

winter, though not so many. A Dutch friend told me lately that in Holland there are no outdoor flowers from October until late March. There, the dramatic, resurrecting meaning of Spring is patent. In our own countryside it means specific jobs. But I'm an urban New Zealander, and I doubt if Spring can mean anything much to me, except as a rather untidy lead-in to our Summer, which really is a season. We have no festivals in Spring, except the Ranfurly Shield, and that is the climax of an old season, not the blossoming of a new.

—Dennis McDeldowney

SPRING . . . S.P.R.I.N.G . . . no good for an anagram—five consonants and only one vowel. Hair spring? Main spring? Spring board? Springbok? . . . might be something there. Spring . . . Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king. The year's like a Ferris wheel with the months hung on it like those seat things.

No Good for Spring comes where An Anagram nine, ten and eleven come on a clock face.

Away back in primary school days Spring meant coming out of the dark tunnel of Winter into the wonderful months of bare legs and sandals, bathing, tea on the beach. Even at High School, end-of-year exams looming up hardly cast a shadow. At "Varsity," last minute swotting in the Gardens, the Spring Meeting, Relax Ball, boronia at sixpence a large bunch—the price of three morning teas.

Then later Spring was the season that somehow got lost between the annual balance—July 31—and the Christmas rush. You knew it was there, but before you could find a minute to pause and look at the blossom here was Christmas, and once again you hadn't had time to buy nearly all your Christmas presents. Blossom? That reminds me. Our flowering apricot began flowering in May and our pear tree burst madly into bloom last Autumn with the fruit still hanging on it. Even the seasons have no sense of responsibility these days. . . Oh, well, it'll have to be a quotation: "When the hounds of — are on winter's traces." Or should it be "Winter's traces?" Where's my Swinburne?

—R.W.H.

WHAT one feels about Spring is conditioned by one's calling and station in life. The lawyer reflects with complaisance that Spring is the season of vagrant fancies and will probably give rise to a reasonable crop of divorces. The undertaker smiles fondly at his stock of "caskets," sure that the aged and ailing who have survived the rigours of winter will almost certainly fall victims to the vacillations of Spring.

It All Depends on the Lambs

"Spring," proclaims the purveyor of nostrums and elixirs, "is the season of gastric upsets; take Brown's powders; they will fix you"—they probably do. No, the only people whose thoughts can stray to the most hackneyed and seasonable of themes are the very young, the very poor or the very rich, the uncommitted; those people who are beyond poverty or wealth, which is almost tantamount to being beyond good and evil, or those very great men, like Melchizedek or Monsieur Sartre, who do not have to refer their destiny to the caprice or anger of a higher authority.

As for me I am a sheepfarmer. Spring to me means lambs and lambs mean

practically everything: success or failure, rage, exultation, despair; champagne and oysters or Franciscan poverty. Their plenty or paucity will mean a new car, a new coat, a holiday, or making do with old ones and staying at one's own fireside. In other words, Spring means to me the chances and changes, the beautiful diversity of life itself.

—Cotsford Burdon

IT'S inexcusable the way the seasons down here in the South are beginning to conform so much: not one of them wants to step out of line and pretty soon there won't be any seasons; only weather. The run-up to Spring starts now around the end of June, when the first blossom comes out; and we've had fires on Christmas Day. The heart could leap to the advent of Spring,

No More Than a Necktie

to a Spring that came rushing out of the gardens in all its glad rags, but no heart can keep up a flutterment over this Prufrocky, anxious putting on and putting off of a slightly daring neck-tie.

In the heart of Canada, now, things really spring. I spent months there, in a temperature that never got as high as freezing-point. Then one, inspired morning the houses, the alleys, the gardens up and chucked the lot into the roadway, the whole white, weighty, inert, stupid mass of the winter, and it poured away over your boot-tops into the rivers. The rivers fractured into icebergs with a ceremony of cannon-shots, and like Tom the Piper's Son, Spring went roaring down the street. And I roared, too. Everybody roared. It was something to write home about.

—Augustus

MY uncle left me a cuckoo clock. The clock wouldn't go, it's true, but I never cared then what time was, so the gift was perhaps not unseasonable.

Came my favourite season of the long winter nights—cosy, warm, longer than seemed usual because crammed with 2YC, 3XN, 12B, 2ZA and other audible manifestations of man's ingenuity. I decided to fix the cuckoo clock. It went for a while, then "Cuck—," the bird said, and there it stuck, with its silly wooden head half out.

Untidy, Uncertain, Unconstant . . .

No horologist. I decided to fix the cuckoo clock. It went for a while, then "Cuck—," the bird said, and there it stuck, with its silly wooden head half out. The seasons seem to me to go round and round like a chain letter, but if there's one season I dislike it's the Spring. Somewhere ahead, I know—about six or seven months ahead—is the summer, full of heat and flies and holiday trains and other things I prefer to miss. (Yet who could not be fascinated by a stuck cuckoo, a half-harbinger in a half-mended clock?)

Yes, I dislike the Spring. It overrates itself as much as a woman in a new hat. It smiles, freezes, or bursts into tears for no apparent reason. It is untidy, uncertain, unconstant, unutterable. Spring reminds me too much of myself.

P.S. I forgot to tell you what was wrong with the clock. It was the spring.

—Denis Glover

THE first touch of warmth in the air and I realise with lightsome heart that it is now too late to start sewing

all that corduroy I bought in the autumn to make into slacks for the children for the winter, and instead, I can go down town and feast my eyes upon the floral prints blossoming in all the windows, and allow sleek young salesmen with hair smelling spring-like

of Mimosa and Wild Violets that competes with the intoxicating factory-fresh smell of dimity and organdie and polished cotton to sell me yards and yards of vernal dress-lengths which I can store in my cupboard and pull out every now and then to gladden my eyes during the long dull drizzly summer days till they are buried in their turn beneath the brown and russet drifts of autumn's corduroy.

And if some grossly materialistic member of the family to whom Spring suggests the need for a new lawnmower should ask why I don't first use up some of the stuff I bought last spring I shall reply that only the aesthetically obscene would dream of exhuming last year's blossoms to greet this year's Persephone.

—M.B.

NOT much, living nowadays where there's no Spring to speak of. Winter sales of woollen remnants yield to swimsuits, cottons, but no Spring. Spring cleaning's urged in advertisements; but until the kowhai blooms and we realise we haven't done ours yet, Spring itself's not with us. Maybe this year the season's on a Thursday, or we miss it altogether.

So Spring for me is forever far behind and miles away. One Cambridge afternoon, perhaps, wider and lighter than any yet, urging us to grease and put away skates in winter box (which until now was the summer box), spend a week's pocket money on four coloured wooden tops, swipe leather thongs from Father's mountain boots (not needed till July, then the row breaks), and issue imprudently barefoot into the green light, there to whip tops till dusk.

Or Spring in the woods of Gottingen, spread with yellow, white and blue, the undergrowth crashing to the stout boots of Teutons who yell "Entzuckend!" at every other step.

Or Spring in South Africa, every sluit gurgling yellow water, daisies in impossible colours blooming where you'd swear none could, apricots flowering in millions, the baboons descending from the mountains to play horrid pranks on foothill-tethered goats.

Or Spring in Toronto, dirty snow yielding to squid-black mud, overheated, fur-covered women slushing among dreams of identical navy-white Easter outfits, flowered bonnets, and the later blessed offloading of children into summer camps.

Or Spring in North Queensland, pink yams blooming in each abandoned tinnine, striped September lilies in the grass, snakes under every log.

Or Spring in the air! Sir, Spring in the air! Why the devil should I, young man?—certainly not in Auckland.

—Sarah Campion

