

Evening Star

I CREPT out of town with the late afternoon traffic as it unclotted itself from the intersections. I probed and jerked my car futilely among the others and finally settled back among them. My shirt had lost its discipline, my face was sticky and tired, and my eyes hung weary-warm in my head.

I thrust up once behind a dusty gravel truck, then drifted back to follow him past Shack-town, where I might pass in the thinned traffic. He showed no signs of speeding up as we rolled into the dingy "outer village" of scattered, leaning homes, and I began to rhythmically thump the wheel. Then he drove even more slowly and his turning blinker-light began winking red at me. It led my eyes past and ahead of the slowing truck to a girl standing with her face turned toward us. She stood beside the highway in a cinder drive which dropped through ragged stunted boxelders, bare against a squat, plain-white house. She swayed a little, rocking the baby she balanced in its blanket on the tilted old mailbox. She had a peasant wife's body with strong arms and shoulders and broad hips. Her hair was drawn back straight and fixed there somehow, the wind spraying long wisps over the shoulder of her tired, faded dress. The truck dusted to a stop there at the drive, and I watched her for a moment as I waited to pass. Her broad smooth Slavic face turned toward the truck cab, and her strong white smile brightened for a flash as it briefly faced the late sun. I passed then, and in my mirror saw her move quickly and clumsily to the truck, holding the baby up at shoulder height. Her head was tossed back and her mouth was wide, smiling and calling. She swung up to the running board behind the blinking light, holding to the mirror, and held the baby in the

open window briefly. She swung there slowly in the darkening view, cradling the child in one arm and laughing, then resting her head against her arm quietly. The picture drew back smaller and fainter as I drove away, and finally I could see only her dark figure against the truck's side in my mirror, and then only the steadily blinking tiny light. A gentle hill rose up behind and closed away the scene.

I turned off the radio and drove home silently.

— *Larry Syndergaard, Ag. Jr.*

In Lyric Places

The Sea, its odors softly drifting,
Drifting on the quiet air,
Up the dunes and over, floating,
Floating down again till there
Among green tangled dune-grass
I am found reclining, lying,
Lying 'neath a sky of brass,
As the Sun hangs lower — dying.
Of dying too the air here tells,
For scents of soft decay are sifting,
Sifting through the grass and swells
Of sand to tell me of the drifting,
Drifting wood, now come to rest upon
The strand, palm and teakwood, rotting,
Rotting. Seagulls drifting on
The air, black against the red horizon, crying,
Crying the approach of Evening.

— *Art Johnson, Sc. Jr.*