

AN OLD SCHOOLTEACHER VISITS THE ANCIENT WORLD

How I envy her! Three weeks she spent in Greece. Huffing and puffing among broken marbles: sweat, sun. Puzzling over classic ruins. Trying to recall which god did what to which mortal. After two weeks the monuments began to look pretty much the same, she reports.

Learning to think in drachmas: 35 to the dollar. To buy this piece of fabric, that jar of olives. Returning, a tour group of twenty retired Americans. Nothing to report through customs, except a bottle of liquor.

And this small tinfoil packet of soil from the floor of the Parthenon, smuggled, which she takes from her handbag to show me, slave to my desk.

MALARKY

When we left Chicago for Arizona we bought a tu-tone blue 1952 Chevy brand new right off the show room floor from a shark named Malarky.

With a name like that, said my Father, he has to be a crook. I remember standing on the front seat (I was only 3 feet tall in those days) and looking out over the shiny hood gleaming with at least a million highlights. We took possession.

Malarky turned around and sold the car to three other parties. But we had it in Arizona and it was obviously ours. My Mother spent five dollars in dimes calling Malarky.

I told you he had to be a crook said my Father. So my Mother threatened him with the Better Business Bureau. We promptly received the title by the next post.

Years later my Dad spotted his wily mug in the Sunday paper MALARKY INDICTED IN FRAUD CASE. With a name like that he had to be a crook.