

it bit by bit into the stove. It burned brightly, and the flames, showing thru the cracks in the warped old stove top, lit up the walls of the shack and caused little animated spots of light to dance across the face of the picture of Washington on the wall. The granite coffee pot astraddle the big crack in the stove top, simmered whisperingly, promisingly, before the flames died out. Lifting the pot from the stove, the old man drank from the spout. It was only luke-warm, but it was coffee, and it cheered him half-way down.

Finally the last splinter of the old broom was burned. Habitually, the old man returned to the coal shed. He knew it was empty, but he had to be sure. He searched the floor again. His gnarled, old fingers ached where the joints were bulged, and the spot where the bull had gored his back felt hot, but not warmly so. He spit loudly in defiance of the cold. There just wasn't any coal left.

ALMOST back to the shack he stepped on something hard, and his ankle turned. When he had struggled to his feet he turned the feeble glow of the flashlight down the path. He couldn't believe it. It was a small lump of coal. It was no bigger than a walnut, but it was round and hard, and it was coal.

Returning to the shack and the stove he dropped the lump among the embers. "That's the last of the coal," he said, addressing the stove. "That's all of it. It's the last crumb. When it's gone the fire will be out, and the ashes will get cold."

He thrust his hands into the bowl of the stove and rubbed the aching knuckles over the tiny flame. The flame went out.

"Well," he said aloud, as he returned the lids to the stove top, "I didn't waste any of it. Guess I'll have to light the oil heater the kids gave me for Christmas."



Seascapes

Myrtle Marie Campbell

H. Ec. Sr.

MY BLUE chambray dress fluttered back in the wind as I ran down the weedy path that curved around the cliff, across the black rocks, over the shining little pools, to the soft sand. Beneath me the sand was warm; I pressed my hands into

its warmth. It was as though I had stepped from a closed, chilled room, and I was grateful for the sun upon me.

Ahead, the Pacific spread away, blue-gray, to a hazy horizon. Its vastness was a feeling, not a picture. Here was space in which to stretch my soul. On this shore-line time was held, prisoner. From the repetition of the waves, lapping, whispering, came an endless peace.

Through the crush of hurried campus days, I had ached to clear my mind, to look a long distance without ceasing. Here I found solace in the wind, the gold-beige sand, the quivering water. Somewhere in that far-away blue-greyness was serenity.

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THE town, a clump of dirty box buildings, huddled in the twilight. Long docks leading out to sea dwarfed the town. I wanted to remain quietly a part of the flatness. From a corner of the harbor a red toy boat steamed silently out to sea, pulled through the water by an unseen string. I stepped forward, then back, to evade the stealthy waves. Rippling up to my toes, then retreating, the water left a dark stain in the smooth sand.

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Rain drizzled along the muddy road that clung close to Sitka Bay. The crescent harbor, etched beneath a rose-grey sky, was an outpost by the sullen sea. Through the angry channels, around bulky dark islands, across interminable miles, icy water stretched to the shores of Russia. Dulled in its mist, its only color in subtle greys, the bay whispered to me with the soft wet sounds of a shrouded mystery.

Strange Damask

Frances Foster

Chem. T. Sr.

What has gone into the weaving of this furiously
striped pattern of existence?
How have the threads been twisted,
how has warp bitten into woof,
that a light, shifting on the iridescent moment
turns it dark, and makes it neighbor bright?