

Solitude

Bob Worth

HENRY DAVID THOREAU once wrote, "If the day and night are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet-scented herbs, is more elastic, more starry, more immortal,—that is your success." Perhaps it was in search of this type of success that Thoreau retired to his now famous retreat "Walden." Today, some look upon him as somewhat of an eccentric. This he may have been, but also he was an exemplification of a trait residual in every human soul. Every man, no matter how successful he may be, must have his "Walden." Deep inside, all of us possess some of the feeling expressed above by Thoreau. God did not create man as an entity by himself, but as an integral part of a vast, interrelated universe. Thus, all of us must occasionally step out of our lethargic daily routine and consider the events of life in an order and purpose in existence.

This desire has manifested itself in my own personality as a sort of unquenchable thirst. I seemed to feel that the events which took place around me were shallow and meaningless. Consequently, I began to search for a solution, and then it was that I came upon a spot that has come to be a sanctuary in which I may take refuge in disappointment of confusion. Like many of the best things in life, it seems quite ordinary to eyes not initiated into its secrets and beauty. Its charm springs from two qualities, each becoming increasingly rare these days—seclusion and serenity. Were these its *only* attraction, it would still be an invaluable possession in a world fraught with dissension and anxiety, but surpassing these attributes is the fact that at least one can observe nature, not as man has altered and distorted her, but as God originally created her.

Perhaps the most magnificent and rewarding time for a visit is in the evening. As the sun sets, it flushes the clouds with a hue that foils description, and, with the coming of evening, a certain eternalness pervades the hour. Indeed, it is as if the tide of time has dropped us for a moment on the beach of immortality before sweeping us once more into the turbulent sea of life. One experiences thoughts akin to those of Emerson when he wrote, ". . . that for all the poetry that is in the world your first sensation on entering a wood or standing on the shore of a lake has not been chanted yet."

The old road winds timidly through the copse like a warm, brown intruder in a swaying, fluttering labyrinth of cool green. Emerging from the trees, it boldly circumvents a field of tall corn and passes finally by an abandoned gravel pit. The pit is nearly dry and the water is honeycombed with many tiny islands and peninsulas. At the tip of perhaps the largest of the peninsulas is a sun-hardened mound of earth, ideally suited as a stool. As one walks here, he hears the numerous tiny splashes made by frogs fleeing from

a heavy-footed intruder. The farther he walks, the more he is overwhelmed by a feeling of tranquility, isolation, and utter satisfaction. All around can be seen evidences of nature in her most quaint yet breathtaking guise. The killdeers tip and bob in the shallow water, the swallows wheel overhead, and all around are heard the warm, pulsating sounds of summer. Peace and contentment almost tangible in its completeness settles upon the beholder of this vast, magnificent pageant.

In every form of human expression—art, music, sculpture, literature—there is something missing. Inspiring as they may be, they are subject to mortal limitations. Only in the cathedral of the outdoors can one experience the grandeur of God and the pure ecstasy of human existence.

Fenstermacher's Music School

Ruth Myer

IN LOOKING back I can recall no specific event, no definite time, no clear-cut emotional experience toward which I might gesture and say that it was the turning point. My dislike for Fenstermacher's Music School must have come over me so gradually, so subtly, that memory failed even to record the date when this dislike changed to utter loathing.

The Fenstermacher's I remember from my student days was an underground establishment. Although I understand the school has since moved to more fashionable quarters, in those days its clientele was obliged to reach it by descending the back stairs of a dusty music shop. As one moved downward on this creaking apparatus, the foul air and roar of the city's streets would give way to the fouler air and more strident roar of Fenstermacher's. Here confusion sat enthroned. More often than not, the small lobby had been invaded by a class of baton twirlers whose shiny sticks—frequently out of control—rebounded off wall, ceiling, and student. If the lobby happened to be unused, one could sit on the folding chairs and gaze at the yellowed magazine prints of singers liberally besprinkled on Fenstermacher's walls to hide their peeling yellow paint and chipped plaster. About the room would recline the standard array of Fenstermacher students and their mothers—usually mute and always expressionless. Around these individuals the sounds and smells of the school boiled and surged continuously. From 10:00 A. M. to 10:00 P. M. the voices of drums, pianos, violins, accordions, organs, trumpets, trombones, and electric guitars blared, ground, grated, and whined incessantly forth from each studio. Lest the suffering client yet remain patient under these tortures to eye and ear, Fenstermacher's instructors liberally spiked the atmosphere with a high concentration of reeking pipe and cigarette fumes.

I do not know why I did not rebel sooner. One evening I turned