

# *Alien Culture*



FINAL ISSUE

*Miss Carter*



FINAL ISSUE

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## EDITORIAL:

This, dear readers and friends is the last and final issue of Alien Culture. It also marks my dropping out of fandom. Why? Pretty much the usual reasons, which you should know by heart after being fans, and then a special lack of time due to college..... Oh, I'll still get the 'zines, both pro and amateur, but publishing and correspondence are both going. Once I'm out of school, and a little more settled than at present, I may take another crack at publishing a fanmag. If I do, it'll be on a far different scale than this one, but that's an item from the realm of dreams.

Thanks from myself and AC go specially to Joe Baker and Dr. Keller, without whom this fanzine would probably never have been born. Joe got the cover & came through with some material of his own, and Dr. Keller's stories will be long remembered by all. Next, J. C. May, Evan Appelman, Ed Cox, and Rick Sneary get a laurel wreath for coming through with a lot of material and a lot of much needed encouragement. Last, comes Leif Ayen, who is helping me get this issue together and already has helped me with the reprint of the first issue.

Unused money from subscriptions, I hope to return some time in the next few months, probably by postal money orders. I'll get those and also the unused manuscripts out as soon as possible, inasmuch as I'm very busy now... Wherever possible, the first issue reprints are being used to help fill out subscriptions.

Well, to put it briefly, so long.....

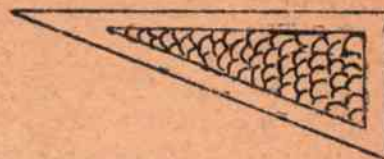
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ALIEN CULTURE is a fanmag published by the editor at his home address (Jim Leary, 4718 Forest Hills Road, Rockford, Illinois). This is the fourth and last issue of AC, and all four issues are available, at 50¢ per 4, 40¢ per 3, 30¢ per 2, or 15¢ per 1 copy. AC is not only a non-profit magazine, but it was also intended (I'm beginning to think) to lose money.

## HEAVENLY TALENT



by

JIM HARMON

St. Peter beamed happily at his next customer.

"Ah yes, Peter Jones. State of preparation July 5, 1919 A.D. to August 17, 1948 A.D. Point of departure.... Ah well, I suppose you're familiar with your own record. Let's see. You go to the third level. Yes, but there's lots of red tape to go through first, you know. Those blessed Democrats!"

A little nervously, but nevertheless aroused, Peter Jones spoke up, "Don't tell me there's any of them up here?"

"Ah yes, yes indeed. Although we have more Republicans."

"Well, I knew they must be somewhere out of this world."

"Hardly out of this world my boy. Not all of them go to the other place."

"Just a phrase we have on Earth, St. Peter," the other Peter replied.

"Ah yes, you do come from Earth don't you?"

Before the ex-mortal could reply, a scholarly looking angel interrupted.

"Earth? Did I hear someone mention Earth?"

"Yes indeed. This fortunate soul right here."

"Well," replied the angel in question, "It's a small heaven. I'm going to Earth on my F-L assignment."

"An F-L!" exclaimed St. Peter, "My, my, how many thousand years did it take you to get another one?"

"I lost count," replied the angel, "But tell me, who is this lad?"

"Oh, his name is Peter too. Peter Jones. He's from Earth."

"My, my, this is a small heaven. You know, it's been ages since I've been down there. Is it a nice place?"

"No, not very," replied the ex-mortal, "Wars all the time and starvation because of them and floods and earthquakes."

"Yes, yes," murmured St. Peter, "Those disasters are due to the wars. Can't those mortals take a hint?"

"My goodness, yes," exclaimed the angel, "I remember a woman named Eve from the time I was last there, who --"

"I've heard that one," said Peter Jones, "By the way, who are you?"

"Why," answered St. Peter, "This is Alphonse. He's very well-known through out all of Heaven for his wonderful talent of --"

"Please," blushed Alphonse, "It's nothing."

"Maybe you're right," mused St. Peter, "Ah yes, it certainly got you into a Heavenly mess the last time you had an F-L."

"Pardon me," asked Jones, "But what is an F-L assignment?"

"Oh," answered Alphonse, "That's a Free-Lance Assignment, on which you can go wherever you think you are most needed in the Universe."

"Ah no, no," interjected the Heavenly Gate-Keeper, "Just the First Galaxy, according to that new rule."

"New rule?" asked Peter Jones.

"Yes," said Alphonse, "Passed just 51 million years ago this April."

"Due to over-population," supplied St. Peter.

"Oh," said the ex-Earthling, "Just where are you going on your F-L?"

"Well," answered the angel, "Earth seems to be in quite a mess, so I think I'll clean it up. If some soul doesn't, it's bound to be molecularized."

"You mean," corrected Jones, "Atomized."

"Perhaps," agreed Alphonse, "I suppose those atomizers help women, and woman can certainly destroy the world."

"Agreed," said St. Peter, "Yes indeed, but let's see, you don't have much time left, Alphonse. Doom's Day File, please." A sheif of papers appeared in his hand. "End of the world, Earth, March 13, 1951. Of course, that has beside it a star (Polaris, I think) and that means it's just an estimation. Heaven only knows the actual date."

"Well," said Alphonse, "I'd consider that a contradiction, but I must be on my way, Good Eternity."

----

My, my how this place has changed," observed Alphonse, "Even worshipping false gods like Fords and Chryslers by sacrificing lives to them in a blood-thirsty fashion.

"These people live crowded in big cities so they can make enough to retire and live in the country where they could have lived all of the time.

"Oh, what cruel rulers they must have to make them watch those drab shadows moving across a glaring screen. And when they watch the big screens in those huge caves they must eat something that makes them ill and drowns out the mechanical voice. Then, when they watch the little screens at those long counters, they must drink that liquid that blurs their vision so they can't see the little screens, and eventually, anything.

"My, My, some of the Devil's disciples are brazen enough to actually breath smoke in the presence of mortals!

"Well, I must hurry on to the place where mortals of various regions go to argue. How absurd! They all have the same desires and emotions. They are all alike under the skin. They all want peace, and yet they quarrel and bicker and argue infernally, and nearly eternally. Let's see, what do they call their fighting place? Ah yes, the United Nations!"

----

In his best ghostly fashion, Alphonse stepped through the wall of the UN building, and cried out hollowly: "I am the Herald of Doom! Turn back to peace before it is too late, or the End of the World will descend upon you!"

"Veto! Veto!" cried one delegate.

"Bah!" cried another, "This is just a product of mass hallucination."

"Quiet, you," said Alphonse, "Or I'll banish you to hell without so much as a thermometer to find out how hot it is!"

"Not that!" exclaimed the scientist-delegate.

"Attend me!" shouted Alphonse, "If war comes again I'll personally see that the Earth swallows up your cities and tidal waves sweep over them!"

"But," protested the Secretary-General, "If the cities are swallowed up, why drown them?"

"I'm just blessed thorough, that's all," replied the angel.

Convinced, the UN conferred, and then the scientist-delegate spoke up for the entire group.

"We agree. There will be no more war. But I wonder, could you possibly

tell me..."

"Well, all right, it's..." said Alphonse as he whispered into the scientist's ear.

"That hot? You don't say!"

Alphonse turned and addressed the assembly. "Farewell, my friends, I leave you in peace!"

----

When Alphonse got back to Heaven, he found Peter Jones still standing before St. Peter's desk.

"Still here?" Alphonse asked.

"Yes," Jones answered, "Red tape takes some time to go through, you know."

"That was a nice little job you did, Alphonse, even though we have something really important on the other side of the universe," said the Saintly Gate-Keeper."

"Oh, you saw it all?" questioned Alphonse.

"Yes, there was a tele-cast from the UN and I picked it up on a set given to me by a new arrival. He said he used it in his work. He mentioned the bar, so I suppose he was a lawyer."

"My my, a lawyer in Heaven?" said Alphonse, "That's a bully good one!"

"Yes indeed, but you pulled some good ones yourself. Why they actually believed you could do all of those things you said you would do."

"You mean he can't?" asked Peter Jones incredulously.

"Of course not," answered the Saintly Peter, "Only the front office can handle such matters."

"But he said..."

"Ah yes, Alphonse is always saying things. That's his talent."

"Yes," said the angel in question, with an air of pride, "I am the biggest liar in all of Heaven."

\*\*\*\*

#### THE STARS ARE CALLING

by

Joseph B. Baker

The call of space is a call without age,  
That leads men on and on.  
It's riches lie waiting for the man who is sure;  
For the man with the brain and the brawn.

The call of space is not stopped by any known bars,  
It calls to all who dream,  
With power and skill that created the stars  
That pour in a magnificent stream  
Through the limitless, cold realms of the dark,  
Each part, a beat in rhyme  
Which, in sounding, has kindled the spark  
That lights the way through the Hallways of Time.

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## THORNE SMITH: MASTER OF THE G. &amp; C. FANTASY

by

Leif Ayen

Of all the writers of fantasy, Thorne Smith is as popular today as he was a decade or more ago. Over ten million copies of his books have been sold in the Pocket Book editions alone. Yet, even with his widespread popularity no really comprehensive study of Smith has ever been written. The one best equipped to do so is Norman Latson, one of Smith's best friends; Smith's one-time publicity agent, Lucy Goldthwaite, or his friend Roland Young could write some very enlightening memoirs of Smith, too, but as yet I have seen no sign of anything of that sort.

Smith had only one vice (or weakness) and that was whisky. It may be that his habit of carrying a pint made him the genius of humor he really was. Take for example other famous literary figures..... E. A. Poe, W. S. Porter (O. Henry), S. Clemens, and Jack London..... they all touched the bottle at one time or another. It would not come as any great shock to those who have read Smith that he resembled more than anyone a character from his own novels. In many parts I believe that his novel Turnabout, was autobiographical, and the chief character, Tim Willows, was no less than Smith himself. Yet Smith's other novels give quick glimpses into him as well.

Smith's physical appearance was far from striking, although those who have met him can never forget him. He was of medium height and build, quite fair, and a face mildly resembling John Barrymore's. His life in Greenwich Village was one of mostly hardships until his successful sale of Topper. His life after that was one of continual hopping from New York to Hollywood between studio contracts and partially completed novels. While in Hollywood he met Roland Young and the two became fast friends. It was this friendship, I believe, which was in a large part responsible for the success of the Topper movies. All the movies based on Smith's novels have been for the most part highly successful. Even the removal of the sex theme in the pictures didn't distract the original flavor of the books. When The Passionate Witch was filmed in 1934 (under the title I Married a Witch) with Fredric March and Veronica Lake, the ending had more of a Thorne Smith flavor than the novel which Norman Latson had completed, which is unusual for Hollywood.

In the following article I will try to give you, the reader, a brief but revealing glimpse of Smith and his books. So.....

On the day of February 23, 1892, the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis was the scene of one of America's greatest events. Commodore James T. Smith, supervisor of the Port of New York during the first world war, became a father. The baby was named James Thorne Smith, Jr., and so the life of one of America's greatest fantasists and humorists began. As a boy he showed no great talent for humor nor any penchant for writing. He completed his formal education at Dartmouth, and then entered the advertising business. World War One interrupted his advertising career, and, naturally enough, he enlisted in the navy. He rose quickly from a seaman to a bosun's mate. While in the navy, Smith edited the navy's paper, Broadside, in which Biltmore Oswald, the naval version of Bill of Dere Dable, first appeared. After the war, he published the adventures of Oswald in two small volumes... Biltmore Oswald: The Diary of a hapless Recruit, and Out O' Luck: Biltmore Oswald Very Much At Sea. Both Books were a success, the first selling 70,000 copies.

Thorne lived in Greenwich Village for many years after the sale of



his two bills. It was here he met Celia Sullivan and married her. During this time he was writing poetry, which, for the most part, appeared in Smart Set and The Liberator, and in a number of other periodicals. He collected these poems into his sole volume of verse in 1919.

Since his income was almost nil, Smith returned to advertising and eventually became copy executive of a large New York advertising firm. At this time, Smith wrote books which received only rejection slips from publishers. During one of his depressed moods after receiving another yellow slip, so the story goes, Smith noticed a tail of some dog bobbing above a low hedge surrounding his home. An idea began to form of a tail-less dog or a dogless tail. From this the dog named Oscar came into being and with him a rotund, little banker named Cosmo Topper. The book was published in 1926 and became an overnight success.

The novel, Topper, is the story of the inoffensive, little man in an everyday rut whose placid life is interrupted by the appearance of two very modern spooks, George and Marion Kerby, who try hard to make Topper a spook also, but succeed only in making him a disgrace. Of all the hilarious episodes in the book, the most humorous were the efforts of the spectral canine, Oscar, to materialize completely. Most people had an aversion to animated, bodyless tails. The drollery of these episodes leaves one shaking with laughter. In 1927, Smith's only dramatic novel, Dream's End, appeared. Perhaps its seriousness prevented it from becoming popular, for it never had as great a following as his other novels.

The Stray Lamb came in 1929. This novel introduced the great American commuter, Mr. Lawrence T. Lamb. Mr. Lamb, with the help of an elf, changes places with a number of interesting animals, and the only one to mourn him is his daughter. Lamb's wife is far too busy with amateur theatricals and another man to worry about her husband's strange disappearance. Although the book is hilarious and ribald, an undercurrent of wisdom and mute sympathy flows through the tale as does it in all Smith's books.

In 1931 three novels were published. They were Lazy Bear Lane: a tale for children, The Night Life of the Gods, and Turnabout. The Night Life of the Gods tells of the predicament of an inventor, Hunter Hawk, when he devises two rings; one which petrifies organic life into stone, and another which un-petrifies stone. With this last ring he brings the Roman gods to life in a museum and causes a small riot with the nude and semi-nude gods and goddesses on Broadway.

Turnabout is probably the cleverest of all Smith's novels. It is the ribald tale of an exchange of bodies between a husband, Tim Willows, and his wife Sally. The exchange of bodies but not personalities presents an amusing and oft-time serious predicament for the Willows. The mistake of Sally entering the women's rest room in Tim's body, and the struggle of Tim with a brassiere are hilarity-plus; while the predicament of Tim having a baby (in his wife's body, of course!) is quite tragic.

The year 1932 hailed the publication of Smith's Cosmopolitan serial Did She Fall? in book form. Like the rest of Smith's books, it is as zany as ever. Even more wonderful was the return of Topper that year in Topper Takes A Trip in which Cosmo takes a vacation with several complications, namely, the Kerbys. Also produced that year was The Bishop's Jaegers, a novel of a bishop set among a nudist colony. This is a typical Smith book being a berserk mixture of underwear, nudity, and above all, sex.

1933 saw Skin and Bones and Rain in the Doorway. Skin and Bones tells the amazing tale of Quintus Bland, and his dog, Busy. The whole thing is started when Bland develops a super x-ray formula which has the effect of changing him and Busy to skeletons at the most importune moments; as the chapter where Bland enters a doctor's office in the flesh for a diagnosis, and after a fight with the

doctor replete with loud shrieks, the doctor emerges from his office with the now fleshless Bland over his shoulder. The appearance produces mild pandemonium in the office among waiting patients.

Rain in the Doorway tells of mild, meek Hector Owen who is pulled through a rainswept doorway into a new life and strange madcap adventures. During this year Thorne went to Hollywood to write dialogue for M.G.M., and it was there he met Roland Young who was to later play Topper on the screen.

After a trip to France and more script writing in Hollywood, Smith returned to New Jersey where he lived with his wife and two daughters, Marion and June. On June 21, 1934, James Thorne Smith, Jr. died of a heart attack at 42 at Sarasota, Florida in the midst of a novel, The Passionate Witch, completed by a fellow writer of fantasy, Norman Matson in 1941. He was survived by his wife and a brother, Skyring. His death was a blow to everyone, family and admirers alike.

His recently completed book, The Glorious Pool, was published in 1934 by Doubleday. Smith once told a friend all of his books were cut about twenty % to avoid complications with the law. The publisher, not Smith, did the cutting. A year before his death, Doubleday published a pamphlet edited by M. Johnson giving articles by and on Thorne Smith and his friends.

Smith is cosmic in his own poking way. I am sure he will have a place in American literature alongside of Mark Twain and Branch Cabell. Smith's is a ribald, carefree type with strains of sharp insight into people and their snarled-up lives. Smith's rare gift of insight into human affairs is as apparent in his stories as his love for cats, dogs, and children, but he has an equally startling gift of rambling off for several pages on utterly insignificant chatter and making it hilariously funny. Smith is the modern Rabelais of American letters for like Rabelais, he gave a new merry lilt to the Novel.

The main reason for the popularity of Smith's books through the years is due to his unashamed approach to sexual matters. He has done as much, I believe as Havelock Ellis or Doctor Kinsey to wipe away stupid sham and hypocrisy from that three letter word "sex". Smith did not write his novels for the inhibited, neurotic, nor the pompous nincompoop, but for those who enjoy a bit of honest-to-God laughter and excellent fantasy.

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The Stray Lamb	" 1929
Did She Fall?	" 1930
*Turnabout	Garden City, 1931
Lazy Bear Lane (juvenile)	" 1931
The Night Life of the Gods	" 1931
Topper Takes a Trip	" 1932
The Bishop's Jaegers	" 1932
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(contains "Advertising" by Smith

New York, 1922

Thorne Smith: His Life and Books, Including an Interview by R Young.

(With a checklist by S. E. Frank)

Garden City 1933

‡A Horse in Bed, a short story by Smith

Golden Book Ag. 1933

The Birthday Present, short story

Redbook 1934

Yonder's Henry

Esquire Feb. 1934

\*Garden City and Doubleday are the same company.

‡From The Stray Lamb.

(Reprints omitted, as they are available from Dial Press and Pocket Books.)

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WATCH YOUR G's

by

Ralph Milne Farley

One of the most frequent and most serious errors committed by authors of science fiction is to accelerate a space-ship beyond all reason.

Velocity never hurt anyone, and this would be true even of a speed exceeding that of light, if such a speed could be attained. Compare my opening chapter, "Faster Than Light", in the collaboration Cosmos, published by the Fantasy Fan a number of years ago.

But acceleration is quite a different matter. We are all subject all the time to the acceleration of gravity, known as "G", 32.16 feet per second. When an elevator speeds up, we may be subject to G and a half, or even 2G, illustrated by our apparent increase in weight, as would be shown if we were standing on a spring scale in the elevator.

A recent article by an airplane test-pilot that he frequently experienced 4 or 5 G and that he believed that even 6 G would not be harmful if not sustained for too long a time, but that 9 G would be certainly fatal.

With this information, it is interesting to test the accelerations of space-ships in stories. If, the ship starts from rest and attains a velocity of V feet per second after T seconds, its average acceleration has been V/T. (or if the author says V feet per second after traveling S feet, the formula is  $V^2/2S$ ) Divide the acceleration by 32.16, and then add one to get the number of G's. To convert miles per hour into feet per second, multiply by 22, and divide by 15.

For example, suppose the author says that his ship was going a thousand miles per hour, ten seconds after leaving the Earth. This means an acceleration of a little over five and a half G (meaning that a 160 pound man would weigh 880 pounds), which the space-traveler might possibly be able to stand for a few seconds.

Yet this speed-up is very moderate compared to those recounted in most space travel yarns.

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"THREE DARK SEEDS"

DREAMS by Eldred Smith

I stood, silent and alone, amid the night,  
 Scanning the eastward heavens for a star --  
 Looking upward, toward the blackness, far  
 And terrible, and terribly bright;  
 Knowing that ere one came to sight  
 Cruel Dawn, implacable, should mar  
 The hoped-for vision....and the tar  
 Of inky blackness give way to light.

Thus is it ever with any dream  
 Which I would realize, from afar,  
 With word or sentence....they seem  
 To vanish just beyond my grasp:  
 A momentary burning, then a gasp,  
 Then Death: one with a never-seen star.

## OBITUARY

by R. Flavie Carson

The island lay like a black pearl afloat  
 Upon the bosom of a lonely sea,  
 And no one save I was there to see  
 That dreadful castle with its jet-black moat.  
 I had attained the shore through good luck  
 From three days' drifting 'neath the burning sun;  
 Of twenty voyagers, the only one  
 To hold to life after the storm had struck.

The island seemed to rise up from the deep  
 Just when I thought I could no longer fight  
 Life's weary battle through another night,  
 And held me on its shore, -- a sodden heap.

And then ....  
 Then, when the dawn broke slowly in the east ....  
 The vultures from the castle came to feast.

## THREE DARK SEEDS

by  
 Genevieve  
 K.  
 Stephens

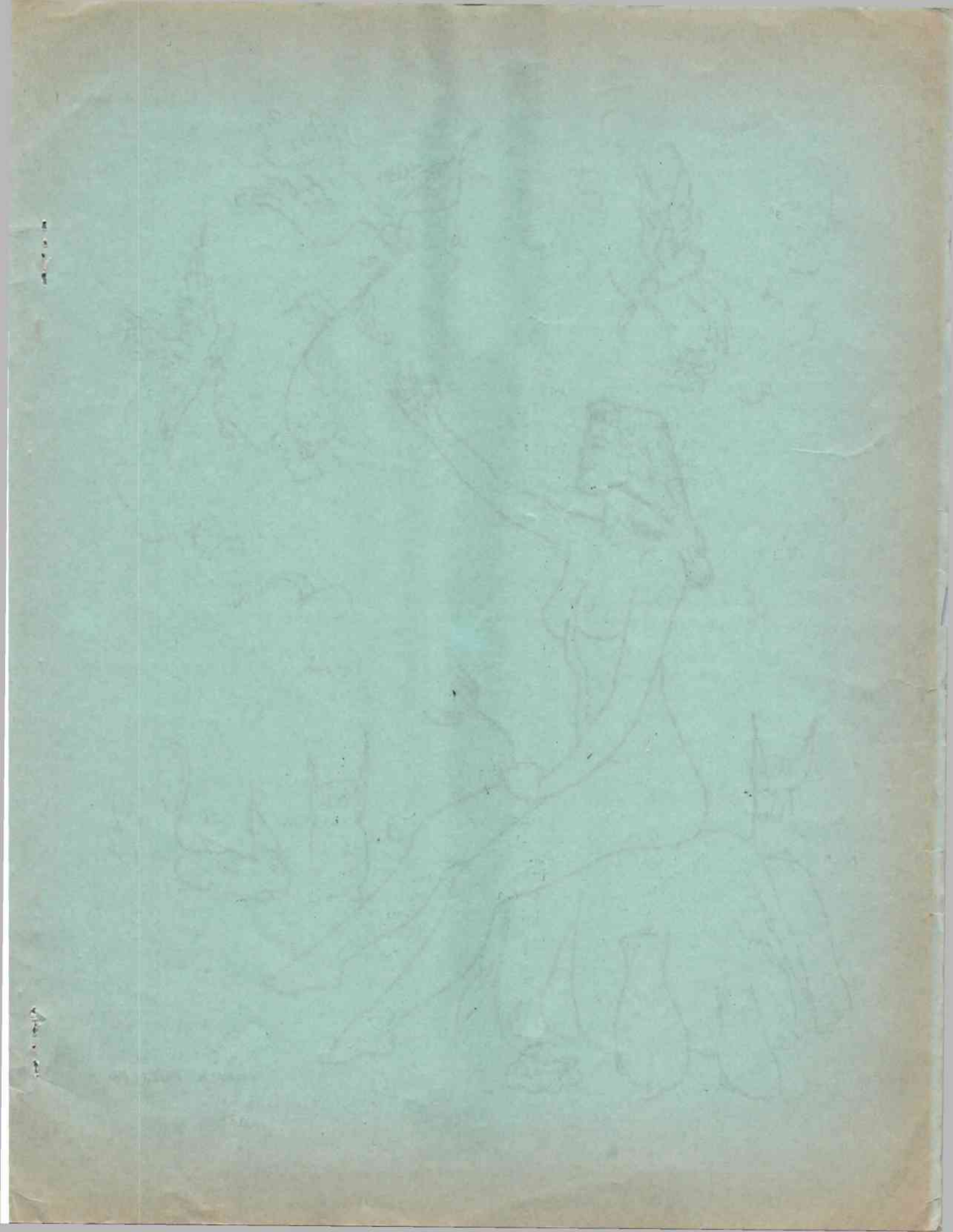
The corbie is black  
 Oh black is he,  
 A perch on a limb  
 Of a withered tree.

A tree that groans  
 With gruesome load  
 Of a corpse, a corbie,  
 A witch's toad.

The corbie feasts  
 On a dead man's eyes  
 The man was a fool  
 The corbie wise.

The witch's toad  
 Is fat and round,  
 Snatched the soul  
 And sucked it down.

Corpse and corbie  
 And witches toad,  
 Three dark seeds  
 The Devil sowed.





WILLIAM ROTSLER