

Christ! Fifty bucks for something any half-wit could make himself for a few dollars; but before I could say anything, he opened his “self-selling” booklet—glossy photographs of children and old women who had been severely burned.

I was on my feet but Campbell was taking my profanity calmly as though he were used to it. But when he moved to show me the door I removed the disk from the sample alarm still in my hand. It let off an ear shattering noise as I tossed it into the far corner of the room. Campbell rushed toward it as I proceeded to disarm the five alarms in the briefcase. As I left, Campbell was at the other end of the room trying to break the plastic box with the heel of his shoe.



Back in Crawfordsville, I filled the tank, picked up my few belongings and headed home.

A half hour along on my three hour trip I stopped at a roadside tavern and bought a cold quart of beer. My cigarette ash dropped on the seat as I reached for a second sip from the bottle beside me. The sun was just setting and in front of me—and behind me—and on either side—stretched miles and miles of corn.

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## GALEN GREEN

### *The Eyes of the Cynic*

for L. S. Perry

Because your father with his large hairy forearms never acquired a taste for the sports page or the financial section, you enter gym class with an underdeveloped sense of competition, for which we drive you to the library . . . (instead of to the ballpark, the church, the liquor store, the television set) . . . from whose dark stacks you emerge with a polite refusal to join us in bombardment when the whistle blows—not so much from the fear of broken glasses as from the vision of the entire class lying forever in our separate graves—and from your pity for even the smell of our sweaty gym socks.

But we, who are unable to return a pity for the smell of your laundry, teach you that to survive you must constantly see through our games, our stained-glass windows, our gin & tonics, our television screens.

Your vision we then label “cynicism” and warn our children against it by bringing your eyes home for dinner.