fails to discourage Adam and Eve into suicide. They always renew their courage in the divine conflict of recreating life. In the final lines The Lord declares: "Man, I have spoken! . . . Fight! And, unfaltering, trust!"

This is magnificent poetry.

## MORE COLLEGE POETRY

**J**UDGED by the number of manuscripts that pour into this magazine, the production of college verse is on the increase. To relieve the jam, I shall publish on this page in September a number of honorary exhibits from the colleges which just failed of a prize in our recent college contest.