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# UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE

(Written for "The Listener" by J.F.)

IN those days when you came home from school you felt unhappy, you didn't know why. As if all day you had been locked with happy things like school and Miss Heafy reading French poetry or reciting with her grey eyes fixed earnestly on her book, and her voice full of sadness, "Once Paumanok, when the lilac-scent was in the air." As if you had been inside the real world but now, at four-fifteen walking up the path to the funny little house with the rusty roof and the cracked front window, you were

and Red-Tipped Governor, and wind his fishing-reel and sit in the front of the car; who had sung you to sleep at nights—

Come for a trip in my airship,  
Come for a sail midst the stars,  
who had brought home coconuts and oranges on Saturday nights and made Santa Claus come twice in one year when you and Don and Susie and Joan had chicken-pox. But it was funny about Dad. He shouted at and sometimes struck Don when they argued and he spoke harshly to you and anyway you had always been frightened about money—ever since the time Mr. Mason's



"Can I take two guineas to-morrow? For my matric. fee.... please?"

being unlocked from all that mattered. Unlocked and made lonely.

You felt lonelier that day in October because Miss Heafy had reminded you about the two guineas. She had been correcting your précis and she had suddenly looked up at you. "By the way, Doreen, I don't think you've given me your two guineas. Can you let me have them to-morrow?" And you had smiled and said carelessly, "I'll bring them to-morrow, Miss Heafy. I forgot all about it." And then you had blushed because you hadn't forgotten about it at all; it was only because you were frightened to ask Dad.

You were still frightened to ask him and as you walked up the path you tried to imagine what you would say.

"It's for matric. The entries have to be in by the end of the week. The entry fee's two guineas, Dad. I promised Miss Heafy I'd bring it to-morrow." Dad would be reading his paper or talking politics with Don. He'd say something about bills and you'll have to wait till the end of the month till I've settled with Mason's and then he'd go on talking about the Government and farming and maybe he'd raise his voice if Don didn't agree with him.

It was silly, you supposed, to be frightened of Dad—who had taken you for picnics when you were small, who had caught butterfish and crabs for you, and let you handle the Greenwell's Glory

bill had been 20 pounds and you told your best friend about it and Dad found out and was angry, you didn't know why. You had felt proud and awed to have a bill of 20 pounds. Of course it made Mum cry and Dad thump his fist on the table, but hadn't you and Susie and Joan and Don sworn a secret oath in the bedroom—we'll be millionaires, see if we don't?

You didn't care about money now of course. You were 15. You were in love with Miss Heafy and you used note-paper that folded in two, and you read Keats, pretending to be Madeline with Porphyro's heart on fire for you, and Isabella weeping over her pot of basil, and La Belle Dame Sans Merci, "full beautiful, a faery's child"; you read Shelley too, and Shelley had renounced all worldly wealth, so you didn't much care about money, except of course about the two guineas and Miss Heafy smiling and saying "Thank you, Doreen," as if she had known all along that you would bring them and that you weren't poor even if you did have to wear your uniform in the week-ends.

SO you walked into the kitchen that afternoon. Mum was there writing a letter to Auntie Winifred and Gipsy the cat was purring knottily three-threads-in-a-thrum, three-threads-in-a-thrum, under her chair.

"Well, Dor," she said. "How did school go to-day?" You wanted to say "Mum,