

# The True-Blue American

By Delmore Schwartz

Jeremiah Dickson was a true-blue American,  
For he was a little boy who understood America, for he felt that he must  
Think about *everything*; because that's *all* there is to think about,  
Knowing immediately the intimacy of truth and comedy,  
Knowing intuitively how a sense of humor was a necessity  
For one and for all who live in America. Thus, natively, and  
Naturally when on an April Sunday in an ice cream parlor Jeremiah  
Was requested to choose between a chocolate sundae and a banana split  
He answered unhesitatingly, having no need to think of it  
Being a true-blue American, determined to continue as he began:  
Rejecting the either-or of Kierkegaard, and many another European;  
Refusing to accept alternatives, refusing to believe the choice of between;  
Rejecting selection; denying dilemma; electing absolute affirmation: knowing  
    in his breast  
        The infinite and the gold  
        Of the endless frontier, the deathless West.

"Both: I will have them both!" declared this true-blue American  
In Cambridge, Massachusetts, on an April Sunday, instructed  
    By the great department stores, by the Five-and-Ten,  
Taught by Christmas, by the circus, by the vulgarity and grandeur of  
    Niagara Falls and the Grand Canyon,  
Tutored by the grandeur, vulgarity, and infinite appetite gratified and  
    Shining in the darkness, of the light  
On Saturdays at the double bills of the moon pictures,  
The consummation of the advertisements of the imagination of the light  
Which is as it was—the infinite belief in infinite hope—of Columbus,  
    Barnum, Edison, and Jeremiah Dickson.

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