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Puberty

Charles Corry

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before the road turned east across the tracks.

I clinched my teeth and with all the will power I could muster, again reached for the carburetor. Even today, I sincerely believe that I could have held on to endure the murderous voltage until the motor choked down, but Tommy Joe was a lesser man. Immediately, he let out a hair-raising scream and begged me to let go: better to be run over by the train.

Less than a block to go before the crossing. The lead engine had pulled slightly further ahead, and I knew that there was no way that we could miss crashing into the side of that northbound freight train. Then it suddenly dawned on me that there was but one thing to do: abandon ship and take our chances.

After the noise, dust, scooter and our bodies settled, and the train rocked lazily on up the tracks, we got up and gingerly brushed ourselves off and checked the scooter. To my amaze-

ment, it was, as we were, not in total ruin. The handle bars tilted at a queer angle, and the broken head lamp loosely dangled by a wire. But that was all. We were in a similar state of disrepair. Some areas of our bodies were not garnished with bruises, abrasions, or contusions, and in spite of slight limps, we could both still walk. For days, however, we were to wear our battle mementos with much the same humility as a less-than-pure Puritan girl once wore her scarlet "A."

The deepest wounds, however, were to our pride. I will never forget having to push the Whizzer on past the post office gathering toward home and my waiting father, nor the open sport for days to follow in the sleepy community of Grundy, Texas, about "them crazy kids on that dang-blasted contraption." But now, thirty years later as I stare out the window on a blustery, autumn day, I can't help but smile.

Charles Corry

Puberty

I feel the shock of sheer cloth
Slice the dark over satin skin
— Satan's delight — enter
The lion's mouth — desire surges
trembling hands on

I am alive and must — must not
Am I branded the Sinner? — I am

My heart races past thought
The flood in my groin denies God
Dilutes reason with hot lust
Drowns thick guilt in rising
pressure of blood

I am alive and must — must not
Am I branded the Sinner? — I am