

Sketch

Volume 8, Number 3

1942

Article 10

Translation

Doris Plagge*

*Iowa State College

Copyright ©1942 by the authors. *Sketch* is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress).
<http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/sketch>

Translation

Doris Plagge

H. Ec. Sr.

AROUND the whitewashed sculpture studio several students worked, whistling, bending, squinting at their studies on the square work table, now and then pausing to brush away the curious flies that hovered over the glistening clay. Sunlight poured in at the high windows, and Jean heard the swish of water far down the corridor outside as the janitor played his hose on the cement bricks.

“Unity—that is what we must work for! We must have that *feeling* for the composition.”

The soft voice of the instructor ran through Jean’s head again and again. She blinked her tired eyes rapidly in a determined effort to rub out the image of the lumpy, shapeless clay figure before her. Somehow her new piece of sculpture lacked all character, she decided. It was dull—it was meaningless, without feeling. Absently she dug her clay-smearred hand into her smock pocket and stared again at the crumpled paper she found there. The feeling was there—on paper. In two dimensions she could do it. Her sketch of the puckish boy and girl holding a Christmas candle had all the life and vitality she was trying to translate in the clay—there it lay in their round arms and bodies, their active legs and fresh smiles. It was alive. The lump of clay was static. A real problem, to combine a boy, a girl, and a candle into a unit with mass, strength, and one-ness. . . .

She turned suddenly back to her bench and looked through narrowed eyes at the crude shapes of arms and legs and bodies. Turning the board she squinted again, her eye traveling along the rhythmical lines of the form and weighing the masses one against the other as the instructor had done.

Ah—why, of course! That’s it! Her square, bony fingers attacked the clay and prodded the shapes up and tight together, accenting each curve and bend of the arm and leg, tipping the head and curving the back so that the round chests of the children pressed against their load in the earnestness of childish delight.

Behind her the instructor watched, chuckling at her exuberant fingers, and noted that her blue eyes sparkled with a fire that would not fail her now.

"That's it—now it's beginning to *live!*" he said. "You have to put the lift and up-swing into it—. Now, here—and here—keep that arm round; keep that freshness of the children there. And fill it in here, and here—make it one mass. Unity is what we must work for! We must have that feeling for the composition."

Jean laughed to herself in the silent but excited way she knew so well. She always felt it coming when something important happened; it was just as though her whole happiness went to live deep in her throat, and kept all sound from coming out."

"I've got it now," she thought. "It's alive."

Off to the War

Margaret Ann Kirchner

H. Ec. Sr.

THIS was a wonderful summer. Just like last summer; like all the summers I can remember. I guess my whole life has been just one long perfect summer. There's never been anything really wrong for Jim and me.

I'll always remember lots of things about this summer. Those silly bets we made on how many kittens Tabby would have. The nights we walked in the rain and waded in all the puddles. And the limp-brimmed old hat Jim kept for wet weather. How we flipped pennies to decide who'd buy the popcorn after the show. And the singing telegram Jim sent me when he went on that baseball trip. The chocolate malteds we ate at two in the morning. And the times we watched the sun come up because there wasn't any good reason why we should go to bed.

But the gang began to kid Jim about leaving.

"When do the Marines get you?" they said, or "Got your orders yet?"

I was sitting with him Saturday night in Pop's Inn eating hamburgers with thick slices of onion when Red came over to the booth and Jim told him.

"I'm leaving Monday on the 6:34."