

where he lay. Finally she left the room, and I was left alone with the dead man.

I sat in the only chair in the room which was near the foot of the casket. The air was heavy with the perfume of many flowers which were banked around the coffin. I tried to distinguish the different kinds of flowers. The deep silence of the room was oppressive, and my nerves became tense. I listened for the tiniest sound. The candles blazed up with a hissing sound as a breeze entered the room. Minutes slowly passed and seemed like hours.

The candles formed grotesque shadows on the wall. The roses seemed very large and unnatural, and some calla lilies took on the shape of large vases. As my chair creaked, my heart beat faster, and I was afraid. A lock of the old man's hair was reflected on the wall, and it waved about grotesquely in the candle light. Sometimes it found a place among the roses, and again it stood alone. A chill ran up my spinal column.

The light played over the face of the corpse. As I watched fascinated, I sat on the edge of the chair, and then—one eye opened. It closed, and the other eye opened. The man's lips seemed to quiver in the shadows as if he were about to speak. My body felt numb, and I could not breathe. Something cracked and in that dreadful moment the corpse became a fearful thing. Perhaps he was trying to get out of the coffin, and those were his bones cracking.

I knew that I wanted to leave the room. It took me an eternity to rise from the chair. I walked trance-like across the room. The door banged when I was halfway there. Panic stricken, I rushed to the door and scratched it with my fingernails. Oh, the terror of that moment when the door would not open, and a dead man was following me. I tried to scream but could not. Perhaps he wanted to take me with him on that long journey

that everyone must take alone. I did not want to die, for I was too young. I did not want to be something lifeless and stiff; something to be wept over and then put in the ground. I feared the hereafter for I could not understand it. Something rustled behind me, and a cold hand clasped over mine and slowly pulled me back into the room. I tried to resist, but some hypnotic force was exerted over me. Suddenly I screamed.

I opened my eyes and knew that I was hanging perilously near the edge, and I was covered with cold sweat. My throat hurt for I had really screamed. I heard the clock strike three. I kept my eyes open and did not sleep any more that night, because I was afraid I would dream that dream again.

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## on college aptitude tests

by

arleen wilson

Saturday morning, I had thought, would be an excellent time for taking a college aptitude test, as that time is regularly set aside for our weekly cleaning. But when the time had actually arrived and I was reading in the general directions that it was very important that I do my best, I decided that I would much rather be at home dusting and making beds. I was being called upon to exert a brain that had not yet awakened from a night's sleep.

Why were the practice tests made so easy? They only aroused false hopes, and I found the succeeding examination the more difficult by contrast. Words which are veterans in my vocabulary had suddenly lost their meaning. I discovered that one word

was an antonym of words with which I had thought it synonymous. Others seemed to have developed several spellings, any of which appeared to be as good as any other. Noun suffixes lost their distinction; pronoun cases had no significance; "garrulous" and "gregarious" became twins in my mind.

I read paragraphs which conveyed no definite meaning. I know vaguely that they contained information of importance about Aristotle, pluralism, Queen Isabella, and 273° Centigrade, but I could not discover the relationship between these words and the question below. When I closed my eyes to try and think more clearly, a mass of small squares containing crosses, loomed before me.

All this I could have endured had the matter ended with the taking of the test. But no! I was presented with a card giving me an appointment at the psychological clinic, to learn what score I had made. As I set out for home, I composed, with what was left of my brain, a riddle: Why is a college aptitude test like the wearing of a green cap? The answer is obvious: It is a scheme by which the freshman is made to realize that he must cast aside the feeling of superiority which he has enjoyed for the last year as a high school senior, and once more admit his inferiority as a human being.

## rhythm in ●

### prose literature

by  
betty davenport

One of my greatest ambitions is to learn to write prose literature which will have the strong sure swing of poetry. There are some (lamentably few) authors whose prose creates the same impression as fine music. That

is the sort of writer I would strive to be should I ever gain the distinction of being a real author.

It is quite probable that my reason for so much enjoying rhythm in prose is because I am rather musical. Whether this quality is innate, or was introduced by my years of training in music and dancing, I do not know. The fact remains, however, that my favorite authors are those whose prose is rhythmical and flowing.

This quality does not seem to be so prevalent in American literature as in that of other countries. For instance, our two great women novelists do not write in particularly smooth sentences. Edith Wharton is usually too interested in her characters themselves to try especially for rhythm, although her style is always adequate and dignified. Willa Cather's books are not on the whole very musical though the reader is conscious of some such disposition in "Death Comes for the Archbishop," and "Shadows on the Rocks." For a while in modern American literature, there was a tendency to write about grotesque, disturbing situations in broken, jerky sentences—a tendency, by the way, much less evident in the very new books. Two of the better known and more successful exponents of this system are Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos. Although one could never call Hemingway's style smooth or flowing, there are especially in "Farewell to Arms," certain passages where the short staccato beat of his phrases produces a definite cadence.

Continental literature, even in translation, abounds in rhythm. My French teacher once read to us a paragraph of Anatole France's "Le Livre de Mon Ami," and though I did not understand the meaning, I was conscious of the smooth, even flow of words and sentences. Even in the much older "Aucassin and Nicolette," the prose passages are introduced by the translator's quaint, rhythmical, "Thus speak they, say they, tell they the tale,"