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戴欣 译注



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## 简介

欧·亨利(O. Henry, 1862 - 1910)出生在美国北卡罗来纳州的一个小镇,原名威廉·西德尼·波特。波特的父亲是医生,波特15岁时去叔父的药房里学徒。他20岁时去德克萨斯州,先后在牧场干过活,做过会计、土地局办事员等;1891年起在德克萨斯州首府奥斯汀第一国民银行做出纳员。

波特在1887年结婚,1894年在银行工作之余创办了幽默周刊《滚石》,但这份周刊只维持了一年时间。1896年,银行发现有一小笔款子短缺,波特因涉嫌此事而被起诉,但他却取道新奥尔良去拉丁美洲避难。1897年,因妻子病重,波特回到奥斯汀,并在该地听候传讯。1898年,波特被判处五年徒刑。因波特有药剂师执照,入狱后曾担任药剂师并时常在监狱药房值夜班。波特从那时起开始以欧·亨利为笔名(原为狱中所用的一本法国药典的作者名字)写作短篇小说,寄往《麦克吕尔》杂志发表,换些稿酬贴补女儿的生活费用。1901年,波特因“行为良好”而提前获释,次年赴纽约专门从事写作。1903年至1906年,波特每星期为纽约的《世界报》提供一篇短篇小说,同时还为其他杂志供稿。

欧·亨利创作的短篇小说有三百余篇,分别收入了《白菜与国王》、《四百万》、《西部之心》、《市声》、《乱七八糟》、《滚石》和《无家可归的人》等作品集。

欧·亨利的短篇小说以描写纽约曼哈顿市民生活的作品最为著名。欧·亨利善于观察和捕捉日常生活中常见但富于哲理的戏剧性场景,他的许多作品的发展节奏较快,结尾时往往出现出人意料的结局,因此为一些评论家称之为“欧·亨利式的结尾”。有评论家认为,欧·亨利给短篇小说创作带来了“新的生命”。

# CONTENTS

## 目 录

|                                  |        |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| GIFTS OF THE MAGI .....          | ( 1 )  |
| 麦琪的礼物 .....                      | (110)  |
| THE LAST LEAF .....              | ( 12 ) |
| 最后一片藤叶 .....                     | (117)  |
| THE COP AND THE ANTHEM .....     | ( 24 ) |
| 警察与赞美诗 .....                     | (124)  |
| A RETRIEVED REFORMATION .....    | ( 37 ) |
| 改邪归正 .....                       | (132)  |
| THE FURNISHED ROOM .....         | ( 51 ) |
| 带家具出租的房间 .....                   | (141)  |
| THE DUPLICITY OF HARGRAVES ..... | ( 66 ) |
| 复制大师哈格雷夫 .....                   | (150)  |
| THE RANSOM OF RED CHIEF .....    | ( 90 ) |
| 红毛酋长的赎金 .....                    | (165)  |

## Gifts of the Magi<sup>1</sup>

[<sup>1</sup>] One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And 60 cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by *bulldozing*<sup>2</sup> the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the *silent imputations of parsimony*<sup>3</sup> that such *close dealing*<sup>4</sup> implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

[<sup>2</sup>] *There was clearly nothing to do but*<sup>5</sup> flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which *instigates the moral reflection*<sup>6</sup> that life is made up of sobs, sniffles and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

[<sup>3</sup>] While *the mistress of the home*<sup>7</sup> is gradually *subsiding from the first stage to the second*<sup>8</sup> take a look at the home. A *furnished flat*<sup>9</sup> at \$8 per week. It did not exactly *beggar description*<sup>10</sup>, but it certainly had that word<sup>11</sup> on the lookout for the *mendicancy squad*.<sup>12</sup>

*In the vestibule below*<sup>13</sup> belonged to this flat a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could *coax a ring*.<sup>14</sup> *Also appertaining thereunto was a card*<sup>15</sup> bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The "Dillingham" *had been flung to the breeze*<sup>16</sup> during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a *modest and unassuming D*.<sup>17</sup> But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "*Jim*"<sup>18</sup> and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham

Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

[4] Della finished her cry and *attended to her cheeks with*<sup>19</sup> the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a *gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard*.<sup>20</sup> Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, *with this result*<sup>21</sup>. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. *They always are*<sup>22</sup>. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. *Many a happy hour*<sup>23</sup> she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling – *something just a little bit near to being worthy of*<sup>24</sup> the honor of being owned by Jim.

[5] There was a *pier-glass*<sup>25</sup> between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a *rapid sequence of longitudinal strips*,<sup>26</sup> obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

[6] Now,<sup>27</sup> there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. *Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat*<sup>28</sup> across the airshaft Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry and mocked at Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had *King Solomon*<sup>29</sup> been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him *pluck at his beard*<sup>30</sup> from envy.

[7] So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and

shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and *made itself almost a garment for her*.<sup>31</sup> And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

*On went*<sup>32</sup> her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

[<sup>8</sup>]Where she stopped *the sign read*<sup>33</sup>: "Mme. Sofronic. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting, before Madame, large, too white, chilly and *hardly looking the "Sofronie."*<sup>34</sup>

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it." ]

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, *lifting the mass with a practised hand*.<sup>35</sup>

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

[<sup>9</sup>]Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the *hashed metaphor*<sup>36</sup>. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was none other like it in any of the stores, and she had *turned all of them inside out*.<sup>37</sup> It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value *by substance alone*<sup>38</sup> and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value—the *description applied to both*.<sup>39</sup> Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be *properly anxious about the time*<sup>40</sup>

in any company.<sup>41</sup> Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

[10] When Della reached home *her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason.*<sup>42</sup> She got out her curling irons<sup>43</sup> and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages<sup>44</sup> made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully and critically.

“If Jim doesn’t kill me,<sup>45</sup>” she said to herself, “before he takes a second look at me, he’ll say I look like a Coney Island<sup>46</sup> chorus girl. But what could I do—oh, what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents!”

[11] At 7 o’clock the coffee was made and *the frying pan was on the back of the stove*<sup>47</sup> hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della *doubled the fob chain*<sup>48</sup> in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: “Please, God, make him think I am still pretty.”

[12] The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two — and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail.<sup>49</sup> His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an



expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

[13] *Della wriggled off the table*<sup>50</sup> and went for him.

“Jim, darling,” she cried, “don’t look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn’t have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It’ll grow again—you won’t mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say ‘Merry Christmas!’ Jim, and let’s be happy. You don’t know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I’ve got for you.”

“You’ve cut off your hair?” asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet *even after the hardest mental labor*<sup>51</sup>.

“Cut it off and sold it,” said Della. “Don’t you like me just as well, anyhow? I’m me without my hair, ain’t I?”

[14] Jim looked about the room curiously.

“You say your hair is gone?” he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

“You needn’t look for it,” said Della. “It’s sold, I tell you—sold and gone too. It’s Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, *for it went for you*.<sup>52</sup> Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered,” she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, “but nobody could ever count my love for you. *Shall I put the chops on*,<sup>53</sup> Jim?”

[15] Out of his trance Jim seemed to quickly wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? *A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer*<sup>54</sup>. *The magi brought valuable gifts*,<sup>55</sup> but that was not among them. *This dark assertion*<sup>56</sup> will be illuminated later on.

[16] Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

“Don’t make any mistake, *Dell*,<sup>57</sup>” he said, “about me. I don’t think there’s anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you’ll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going awhile at first.”

*White fingers and nimble*<sup>58</sup> tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, *necessitating the immediate empolymment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat*.<sup>59</sup>

[17] For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, *side and back*,<sup>60</sup> that Della had worshipped for long *in a Broadway window*.<sup>61</sup> Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jewelled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them *without the least hope of possession*<sup>62</sup> And now, they were hers, but *the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone*.<sup>63</sup>

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: “My hair grows so fast, Jim!”

[18] And then Della *leaped up like a little singed cat*<sup>64</sup> and cried, “Oh, oh!”

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull, precious metal seemed *to flash with a reflection of*<sup>65</sup> her bright and ardent spirit.

“Isn’t it a dandy, Jim? *I hunted all over town to find it*.<sup>66</sup> You’ll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see *how it looks on it*.<sup>67</sup>”

[19] Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put

his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

“Dell,” said he, “let’s put our Christmas presents away and keep ’em a while. *They’re too nice to use just at present*.<sup>68</sup> I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on.”

[20] The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to *the Babe in the manger*<sup>69</sup>. They invented the art of giving Christmas gifts. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly *bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication*.<sup>70</sup> And here *I have lamely related to you*<sup>71</sup> the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But *in a last word to the wise of these days*<sup>72</sup> let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were of the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

## Notes

1. magi 《圣经》中从东方来朝见初生不久的耶稣的三博士，他们给耶稣带来了寓意深远的礼物；该词的单数形式为 Magus
2. bulldozing 原意为“强迫”，这里形容购物时死乞白赖地往下压价
3. the silent... parsimony 虽未被人当面指出来，但也显得太吝啬
4. close dealing 斤斤计较，锱铢必较的购物方式
5. There was... but 除了……之外，没有别的事情能做
6. instigates... reflection 引起人富含寓意的思考
7. the mistress of the home 这家的女主人
8. subsiding from... the second 直译为“从第一阶段转到第二阶段”；意为“(情绪由激动)转为平静”

9. A furnished flat 带家具出租的公寓房
10. beggar description 难以形容;这里的 beggar 为动词,意为“难以……”
11. but it... that word “that word”指“beggar”一词;这里的“beggar”一词双关,既作为动词表示“难以……”,又暗指德拉家破烂不堪,比乞丐住的地方强不了多少
12. mendicancy squad 贫民窟,乞丐窝棚
13. In the... below 在楼下的门厅里,“below”这里是“楼下”的意思
14. coax a ring coax 意为“耐心地处理……,慢慢地把……弄好”;这里指电铃是坏的,无法敲响
15. Also appertaining... a card 那里(指楼下门铃处)还挂着一块门牌;appertaining 意为“属于,有关”,thereunto 为较旧的用法,相当于 thereto,意为“此外,又……”
16. had been... breeze 春风得意
17. modest and unassuming 质朴又谦逊的
18. Jim Jim(吉姆)是 James(詹姆斯)的昵称,表明这对夫妻虽然贫困,但仍是一往情深
19. attended to her cheeks 往面颊上(扑粉)
20. a gray... gray backyard 作者在这里一连用了三个“灰”字:灰猫,灰栅栏和灰色的院子,意在烘托德拉低落的情绪
21. with this result 指只攒到一元八角七分钱这样一个结果
22. They always are 事情总是这样的;注意在这句之前的句子大部分都是用过去时态,到这里时态忽然转成一般现在时,强调这种情况时常发生
23. many a happy hour “many a”后面接单数名词,表示数目多
24. something just... worthy of 一件多多少少能配上他的东西;“a little bit”修饰“near to”,相当于“somewhat”,意为“在某种程度上,多多少少地……”
25. a pier-glass 一面壁镜或条镜
26. a rapid... strips 一系列快速变幻的纵向窄条

27. Now 该词在这里不表示时间,而表示一种语气,含有“且说,要知道,由于”等意思
28. Had the... the flat 示巴(Sheba)古国在阿拉伯半岛西南部,即今日的也门地区;《圣经·旧约》上说,示巴女王带了许多香料、宝石和黄金去觐见所罗门王,用难题测试他的智慧;“Had... lived in”是虚拟语气,意为“假使,倘若”
29. King Solomon 所罗门王,公元前十世纪以色列国王,以聪明和豪富著称
30. pluck at his beard “pluck at one's beard”含有拽胡子的意思;整个短语的含意类似中文的“嫉妒得眼珠都红了,嫉妒得心痒难熬”
31. made itself... her 简直就像一件袍子裹住了她(的身体)
32. On went... 很快地穿(戴)……
33. the sign read 招牌上写着;招牌上说
34. hardly looking the “Sofronie” Sofronie(莎弗朗妮)是意大利诗人塔索(1544-1595)所著的史诗“被解放的耶路撒冷”中的人物,她为了拯救耶路撒冷全城的基督徒,勇敢地承担了他人 的罪责,成为舍己救人的典范;作者在这里借用这个名字来讽刺女店主;“hardly look...”意为“看上去与……不相称”
35. lifting the mass... hand 手法纯熟地拎起了大把的头发
36. hashed metaphor 不高明的比喻
37. turned all... out “turn something inside out”意为“把……翻个底朝天”;作者这里用了夸张的写法,表示“(德拉)把所有铺子的里里外外都仔细搜寻过了”
38. by substance alone 完全凭借其质地……;“alone”在这里意为“完全、纯粹、仅凭着……”;“substance”指原材料的质地
39. the description... both 这词组用来描述两者(表链与吉姆本人)都合适
40. be properly anxious... time 举止得体,不失风度地关注时间;“anxious about time”这里指因急于知道时间而看表
41. in any company 与任何人在一起

42. her intoxication... reason 她的陶醉在一定程度上被谨慎和理智所取代;“gave way”意为“让位于,被……所替代”
43. got out her curling irons 取出烫发钳
44. to work... ravages 动手补救起灾害来;“ravage”原意为被破坏的结果,这里指“一头长长的秀发剪掉了,只剩下很短的一截,这对一向以秀发为荣的德拉简直是个极大的打击”
45. If Jim... me “kill”含有“使……非常痛苦,伤心欲绝”的意思;本部分意为“如果吉姆没让我伤心至死的话”
46. Coney Island 科尼岛,位于纽约市布鲁克林南端海滨,原为一小岛,后为旅游休闲胜地
47. the frying pan... the stove 德拉家可能用的是四灶头的煤气灶,德拉把煎锅放在靠后的灶眼上保温,以便随时可以煎肉排
48. doubled... chain 把表链对折着……
49. as a setter... quail 像闻到鹌鹑气味的猎狗
50. Della wriggled... table 扭身跳下桌子
51. even after... labor 甚至在绞尽脑汁、冥思苦想之后还……
52. for it... you 我是为了你才失掉头发的(把头发卖掉的)
53. shall I... on 我把肉排煎上好吗
54. A mathematician... answer 一位数学家或智者可能会给你一个错误的回答;本句意为数学家或智者很善于计算纯数学方面的问题,然而一旦涉及情感方面的问题,由于有些东西是无法计算的,他们的特长也就失去作用了
55. The magi... gifts 三博士为初生的耶稣带来了三件礼物——黄金、乳香和没药,黄金象征尊贵,乳香象征神圣,没药则预示耶稣后来会因受迫害而死
56. This dark assertion “dark”这里指“令人迷惑的……”;“dark assertion”意为令人不解的、晦涩难懂的话
57. Dell 德儿,为德拉的昵称
58. white fingers and nimble 白皙、灵巧的手指
59. necessitating the... flat 需要这公寓里的户主马上采取各种办法来抚慰她

60. side and back 吉姆买的是一套作为头发装饰品的饰梳;side指可以插在两鬓上用的梳子;back指插在脑后部的头发上用的
61. in a Broadway window 在百老汇街道的一个商店橱窗里
62. without the...possession 从未有过要占有它们的愿望
63. the tresses...gone “that should have adorned...”为虚拟语气,意为“本该……”;“the coveted adornment”意为“渴望已久的装饰品”
64. leaped up...cat 像只被火烫着的小猫那样跳了起来
65. to flash...reflection of 由于反射了……而闪闪发光
66. I hunted...it 我搜寻了整个城才找到它
67. how it...on it 金表配上表链后的样子
68. They're...present 它们实在太好了(以致)现在用不了
69. the Babe...manger 诞生在马槽里的圣婴
70. bearing the...duplication 附带一种投桃报李式的互换礼品的特权
71. I have...you 我不甚高明地对诸位讲述了……
72. in a last...days 对现在的聪明人再进最后一言

## The Last Leaf

[1] In a little district west of *Washington Square*<sup>1</sup> the streets have run crazy<sup>2</sup> and broken themselves into small strips called "places." These "places" make strange angles and curves<sup>3</sup>. One street crosses itself a time or two<sup>4</sup>. An artist once discovered a valuable possibility in this street. Suppose a collector with a bill for paints, paper and canvas should, in traversing this route,<sup>5</sup> suddenly meet himself coming back,<sup>6</sup> without a cent having been paid on account!

So, to quaint old *Greenwich Village*<sup>7</sup> the art people soon came prowling<sup>8</sup>, hunting for north windows<sup>9</sup> and eighteenth-century gables and Dutch attics<sup>10</sup> and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs and a chafing dish or two from Sixth avenue, and became a "colony."

[2] At the top of a squatty, three-story brick Sue and Johnsy had their studio. "Johnsy" was familiar for Joanna<sup>11</sup>. One was from Maine; the other from California. They had met at the table d' hote<sup>12</sup> of an Eighth street "Delmonico's,"<sup>13</sup> and found their tastes in art, chicory salad and bishop sleeves<sup>14</sup> so congenial<sup>15</sup> that the joint studio resulted.

That was in May. In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy finger<sup>16</sup>. Over on the east side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by scores,<sup>17</sup> but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown "places."

[3] Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric



old gentleman<sup>18</sup>. A mite of<sup>19</sup> a little woman *with blood thinned by*<sup>20</sup> California zephyrs *was hardly fair game*<sup>21</sup> for the *red-fisted, short-breathed*<sup>22</sup> old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay, scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch window-panes at the *blank side of the next brick house*.<sup>23</sup>

[4] One morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hallway with a shaggy, gray eyebrow.

"She has one chance in—let us say, ten,<sup>24</sup>" he said, as he shook down the mercury in his clinical thermometer. "And that chance is for her to want to live. This way people have of *lining-up on the side of the undertaker*<sup>25</sup> *makes the entire pharmacopeia look silly*.<sup>26</sup> Your little lady has made up her mind that she's not going to get well. Has she anything on her mind?"

"She—she wanted to paint *the Bay of Naples*<sup>27</sup> some day," said Sue.

"Paint? —bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking about twice—a man, for instance?"

"A man?" said Sue, *with a jewsharp twang in her voice*.<sup>28</sup> "Is a man worth—but, no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind."

"Well, *it is the weakness*,<sup>29</sup> then," said the doctor. "*I will do all that science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish*.<sup>30</sup> But whenever *my patient begins to count the carriages in her funeral procession*<sup>31</sup> I subtract 50 per cent from the curative power of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about the new winter styles in cloak sleeves I will promise you a one-in-five chance for her, instead of one in ten."

[5] After the doctor had gone Sue went into the workroom and *cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp*.<sup>32</sup> Then she *swaggered into Johnsy's room*<sup>33</sup> with her drawing board, whistling *ragtime*.<sup>34</sup>

Johnsy, *lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bedclothes*,<sup>35</sup> with her face toward the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking