

A Modern Breakfast

Robert Luker

As I awoke this morning to the melodious strains of music from my clock-radio and the aroma of freshly brewed coffee in the electric coffee pot attached to the radio, I thought about you, Mr. Thoreau, and how you would feel if you could come and have breakfast with me. It would be a simple, easy-to-prepare meal. First there will be orange juice—take the can out of the freezer, add water, and it is finished. Now, we'll put the ham and eggs in the electric skillet and set the dial; the dial will regulate the heat. This will give us enough time to put two pieces of bread—"the staff of life"—into the toaster, not the oven. Now all there is to be done is to pour the coffee and juice, take the ham and eggs out of the skillet, and we are ready to eat. Yes, that is breakfast today, Mr. Thoreau. By the way, I appreciate your sense of economical values, so I am presenting you with an itemized bill for our "simple" breakfast.

1 can frozen orange juice	\$.20
4 eggs at 60c per dozen	.20
2 slices of ham	1.00
4 slices of bread	.04
4 pats of butter	.10
Total	<hr/> \$1.54

Although this sum might have fed you for weeks at Walden, in our modern age it is considered quite an inexpensive meal.

Time and Death

Robert J. Schrenker

THE time and place were August 24, 1955, and the military reservation of the First Armored Division, site of simulated combat exercises. I was a green private fresh from basic training, participating in preparatory exercise "Whirlwind," forerunner to gigantic "Exercise Sagebrush." That night a soldier was killed, ignominiously crushed into the dirt by a tank. He was a member of my company who had breathed, thought, cursed, and sweated just a moment before, but his life was snuffed out in an instant. The tank stopped, the company slowed, but the division moved on, absorbing the pause with its gelatin-like flexibility. The body was methodically removed from the field and evacuated to the rear. The tank shifted gears and the company resumed speed. In a few moments the formation was intact, with only an inert corpse in the rear to prove that it had ever been impaired. I do not even remember the name of the soldier, although we talked about him that night and again the following day. We thought of him often in the next week. We mentioned his name now and then. In a month he was

forgotten by the military, with only a tombstone and a dusty personnel folder to prove that he had ever existed. He will linger on in the hearts of those who loved him most as a resurgent agony. In time, this agony will petrify into a cold numbness which only death can bring. He will be enshrined in the hearts of his friends, but even as a shrine becomes tarnished and tattered when it is exposed to the elements, so will a shrine in the hearts of people when exposed to the vicissitudes of life. He was a cog that had been broken and replaced. Even if he had been a general, he would have been replaced with relative ease.

Is anyone so indispensable that he cannot be replaced? I think not. Rich or poor, powerful or picayune, loved or unloved, a man will surely die, and he will most assuredly be forgotten.

My First Concert

Janet L. Cox

ON March 29, 1954, I gathered up my long black skirt in one hand, grasped my horn with the other, and hesitantly made my way down the long corridor of Caleb Mills Hall. As I neared the warm-up room, the beautiful, impromptu concerto of symphonic instruments tuning up for a concert greeted my ears. Flute and clarinet players played sweeping runs, trumpets rapidly tongued technical exercises, and trombones sonorously announced their presence. Above all this, I could hear the golden melted-butter tone of the French horns. My heart gave a great leap as I realized that tonight I was playing with an orchestra made up of college students and professional musicians—all infinitely better players than I, a high school sophomore. My weak knees swayed a little as I took my horn from its case and began running over passages from the selections we were to play for the concert. As I played, the polished, bell-like tones emitted from my teacher's horn reached my ears, and the black ink spots blurred as I realized my inadequacy among these musicians. However, my teacher sensed this and smiled encouragement to me as we filed onto the stage.

The house lights dimmed before the conductor walked briskly on stage and stepped up to the podium. With a wave of his baton, the first soft strains of the violins sounded, and we were off to the glorious land of "Les Preludes." Gradually, as the music rose and swelled around us, my fear vanished; I became just another musician lost in the trance of helping to create ethereal sounds. The music swelled to a soul-searching climax. Then, as I stood with the other orchestra members to take my bow, the ink spots, the conductor, and the audience again became blurred. My teacher's dark eyes sparkled as he looked at me with understanding. He knew that I had just realized that I belonged in that orchestra, even though my experience was less than that of my fellow musicians.