

Erika Guttentag's Long Walk

By Joanne Ferguson

When Hitler came to power in 1933, Erika was in the 11th grade and her older sister Ursula in the 13th. They were living in Stettin on the banks of the Oder River. Since their father had some Jewish ancestry, they were labeled “non-Aryan,” with all the restrictions that entailed. They were not allowed entry into any social or sports groups, and most grievous of all, no admission to universities or most other institutes of learning. Erika’s parents were divorced when she was three; her mother was a school teacher and a woman of great determination. She placed Ursula in Bath, England, as an au pair and then Erika went to the same family and both girls sharpened the English they had learned in school in Stettin. When Erika got home, they found a third-rate business school in Leipzig that offered courses in a number of languages and did not ask the dreaded question of Jewish ancestry.

Her mother realized that her daughters would have trouble finding jobs in Stettin, where everyone knew they were “non-Aryan,” so the girls made a move to Berlin, where each of them found jobs in firms that did not ask about ancestry. They were joined by their mother in 1941 and rented an apartment in northeast Berlin. Their mother was always passionately anti-Nazi and somehow managed to avoid joining the Nazi Party without losing her teaching jobs. Erika says, “I will never know how she did it.”

When America entered the war in 1941 the air raids began, from both the Allies and the Russians. Everyone was herded into the shelters, carrying suitcases with a few possessions in case the building was hit. Erika and her family were on the



fourth floor, so they carried their suitcases up and down the stairs, sometimes twice a day, or more often during the night.

They suffered from insufficient sleep and with constant hunger. Hunger is a thread that winds through Erika’s whole account of the war.

Their greatest fear was that Hitler might succeed against all odds. “It was an eerie feeling: we needed the air raids, all those killed in action, the burning cities, so Hitler would be defeated and his reign over.” It was punishable by death if you were found tuned to foreign radio broadcasts, so they never knew what was really happening.

It was in late March, 1945, when the battle for Berlin began. They had no idea who would appear first, the Allied troops or the Russians. Erika peered out the window in those last days, hoping for an Allied uniform. She was at work in a suburb when the artillery fire began. The trains had stopped running by the time she realized the guns were danger-

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The Forester

The newsletter of the Residents Association of The Forest at Duke, Inc., 2701 Pickett Rd., Durham, NC 27705-5610. Published monthly except July, August, and September by and for the residents.

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October 15, 2013

President's Podium

by Jack Hughes

For my final column, I would like to give a quick answer to an often asked question: The Forest at Duke Residents' Association: why and what?

The Residents' Association was chartered by the State of North Carolina in 1996 as a not-for-profit corporation. The specific purposes for which it was organized were:

1. To assist in the development and implementation of services and facilities which support the needs of residents;

2. To protect the rights, privileges and interest of residents;

3. To serve as a liaison between the Residents and the Management and Board of Directors of The Forest at Duke.

Residents become members of the Association on admission; annual dues are modest and voluntary; meetings are held quarterly with an annual meeting in October. The Association is directed by a Board of Directors, elected by residents, consisting of officers and nine directors. Each director is chair of a Standing Committee and there are 54 subcommittees – Activities to Woodworking - whose chair is appointed by a director. The subcommittees are composed of resident volunteers who, with the support of the Administration, are largely responsible for the good life at The Forest.

The Forest is managed by a Board of Directors through an Executive Director employed by the Board. Although The Forest Board is the final authority in all matters, residents have considerable influence through frequent interactions with the Administration and Board and three very active Resident Members of the Forest Board.

A Benevolent Fund, established by The Forest to assist those who need help in paying the

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Library Science 101



by Carol Scott

THE NEW TECHNOLOGY

By now you will have learned that the new Forest website devised by Bob Dix has been implemented, and the Library is included. Here are the directions to find it.

1. Into the address bar at the upper left of your web browser type this web address: www.ForestRes.org.
2. When the window asking for user name comes up, type in the word resident --- NOT your own name.
3. In the password window type RAweb2701.
4. Press the Enter or Return key on the keyboard. After a few seconds the front page of the web site will appear.
5. Click on the picture for Services, and then on Library.
6. At the bottom of the description of the library click on Search. Now you can see a duplicate of the residents' computer in the library, see by author, title or subject if we have a particular book in the Library, and reserve it for yourself. You will be notified when it is ready for you to check out.

Wasn't that easy? Now all you have to do is come to the Library to check out your book when you are told it is ready for you.

While the Library of Congress was shut down we could not classify and catalog new books, so there has been a backlog of books to process. They should soon all be out on the "New in the Library" shelves.

And speaking of shelves --- shelves of our

Sale Books will be in the Encore Store hallway when it is open on the 12th and 13th of this month. This is an experiment to see if it gives better access for employees. Afterward, the Sale Books will be in the Library copier room as usual.

A collection of opera CDs, two CDs and a guidebook for The Great Ideas of Philosophy, and a CD and guidebook to Modern Masterpieces at the Louvre have been donated recently and can be taken out from the classroom. Now you can familiarize yourself with the opera before you make that Saturday trip to Raleigh.

As we look ahead to Thanksgiving, we can be thankful for our loyal readers, the compliments we receive about the Library, our generous donors of time, books and funds, OASIS, and especially for the twenty-five volunteers who help this Library work so well.

Happy Thanksgiving (in advance)!

Podium continued

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monthly fee, is supported by the Association through donations and profits from the Gift Shop and Encore Store.

In keeping with The Forest "No Tipping Policy" the Association has an Employee Appreciation Fund to which Residents contribute. The funds are distributed to all employees, except management, twice a year.

Overall, it has been a good two years, and I thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Erika continued

(Continued from page 1)

ously close. She borrowed a bicycle from the office's landlady and pedaled home. She has always regretted that she couldn't return that bicycle.

When the battle grew closer, the sirens sounded and everyone had to go down to the shelter, where they awaited what would happen next. "We were scared stiff," Erika says, always thinking, "Let it be the Americans." But it was the Russian soldiers who appeared with an interpreter, demanding all their watches, and they were told if anyone held one back they would all be shot. Later that night some soldiers came in, took one girl, and left. "My fear and panic were more than I had ever experienced," she says.

The next morning, her mother said, "We can't stay here." So they loaded up their three bicycles with some essentials and food and went outside, where there were guards in front of every building. They took one tentative step and nothing happened, then another and another and kept walking, past tanks and soldiers. A couple of blocks from their building was a forced-labor camp full of Poles. The Russians unlocked the gates and the men came out at

a run, looting as they went.

As Erika and her family walked on, they suddenly began to see German soldiers and equipment. The battle of Berlin was raging around them, artillery fire, dead people in the streets. They ducked into entranceways to houses when the firing got too bad. "The most haunting sight was a man strung up on a tree with a sign on his chest 'Here I hang because I refused to help the war effort.'" They kept walking and came to the house of Ursula's boss, where they stayed the night. The next morning, much to their surprise they were once again in Russian territory. They kept on with no house in sight. That night in an orchard they found a little tool house where they might shelter. When they opened the door they found four people already there. They all slept on the floor like sardines; whenever one needed to turn over they all had to.

The next morning they reached the little town of Werder. They were now officially refugees with no ration books. They spent the night with a compassionate woman, then were housed by the city government in a kind of shelter. Her mother spotted rifles against the wall and said, "We can't stay here. If the Russians find us we are all dead." The city found them a little windowless room with featherbeds to keep warm. Erika remembers thinking, "I will never sleep in my own bed again." They lined up for a ladle of thin soup once a day. The town surrendered without a fight on April 10. They now had to decide what to do next. Erika voted to go back. "I couldn't face another uncertain walk, unwashed, no shelter, no food." So back they went. Erika remembers little about the walk back, except as they were walking through a forest, "Horror of horrors a Russian soldier approached. We froze, paralyzed with fear." It turned out all he wanted was a bike in working order so he took Ursula's and gave her his broken one.

Home at last, after an absence of 12 days or so, they found the door kicked in and drawers dumped but surprisingly little missing. The Russians got some supplies going and issued new ration cards. Among the allowances was ¼ egg a week! Erika

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Erika, left, and Ursula with bike, 1945

Erika continued

Otto in Berlin, 1945

(Continued from page 4)

laughed and said that even now without thinking about it, when she breaks an egg she puts her little finger in the shell and makes sure all of it is out. Even getting the food that was allowed was uncertain. They went from shop to shop, stood in line after line. They were thrilled when Ursula got a job in a little Greek grocery store and she could sometimes come home with two potatoes and a carrot.

Then came some good fortune. Erika had always been an opera buff and at last the opera house opened and she went. She sat next to an American soldier and struck up a conversation with him to practice her English. He told her his government was dying for someone with her qualifications and told her where to apply. She got the job, of course, with the Office of Military Government. Since it involved a train commute of three hours on the malfunctioning transportation service, she spent the weeknights with her mother's cousin and went home on the weekends. Her job was interesting, and one of the fabulous perks was the daily lunch the Americans fed

them. They lined up and passed from table to table, getting a ladle of food at each. She says, "Sometimes, on a banner day we got a slice of SPAM—an incredible luxury! Another big treat were the occasional Graham crackers. I never ate all the food but saved some to take home on the weekend."

One day an American Captain, who spoke perfect German, came to the door looking for relatives in Berlin. His name was **Otto Guttentag**! Otto was a physician who had volunteered. He not only found his relatives but also Erika, before he returned



Happy warbride

Erika continued

to San Francisco.

Erika by this time was secretary to Robert Kreider, the Mennonite in charge of relief to all of Western Germany. When he was transferred to Stuttgart, he took Erika along, and she was out of East Germany, already a complicated procedure. In that year of 1947 the law allowing “war brides” to enter the US outside the immigration quota was to expire on December 31. These brides must be married within three months after arrival in the US. Robert Kreider helped her with necessary telegrams, she got a visa, and was on standby for an airline reservation. She went to the airport on Christmas day, spent the night, and, mercifully, the airline ran an additional, unscheduled flight full of people like Erika, war brides, who had to leave the country before January 1, 1948. They left late on December 26, “a planeload full of happy, chattering young women. It was a fantastic, happy flight, even though it lasted 26 hours.”

New York had just had the worst snowstorm of the winter; all transportation stopped, their plane threatened with a possible landing in Baltimore. Robert Kreider had given her five dollars, but that was all she had.

Otto had come to New York and spent the previous night in the airport, not knowing if she would be on the plane or not. She was not on the passenger list since she had been on standby. She was the last one off the plane.

They were reunited at 5:00am, December 28. Erika says, “I don’t remember how we managed to get back to town, but of course nothing mattered now.”

Welcome, New Residents

Saul and Rose Boyarsky

Apartment 1007 919-493-7198

The Boyarskys are on their third residence in North Carolina. They lived in Durham from 1950 to 1955 and again in the 1960s. They returned to a home in Chapel Hill in 1999 after 30 years in St. Louis. Saul is originally from Burlington, VT. Rose was born and brought up in Jersey City, NJ. They have chosen Durham as their home. Saul is a retired urologist and Rose a retired clinical psychologist. Both are published writers in their fields.

They have a son and daughter and two grandchildren in this area, a daughter in Cleveland, OH, and a granddaughter in Portland, OR. Saul enjoys writing and teaching about spirituality and comparative religion. Rose is a Master Gardener who left a large garden in the woods for the comforts of The Forest.

The Burgess Boys

by Elizabeth Strout

a review by Peggy Quinn

Oh those Burgess boys, they were the talk of the town! Shirley Falls, a little town in Maine, is where it all began. Elizabeth Strout's newest novel, *The Burgess Boys*, takes us back to the setting of her previous novel, *Olive Kitteridge*. Olive, stern but lovable, was the embodiment of Maine, where the winters were cold and harsh, where people wore thick sweaters and boots and houses were cold and the snow was deep.

The boys, Jim and Bob, and their sister Susan live there with their mother after their father died. The father's death haunts the boys, and as soon as possible they both leave to seek their fortunes in New York. Jim becomes a successful lawyer, marries Helen, a rich heiress, and becomes famous mostly because of his defense of Wally Packer, a slick entertainer, who killed his girlfriend, was guilty as sin, but got off because of Jim's skill before the bench. Jim Burgess is not a lovable person. He is arrogant, smug and sarcastic. He belittles his brother, makes fun of his dorm life style, and calls him Slobdog. Olive would not have liked him.

Bob is the nice one. He too became a lawyer but a less prosperous one. He hates trials and settles for a job with legal aid. He is divorced from Pam who didn't have the good sense to appreciate what she had. Bob is modest and caring. He manages to shrug off the sarcasm and other insulting remarks that Jim hurls at him. While Jim dresses in his tailor-made suits and gold cuff links, Bob feels comfortable in his old jeans and sweat shirts. He sometimes drinks too much and worries too much. He misses his brother when Jim's life gets too busy to keep in touch.

Susan, Bob's twin, stayed in Shirley Falls with her shy, friendless teen age son, Zach. She works for an optician, is divorced and lives in a dilapidated house which she can barely afford to heat.

Life erupts for the family when Zach is accused of a hate crime. He was caught when he rolled a frozen pig's head into the storefront door of a mosque. Shirley Falls had become a resettlement area for Somali refugees and Zach's action had occurred on the feast of Ramadan. The boy had no idea what Ramadan was, and he did not deliberately set out to harass the "Somalians." He is a shy kid, afraid of his own shadow.

The call goes out to Jim and Bob and during the next few months they spend time back in Shirley Falls working on their nephew's defense. Strout is a master builder when it comes to portraying characters who come alive and recognize the need that takes them outside of themselves. The reader gets a second chance to view relationships that change and family dynamics that never should have fallen apart. Bob and Jim finally explore the old haunts that came with their father's death and the Burgess boys, like Olive, find life in Maine and family loyalty to be a new and rewarding experience.

Miss Jane Visits the Forest

by Sylvia Arnett

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a woman of middle years, never married, may wish to venture into this happy state...but only after a suitable search.

Thus it was that a Miss Jane A. found herself driven from the local airport by a cabbie of indeterminate ethnic origin who proudly overrode her directions, sent to her by her sister Eliza, with loud assurances that he would find her destination, The Forest at Duke, with the help of his GPS.

Never having seen a GPS before, Miss Jane could only surmise that it must be the man's physician and that she was, in fact, in the hands of a lunatic. Thus, it was to her great surprise and relief that she arrived safely at the gates of The Forest after having discovered that the GPS was a Voice with a British Accent (!) who had guided them with consummate skill through the perplexing freeways and streets of a city of middling size by the name of Durham. Perhaps it was the city's name that had caused her sister to select this place for the accomplishment of her remaining years. At any rate Jane would now be able to determine with her own eyes if Eliza had chosen well.

The prospect of the great house itself, down a double lane of colourful trees was encouraging, though to her eyes there was not enough shrubbery....shrubby being a particular favourite of Miss Jane's for the furthering of meaningful talks and amorous alliances. Let it be admitted now that these latter were near to the purpose of her visit.

Dear Eliza was waiting under the portico, and the sisters were reunited with all the warmth that a long absence can encourage.

How delightful to her eyes was the great hall! The fountain seemed almost a palatial feature, and she could only wonder at the inheritances and incomes of the residents who were fortunate to live here. She looked closely at these personages as they gathered and strolled through the halls and ante-

rooms. They wore agreeable expressions though some of them were clearly not at their best physically. Their being thus challenged, she was relieved to find them to be amiable and courteous while they were being introduced to her by Eliza.

When Jane had quite settled in Eliza's cozy apartment and they were having tea, Jane made comment on her brief encounter with the residents.

"I assume that the men were out on the links today since I saw so few of them in the halls."

Eliza cast a quick glance in Jane's direction. "I'm afraid you will be disappointed, dearest Jane... very few of the men here play golf."

"Then they must swim or play tennis?"

"Not quite...some few here swim...we have a fine pool. Did you bring your bathing suit?"

Not to be deterred, Jane pursued the subject. "Where are the men and what do they do?"

"They are the backbone of the Residents Association, and they play pool and..." she paused.

"And?"

"And I neglected to tell you that they are greatly outnumbered by our female population."

"Do they find this alarming?"

"I believe that it is not openly discussed. They are gentlemen all."

Eliza and Jane had suffered several heartbreaks apiece and they had learned to be frank with one another. Therefore it did not need to be said aloud that Jane was hoping to find a suitable matrimonial partner while on her visit. They must set to work; her visit was to last but two weeks. Then she must return to England.

Eliza made it a point to arrange supper parties with carefully chosen male companions. There was a tall man, a jovial man, a quiet man, a deaf man, and an opinionated man. Jane enjoyed meeting them; they were gentlemen all to be sure, but none of them showed any sign of wishing to see any more of her. Several of them even seemed relieved when they

ascertained that she would depart a week hence.

"This is discouraging to be sure," Jane said to herself. "I will devote my remaining hours to my sister's company for there I am always assured of her tender care."

She and Eliza took long walks and rambles. On the grounds there was a delightful gazebo overlooking a small pond where a fountain sprayed columns of water that sparkled in the afternoon sun. There she and Eliza would pause to rest and to chat.

One afternoon a tall man came by on the path, walking a fine looking Irish setter.

"Oh, what a beautiful dog," said Jane. "I would love to pet it."

"Don't bother," said Eliza. "His owner would not like it."

And indeed, the tall man did not acknowledge them nor look in their direction. He was soon gone.

"Who is he?" inquired Jan

"His name is William Fairlie. He is a retired stockbroker and a widower. He is rarely here; he has a cottage in Maine and a house in Florida. He is reputed to have said that he didn't like being here with all of us 'old folks'. No one cares anyway; he is cold and disagreeable."

"What a pity," thought Jane...a single male and a stockbroker at that!

Jane's visit in Durham passed all too quickly. Her presence was required in London to celebrate the release of her fifth novel, *Hubris and Humility*. She found press interviews and book signings to be terribly over-stimulating. She was, in fact, dreading them, but at last the furor died down and she was able to be at home in a village near Bath where she lived quietly.

A bit of news came from Eliza in a long letter..."By the way, the tall, unfriendly man with the Irish setter that we met on one of our walks here has had a bit of bad luck. He suffered a minor stroke just after you left and has spent several weeks being rehabilitated in our Safe and Sound Center. He was

very impressed by our therapists and even more by his neighbors who dropped by to see him. One of them had kept Rusty, his dog, and brought him every day to visit his master. I encountered him the other day and he told me how much he had enjoyed reading your last book. When I said, 'Oh, she's got a new one out, *Hubris and Humility*', he got a rather strange look on his face and said that he was looking forward to reading it."

Jane pondered her sister's letter. Her new book would be something of a shock to Mr. Fairlie, telling as it did of a man too proud to be "old", who suffered a stroke which rendered him helpless. As he recovered he learned some humility, hence the title.

She sat down straightway to write to Eliza. "My dear sister, received your letter of the 5th. Sometime hence I do want to meet Mr. Fairlie. Is it not a strange co-incidence that my book corresponds so closely with the unfortunate events in his life? I shouldn't wonder that he would think that you and I had colluded somehow to tell his story. You must indicate to him that I had the idea years ago. I did, didn't I?

"Better yet, perhaps I should tell him myself. Do you know...does he do e-mail? Yes, dearest, I have finally joined the ranks. I did get a computer with some of the money from H&H, which is selling like 'hot cakes' as they say in the U.S. My agent is negotiating screen rights as of this moment. She also got a call from Julian Fellowes asking if I would like to help him with *Downton Abbey*. I am mulling it over carefully. My new book's title? *Fame and Fortune*!

All my love, Jane"

And Two Plus Two Equals More

Don Chesnut says

Oliver Ferguson replies

The Glory of Mathematics

I know pi to sixteen places,
I know Euler's constant, too.
I could lecture on group theory
'Til you turn a bluish hue.

I like rationals and fractions
And numbers that are prime,
Elliptics and cryptography
To me are simply fine.

Math gives us nice equations,
On them we do rely.
The Haiku poems of science
Without them I would cry.

Richard Feynman said it best,
He of the mind so keen.
The glory of mathematics is:
We don't have to say what we mean.

So what this musing says to me,
No shadow of a doubt,
Most of the English language
We can simply do without!

Math and Me

It's all very well
That with such ease you tell
Of the pleasures of fractions and trig.
As things stand with me,
They're impossible to see,
Irrespective of how hard I dig.

Problems (not pleasure)
Play hell with my leisure.
Why cry out "Eureka!"
When trying to seek a
Solution that's obviously moot?

Wherein lies the gain?
No square root can sustain
Any known flower or fruit.

Math lovers like Feynman
(Who's no Simple Simon)
Need no words to say what they mean.

But if they were like me,
They'd be high up a tree,
And have more than enough to blaspheme.

Mystery: To Gourmet or Not To Gourmet

by Bill Harrington

I've been waiting for Chef Al to leave so that I could write this article.

Ladies and gentlemen – I've tried and tried to become more cultured, more suave and sophisticated, but ... alas ... it has been a futile effort. Back home, gourmet was having ice cream to put on our apple pie. And then, I learned that the French had come up with a better name for that.

And furthermore; what are those little reddish, pinkish colored flowers on the edge of my plate when I'm in the dining room on Wednesdays at noon? Are they edible or not? I was taught to eat everything on my plate. Now, I ain't at all sure that's the right thing to do. I don't know whether to eat the thing or take it back to my apartment and put it in water. What would happen if I planted it?

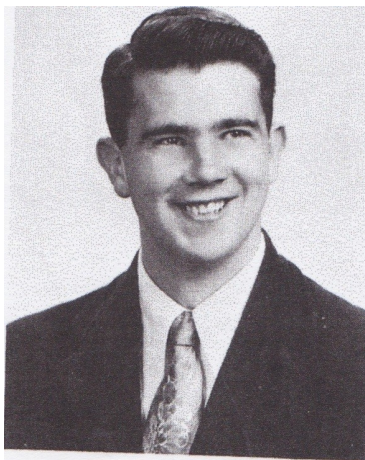
I thought before I embarrassed myself any further, I'd better look the word up. Here goes: "**Gourmet** is a cultural ideal associated with the culinary arts of fine food and drink, or *haute cuisine*, which is characterized by refined, even elaborate preparations and presentations of aesthetically balanced meals of several contrasting, often quite rich

courses. The term and its associated practices are usually used positively to describe people of refined taste and passion." (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

Now I understand – *aesthetically balanced meal* – that's what the flower is for. It balances out the aesthetics of the plate. *People of refined taste and passion*. Just give me a piece of plain old-fashioned ungourmet-like chocolate cake accompanied by a cup of steaming hot gourmet coffee.

My apologies to anyone I have offended. In reality, I've enjoyed my gourmet meals in the dining room. I look forward to seeing all of you people of refined taste and passion next time I decide to partake of the aesthetically balanced, elaborately presented culinary delights prepared by our next gourmet chef. Is it proper etiquette to request a straw to drink my Kool-Aid when having my Apricot and Cranberry Stuffed Pork Loin?

Mystery People: Do you know who they are?



High School grad



Just Married 1954

Balcony Gardening

by Carol Oettinger

I have always enjoyed gardening. When I moved to an apartment I felt a real loss. I found that many plants grew and thrived on my west-facing balcony. This summer proved that real adventures can happen right there.

Among other plants, especially a large tomato plant from which I ate and shared delicious cherry tomatoes all summer, I planted a pot of parsley. After a while a vine of some sort grew out of that pot. I twined the tendrils around the tomato cage where it continued to grow. A cucumber-like object appeared. I showed it to my son, who said, Mom, that's a watermelon."

The mystery was how a watermelon seed got into that pot.

I checked my baby watermelon every day all summer. As it became heavy, I found a board to lay across the tomato cage to support it. It grew until it was about twelve inches long and almost that around. There was a lot of conjecture about whether it would ripen.

I never gave up hope. On October first, I sliced it open and found a nice red interior. It was delicious. So anything can happen on a balcony garden.

Culinary Fantasies

by Ned Arnett

Sometimes I dream fantastic travel plans, that take me to one or another of the "stans" out on the back steppes of Asia, alone, I dream of Mongols and of Kublai's throne.

Perhaps I'll spend the morning in a yurt, itching in a scratchy yak skin shirt, sharing the camel stew, and for a prize my host insists that I must eat the eyes.

Or I may join some Inuit on a hunt for seal on Baffin's icy ocean front. I'll have to share a lunch of raw seal liver with frozen blubber that makes me shiver.

Back in the bush they practice rites incredible involving human body parts made edible. Attracted though I am to stone age culture I draw the line at learning to be a vulture.

Still, there's no sea my fantasy won't sail no frightful challenge that really makes me pale .
no killer mountain I won't gladly climb
As long as I'm home safe by dinner time.