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The Room Across the Hall

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AFTER THANKING colleague Coogan for his penetrating report on the Osborne play, I'd like to close by mentioning briefly what is coming up. After a singularly dank early December, the Philadelphia theater promises much more for the winter season. By the time you read this piece, localities will have seen Seventeen, reportedly a pleasant if non-historic musical. Also Bell, Book and Candle, the van Druten play about witchcraft in modern Manhattan, will have held the stage, along with the always capable Kaufman's latest, Fancy Meeting You Again. Also promised is a musical version of Victor Wolfson's admired, but unsuccessful, Excursion; they've retitled it A Month of Sundays. For many of us, the most exciting news is that we are to get, along about February, Christopher Fry's Venus Observed, with Rex Harrison and Lilli Palmer playing the leads. Venus Observed is not, I think, as good a play as his The Lady's Not for Burning, in the reading. But it is somewhat better constructed, and should be a delight. Mr. Fry, for the information of shut-ins, is the Britisher currently engaged in irrigating the Waste Land.

The Room Across the Hall

● James F. Martin

The open door across the hall
Bids black against the long white wall,
But yet I know a boarder's there
I've heard his footfall on the stair.

A time there was when I was ill
And saw him on my window sill,
And asked if I could visit in,
But all he did was stare in grin.

A time there was when I was well
And crossed the hall to ring the bell,
Because I wanted much to see
That misty face that looked at me.

The room may be a darkened tomb
Or filled with life like nature's womb,
What's in that room men may agree
But I shall want to wait and see.