



**As You Were  
Saying...**

**Teen-Age Marshall Plan.** We teen-agers never had a place of our own, although we always wanted one. Finally a bunch of us got together and talked to various civic groups. One of them offered us a sort of Marshall Plan: they'd give us the money if we'd do the work.

So we scouted around and found an old building. It was in awful shape, but all the kids painted, sanded, and washed like mad, and pretty soon we had something to be proud of. I think doing the hard work (and it was fun doing it) made us appreciate the place even more.

Now, after school and on week ends we have somewhere to go—there's ping pong, dancing, parties, and everything—and we did it all ourselves!—*Sharon Enloe (age 17), Jefferson City, Mo.*

**Two Views of a Stranger.** Driving home in a heavy snowfall last Winter, I became angered at a motorist behind me who kept honking his horn. The ruts were deep and hazardous, but I finally let him pass, muttering, "Hope he gets stuck."

Two miles farther on, he did. As I passed him I thought, "Serves him right."

Later, as I turned off the highway onto a country road, I also got stuck. I was there half an hour before anyone offered aid. Who was my benefactor? You guessed it, the same man. He stopped, gave me a push, then drove on, never knowing that I'd harbored ill feeling for him only a short time before.—*Cleveland S. Baker, Alexandria, Va.*

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... THE STRANGER who has never seen my face, never heard my voice, never discovered my sanctuary, writes to me:

"I love you. Each man must have one woman in his life. You are mine."

On this page each week, I bestow the weakness and strength of myself on all, not on one. I had not asked to be loved by a stranger except in my own way.

He chooses to love me in his. That's why my first reaction to his letter was indignation for presuming on my desire for universality and creating a privacy in which he and I are alone together.

But my second reaction is that of tolerance. The painter gives all who view the lifeblood of his canvas the right to take it for their own. The writer is no exception. I can neither grant nor deny the stranger's privilege of love, regardless of its form.

The man who wrote to me is lonely. He lives apart from the world. He has never seen mine. He has created from

my words and from this photograph a familiar vision.

It is not truly I whom he dreams. It is his own dream and he loves it.

I might have replied in anger and reproach. I might have told him truly of myself to destroy the marble and make it flesh.

I choose rather to remain silent, to leave his words untouched and to accept them not for myself but as he intended them, a peculiar tribute.

Many who know me face to face do not love me. Many are indifferent. From some I elicit dislike. My feet rest on no pinnacle of perfection, my head is not illuminated by the stars.

But if you must love me a little, stranger, love me. If I have come to fill a quiet need in a corner of your heart, I will do so.

For I understand, too, that when love walks away, it leaves a long shadow.

Emptiness.

*Patty Johnson*

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