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54 The Negro met the first of the ladies at the front door and let them in, with their hushed, sibilant voices and their quick, curious glances, and then he disappeared. He walked right through the house and out the back and was not seen again.

55 The two female cousins came at once. They held the funeral on the second day, with the town coming to look at Miss Emily beneath a mass of bought flowers, with the crayon face of her father musing profoundly above the bier and the ladies sibilant and macabre; and the very old men—some in their brushed Confederate uniforms—on the porch and the lawn, talking of Miss Emily as if she had been a contemporary of theirs, believing that they had danced with her and courted her perhaps, confusing time with its mathematical progression, as the old do, to whom all the past is not a diminishing road but, instead, a huge meadow which no winter ever quite touches, divided from them now by the narrow bottleneck of the most recent decade of years.

56 Already we knew that there was one room in that region above stairs which no one had seen in forty years, and which would have to be forced. They waited until Miss Emily was decently in the ground before they opened it.

57 The violence of breaking down the door seemed to fill this room with pervading dust. A thin, acid pall as of the tomb seemed to lie everywhere upon this room decked and furnished as for a bridal: upon the valance curtains of faded rose color, upon the rose-shaded lights, upon the dressing table, upon the delicate array of crystal and the man's toilet things backed with tarnished silver, silver so tarnished that the monogram was obscured. Among them lay collar and tie, as if they had just been removed, which, lifted, left upon the surface a pale crescent in the dust. Upon a chair hung the suit, carefully folded; beneath it the two mule shoes and the discarded socks.

58 The man himself lay in the bed.

59 For a long while we just stood there, looking down at the profound and fleshless grin. The body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace, but now the long sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love, had cuckolded him. What was left of him, rotted beneath what was left of the nightshirt, had become inextricable from the bed in which he lay; and upon him and upon the pillow beside him lay that even coating of the patient and bidding dust.

60 Then we noticed that in the second pillow was the indentation of a head. One of us lifted something from it, and leaning forward, that faint and invisible dust dry and acrid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron-gray hair.

—1930



Ernest Hemingway
(1899-1961)

A Clean, Well-Lighted Place

Hemingway so embodied the image of the successful writer for so long that today, three decades after his suicide, it is difficult to separate the celebrity from the serious artist, the sportsman and carouser from the stylist whose influence on the short story and novel continues to be felt. The complexity of his life and personality still fascinates biographers, even though a half dozen major studies have already appeared. Born to a doctor in Oak Park, Illinois, wounded as a volunteer ambulance driver in Italy during World War I, trained as a reporter on the Kansas City Star, Hemingway moved to Paris in the early 1920s, where he was at the center of a brilliant generation of American expatriates that included Gertrude Stein and F. Scott Fitzgerald. His wide-ranging travels are reflected in his work. He spent much time in Spain, which provided material for his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), and stories like "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place." In the 1930s he covered the Spanish Civil War, the backdrop for his most popular novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). His African sojourns and residence in pre-Castro Cuba were also sources of his fiction. When all else is said, Hemingway's greatest contribution may lie in the terse, stripped-down quality of his early prose, which renders modern alienation with stark concrete details. Hemingway won the Nobel Prize in 1954.

It was late and every one had left the café except an old man who sat in the shadow the leaves of the tree made against the electric light. In the day time the street was dusty, but at night the dew settled the dust and the old man liked to sit late because he was deaf and now at night it was quiet and he felt the difference. The two waiters inside the café knew that the old man was a little drunk, and while he was a good client they knew that if he became too drunk he would leave without paying, so they kept watch on him.

"Last week he tried to commit suicide," one waiter said.

"Why?"

"He was in despair."

"What about?"

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6 "Nothing."
 7 "How do you know it was nothing?"
 8 "He has plenty of money."
 9 They sat together at a table that was close against the wall near the door of
 the café and looked at the terrace where the tables were all empty except where
 the old man sat in the shadow of the leaves of the tree that moved slightly in the
 wind. A girl and a soldier went by in the street. The street light shone on the
 brass number on his collar. The girl wore no head covering and hurried beside
 him.
 10 "The guard will pick him up," one waiter said.
 11 "What does it matter if he gets what he's after?"
 12 "He had better get off the street now. The guard will get him. They went
 by five minutes ago."
 13 The old man sitting in the shadow rapped on his saucer with his glass.
 The younger waiter went over to him.
 14 "What do you want?"
 15 The old man looked at him. "Another brandy," he said.
 16 "You'll be drunk," the waiter said. The old man looked at him. The
 waiter went away.
 17 "He'll stay all night," he said to his colleague. "I'm sleepy now. I never
 get into bed before three o'clock. He should have killed himself last week."
 18 The waiter took the brandy bottle and another saucer from the counter
 inside the café and marched out to the old man's table. He put down the saucer
 and poured the glass full of brandy.
 19 "You should have killed yourself last week," he said to the deaf man. The
 old man motioned with his finger. "A little more," he said. The waiter poured
 on into the glass so that the brandy slopped over and ran down the stem into the
 top saucer of the pile. "Thank you," the old man said. The waiter took the
 bottle back inside the café. He sat down at the table with his colleague again.
 20 "He's drunk now," he said.
 21 "He's drunk every night."
 22 "What did he want to kill himself for?"
 23 "How should I know?"
 24 "How did he do it?"
 25 "He hung himself with a rope."
 26 "Who cut him down?"
 27 "His niece."
 28 "Why did they do it?"
 29 "Fear for his soul."
 30 "How much money has he got?"
 31 "He's got plenty."
 32 "He must be eighty years old."

33 "Anyway I should say he was eighty."
 34 "I wish he would go home. I never get to bed before three o'clock. What
 kind of hour is that to go to bed?"
 35 "He stays up because he likes it."
 36 "He's lonely. I'm not lonely. I have a wife waiting in bed for me."
 37 "He had a wife once too."
 38 "A wife would be no good to him now."
 39 "You can't tell. He might be better with a wife."
 40 "His niece looks after him."
 41 "I know. You said she cut him down."
 42 "I wouldn't want to be that old. An old man is a nasty thing."
 43 "Not always. This old man is clean. He drinks without spilling. Even
 now, drunk. Look at him."
 44 "I don't want to look at him. I wish he would go home. He has no regard
 for those who must work."
 45 The old man looked from his glass across the square, then over at the
 waiters.
 46 "Another brandy," he said, pointing to his glass. The waiter who was in a
 hurry came over.
 47 "Finished," he said, speaking with that omission of syntax stupid people
 employ when talking to drunken people or foreigners. "No more tonight.
 Close now."
 48 "Another," said the old man.
 49 "No. Finished." The waiter wiped the edge of the table with a towel and
 shook his head.
 50 The old man stood up, slowly counted the saucers, took a leather coin
 purse from his pocket and paid for the drinks, leaving half a peseta tip.
 51 The waiter watched him go down the street, a very old man walking
 unsteadily but with dignity.
 52 "Why didn't you let him stay and drink?" the unhurried waiter asked.
 53 They were putting up the shutters. "It is not half-past two."
 54 "I want to go home to bed."
 55 "What is an hour?"
 56 "More to me than to him."
 57 "An hour is the same."
 58 "You talk like an old man yourself. He can buy a bottle and drink at
 home."
 59 "It's not the same."
 60 "No, it is not," agreed the waiter with a wife. He did not wish to be
 unjust. He was only in a hurry.
 61 "And you? You have no fear of going home before the usual hour?"
 "Are you trying to insult me?"

- 62 "No, hombre, only to make a joke."
 63 "No," the waiter who was in a hurry said, rising from pulling down the metal shutters. "I have confidence. I am all confidence."
 64 "You have youth, confidence, and a job," the older waiter said. "You have everything."
 65 "And what do you lack?"
 66 "Everything but work."
 67 "You have everything I have."
 68 "No. I have never had confidence and I am not young."
 69 "Come on. Stop talking nonsense and lock up."
 70 "I am of those who like to stay late at the café," the older waiter said. "With all those who do not want to go to bed. With all those who need a light for the night."
 71 "I want to go home and into bed."
 72 "We are of two different kinds," the older waiter said. He was not dressed to go home. "It is not only a question of youth and confidence although those things are very beautiful. Each night I am reluctant to close up because there may be some one who needs the café."
 73 "Hombre, there are bodegas° open all night long."
 74 "You do not understand. This is a clean and pleasant café. It is well lighted. The light is very good and also, now, there are shadows of the leaves."
 75 "Good night," said the younger waiter.
 76 "Good night," the other said. Turning off the electric light he continued the conversation with himself. It is the light of course but it is necessary that the place be clean and pleasant. You do not want music. Certainly you do not want music. Nor can you stand before a bar with dignity although that is all that is provided for these hours. What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was a nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too. It was only that and light was all it needed and a certain cleanness and order. Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it all was nada y pues nada y nada y pues nada.° Our nada who are in nada, nada be thy name thy kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nadas and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada; pues nada. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee. He smiled and stood before a bar with a shining steam pressure coffee machine.
 77 "What's yours?" asked the barman.
 78 "Nada."
 79 "Otro loco más,"° said the barman and turned away.

bodegas wine shops
 nada y pues . . . nada nothing and then nothing . . .
 Otro loco más Another lunatic

- 80 "A little cup," said the waiter.
 81 The barman poured it for him.
 82 "The light is very bright and pleasant but the bar is unpolished," the waiter said.
 83 The barman looked at him but did not answer. It was too late at night for conversation.
 84 "You want another copiar?"° the barman asked.
 85 "No, thank you," said the waiter and went out. He disliked bars and bodegas. A clean, well-lighted café was a very different thing. Now, without thinking further, he would go home to his room. He would lie in the bed and finally, with daylight, he would go to sleep. After all, he said to himself, it is probably only insomnia. Many must have it.

—1933



John Steinbeck
 (1902-1968)

The Chrysanthemums

Another American winner of the Nobel Prize, Steinbeck has not attracted as much biographical and critical attention as his contemporaries William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway, but future generations may view *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), his epic novel of the Depression and the Oklahoma dust bowl, with the same reverence we reserve for nineteenth-century masterpieces of historical fiction like Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* or Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. If one measure of a great writer is how well he or she manages to capture the temper of the times, then Steinbeck stands as tall as any. Born in Salinas, California, he drew throughout his career on his familiarity with the farming country, ranches, and fishing communities of his native state, especially in novels like *Tortilla Flat* (1935), *Of Mice and Men* (1937), and *Cannery Row* (1945). Steinbeck's short fiction is less well known, though

copita little cup