NOTES AND SHORT ESSAYS

Five Formerly Unpublished Hemingway Stories

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Peter Griffin, author of the new biography of Ernest Hemingway, *Along with Youth: Hemingway, The Early Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), includes in his volume five short stories previously unpublished. They were Hemingway's first halting efforts to become a serious writer after his return to the States from Italy. He was full of memories from the front, bursting with his old enthusiasms for hunting, fishing, and boxing, and he was ready now to give himself seriously to the dream of becoming the very best writer. And he had time.

He wrote diligently, and he sent some pieces to *Redbook* and others to *The Saturday Evening Post,* but they were rejected. He tried again, with no success, so he put them away. He had much yet to learn about crafting a story, about creating characters, about a prose style appropriate to his material, but he was certainly learning. These stories contain glimpses of the Hemingway that was to be, as Griffin says, but little of the magic is yet discernible.

"The Mercenaries" (pp. 104-12) is one of the first serious stories that Hemingway wrote after his war experience. It is told in the first person by Rinaldi Renaldo. Renaldo meets two men in Cambrinus's prohibition bar in Chicago, who then attempt to persuade him to join them in their plan to go to Peru to fight against Chile. One of the men is an Italian-American, Perry Graves, a large-bodied coarse man, and the other is a Frenchman, Denis Ricaud, a refined gentleman. As the three visit in the bar over their drinks, conversation turns to the war in Italy and Graves asks Renaldo, "Ever hear of Il Lupo?" Yes, Renaldo had heard of him, a legendary Italian war hero. Graves proceeds to tell a tale that stretches to five pages in which he is challenged by Il Lupo (The Wolf) to a duel with swords, but Graves agrees to a duel with pistols. Il Lupo cheats by drawing his pistol early, and Graves shoots Il Lupo's pistol from his hand, then coolly leaves the scene. Graves brands Il Lupo as a coyote, a coward, in his reminiscence, not a wolf. But Ricaud says no, Il Lupo is a hero as his other war exploits prove.

The story anticipates the kind of thing that Hemingway did so successfully later. It is violent, and it reveals Hemingway's attention to detail. Graves, for example, pulls a bit of tobacco from his cigarette, which he places under his tongue, before lighting up. That becomes a hallmark for the hero. He does it twice. But Graves's narrative is offered in surprisingly long speeches with very un-Hemingwayesque language. Hemingway had not yet in this story learned to make every word count. His opening scene is badly worded. It includes, for example, this sentence: "When you enter the room, and you will have no more chance than the zoological entrant in the famous camel-needle's eye gymkana of entering the room unless you are approved by Cambrinus, there will be a sudden silence." The grammar and the diction are both unfortunate.

"Crossroads—An Anthology" (pp. 124-27) is the second "story" included in Griffin's book. It is a series of five sketches rather much like the vignettes of *In Our*

Time. The first is "Pauline Snow," a bit reminiscent of Luz in "A Very Short Story," and "Ed Paige" is about an amateur boxer who improbably wins a prize for going six rounds, but never does any significant thing in life thereafter—he wears his honor out. "Bob White" comes home to America with the "real lowdown" on the French, and "Old Man Hurd—and Mrs. Hurd" is a look at two ne'er-do-wells who somehow survive on their farm. "Billy Gilbert" tells of an Indian hero of the war who comes home to northern Michigan wearing a kilt. He becomes, of course, an object of ridicule. Besides, Billy's wife has left him in his absence, and nothing is left on his farm, so he wanders on his way with a back pack. There is no thematic unity in the pieces, but the prose has in these sketches become recognizably Hemingway—the sentences are short, the diction simple, and the characters well conceived. An ironic tone is noticeable also.

The third is entitled "Portrait of the Idealist in Love" (pp. 161-64). It has one figure, Ralph Williams, who writes a long letter to Isabelle, his future sister-in-law, in which he tries to justify some of the things in himself that she apparently despises. The letter reveals a stuffy kind of person in its style and in its mawkish tone. If Hemingway meant to portray such a person, he succeeded; yet the story-frame for the letter is so brief that the "story" can hardly be called that. Ralph Williams emerges as a fussy prig through what he writes, but he exists almost without a narrative setting. It seems an exercise, not a finished piece.

"The Ash Heel's Tendon" (pp. 174-80) is a developed story about a professional killer who always gets his man. He is cold, ruthless, expensive, and efficient. He is Hand-of-God Evans, or Hand, for short. Hand comes to a mid-western town and kills one Scotty Duncan, cleanly and deliberately. He leaves unhurriedly and proceeds to similar executions across the country until, two years later, he returns to the same town and place on a new assignment. Two stool pigeons believe that they are the marks, but Jack Farrell, the "czar of the Fifteenth Street police station," knows that he is Hand's game. Jack has over the years carefully studied his man and learned Hand's real name—Guardalabene—so that he has a theory: he believes Hand will be distracted from his constant wariness by hearing the Italian tenor Caruso sing the line "Laugh, Pagliacco, though your heart be breaking." And so it does. Jack Farrell sets Hand up in the very bar he had killed Scotty Duncan in, with the cooperation of the bartender who had witnessed that killing, and Jack succeeds in capturing the vicious killer without firing a shot. Unfortunately, again, Hemingway has not yet learned his trade. His "Killers" is a masterpiece, but this tale has unconvincing dialogue and uses what Griffin calls Hemingway's "public lecturer's voice" (p. 123) and ineffective underworld slang. Consider this opening sentence: "In a former unenlightened time there was a saying, 'In vino veritas,' which meant roughly that under the influence of the cup that queers a man sloughed off his dross of reserve and conventionality and showed the true metal of his self." Then he adds, after a line, "In the rude nomenclature of our forefathers these revealed conditions were denominated in order—laughing, sloppy crying and fighting jags." It is easy to understand why such clumsy prose kept the story from the light of day. Not all of the story is as ineptly phrased, of course, but with opening lines like these, many magazine readers might have gotten no further. The editors were correct.

The fifth story is "The Current" (pp. 200-09). Hadley thought it was wonderful—"The best prose you've ever written," she said (p. 200). It features Stuyvesant Byng, who sets out to propose marriage to Dorothy Hadley, a red haired woman whom he had known since childhood. During the intervening years, however, he has philandered, he has dabbled at a dozen things like polo and golf, and always done well. He is wealthy, very handsome, and undisciplined. But he assumes that Dorothy will turn him down, and she does, but on second thought, she agrees to consider marriage if he will take up something "hard" and stick with it. He decides to become a boxer, and devotes himself to the physical regimen of the boxer, though he continues to doubt the wisdom of his choice. He is capable, however, and he wins bout after bout until he is matched with the middle-weight champion, Ape McGonigle. They fight, and Stuy almost loses; he is woozy from a tricky blow. But he recovers, he knocks Ape out, and Dorothy confesses her love for him. She is won.

The story is not well crafted, and though the "public voice" is not as prominent as in "The Ash Heel's Tendon," the prose is undistinguished, even clumsy: ". . . Stuy's right swung to a spot a little to one side of the point of the jaw of a certain Hebrew Gentleman with an Irish name, and Stuy stooped and putting his gloves under the Celtic Semite's arms carried him to his corner while the crowded auditorium shouted and yelled for Slam Bing." The "current," says Stuyvesant, is that constant love he has had for Dorothy for many years. But nothing in the story gives credence to the idea of constant love on the part of either Stuy or Do (as he calls her) and the story of handsome Stuy's development into a middleweight champion is not credibly motivated.

Hemingway had yet to demonstrate the skill that we have come to appreciate in his short stories. But all artists need time and room to grow, and these stories reveal glimpses of what was to come. It was essential experimentation; the artist had still to perfect his metier.

A New Kind of Male-Female Relationship: A Note on Saul Bellow's *The Dean's December*

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In most of Bellow's novels the relationships between the protagonists, all male, and women, can best be described as failures. Characters like Tommy Wilhelm of *Seize the Day* (1956), Eugene Henderson of *Henderson the Rain King* (1959), and Moses Herzog of *Herzog* (1964) are either separated or divorced, and though they have affairs, they seem to be in perpetual flight from any kind of stable, trusting union with a female partner. Artur Sammler of *Sammler's Planet* (1970) is an elderly widower, but his view of women, especially his sexy relative Angela Gruner, verges on the misogynic. In *Humboldt's Gift* (1973) Charlie Citrine repeats the pattern established in *Seize the Day* and *Herzog*, trying to flee the wrath of his ex-wife and acting the part of an ageing Lothario to his beautiful mistress Renata.

The Bellow heroes have typically suffered from a phobic and paranoid reaction to women and their expectations of love and emotional commitment. As a result they become isolated, lose contact with their children, and suffer from the guilt feelings that follow. Their new girl friends they regard with a mixture of wariness and desire, and seem incapable of surrendering themselves in devotion and love to any one of them. Herzog is attracted to Ramona, but fears entrapment by her, and Citrine loses Renata to another man because of his indecision about her. Without fully realizing it, these protagonists maintain a distance between themselves and women which blocks the development of a lasting relationship. The women, however, perceive this clearly, also Ramona, who tries to break down Herzog's reserve