

—NEBRASKAN LITERARY SECTION—

A Blue, Cheap World, A Man And A Horn

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following short story was submitted to the Nebraska Literary Society by Boyd D. Howells. The Nebraska staff feels that this manuscript is more than worthy of presentation in our pages...

By BOYD D. HOWELLS

The July day turned broadcloth shirts into sponge-like membranes soaking up, becoming saturated with perspiration...

The new city was playing its summer blues song. The big man on the street corner and the quiet, small audience in the midst of a population of stage hands...

The two were waiting for a streetcar. In a way, they were not really waiting, but just standing there like people who are in a particular hurry...

A little bell said, "ching-ching-ching, ching-ching-ching." An antique streetcar rolled, rambled down the street, stopping at corners like a mechanical toy...

"Rehearsal in fifteen minutes," the white man said. "The boss wants to hear what you've got."

The man set the trumpet on the dressing table. The horn was still in its cloth sack—a sack which should have contained corn meal or flour...

"First thing you've gotta remember," the manager said this as if he had said it many times before, "is that these people don't give a damn that you've played New York. They don't give a damn what your name is unless it's Armstrong or Teagarden. And they don't give a damn about anything else except your horn and the music it makes."

The big man looked down at the same kind of manager that he had known many times before making the same kind of speech that he had heard many times before.

"You could do with a hit tonight, you know," he knew.

"A hit might put you back on the road to New York. Oh, I know you boys (he meant niggers) all right. You're all dying to get to Harlem. Especially the ones like you who've been there once and know what it's like to be high on the hog."

The big man's head was looking at the manager. His eyes were lost under his forehead. He listened.

"Why did you fall, anyway? The O-pipe wasn't it? Yes, that was it. Turned yourself over to the cops and took the cure. Yeah, boy, you lost a lot of friends—too many—when you did that, didn't you?"

he blew the horn his mind wandered back to the time when he had been taking the cure. Lying on his little cot, with a dozen horns blaring off-key in his feverish brain, the big man had had a dream—a blue dream of life and death tangled up together?

Like a clean room with a clean girl in a lacey, white veil dancing on its walls, the strange death wagon surged on, not feeling the heat, not straining. He rested his head on the pillowless, bed-like arrangement of satcen soaked with scented salts. Smells were the last experiences that he remembered—remembered vividly—remembered smelling like a florist shop as he lay serenely in front of a backdrop of wire and wood and ribbon and flowers. People came to view his corpse—people with heavy shoes, stomping—stomping—stomping. Each of them must have been different. Some wept—he heard them. The ones who had loved him sobbed as if adrift in a familiar molasses world—where had he known that molasses world before? Then the men with the cold, tickleless hands came and picked up his box and arranged his hands. He wanted to move his hand himself, but he was dead; so the dead fishes did the job. He had lived like a coward, like those people who fiddled around him now with deadfish hands and sawlow complexions and dark, sunk-in eyes. He relaxed. And the death wagon hummed along the highway; the death wagon was not sad at all.

"You're on," a white man's voice said. The boy had wiped the golden horn off with a clean, dry cloth while he was waiting for the man's turn to go on stage. The big man knew that here was a good boy.

On stage the big man unfolded the trumpet from his bosom. He made a wheezing sound through the horn. Then he kicked a tin can through the instrument just to see if it would fit. Then, slowly, he began to push his soul through the horn. Whiskey bottles were neglected by the patrons as the little knote in a string through a molasses world—a blue world that was suddenly becoming bright and gaudy alive and, most of all, cheap. He made them love

'Y' Travelers Add Pleasure To Activities On Late Trip To U.N., U.S. Government

chance to listen on the earphones which carry five languages. They visited the post office in the UN, where they purchased stamps honoring the organization. In their spare time, the group attended the Radio City Stage Show, "Easter Pageant" and they saw the Rockettes, a famous dancing group featuring 60 girls. They toured the Rockefeller Building and rode on the Staten Island Ferry Boat.

"Wish You Were Here," was the title of a play which some members of the group attended. Some of the other members saw Irene next year.

A traveler could spend several weeks in either city and still not see everything. But the real excitement comes when a person attempts to do all the sight-seeing and visiting in the small amount of time available in ten days of travel.

Ten University students with their chaperone, took just such a trip during the latter part of March. Their trip was sponsored by the National Council of the YWCA and YMCA and the group attended government seminars in each city.

Ginny Robertson, Chlorey Ode, Lee Spencer, Carol Haerer, Amy Palmer, Mary Sue Lundt, Jerry Jensen, Dale Hutchins, Gerd Hoffman, John Greer and Rex, Dick Gaty, sponsor, were the students who visited the east coast from Nebraska.

Twenty-seven colleges from 17 states were represented at the seminars. The groups spent three days in Washington and four days in New York.

The purpose of the trip is to acquaint the students with the functions of the government and give them a chance to see it in action. They traveled by bus from Nebraska to the coast.

Upon their arrival in Washington, the delegation was greeted by the Nebraska senators and representatives and had breakfast with them. They also visited these men's offices.

Two committee hearings presided over by Senator Robert Taft were on the agenda for the group. The Washington student seminar consisted of two speakers who discussed the state and foreign policy. It was entitled, "Meet your Government."

their cheapness—the cheaper the better. He made them love their blues. They had all come here looking for something—themselves—in a fifth with setup. How they were finding themselves, not in a bottle, but in a sweet horn. All kinds of walls fell down, crumbled, in a glory-glory way as the brass cried big tears. The trumpet cried on, higher and trumper and higher.

Backstage, the boy listened to the sweet horn and stared with those big, wonderful, nigger-boy eyes at the Negro, Joe, in charge of the stage-door. Joe was a hollow man, not good for much anymore. The music had ruined his stomach long ago and his false teeth and a paper lip had kept him out from under the spotlight for so long that had forgotten how to sweat. He said, like stage-door-men do, in a rickety, old desk chair with his feet propped on the doorkill, barring the alley entrance. He was paying no attention to the sweet horn as he read "Dime Western." He hated cowboys.

The big, black Negro coughed into the mouthpiece, held the spit-valve open, let saliva dribble onto his pin-striped vest, wiped the saliva away with his hand, and then stood quietly erect with his horn shining in his big black hands. The people were hurting—hurting bad.

The applause was not even at all, but riotous. The big man did not bow. He received their screams and clapping with a gratification that pulled his eyeballs back into his head until he felt that he could almost see out of his ears—if only these damned eyeballs would turn sideways. His body broke at the knees. The big man folded slowly until he was on his knees with his head bowed and his golden horn, wet with perspiration, clasped to his bosom. Maybe he wept.

The boy took the horn with the perspiration on it from the dressing table and began to wipe the bell. The big man sat quietly with his eyeballs lost in his ebony head. Out from a young Negro woman, a newcomer, was singing the blues.

"Usta wonder, Usta wonder, Usta wonder, Usta wonder, They play the blues all day."

Ivy Day Racing Form

Black Masque Handicap

Table with columns: Horse, Stable, Trainer, Odds, Comments. Lists various horses and their details for the Black Masque Handicap.

Thirteenth Annual Handicap

Table with columns: Horse, Stable, Trainer, Odds, Comments. Lists various horses and their details for the Thirteenth Annual Handicap.

Technical Institute Entries Begin For Foreign Students

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Foreign students, desiring to participate in programs of technical co-operation may apply for a special Institute to be held this summer.

The dinner will be held in Parlor X and is to be the final meeting of the organization for this school year.

To be eligible a foreign student must be completing his bachelor's degree or higher level of training this year; must be returning to his home country this year; must be preparing for a career in agriculture, health, education, industry, community service, or public administration, and must come from Latin-America, South East Asia, the Near East, or Africa.

Interested foreign students should contact Dr. Rosenoff in Room 103, Administration Building, for further details and application forms.

The main objective of the program is to study ways in which technically trained students can best utilize their knowledge and skills in the service of their home countries.

The seminar series are informal discussion groups for faculty and students. Coffee is served during the meetings which are held in the Faculty Lounge.

A castaway of a desert isle, following another nearby shipwreck, hauled a girl clinging to a barrel from the water.

"How long have you been here?" asked the girl.

"Thirteen years," replied the castaway.

"All alone? Then you're going to get something you haven't had for thirteen years," replied the dripping dame.

"You don't mean to tell me there's beer in that barrel," he said.

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