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Bell, T. 6-29-61 Santa Cruzan's Story Of Death Related In Magazine Article

Everyone must die. How one man, Santa Cruzan Thomas Bell, felt as he faced inevitable death from cancer is recorded in his final work, "In the Midst of Life," to be released early in August by Atheneum Publishers.

Attracting nationwide interest is the excerpt from his book carried in the July issue of Reader's Digest under the title, "Six Months To Live." Written without sentimentality or morbidity, it is the account of a man who loved life but who faced death with courage. Death came last January 17 a few days after the final chapters were completed. He learned of the book's acceptance by the publishers the day before he died.

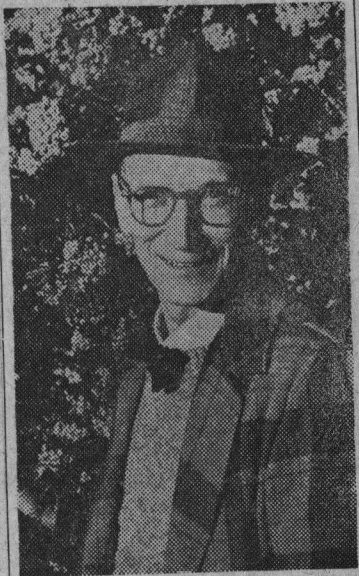
"One good thing about all of this," he told his wife, "I've been able to write another book."

Santa Cruzans reading the Reader's Digest article will recognize the East Side locale and businessmen mentioned even though their names have been changed.

Thomas Bell, author of seven books and numerous short stories for national periodicals, came to Santa Cruz six years ago with his wife, Marie, and took over the East Side Stationery and Gift shop. They previously had vacationed here and liked it so well they returned. Mrs. Bell had been an art director for Norcross greeting cards in New York.

Born in 1903, Bell grew up in the Pennsylvania steel towns and when he was 15 worked as an apprentice electrician in the mills. In 1922 he went to New York where he was a mechanic, a merchant seaman, and while writing his first novel, a bookstore clerk.

In 1930 his "Equestrian Portrait" was published. His other novels are "The Second Prince," "All Brides Are Beautiful" (produced as a motion picture starring Joan Fontaine under the title "From This Day Forward"),



Thomas Bell

"Out Of This Furnace," "Till I Come Back To You" (dramatized on Broadway as "The World Is Full of Girls"), and "There Comes a Time."

Mrs. Bell says few of their customers or business associates knew that her husband was an author.

"Tom wanted it that way. To him the storekeeping wasn't the main thing. What was important was the opportunity to meet and talk with people and to each of them he gave a little part of himself.

"He felt everyone was good and that man was put on this earth to rise above himself—and if given a chance he would."

Mrs. Bell says she is trying to be a good widow.

"I opened the store immediately as he wanted me to do and I haven't grieved—I've smiled. And as he promised me, I have a headful of memories and all of them pleasant ones."