

her superficially plain appearance and remain to become acquainted with her.

She has her faults, just as no human being is perfect. As many people are prepared and ready for a task except at the moment they are needed, my little bug provides warmth and comfort from her heater in the summer, but in the winter the heater struggles vainly to warm the cold air. As any person might favor a leg or an ankle or an injured arm, my bug favors her second gear, for the proper touch is needed to shift into second without a protest, a rebuke perhaps, from her gearbox. She has defects in her personality, but now that I know her well I respect her for her modesty. I admire her unpretentious design combined with her deepseated beauty. And if some winter day when I drove her to class her heater vigorously poured forth warm air, and she made not a protest as I gingerly shifted her into second gear, she would not be the same car.

## A Memory of Silence

John Greene

As I stood before that high wall of age-worn stone, a nervous chill passed through my body. The gate, two wooden doors darkened by weather and age, cracked open at exactly twelve o'clock. There, in the warm sunlight of a summer afternoon, stood a monument of peace, Catholic Christianity, and silence. The gate shut behind me, and at once I felt as though I were far removed from the world I had just left. The tall buildings which faced me seemed as silent as death itself, for from none of the open windows did I hear the angry shouts of impatience, or the clanging and banging of slamming doors, or even the rustling of papers by the fingers of a tired and bleary-eyed student. The quiet was frightening at first, but as the purpose of my coming here arose in my mind, the peace of these surroundings seemed at least proper, and even magnificent. I thought to myself, "So this is that other world, the world of the Trappist monk—how beautifully simple it is. For three days it's going to be my world too."

Immediately, I was taken to my room, which was quite small but nevertheless very cool and comfortable. Beneath the large French window overlooking a multi-colored flower garden, was my bed, which was surprisingly soft and inviting. At the foot of the bed stood a high desk made of some light wood and stained with a light-oak varnish. Opposite the window was a sink, and above that a towel rack, mostly covered by two white, fluffy towels. The walls were a pastel blue which, when the sun shone brightly, cast a light tint over everything in the room. Hanging on the wall at the head of my bed was a large cross with a plaster of Paris corpse of the crucified Jesus on it. That crucifix, unadorned yet modern in artistic design, suggested to me the austere but never stagnant life of the Trappists: as they live in simplicity and silence, they also grow

in spirituality.

In every action, the monks perform in a relaxed manner; communication is limited to sign language. They seemed to despise the fact that some of their bodily desires and needs, such as the need for sleep and food, could not be overlooked for the much more important task of feeding and restoring the soul; but with confident resignation they live the life as it is prescribed for them in the Rule for their community.

For three days I lived that life as completely as my spiritual maturity would allow. Then, hesitatingly, I walked back through that weather-beaten gate, this time not to be filled with awe at the silence of one world, but to be stricken with fear at the confusion of another. As I struggle to find words to convey my impressions, I relive the entire experience and am overwhelmed with love and respect for the men who live that "hidden" life—day after day, after day, after day.

## Of Things Past

Gretchen Rhett

I SQUIRMED uncomfortably on the hard wooden bench. Try as I might, I was unable to make my feet touch the floor of the hospital waiting room. I was eight and one-half, and I was tired. It was Christmas Eve, and I wanted desperately to go home. I pitied the small forlorn Christmas tree in the corner of the room. Its bright lights seemed to be trying in vain to warm the stark, white walls about it. Unable to look upon the tree any longer, I walked over to the window.

My parents had brought me with them to the hospital to see my grandfather. I closed my eyes and mentally retraced the few short years I had known him. My first unsteady steps in life had carried me happily behind him as we walked through those lazy, fun-filled days which he had shared. Life with him had been dolls and bicycles. It had been fuzzy white puppies brought home in pink hatboxes. Random incidents came one by one into hazy focus. I recalled the greenhouse in which we had spent so many hours, bound together by our mutual interest in flowers. Only this afternoon I had stood in the doorway and gazed at the seven hundred and fifty Easter lilies, which we had so recently planted.

I jumped when a hand on my shoulder brought me back to reality. Silently, I followed my mother down the hall and into a room. I saw my grandfather in the bed at the far side. I reached for my mother's hand but it was not there. In mute terror I walked to the side of the bed. I did not want to look at him; and yet I knew in my heart that I must. All the while he spoke to me I kept my frightened tears within me by the strength of my clenched hands and by the desire to be the kind of person he wanted and needed me to be.