

left, recounting our experiences and planning our course for future nights.

As the days and nights went by, we became more rabid in our appreciation. As we watched, we felt as though we wanted to be more and more with him. When he walked, we wanted to walk, and when he wrote, we wanted to write. We felt that whatever the cost he had to be watched at all times. We could not bring ourselves to waste it.

As time went on we came to a point of frenzy. We began to mutter about him constantly, trying to think of something to do. It was during one of these discussions that one of us finally pointed out that we had to kill him. He showed that he was making fools of us. Then we began to feel for the first time like monkeys, and this incurred our displeasure. We began to see that he was mocking us and having fun, and we saw finally that he was perverted. It was then that we unanimously resolved to kill him. Our first thought on this matter was to eat him alive. But although we initially agreed on the appropriateness of the method, we found it had certain technical flaws. At last, as you know, we decided to machine gun him. At our last meeting in the gallery we remarked how fitting it was that we had selected him -- that he among all people had been elected.

After the assassination we felt a great loss. We didn't meet much after that, and when we did, we only exchanged broad smiles. Our organization seemed to crumble. Our committees of correspondence, which had been our pride and joy, dissolved. We had lost our guiding aims, and our sense of purpose in life. I miss the old times, which I recall now in tender and poignant memories. I have only a few souvenirs to remind me of those times -- a few snapshots that we took of him, and a few personal belongings that we stole. It seems to me now he was like a flower. But he was much more than just a flower, he was a great artist -- a prodigy. But perhaps he is not really dead. Perhaps his spirit lives in others, lifting their daily performances to such great heights. If so, we will find them.

-- Philip L. Sawyer

Auburn, New York

Mr. Lavender

Mr. Lavender's unpainted bungalow was located between Mr. Black's green bungalow and Mr. Brown's white bungalow on a five house street. Across the road from Mr. Lavender's property, Mr. Green lived in his brown bungalow. Next to Mr. Green, Mr. White lived in his newly painted black bungalow. Mr. White was the only man on the five house street who had a sense of humor.

The wives of the four humorless men and Mrs. White always met on Sunday afternoons to talk over such harmless things as budgeting and their husbands. The five male colors convened in one of the five kitchens to drink beer, and to talk seriously about fishing and playing golf. Sometimes, they talked about drinking, while drinking.

One afternoon they consumed more beer than they usually drank on a Sunday afternoon, and their conversation took a strange turn. Mr. White playfully suggested that Mr. Lavender's bungalow should be painted. Mr. Lavender was feeling very happy, and he was only too eager to agree with Mr. White. But the color? They were all very bewildered when they tried to think of a color.

"Such a serious undertaking must be given much thought," the cautious Mr. Black told the other men.

"Agreed," said Mr. Green. Mr. Green was always very likable.

All week long the five men thought about the unpainted bungalow. The next Sunday they talked and talked about it. There seemed to be no solution. All the following week the five men spent sleepless nights worrying over the selection of a color.

"I guess it will have to remain colorless," Mr. Lavender said wearily.

"Perhaps it's just as well," Mr. Brown said with a sigh.

"What do you mean by that?" Mr. Lavender snapped.

"What do you think I mean?" Mr. Brown snarled. Mr. Brown was very irritable from so much thinking and so little sleep.

"Turn to stone," Mr. Lavender said crossly to Mr. Brown.

"Turn to stone yourself," Mr. Brown replied.

"You all act like a pack of dogs," Mr. Black said justly.

"Perhaps you should change your name, Lavender," laughed Mr. White.

But Mr. Lavender was aroused, and Mr. Lavender told Mr. White to turn to stone too.

The next Sunday the wives didn't meet, and the men didn't drink together. The street looked smalled. The paint on the four painted bungalows definitely seemed brighter in the sunshine.

One Sunday Mr. Lavender painted his bungalow black, and shortly afterwards, Mr. Black moved away. Then Mr. Lavender repainted his black bungalow green. Mr. Green accepted a new but less lucrative position with his firm in another city. Mr. Lavender was so pleased over his newly acquired powers that he painted his bungalow a rich brown the very next Sunday. The next day Mr. Brown died.

Mr. Lavender wasn't Mr. Lavender anymore. He repainted his rich brown bungalow white. Mr. White repainted his black bungalow lavender. Mr. White had a sense of humor. But Mrs. White didn't have a sense of humor. She was witty instead. She left Mr. White. Mr. White laughingly burned his house one night. There wasn't anything else he could do. He was still laughing

when the little men in white jackets carried him away.

Now Mr. and Mrs. Lavender are the only people who live on that small four house street. Nobody wants to live in the three empty buildings. Some people say that these three empty bungalows smell strongly of paint.

For years Mr. Lavender has been repainting his bungalow a new color every Sunday. He must like his work. Mr. Lavender is a house painter by trade.

-- John Stevens Wade

Monmouth, Maine

1

Reading Pliny
in a broken book
my Grandfather once looked through
Quid platanon opacissimus?
Quid illa porticus vernâ semper?
I remember his house outside Baltimore
the banked lawn and sycamores
over a low stucco wall
and the car roared up
over the top of time
into the Twenties
the house coming into view.
"That's where we lived,"
my Father said
when he brought us back there for a look.

2

This book
with its broken back
thumbed pages
and letters to a friend
is like my Grandfather's
fortune
in
10/10/29.

-- Ben Pleasants

Los Angeles, California