

benches . . . " Adoro te devote" . . . Whose is that face lifted in contemplation and song, filled with a glorious light. Never in my wildest dreams did this come to mind. That voice that once made Marian Hall resound with "Tammy" as she bounded about, now is uplifted in praise of the Lord. Found at last is her goldmine in the sky. Strange, strange are the ways of providence. Vale! I go.

The fog thickens and the melancholy strains of the wind resume, carrying me to the white monument on the hill side. The fog curls and drifts around the base on which is carved this epitaph:

"Here rests a heart that lived but to lose,
A heart that flew to many, had no home
Until she met the one that was her fate,
The one whose love could never be her own.

Long for this one her heart did sadly pine
And love now unrequited there abode;
Until her soul did slip the bonds of earth
And flew unto her Father and her God."

How hard it is to believe that heart could at last find home. A seeming nemesis.

At this lonely spot I shed a tear, a tear for youth, for life that slips away so soon.

All at once a roaring fills my ears, I see nothing but blackness; the mist is cold against my face. All disappears with the melancholy wind as it recedes, slowly, slow into the void whence it came.

—JEAN MacISAAC '61

Note: These two short stories are Campus entries in the National NFCUS Short Story Contest, and were adjudged as such by Dr. O'Grady to represent St. Dunstan's.

A "GROWN-UP BOY"

It was Saturday evening. Kevin Black, a barefooted boy, was resting himself on a flat rock in the turf bog of Arranal. His blue sweater had holes in each elbow, and his grey pants with their frayed edges flapped in the cold breeze that blew up from the embankments of the sea shore. The sun was setting, stretching an uneven crescent of light across the land. Looking out over the sea as he sat on a crag projecting from the hill, the boy resembled a preying animal of freedom in the setting sun. Beside him his shaggy grey donkey, with the wicker carrying basket on her sides filled with turfs of peat to be used as fuel, kept nodding her head with a melancholy persistence as she nibbled at the sweet grass strewn about in patches.

The boy was alone and lonely. He had neither brothers nor sisters. His mother had been dead for a few years, and his father continued to go out fishing every day. So he had no one to help him to draw home the peat. Since early morning he had been working hard to build as big a stack as the boys in neighboring Rammocky. As he sat tapping the rock with a stick he recalled with a feeling of sadness the rhyme they shouted at him yesterday when he was coming from school:

"Kevin, Kevin, Kevin Black
Has only got a wee turf stack."

Their mocking laughs now taunted his mind, and he found himself clutching his stick tightly. Then he thought of all the turf he had heaped at the gable end of his thatched cottage, and a sweet unrest gripped him and seemed to soothe him as he pictured the big stack he would build this evening. At that moment, a hawk shivered in the air. A gull swayed upward and the hawk darted below the edge of the embankments.

Kevin looked at the mark on his hand—a red gash where he had ripped it on the desk at school. He licked the dry blood with his tongue and then, hearing the screech of a bird, he jumped up and raced to the edge of the craggy embankment. Below him the sea rolled its foamy waves up on the rocks, gulls tilted on the hovering gusts of the wind and curved upward in graceful movements. But he could see no hawk. He lay flat on his stomach, pressed the heather away from his nose, his eyes ranging along the shore line. At last he spied the hawk; it was tearing at a little bird whose feathers fluttered about like blown ashes. Kevin clenched his fist, jumped to his feet, and searched for a large stone. He fired it at the hawk with all his might. It crashed in a thousand pieces and the sea birds rose in a flock and surged through the air with wild cries of terror. The boy became obsessed with fear. He ran to his donkey, caught the reins, and hurried from the peat bog.

Down, down, he hauled the donkey; then getting tired, he let her lead the way, now and then goading her forward with his stick. He loved the animal, and today he was proud of her, for she had been carrying turf since morning without getting her usual rest at unloading time.

The path stretched in front, falling and twisting down to the grey plain of the land where a few donkeys strayed about the scanty pastures. "It'll not be long now till you'll be out with them", Kevin said to the donkey, prodding her along with another tap of his stick.

He halted for a minute and scanned the sea, trying to sight his father's boat. But not a boat could be seen on the slaty surface of the water. The mainland with its scattered limewashed houses looked like the distant view of a cemetery. The mountains were a dark blue now, and Landes had a bonnet of mist which his father told him was its nightcap. It was only yesterday that he had written this in his composition in school, and he smiled reflectively as he felt the teacher hanging over him warmly, and patting his head for what he had written. A shore bird's cry startled him, and looking in front he saw his donkey moving ahead quickly, the baskets of turf swaying heavily against her sides.

The donkey drew up at the gable-end of the house, and Kevin emptied the baskets. Around him was the pile of loose turf he had drawn all day. Without taking a rest, he bent his back and began the stacking. The sun had gone down, and the cool shadows crept into the hallows of the land. In the silence Kevin heard the pounding of his own heart. A woman hurrying home with a basket of groceries stopped and shouted:

"Kevin, child, you're a great **man** to be building a stack like that. And did you do it all yourself?"

"I sure did", he said wiping his nose with his sleeve, "I'll have a big stack when my father gets home from the fishing".

"I've never seen a stack like it", she smiled, and her words urged him to work harder.

The stack mounted higher and higher. He got up on top of it, and his back ached as he looked towards Rammocky and measured with his eyes the size of their turf stacks. "I've beat you all", he said, and he jumped to the ground and sat on an upturned basket, gazing proudly at his own large stack of turf. He pulled his shirt from below his sweater and wiped the sweat from his face. His eyes turned suddenly to the sea, and he saw his father's fishing boat with her nose high out of the water. He looked up at the chimney of the house and saw no smoke coming out. He rushed into the house. The fire was out, and the kettle was cold. He rummaged into his schoolbag, tore leaves out of an old scribbler, lay before the fire-place, and piled peat turf around the crumpled paper. He got to his feet, lit the fire, and soon pure, thick smoke rolled up the chimney. He ran to the spring well with a pail for water, the dew on the grass brushing coldly against his feet. The boat was nearly in, but he would surely have the kettle boiled in time. He went into the house, filled the kettle, and got it ready to heat. He then got down on his knees, and kept blowing at the fire. He arose wearily, and went across to the bedroom where he instinctively thrust himself upon the soft bed. When his father came in, he left his string of wet fish on the porch bench, and went over to lift off the boiling kettle. He noticed Kevin lying across the bed and shook him gently: "Kevin, son, are you asleep?"

Kevin didn't hear him. His mind was whirling round like a wheel—a glittering wheel that grew and grew until it lost itself in darkness. His mind grew dark, and out of the darkness arose the turf stack. It grew bigger until it looked like a mountain. He saw it waver, and his raving mind burst into speech: "It's going to fall on me... Hold it back!" He clutched at the air and then felt a cold hand upon his forehead. "It's me, Kevin. Don't be frightened, son, you're only dreaming", said his father.

The boy opened his eyes in a vacant gaze, and his father raised his head from the pillow and, putting a bowl of milk before him, said: "Take this and you'll be all right, son. You're weak with the hunger".

Kevin sipped the milk slowly, and when he had finished he lay back on the pillow and fell deeply asleep.

When morning came he lay in bed dreamily looking around. Seeing the boy awake, his father came in dressed in his Sunday clothes. "And how's my little man this morning?", he said.

"I'm all right now, daddy Did you see my turf stack?"

"Did I see it! Of course, I did. And it was the whole talk of the people on their way home from Mass this morning".

—RICHARD ST. JOHN '58

THE DEAL

"There's old Hally Coffin's place. Guess I'll give him a try," thought Pius, as his one-ton maroon truck bounced along the frozen rough road that ran through Chepstow. The driver wondered for a moment why he picked this road to travel on today. But he soon came to

the conclusion that all the dirt roads were equally bad at this time of year, for it was early November and the north-west winds that blew in off the Gulf weren't exactly the Nassau type.

Pius McVety was a cattle buyer, and honest kind of guy at least he tried to be. He was a lanky fellow, and spoke with a slight drawl which made him feel and sound like a Southerner.

He was almost opposite Hally Coffin's house now. Before turning into the lane leading up to the residence, the driver gave the spread a quick glance through the side window of his truck. Coffin, he noticed, had a rather prosperous looking place, though moderate in size. The buildings were situated on a slight northerly slope. From the appearance, one got the impression that it was the product of many years of thrift—conservatively equipped, perhaps, but lacking no essentials.

"Doesn't seem to be much activity here," McVety thought, as he started up the lane. "I'll go in anyway. The old guy's probably in the cellar grading potatoes."

A hollow bang resounded when Pius slammed the truck door in Hally Coffin's yard. He regarded the barn and noticed that every door was closed from the outside. An absence of smoke at the flue top indicated a similar state of vacancy. McVety went to the door and tapped on the glass panel of the inner door. There was no answer. Pius closed the door.

"Nothing but the sky and the grass," he said, smiling to himself. "Oh well, I'll see what he's got anyway."

He went into the stable, snapped on the light, and closed the door behind him. A beautiful herd of Ayrshire cattle met his first glance. After looking over the stock for a few moments from where he stood, he began to stroll up the aisle.

"They sure are fine looking cattle," he thought. "Well looked after too. Bill wood asked me to pick up a milker, something like that, for him. I'd give Coffin two twenty-five for that animal. They're all pure breeds, too, I guess. Really not a poor animal in the barn."

McVety was about to light up a smoke when he recalled where he was. Putting the cigarette back into the pack he proceeded to examine the rest of the animals. This he did rather rapidly, until he came to a white heifer in the far end of the stable.

"Sure is a beautiful animal," he thought, "best cow in the barn. Ought to make a good milker in a few years. Should be able to bet a hundred and sixty for her at the auction next week."

After sizing up the animal for a few minutes Pius started back to the door, glancing again at each one of the heard and comparing them to his choice at the back of the stable. He flicked off the light and came out of the barn, closed the door and turned the wooden knof till it was horizontal. He crossed the yard and was getting into the truck when he checked himself. Taking a sheet of paper from a small notebook he leaned on the hood of his truck and wrote:

I'll give you \$140 for that white heifer
in the far end of the stable.

Will call back next week.

P. McVety.