

ask myself, "If I had gone to her, if I had braved the cliffs that night could I have stopped her?" Then, like a cold dash of water, the thought flashes across my mind, "Would I have stopped her?"

Derby Day

Patricia Burger

FROM WHERE I stood, several yards from the far turn, shielding my eyes against the brilliant afternoon sunshine, I could see the twin spires of the grandstand towering high into the vivid blue Louisville sky. Sitting up there in the shade of the grandstand were the wealthy, the horse owners, the society people and all others who could afford over five dollars for a seat. They were indistinguishable now, part of the faceless thousands who were dashes of bright color on the gaudy picture spread before me. The brick wall across the track that shut out Churchill Downs from the city didn't stop non-paying spectators from viewing the picture from their roof tops.

The milling crowd around me filled the worn infield to overflowing. Here the sight was more distinguishable than the faceless dabs of color in the grandstand. People, white and brown, in skirts and blouses, sundresses, suits, shorts, sport coats, checked, plaid and striped shirts, straw sunbonnets, caps, hats and sunglasses were walking, sitting, standing, running or sprawling on the ground. Most were talking and laughing, others were shouting about a win, a few were sitting in silent disappointment, and some, like me, were merely waiting for the next race, the seventh race of the day.

Near me, sitting on a large blanket, was a group of young people vivaciously talking among themselves as they gulped beer kept in a large red cooler. Behind them sat an elderly couple, checking their programs while eating hot dogs oozing with mustard. A man sporting a white cap pushed his way forward calling, "Mint juleps . . . get your juleps here," as he held up a green frosted glass. He nearly ran into an old man slowly wandering past with his eyes on the ground in hopes of finding ticket stubs people had dropped. From my left came the dissonant notes of several bleary-eyed race fans enjoying the effects of too much tipping. Around them raced two children with cotton candy plastered on their open mouths. A drunk fell off his bench, landed on his back with feet in the air, and grinned as he triumphantly held his bottle aloft and safe. The man snoring beside him snorted and settled his racing form securely across his sun-blistered face in disgust.

I took a sip of the warm coke I held in a small paper cup, but it did little to relieve my thirst caused by the hot May sun and the pressure of the crowd. My thirst was a scratchy, parched annoyance starting in the back of my throat, making my tongue a lifeless lump of dried sponge. The departing view of that frosted glass with the green mint leaf caused the sponge to shrivel more as I idly wondered

how anyone could eat hot dogs on a day like this.

But suddenly the juleps, hot dogs, and thirst were forgotten as the sharp, clear notes of a bugle sounded above the dull murmur of the crowds swarming in the infield. The notes spilled out into the hot air with precise, staccato rhythm. "Ta-Ta-ta, ta, ta-Ta." Even as they played, the crowd's murmuring grew greater, and multitudes of brightly hued race fans moved toward the track. Stripes, plaids, checks, polka-dots melted into a solid sea of excited humanity swarming toward the rail. Folding chairs, blankets, and food were abandoned for the more immediate interest at hand. The man asleep shoved his racing form aside, arose and roused the drunk before moving on. The latter staggered up to join the thousands preparing to watch the race.

To assure myself a view of the track, I wedged between a woman standing on a bright red cooler and a gentleman loaded with movie equipment. It was impossible to stand upright, squarely facing the fence that separated us from the rail, so I pushed myself in sideways and crouched as if preparing to sit. The man beside me unintentionally swung around, his camera banging my head and sending me face first into the cool, wire fence. Though my head stung from the blow and my back ached from the cramped position, it was all worth it to see that track—brown, smooth, and fast.

As I crouched there, hemmed in on three sides, I could see the mobile starting-gate rumble across the track to park in my view. The padded doors were open and ready for the horses to enter at post time. The people on the roof tops across the wall were cheering excitedly. The television cameras on top of the grandstand were turned on the main attractions, the race horses. Then the first thoroughbred, dark, slender and spirited, pranced into view. The silk-clad jockey perched high on his back. The sweet haunting melody of "My Old Kentucky Home" floated through the sunlit air and above the hushed voices of the thousands gathered along the track. It was then that I became part of that sea of faceless thousands who melted into the bright and gaudy scenery of Churchill Downs. The Kentucky Derby would soon begin.

My Unpretentious, Beautiful Bug

Tom Bose

I AM A SUBVERSIVE threat to the American economy. In an economy based on periodical obsolescence, frequent major breakthroughs in progress, and rapid turnover a few citizens refuse to cooperate. These individuals of questionable allegiance find it unbearably difficult to part with the old and embrace the new. In an unsympathetic society a few people become attached to a possession, while the forward looking majority eagerly scraps the outmoded or outdated and purchases the very latest and most advanced. As a member of the persecuted minority, I have developed a deep attachment to a little