with and without stories; pencils of all descriptions — long and thin, short and fat, yellow, black, chewed — and an array of books, hastily dumped by their owners, who had rushed off after last-minute interviews and check-ups.

The aspiring sports reporter who was furrowing his forehead over a lead, already rewritten three times, performed the seemingly impossible task of wrapping his legs another time around those of the chair and began tugging absent-mindedly at the collar of his stylish plaid shirt — genius was at work.

With a staccato clatter three typewriters in the corner stuttered out sentences which were to make up the front page news, and a note of frivolity somewhat belied the tenseness in the air as another group of journalists "ohed" and "ahed" and giggled over the efforts of the columnist who was reporting the "gossip."

In the midst of the flurry and confusion, an alien in the hubbub, the editor, calm and serene, sat at the desk by the window, where late afternoon sunlight haloed her light hair. She edited copy flung carelessly from the typewriters; she gently chided the idlers around the "gossip column" and put them to work writing headlines. With a few words she lifted the sports writer out of his quandry and speeded the other reporters through their stories and on their way home. At last, as the five o'clock bell rang, the office had changed character and become another room. Chairs had been pushed into place at the tables as though they had not held a squirming boy or girl working on a story. The typewriters had ceased their chatter and seemed a little forlorn, shrouded in their black covers. As the editor collected the galley proofs, putting them in order, she pushed the papers off the table into the wastebasket. Then she, too, left.

Alone in the last sunlight slanting through the window, the room seemed to have settled down to rest.

They Don't Understand
JOSEPH F. WORKMAN

Drink, my friend, and no longer will you suffer. Drink till you're drunk; drink till you forget you're a Navy man; drink the Captain's commands away from your mind. Drink! Drink! Drink!

Slowly I looked around, and there, to my utter amazement were houses, flowers, and pretty girls smiling in a cute way which, to a sailor, who knew only the sneering lips of the water-front girls, was unfamiliar. On my left was a street. It looked like Main Street back home on Saturday night.

Yes, it is Main Street. I know several farmers over there by the Court House steps. Yes, by golly, there's lights, bright lights. Everywhere people are talking. I wonder what about. There's the old school teacher, still mumbling to himself. Gee, all of this looks grand. Gosh, I must be home, Home, HOME! Look at me; I'm talking to myself. I must be mad, or rather, I'm probably drunk. Yes, that's it; I'm drunk! Tomorrow I go back to kill. I have to kill. It's fun. Nothing bloody about it, for we never see them die. We just blow them up and go find more to kill.
Come to sea with me, my friend; it's not too bad — I—I guess. I've been here three years. Old salt, you say? No, I reckon I've lots of pepper in me. I got hurt last time. That's why I'm a—drinking. I've got to go on—got—to—g'on.

There are people watching me. They think I'm pretty bad. Maybe I am. I should not get this drunk. There are lots of us out there killing, aren't there, mister? You say your son is? Gee, that's tough! What's he on, a transport? Yep, that's tough all right. I—I'm on a heavy cruiser. Heck, mister, we have so many guns there's not room for all of them. Loud! You bet they are. Deadly, too. We're the best. We blew a ship clear out of the water last battle. But they got a plane from their carrier through our flack. Bombed us, they did. Killed about a hundred of us. But we're getting better each time. The battle before last three or four hundred boys never heard taps.

Well, so long—I'd better shove off—better—shove—off. Oh, yes, and when you see your son, you say to him, "Don't drink, son. The public just don't understand—just—don't understand."

Sketches
DONALD TAYLOR

Miracles
Gray sky, white snow falling softly, stillness — I sat dreaming in a chair by the window. I had laid aside my book and was gazing into the out-of-doors. Several old, shriveled and dried chrysanthemums were all that remained of the flower bed in our yard. Across the street, two children were playing on the sidewalk. A small boy was giving his little sister a ride in his wagon. Their cheeks were red, kissed by the wind. Their mother came to the door and called them, and together they ran toward the porch. The little girl fell on the steep embankment, and her brother helped her off the ground.

The sky, the snow, the flowers, and the children caused me to recall some lines of Walt Whitman's I had once heard. "... who makes much of a miracle? every cubic inch of space is a miracle, what stranger miracles are there?"

Repeat Performance
A grey haired old man stopped to wait on me as I entered the second hand store. "Do you have any tables," I asked, "one that I could use for a tool bench?"

He had no tables, but he insisted on showing me an old piano. Its varnish was cracked, and the keys were dirty, but when he began to play, all of that was gone. He saw not a dirty store room, but a cozy theatre, dimly lighted by kerosene lamps; not an old piano, but a shining grand piano on the vaudeville stage where he had worked for so many years.

He looked at me, but saw instead a smiling, laughing audience applauding for an encore. He saw and felt the past in this repeat performance. And for a moment, I caught the spirit of his music and the heart of his dream.