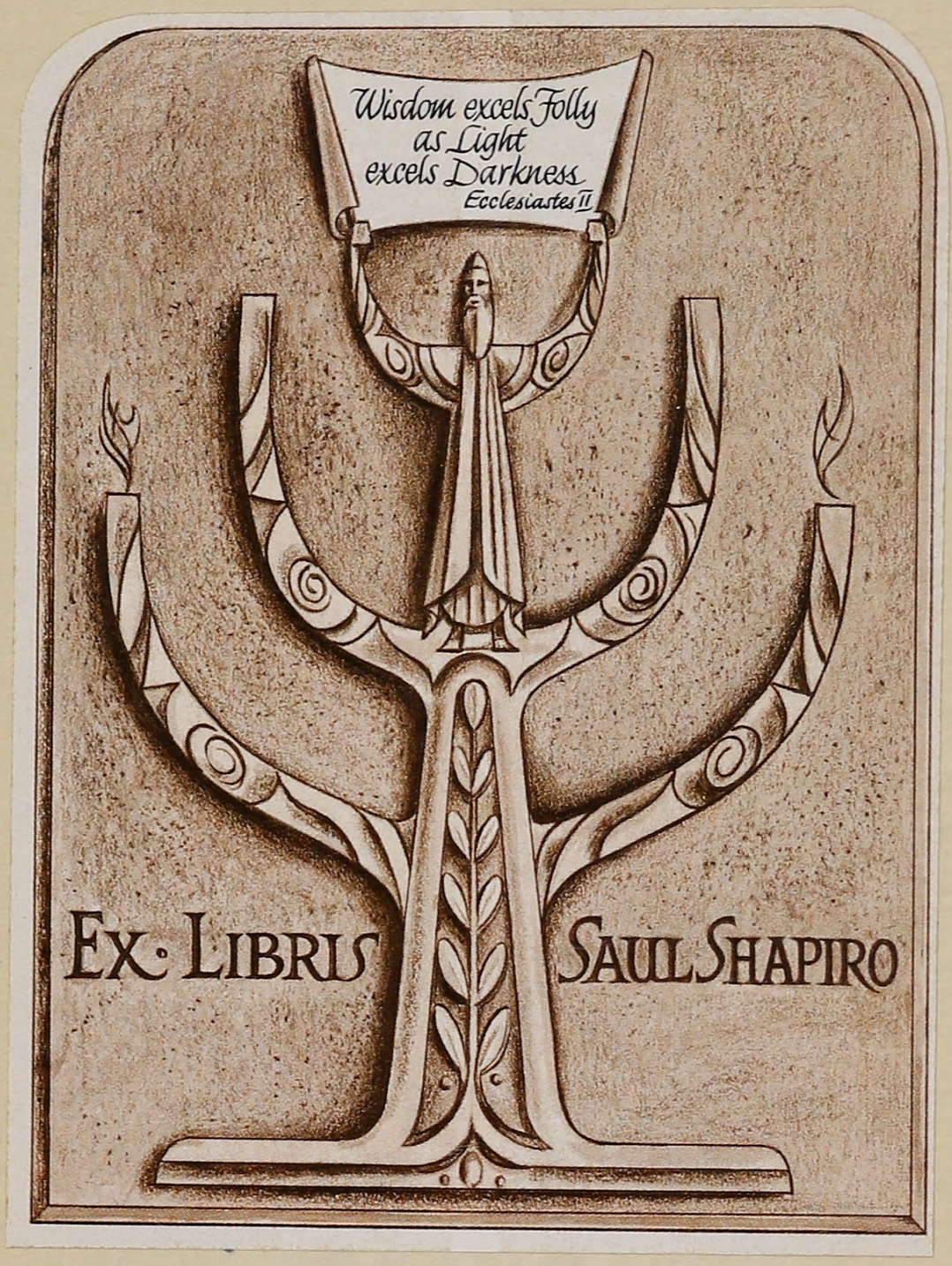
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excels Darkness
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BY NATHAN ASCH

THE OFFICE
LOVE IN CHARTRES

FOR MY
FATHER

CONTENTS

I

THE SUBWAY

Quicker and quicker he walked toward the sunlight, Harry Grossman hardly able to keep up with him, but hurrying behind him and calling: "What's the rush? Wait for me"; but he walked on, went through the big entrance where the doors had been summerlike folded to the sides, went down the great stone steps. The sun was on the right lighting up the Customs House, the statues around it, the sun was red in the windows of the brick Railroad Building. He walked right to the sun. He said to himself: I want to be in the sun for just a moment. He became ashamed of the thought, said: I don't want sunlight at all. All I want is the subway station, and it's there where the sunlight is. I am going to the subway station and not to the sun.

From everywhere people came out: from the Standard Oil Building, from 42 Broadway, from the Cunard Building behind him. Down Broadway they went, drawing gloves on, hitting the ground with their sticks, in twos and threes walking a little quicker, talking and laughing; messenger and office boys and little file clerks with short dresses and long, thin legs ran, getting in everyone's way. As they came toward the sta-

tion there were more of them, getting thicker and more crowded, with the entrance swarming. They were excited, they were eager, something wonderful was going to happen the next moment, their faces said.

That was how Jim felt. Something wonderful was going to happen in a little while. Maybe in the subway, maybe home, or later in the evening. Coming out of the office, through with work for the day, the time absolutely his own until the next day at nine 'clock, he felt happy, he was excited. Quicker he walked toward the sunlight, to the crowded hole in Bowling Green that led to the subway station. For a moment, he saw, he would be in the sunlight. After all he couldn't go to the back of the station, from where the sun could be seen, he couldn't cross the street and walk up the Customs House steps, and stand full in the sun, see dark Broadway going away up, with the great buildings on both sides and people hurrying home. No, for just one moment he would feel the sun from Jersey, and then he would get a paper and he would go down.

Harry Grossman was running after him, calling: "Hey, wait. What's the matter?" Then Harry came up to him, and together they went on. At the subway entrance there stood a boy, white, blue, pink newspapers on the ground be-

tween his feet, yelling the names. Jim said Journal, Harry said Telegram, and the boy drew a paper with each hand from the pile, folded them in his fingers, slipped them under Jim's and Harry's arms. Three cents each, and down they went.

Down there it was dark from the sun above, and there was noise there hadn't been on the street, noise of metal striking metal, of nickels dropped into turnstiles, and the turnstiles turning with people in them, people changing money, going through to the platform, a train on the other side passing, deafening everything. The station was crowded. People dropping pennies into chewing gum machines; people buying papers, sweets; nervous people walking up and down the station platform, leaning against pillars, trying to read the news, eyes not yet used to the dim light from the sun above.

Near the newsstand stood two girls, girls who didn't work downtown. Black satin next to the body, that was soft where it showed, that rolled as they walked, as they stood. They walk up Broadway at six, look at automobiles that pass, and when they see an imported car with a man or two men in it, they give it a come hither look. Come hither and play with me.

Jim's eye met Harry's eye, and Harry's eye

made a slight wink. Slowly they walked toward the newsstand, toward the girls, who never noticed them, who made it a point not to notice them; and Jim's eye covered the girls and undressed them, and found the one that pleased him best. Then they stopped and stared.

Come on, look at me, Jim's eye said. Give us a look and a nice Come to bed smile. I could ruin you, he said, if you gave me a chance. I could ruin you so you'd love it. You'd yell, Papa, give me more. You'd forget all about Hispanos and all about your rent.

We'd give you a swell time, Jim's eye said. We'd take you to the movies, and give you some cheap booze, and of course we couldn't afford to take you upstairs where you live. But we'd manage to give you a good time in the hall. But there's probably an elevator man where you live. "Well, damn the elevator man," he said in a loud voice.

"What did you say?" asked Harry, his eye on the other girl.

"Oh, to hell with them," Jim said.

"They're nice," Harry said, still looking.

The girls moved on toward the head of the platform. Paying no attention to Jim and Harry, saying by their walk: We can't be bothered with you. You haven't got a Cadillac. You're nothing at all. You just ride in the subway. We took the

subway because there are no taxis on lower Broadway at this hour. Well, Jim said, this is the rush hour. You're going to ride with us, you're going to be touched by us, and you're going to like it.

The train came. They forgot everything in the world but that the train had come and that this train must be boarded. The train was full already; the guards yelled: "You let them out. Let them out first." No one heard the guards. Let them get out if they can. We're going in. People tried to get in, pushed and shoved and hit with their elbows, and got in.

The two girls got in, and right near them, pressed against them, were Jim and Harry. The girls were angry, the girls looked at them indignantly. The girl Jim liked said: "Quit your shoving." Jim smiled. What do you mean, quit your shoving? Where do you think you are?

"They don't like us," he said to Harry.

The platform man pushed the remaining few in, pulled the door closed. Bells and the train started. Jim found the ground with his feet, elbowed room for himself, and looked up at the placards.

Thirty dollars and fifteen cents. Would have to give Ma ten dollars, and Daisy three dollars that he owed her, and pay the tailor two dollars,

and how much to Joe? Oh, Lord, four fifty, and there might be some odd packages of cigarettes that he owed for. It was no use. You worked like a dog all week, and then pay day came around when you paid back what you owed, and you were broke again.

Now, let's see. Daisy would have to get her three dollars, or she said she'd never lend him another cent. And the tailor wouldn't give him the suit unless he paid what he owed. Joe? Well, he'd give him two dollars, otherwise he wouldn't be able to pass the stationery store again. That made it seven. Then Ma. . . .

Ma, I'm awfully short this week. Can I give you five dollars now? and there's a fellow owes me money that he promised next week. Be a good guy, Ma, and wait a couple of days. All right, Ma?

That was all right. Twelve dollars altogether, and eighteen left over, and then have to save carfare, and have to buy lunches, and the suit that would have to be gotten soon. In about two weeks. And he wondered how much Helen would cost him tonight.

Everyone swayed as the train turned a curve. At first all the heads and bodies this way, and then altogether that way. When the train stopped too suddenly some people missed their straps

and almost fell. Some said Sorry, some said Pardon me, some said nothing at all, but stared, and the ones they stared at stared back. As they reached Rector and then Cortlandt Street, more tried to get out and still more did get it. Again there was terrible crowding, with people against the ones sitting, against the opposite door, against each other. Some gasped, some protested in angry voices. " Cut out the shoving." " Get your elbow away." Again the door pushed shut and again they started.

Harry Grossman was trying to look at a corner of his paper, and while reading he glanced at the girl pressed against him, and from time to time he grinned at Jim. Jim grinned, too.

All right, sister, don't get sore. We won't eat you. We're only human. We like to feel against us a bit of high class meat, even if we can't ever taste it. You know, we're all right. We're good guys. Now come on, be nice, smile.

Oh, to hell with them. " Don't look at them, Harry." You'd think a couple of Queens of Roumania were riding here. They're no good. They can see through your clothes and know what you've got in your pocket. And you haven't enough. Not for them. Look at the stuff they're wearing. You think a clerk earned that money? Forget them.

Tonight he would meet her. She would be standing near the soda fountain of the Times Square Liggett's, waiting for him. She would smile, say Hello, put her arm through his, and they would walk into Broadway. They would come to a movie, would go in, sit near each other in the dark. He would take her hand, feel its warmth, its softness; and sitting there holding each other they would get to know each other better.

He smiled. In his mind he was sitting with her in the movie; he was holding her, holding as much of her as he could, as she would let him; and he wondered what would happen when he would know her better, how they would act, what they would say at the end of the evening, when at the door of her home he would be kissing her good night.

Or would they kiss good night? At the end of the evening would she still be nice to him, as nice as he knew she would be when they would meet in Liggett's? Or would she be angry at him, would she remember something that would have happened in the early part of the evening, and walk into her place with a short Good night, then shut her door, leaving him angry at the night he had wasted? Or maybe — but this he hardly hoped — feeling well toward him she would ask him to

come into her home, or maybe even he could convince her in the taxi that she should allow him to enter. And then, did she live with her parents, or with a girl friend? or maybe she lived alone, and upon entering he would find himself in the room she slept.

Harry was saying something to him.

"Isn't this a God damned shame?" Harry was saying.

"What?" he asked.

Over the head of a woman, Harry handed him the paper. He read the headline: SACCO-VANZETTI LOSE HOPE MUST DIE TONIGHT.

He looked at the headline, at first not understanding; then he remembered and gave the paper back.

"Who cares?" he said.

Harry went back to his paper. The two women were still indignant. A little man repeated: "Let me out. I want to get out of here," pushing people out of his way, trying to reach the car door. The train stopped. The guard yelled Brooklyn Bridge. A lot of people got out. A lot of people got in. The two women found seats. A loud bell, and the train started.

Jim and Harry moved toward where the women were sitting, and stood over them, holding to the straps. As the train curved in its track

knees touched knees involuntarily; sometimes knees tried to touch knees. Jim's glance went down over the small hats, on the satin covered bodies, and he noticed the waist of one of the women was cut very low, and leaning forward he saw her breasts. For a moment, angry at her, he wanted to take his eyes away, but couldn't, and kept on staring. A desire came over him to reach down and touch those breasts, fondle them; his hand even relaxed its grip on the strap, but quickly he controlled himself, tightened his hold, and still he looked.

The woman raised her head, saw him looking into her bosom. She didn't adjust herself, she didn't even cover her breasts with her hand, but she looked straight up at him, contempt on her face, and her eyes said: You bastard. Go on, look, if it does you any good. Get an eyeful, quick. It's the first and last time *you'll* ever see them.

For a moment he kept on looking, as if he were trying to outstare the woman, as if in lowering his gaze before she lowered hers, he would give in to her, show himself inferior to her; but his neck began to feel warm, then his cheeks, and his ears burned, and he turned his eyes away, feeling foolish, humiliated. He hated the woman. His hand wanted to strike her, to hurt her. He hoped no one noticed him, he hoped Harry was not

seeing him blush. He hated himself, too, for having been outstared by her. He wanted to move into another part of the car, but it was crowded, and Harry would ask him why.

The train went on with great speed. Things rattled. People moved. People stood motionless, eyes motionless, looking at something, thinking. Some laborers talked in Italian. A little guy in the corner read a Jewish paper. A couple of little girls giggled. A big man, derby on his head, grey gloves on in the summer time, read the stock reports and marked his newspaper with a pencil. A man on the verge of sneezing quickly felt his pockets for a handkerchief, then sneezed. A girl meeting someone at Fourteenth Street was making her face up. She rubbed a dirty powder puff on her compact, pushed it over her nose, her cheeks, her chin, and under her chin, grimacing into a little hand mirror. She opened a lip stick, wetting her lips with her tongue, — the train lurched, and she almost fell — then she very carefully made two spots of red on her upper lip, spreading them with her little finger; then made a broad mark on her lower lip. She wet a corner of her handkerchief, and evened the cupid's bow. Then she put things back into her bag, and stood.

He was still angry at something, but now he could not tell at what. His eyes went over the

faces of the people in the car, some reading their papers, a few talking unanxiously; his eyes went up to the advertising placards: a collar being advertised, with a picture of a handsome guy wearing it; a soap with a pretty girl taking a bath; a garter, " If you didn't wear pants, you'd change your garters oftener." He smirked.

Oh, well. He raised his newspaper, turned to the sporting section, read of the coming fight. Tex Rickard was taking it to Chicago. Well, then he'd hear it over the radio. Anyway, you went to a big fight, and you spent ten dollars on a ticket, and the ring was so far away you couldn't see who was who. The fighters looked like a couple of dolls from where you sat, and you couldn't see the fighting; but when the ringside yelled, you yelled too. Coming home you read about it in the fight extra, and the next day you told everyone in the office what it was all about.

Anyway, Tunney looked like a soft guy who read books, and guys who read when they're fighters can't be much good. And Dempsey was a fighter who didn't show off, but who looked like a fighter, and acted like a fighter, and he hoped he'd win.

He spoke to Harry. They began to argue about the fight. Jim said this, and Harry said that, and then Jim answered, but Harry inter-

rupted him and got in something else; and Jim tried to go on talking, but Harry wouldn't let him, but told him. They spoke in loud voices over the noise of the train, and everybody around them heard, and some people looked and listened, and others didn't. Then Jim got sore, wished that Harry wouldn't interrupt him. He went back to his paper. Harry talked for a little while longer, but he saw Jim wasn't listening, so he stopped.

Jim turned to the funny page, read the first comic strip. He read every word of it carefully, didn't laugh when he reached the end of it, but went on to the second strip. He read through the page, refolding the paper. He didn't smile once. When he had finished, he folded the paper, placed it under his arm, and pursing his lips, silently began to whistle. A sign "Fourteenth Street" flashed by, and then they were at Fourteenth Street.

Harry said "So long"; Jim answered "So long, see you tomorrow." Harry left. Across the aisle from the two women a seat emptied. Jim jumped and was in it an instant ahead of another guy. He sat down. He opened his paper.

He wondered if his shirts had come from the laundry. He told Ma to have them ready today. He said: "I am going out Monday, I've got to have the shirts clean." Daisy said, "Well, then,

why don't you buy yourself enough shirts to last you." And Daisy added: "Yes, watch him buy shirts when he goes out with a different girl every night. Where would he get the money?" Daisy earned as much as he did, and she always rubbed it in. "Yes," she said, "and save my money, too." She always had money. When he had a good enough story to tell her, she always had enough to lend him. "But you give it back to me next Monday, or you'll never get another cent."

Yes, and Daisy gave Ma more every week than he did, and she rubbed that in, too. And when he told her she didn't have to spend her money when she went out with Phillip every night, she answered: "Well, why don't you get a steady girl, who isn't out for your money?" Steady girl! Daisy was younger than he, but she was going to get married soon, and if they didn't have to buy house furnishings, she wouldn't be saving money.

A woman stared at him from above. He had been looking at his paper, thinking, when he had felt her eyes. She wanted his seat. Well, you can't have it, he said. I'm not going to get up. It's my seat, see. I'm tired. Why the hell don't you look at someone else? Why pick on me? He thought of staring back at her, but didn't, and continued looking at his paper. He wanted to go back to his

thoughts, but the woman was preventing him. Still, he wouldn't get up.

To hell with Daisy, and to hell with Phillip, and to hell with the woman above him. And then he wanted to hate someone particularly, and he looked across the aisle where the woman with the breasts was, but all he could see through the crowd was a leg in flesh-colored stocking, and a knee. It was a good leg, but to hell with it.

And to hell with Simson. One of these days he'd quit on him without warning and show him whether he was indispensable or not. Saying: " If you ever feel, Mr. Cowan, that you are becoming indispensable to this firm, or if you feel this firm is not doing the right thing by you, we want you to resign." He'd have quit on the spot, only in his mind he had heard Daisy saying: " Oh, well, out of work again. You probably think I ought to support you." It was much easier answering nothing to Simson and walking quietly out, than having to listen to Daisy day after day as he came home without having found another job. And six months after having started everyone gets a raise, and he didn't see why he shouldn't get one, too.

He hadn't prepared what he would say to Simson when he entered the inside office. He didn't want to prepare. He said: They owe me a raise. They know it; and I'm going to get it.

Scared in spite of himself he knocked on the door, heard "Come in" in a loud voice, and went in. Simson was sitting at his desk, reading something, and did not look up; without seeing who had come in he asked: "What is it?" and went on reading. Of course Jim wasn't able to say what he had to say if Simson didn't know who he was. So he said nothing. Simson after finishing laid the paper on the desk, noticed someone was in the room, looked up, and repeated: "Well, what is it?" Jim told him he had been with the firm six months, and he thought he should get a raise. Simson answered: "Well, Mr. Cowan, you will not get a raise," and added the thing about being indispensable.

So Jim went back to his desk and immediately wrote two letters, one to the Magrudder Co., and the other to A. C. Wylie, offering his services. And if ever Simson found out about the letters. . . .

He got cold thinking of it. But there wasn't much chance of it being found out. And if it was he'd quit. But what a satisfaction to be able to go into Simson's and: "Well, I got another job." What would Simson say?

And if there was a letter home from Magrudder offering him a job. Maybe forty bucks a week, and a correspondent. He'd have a room, a stenog-

rapher of his own. Will you sign the letters now, Mr. Cowan? Oh, Mr. Cowan, what should I say if anyone called? Not the sort of Mr. Cowan Simson used. He Mistered everybody when he had them on the carpet. Mr. Cowan, we must ask for your resignation. We have heard you are applying for a position with a competitor of ours. Don't you believe it would be fairer to us if you first left us before trying others?

It would be terrible if Simson found it out. He'd get called, given his pay on the spot and told to leave immediately. Of course, before leaving he'd tell Simson what he thought of him. That would help some. But then coming home in the subway, and getting home, and telling Ma. And then Daisy would say: "Oh, well, I expected it." And if Phillip was there he'd put something in, too. Well, he'd fix Phillip.

The woman wasn't standing any longer. She got a seat, or maybe she had passed into another part of the car and was staring at someone else. People were rising, moving toward the exits. People standing were sitting down. He saw the two women leave. He wasn't angry at them any more. He looked into their faces, but they ignored him. He became angry again.

Grand Central Station. Change for New York Central, the Shuttle, Queensboro, and West Side

trains. The doors opened, the car became almost empty for a moment, then another crowd came in, rushed for seats, stood and held straps, stared or read papers, or talked. The doors closed. The signal sounded. The train stood a moment and then started.

First the tailor, then home and a bath, and he would pick out the shirt he would wear tonight; if his shirts came back from the laundry; if they didn't he'd raise hell and put on a soiled one; then supper, and having to listen to Daisy's lip. "Where you're going? What you're going to do? It's a wonder you can't stay home one night." Oh, well, he wouldn't answer. What was the use? If he did there would be a fight and he wouldn't be able to leave until all sorts of hours. Then the money. Oh, yes, the money. He'd have to put some of it into his watch pocket, so Ma shouldn't be able to tell how much he had. Then into the street, on the Elevated, down to Forty-Second Street, West on it, until he came to Broadway, and there in the drug store she would wait for him; she would smile, and they would go.

He wondered whether he should buy any gin. It would cost less in the end, to go to a cheap dance hall and order ginger ale, keeping the gin bottle under the table and filling the glasses from time to time. But if the manager saw them, they

would have to get out. And if they went down town to the Paradise, he knew most of the fellows, and if he'd have a strange girl with him, they would all try to butt in. So it was better not to have gin, but to go to Paddy's, pay more for each drink, and dance to the mechanical piano. Anyway in Paddy's at midnight anything was liable to happen.

So it would be Paddy's, and it would cost six or seven dollars at least, and tomorrow he would be broke again. And if he had the nerve it wouldn't have to be so.

If he had the nerve, he'd go to Simson and he'd tell him: You know what you can do with your God damned job. I'm quitting. Goodby. And he'd apply to a big wholesale house for a job as a salesman. That was what he always dreamed of: to be so sure of himself that he could travel from town to town and sell goods: textiles or automobile accessories or novelties. No hours to keep; responsible to no one; his own boss; if he didn't feel like working one day he'd lay off till next morning. To be able to walk into a strange place: a shop, or an office. I want to see the boss. — What you want to see the boss for? — Never mind. You tell him. Mr. Cowan is here. From such a company. Or even better than that. To pay no attention to the office boy or information clerk.

To ignore them altogether, push them to one side, march into the office marked Private. Look here, I represent this company. I'm selling their goods. They're fine goods, see. Here they are. Look at them. Better material, better workmanship you won't find. And cheap too. We undersell everybody. See. And no amount of protesting would stop him. He'd pull out the order blank, unscrew the head of his fountain pen, hand the penholder to the man, and say: Now you better take my advice and buy, see. Just sign there, and leave the rest to me. Like that, see. That's right. Much obliged. See you next time I'm in town. And he'd walk out.

And then he'd go to his hotel. No Ma. No Daisy. Until morning he could do exactly as he wanted to do. And there would be plenty he could do, having the money he would earn. Real money. None of your thirty dollars a week. In the first place all his expenses would be paid by the office, and the expense account could be padded a little; and then the commissions. After a while, in each town he would come to there would be a hot girl waiting for him; a red haired cigar store clerk here, a soft, mushy eyed manicure girl there. After dinner, after they would have had some liquor in them and would be feeling good, there would be the game of trying to

sneak the girl into the hotel room; or maybe even in some hotel he would find a nice chambermaid who would be willing, when she came into the room to make the bed up.

And the Pullman trains. The thousand jokes he had heard of salesmen in sleeping cars. Girls travelling all the time, all anxious, all excited to start something with a guy who was alone. Those girls would also be away from home, and no one to watch them they wouldn't mind pulling off a little trick. He would have the lower berth, and there would be a nice kid having the upper, and naturally he would offer her his. A little conversation would start, and then in the middle of the night he would hear tapping from below.

He sighed. It was a nice thing to dream about, but it would never happen, because he knew he'd never have the courage to do it; and even if he did, he'd never get the money together to keep him going until commissions started to come in. And then, even if Ma or Daisy were to lend him the money — which he knew Daisy wouldn't, while Ma hardly ever had money — still it was impossible: he did not know the business. He would have to start as a stock boy, or as an order clerk until he got to know the goods. And a year in the stock room at fifteen dollars a week did not

appeal to him, even if later he would be making hundreds.

So it was to be a clerk, and after a while maybe head bookkeeper, if he didn't get fired from his job — and if Simson wouldn't give him a raise it probably meant he would fire him as soon as he got someone else broken in — and then after years, he might get to be cashier; and that was all. And he wasn't made for it. He was made for selling, for talking people into ordering huge amounts on the spur of the moment, for sitting in a Pullman smoker with other salesmen and telling stories, for leaning against a counter in a hotel lobby and whispering to a beautiful cigar clerk, while she giggled, a bit frightened of him, well knowing that before he left the hotel she would find herself in his room, undressed and ruined.

Farmhouses with nice farmers' wives fooling their old husbands; Pullman berths with struggling virgins; nights waiting on the street outside of windows the shades of which when raised will mean the road is clear; big talking; figures of thousands; not writing those figures in a ledger, but putting them on order blanks; talking as man to managers, to bank presidents; lunches in hotel restaurants with buyers; offers of prewar liquor; offers of girl friends: She's a good, hot kid, and

willing; Come up the house for dinner, and meet the wife: Play golf? Oh, well, I'll get you a guest card at my club. Wait till you see what I got in my locker; buyers visiting New York, and he having the addresses of chorus girls, having drawn a large sum of money from the firm cashier, calls up the girls, gets a party together, starting with theatre, night club or road house, and hotel rooms; girls sliding down the banisters; girls pouring champagne on a bald head; girls doing the Black Bottom in black silk teddy bears; girls naked on a bed; beautiful breasts; beautiful bellies; yells: Oh, you, daddy.

Eighty-Sixth Street. Next stop One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Street. "Let them out. Let them out first."

ANARCHISTS MUST DIE TONIGHT. ALL HOPES ARE LOST. UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT TURNS DOWN APPLICATION. CHIEF JUSTICE TAFT REFUSES TO LEAVE HIS VACATION HOME TO INTERVENE. JUSTICE BRANDEIS SAYS HE CANNOT INTERVENE. GOVERNOR FULLER TAKES UNDER ADVISEMENT MOTION TO COMMUTE SENTENCE TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT. ALL AMERICAN EMBASSIES IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES HEAVILY GUARDED. AMERICANS INSULTED IN GENEVA. THREATS OF BOMBS. NO NEWSPAPERS IN THE ARGENTINE. ALL NEW YORK POLICEMEN GUARDING

SUBWAY STATIONS. SACCO AND VANZETTI MUST DIE FOR THE MURDER OF SOUTH BRAINTREE PAYMASTER.

Well, they were Reds, and they were wops, and they raised hell, and now they had to pay for it.

For a while Dempsey and Tunney, Sacco and Vanzetti, Simson and himself, and the girl Helen he was to meet tonight, ran through his head until he did not know which was which. Then he pushed his paper under the seat, behind his shoes, straightened himself, shook his head a little, said: What the hell? Who cares? looked up, tried to find someone in the crowd above him whom he liked, saw one, a good looking girl leaning above him, one hand on the strap, the other holding a book she was reading very intently. He stared into her eyes, trying to get her gaze away from the page and on him, but she ignored him, went on reading; so he said: Wait, I'll show you, rose from his seat — somebody else tried to sit in it, but he stood in the way — said: " Have the seat, miss." She looked up, smiled very slightly without ever looking into his face, and while he tried to tip his hat, she sat down, again spread her eyes over the book, and was lost.

He wanted to sneer at her, but he couldn't. He

pushed his way through the crowd with his elbow, never excusing himself; when someone stood in his way he dug his elbow into the ribs, and went on. He was sad. What the hell? What was the use? Oh, what was the use? For a moment he wanted to push someone in the face, and he looked around for a face to push, but no one saw him, no one even knew he was there. He clenched his fists. He said: I'll show you all, you bastards. I'll show you. Now he wanted to smoke. He got his hand into his pocket, took out a cigarette, tried to find a place to spit, but there wasn't any. He said: I'm going to smoke. I'm going to take the match box, pull out a match, strike it, light my cigarette, and puff away. Let a cop get me. I don't care.

The train was making a lot of noise, going terribly fast, much faster than usually; when it turned a curve the wheels on one side lifted from the rails. A woman looked frightened. Now wouldn't it be wonderful, he said, if there should be an accident? If the whole shooting match just left the rails and went against the pillars? He saw headlines: DISASTER IN THE SUBWAY. ONE HUNDRED KILLED. HUNDREDS WOUNDED. SUBWAY SYSTEM TIED UP. Like the Brooklyn accident five years ago. Well, if it happened today, they'd say it was the work of Red sympathizers. Trying

to help Sacco and Vanzetti by blowing up the subway.

He saw a picture of the death room, as he had seen it in the slot picture machine at a penny arcade. Stone walls. An armchair with straps. A priest enters, crucifix in hand; the condemned follows in a striped suit; the guards after him. The condemned sits in the chair. His arms are strapped. His legs are strapped. On his head is placed a helmet with a wire attached. Tonight instead of shaving their heads they would place under the helmet a sponge filled with water to provide a perfect contact. The man kisses the crucifix. The priest steps back. But tonight there would be no priest. And then the lever is thrown. In the whole town the lights would dim for a moment, he had read, while most of the current is used for the execution.

The death house. Suddenly he remembered how he himself was in jail once. They were having a crap game in the back room of the Paradise one Saturday afternoon. No one thought there was any danger, when a bunch of guys dressed like taxi drivers entered, and one of the guys quietly said: " All you fellows get your hats. You're all arrested." It happened so suddenly that no one was surprised. One of the players was even allowed to phone to his mother and tell her he was

not coming home that night. They went through the streets to the Charles Street Station. No holding by the arms; no guns. Just walking along with the taxi driver like guys. Their false names were entered on the blotter. And then they were locked up.

For a while they all thought it was fun for them to be together in a cell. They sang, they yelled, they told dirty jokes. There was even a fight. They sat there smoking, talking. They were all proud to be arrested. Look what they all told at the Paradise the next day.

But then it was five o'clock, and then six o'clock; they got hungry; they were tired. They did not want to stay in jail any longer. They wanted to get out, to go home, to go to a show.

So they began yelling. Let us out. We want to get out. What you mean by keeping us locked up like this? Who the hell do you think you are?

But no one answered. One of the fellows said: " I suppose everybody who gets in here yells the same thing. They're tired of listening." Another fellow said: " But I want to get out." Somebody had answered: " Well, go on and get out."

And then seven o'clock, and then eight o'clock. One of them tried to sleep on the cot. Another sat on the edge of the toilet seat and, head on the palms of his hands, thought. The rest got on the

floor; and very slowly they waited until the noise of the opening of the outer door was heard and the guard entered with cops who took them to Night Court.

Then standing in front of the judge who could give them six months in the workhouse if he felt like it, and nothing could be done to him; and trying to look as stupid as possible. The cop told them: " If you look dumb, if you look as if you knew nothing about it, the judge'll let you off easy "; not able to see the judge for the bright lights after the dark police wagon; listening to the cop who was fixed to look dumb himself; listening to the judge asking questions; all the time thinking: I want to get out. I want to get out. Why the hell don't they let me out?

Then after having paid the fine, when the Captain said: " All right, beat it." The rush for the door, the run down the circular stairway, one fellow tripping and almost falling. Out of the building. Into the street. The street. Then the cool evening air. The Elevated above them. Come on, let's have a cup of coffee.

Suddenly he wanted to get out of the subway. He was tired of people around him. He wanted to be on the street, on the way home. Again he wanted to see the sunlight falling on him. He wanted to be able to go in any direction. Turn this

corner, that one. He wanted to get out. Stop the train and let me out.

He said: We're probably under One Hundred and Nineteenth Street. He shut his eyes and he shut his mind: then he opened and said: Now it's One Hundred and Twentieth Street. And then again he shut himself, and so he went on, until in his mind he reached One Hundred and Twenty-Third Street, when the brakes were applied, and the train slowed, made more noise than before. The sign One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Street. The train would never get there. He put the cigarette in his mouth. He opened his match box. The train would never stop. In his mind he was already upstairs. He pushed some people out of his way. The train stopped. The doors opened. He rushed out. He ran along the platform. Not afraid of cops he lit his cigarette. He jumped on the stairs three at a time. More stairs. The sun. The sun. Ten more stairs. Eight. He took a puff. A jump, and he was on the street.

II

HOME

Above the noise of the water he heard Daisy's voice.

"What?" he yelled.

"Aren't you ever getting out of that bathroom?"

"Oh, shut up," he said, "I haven't been here a minute"; and continued examining his face in the mirror.

Steam from hot water pouring into the tub was clouding the mirror and he had to wipe it with a towel. He stuck his tongue first into one cheek, then into the other, looked very carefully, saw a blackhead on the side of his nose; squeezed it out. A tiny drop of blood appeared. He wiped it off and continued to look. He wanted to squeeze a particularly large pimple, he always wanted to, but it would bleed, and squeezing pimples didn't help you get rid of them. Besides his face looked scarry for days.

Again he wanted to shave and decided not to. His face always hurt after shaving. A pimple got nicked, bled and felt sore. What a hell of a face he had. If he shaved it it hurt, if he didn't it looked terrible.

There was no letter from Magrudder or from

anyone else; and he had to pay Joe of the stationery store the four dollars and fifty cents and also for three packages of cigarettes. He only thought of paying two dollars, but some guys he didn't like were standing near the cigar counter, and he wasn't going to beg off in front of them. Joe said: "It's four ninety five," so he pulled out a five dollar bill and another dime, said: "Give me a package of Luckies," and walked out, feeling good, never looking at the guys.

Of course he wasn't the loser because at the last moment instead of giving Ma five on account he gave her nothing at all, and even if it didn't feel very pleasant what are you going to do? For a moment he wanted to figure what he owed Ma altogether, then decided it wasn't pleasant either, so he gave it up; stuck his hand into the tub. The water was too hot. He shut off one tap and let the cold water run. He threw off the bathrobe, stepped in. The hot water itched his ankle, but he bore it; put the other foot in, stood a moment, looked at himself in the mirror. The hell of it was that on the only place that people could see, his face, there were pimples, while the rest of his body was spotless.

The water covered him more and more as he sat in the tub, feeling warmer and warmer; his

muscles relaxed as he slid down; every part of him became easy, soft. He stretched out, sighed very deeply, and closed his eyes. Never would he get out of the tub. To hell with dressing, to hell with dinner, and to hell with the girl he was meeting later. To stay in the tub with the warm soft water around him, breathing easily. His cheek touched his shoulder, and it felt soft like a baby's shoulder, and then without knowing what he was doing, he kissed his shoulder. He opened his eyes, sat up. He seized the soap, the sponge, began lathering himself. He rose in the tub, lathered all over. He looked into the mirror once again, and sat down.

"Daisy," he yelled.

"What?"

"Get a package of cigarettes out of my coat pocket and slip it in the door."

"Oh, get out of the bathtub," she said. "You'd think you owned the place."

"Supper's all but set, Jimmy," Ma yelled. "Hurry up."

"Daisy, please get me my cigarettes."

"I won't. Get out of the tub."

All right, I'll get out of the tub, but you ever ask me for anything. Still, he didn't want to get out of the tub. He didn't want to do anything but just lie there. Dinner was ready, the suit all

pressed lay on the bed, the shirt he would pick out, the tie. The silk socks had a hole in them.

Outside a guy was singing on the radio, a low whispering voice. Daisy was setting the table. She was angry at something. Every time she put a dish down or a fork, you heard it. A dish made a clump noise, and the fork did a clink. When she pushed a chair to the table, you thought the house would fall. The outside door opened, and Phillip's steps came. He walked into the kitchen, and Daisy made more noise than before. Phillip was in the kitchen trying to get squared with Ma.

Jim stood on the bath mat and rubbed himself dry, wondering what was happening, when he suddenly put his bathrobe on, opened the door, and called:

"Daisy."

No answer.

He wrapped the bathrobe tighter around him, walked into the dining room.

"Why don't you tell him to go to hell?" he said.

Still she didn't say anything.

"Give the bastard the merry ha-ha," he said.

She turned and said:

"You put on your slippers and get out of here."

All right, you little bitch, I won't say another

word. Still he had a good mind to punch Phillip in the jaw. He didn't know what it was about, but Daisy must be feeling bad, and he didn't like Phillip. Never had liked him.

He left the door of his room open so he should hear what was being said in the kitchen. He heard Phillip call his mother Ma and he became angry again. Phillip had no right to call her Ma, not until he had married Daisy anyway. And the whole business was funny because Daisy didn't seem to like Phillip. She bawled him out every time, yet she was going to marry him.

There was the shirt with the collar attached, but the damned Chink left a spot right in front of the collar, acid or something. Then there was the blue striped shirt with the collar to match, but he wouldn't wear it, except maybe with a stiff white collar. But stiff collars are uncomfortable, especially if you're loving a girl in a taxi. Then there was the other white shirt that he liked so well, with the monogram Daisy embroidered for him, but the neck was almost worn out. The damned acid the Chink used. Well, he'd put on the first one, and a bow tie to hide the spot.

He took the pins from the shirt, looked around for a place to put them, didn't find any, threw them under the dresser. He put on the silk socks with a hole in them. He put on the shoes. Had to

get a shine. He unbuttoned the fresh shirt and put it on, looking at his face in the mirror.

Daisy's voice was heard in the kitchen louder than either Ma's voice or Phillip's. Daisy was sore. She only needed the provocation to burst out weeping. Her voice got higher and higher and then there was a catch in it, and she wasn't able to say a word for a moment or two. When she started talking again, the voice was low, almost hoarse.

He couldn't stand it any longer, so he put his pants on, carefully holding them by the crease, they shouldn't touch the dust on the floor, slipped the belt in, and walked into the kitchen. It wasn't his business, but for two cents. . . .

Ma was mashing potatoes, Daisy was cutting bread on the bread board. Phillip — how he hated his mug — sat on a box and smoked a cigarette. Flicked the ashes on the floor.

"Where do you think you are," Jim asked Phillip, "home?"

"Oh, Lord Jesus," said Phillip. "Have I got to listen to you, too?"

"Yes," said Jim, "and if you don't like it. . . ."

"And you, are you going to mind your own business?" said Daisy.

"No," Jim said, and he was going to tell her

something else, but Ma took him by the arm, pulled him out of the kitchen. She shut the door behind her. "Leave them alone," she said; and she kissed him.

"I don't like him," Jim said.

Ma had her arm around his shoulder, and he wasn't so angry any more. He squeezed her waist, took her arm off him, went back to his room. He brushed his hair until it stayed down, scowling into the mirror. It took him a long time to pick a tie. A bow tie would hide the spot on the collar, but maybe a four-in-hand was better. There weren't many ties, but still it took him a long time. Once or twice he grumbled and made a movement as if he was going back into the kitchen, but then the tie occupied him more and more. He used the whisk broom, took the vest from under the coat, put it on, looked into the mirror, then took the vest off, threw it on the bed; picked the newly pressed coat from the back of the chair, and put it on.

He smiled into the mirror, threw back his shoulders, marched into the dining room. Ma, Daisy and Phillip were there, silent. He wanted to ask: How do I look? but it seemed foolish, they were all so serious sitting around the table. He walked twice around the room, carelessly, but he attracted no attention. He sat down.

There was boiled ham for dinner, and boiled cabbage, and mashed potatoes. There was bread on a plate, butter in a saucer, salt and pepper, a bottle of ketchup, a jar of mustard, a tin of paprika, water in glasses, sliced cucumbers in vinegar sauce. Later there was bread pudding and coffee. Ma hardly sat down, going into the kitchen and out.

Well dressed and clean, he felt good toward everybody, and he became sorry for them because they were fighting. Besides he liked to eat — particularly he liked boiled ham and cabbage, with English mustard, although the mustard on the table was prepared German — and he couldn't enjoy the food when Daisy was sore, Phillip looked as if he had made up his mind not to talk, and Ma was filling everyone's plate so carefully to make sure everyone had a fair portion and no one could have another pretext for fighting. Oh, well, Phillip was a nice guy, even if he didn't like him; Daisy was a cute kid; Ma was simply swell; the food was before him, the fork raised to his mouth; he was in love with them all. So after eating a forkful and filling another, just before he swallowed it, Jim said, winking:

"It's all right, Phillip."

And Phillip still trying to be funny:

"Thanks, Mr. Cowan, for saying so."

And Daisy suddenly:

"Besides, where's my three dollars?"

Then Jim got sore. What was the use? You come home from work dead tired, you want to raise hell with everyone; instead you control yourself, act pleasant; and all you get back. . . . You can't be nice to people.

To hell with them. He would eat his food and get out; out on the street; out to Broadway; with Helen. Breasts standing, nipples showing through the fabric; breasts that make you want to touch them, squeeze them, soft breasts, smelly faces; lips you kissed that gave in, still they were hard. Quickly through dinner. Hurry. Get out on the street. To the L. To Helen. Quick.

"Don't swallow your food, Jimmy."

Door bell rang. Ma went to open.

"Oh, hello, Mrs. Williams. How nice. Come right in."

"Good evening, Mrs. Cowan. I just ran in. — Hello, Daisy. How's your young man? — Oh, hello, Mr. Laurie."

"Good evening, Mrs. Williams."

"Hello, Jimmy."

"Hello."

"Oh, Mrs. Cowan, I just rushed. Jennie got hurt this afternoon coming home from work."

"Oh, Mrs. Williams. Automobile accident?"

"No. She got out of the office, and there was a big crowd in Union Square. All yelling. And the police charged them. They must have thought she was one of them. She got hit with a club. The skin on her scalp's all cut. The doctor took three stitches."

"Yes," said Phillip, "them two wops up in Boston. There's an Extra out on the street. A riot in Union Square. Trying to get them out. Some people got hurt."

"Oh, Mrs. Williams. — Daisy, run up a minute and see Jennie."

"That's what I came for. She's lying on her bed, moaning. The doctor says she's shocked. I thought maybe Daisy. . . ."

"Daisy, go up to Mrs. Williams'."

"Sure, Ma. — Just a minute, Mrs. Williams."

Mrs. Williams left, then Daisy.

"Ain't it a shame," Ma said. "What did she have to do with it?"

"Well," said Phillip, "a riot is a riot. The police can't pick them out. They've got to disperse them, don't they?"

Jim became sorry he hadn't read more about it in the subway coming home. Headlines. What were they? Something about Argentine? Governor Fuller?

"Is that so?" said Jim. "And how would you like if somebody hit you over the head with a club when you didn't know anything about it, and then said: Pardon me. It's a riot?"

Oh, hell, what was he talking about? He didn't know what it was about himself.

"Law and order," said Phillip.

"Crap," said Jim.

"Jimmy," said Ma.

Jennie Williams was lying upstairs moaning. Jennie Williams that kissed you like she wanted to get all of you this minute, just ate you up with kisses. Little Jennie was lying upstairs with her scalp cut. Hot little Jennie whose bluff he called once and after a particularly long kiss slipped his hand up her dress. She never let him kiss her again after that.

But that was long ago when she was still in high school, when he just quit studying and got his first job, when every girl he met was someone to try things on. Oh, yes, she let him put his hand on her breasts over her dress, but not inside. Little Jennie, lying, moaning.

"It's a damned shame," he said.

"Why didn't she mind her own business?" said Phillip.

Jim wanted to hit him.

"You God damned fool," he said, "she works

in Union Square, do you understand? She's got to get home, don't she? Can you get that through your head? She's got to cross the Square to get to the subway."

His own sister marrying a guy like that. Didn't Daisy have better sense? There was love for you.

He didn't care what he said.

"If I was Daisy and there was no other guy to marry but you, I'd sure drown myself."

Phillip flared up:

"You dirty. . . ."

Ma came in from the kitchen. They quieted down.

"Jimmy, run upstairs and see if they need something. They must be all upset."

He rose, went up to her, put his arm around her waist, squeezed it. She kissed him. She was one swell Ma.

"Going out again tonight, Jimmy?

He wanted to say No. She was one swell Ma. But got to see Helen. Helen and movie and speakeasy, and then the taxi. Two sitting together, holding each other, kissing with a long hard kiss. Then maybe something else. Maybe her room. Taking her clothes off one by one, kissing her all of the time, she should not know her clothes were being taken off. Holding her with one arm

while the other was unbuttoning, unpinning, undressing.

Half past six. Another hour. Ma would wait up for him. She would be sitting in the kitchen on the hard chair. "Have a good time, Jimmy?" Funny Ma never waited up for Daisy.

"I'll be home early," he said.

". . . in the morning," said Phillip.

I hope to hell he marries her quick, said Jim going up the stairs. I can't stand him around the house much longer.

Funny, he said. I haven't been above the third floor in years. Not since the night with Jennie in the hall. The stairway looked different than it did leading up to the third floor. Different cracks in the wall; a garbage can he'd never seen before. The light fell differently through the window on the midstairs landing. The numbers above the apartments were different. Some foreigner he had never heard of had the flat opposite the Williams'. Jim brushed whatever crumbs remained from dinner off his newly pressed suit, pushed his hair back, turned the ringer, a different sound from the one downstairs.

It was Marie who answered. God, how she'd grown. She must be twelve now or maybe more. She'd get to be a cute kid some day. Bigger than little Jennie. Then he remembered that it was a

long time since he last saw Jennie. She must be twenty-two at least. Foolishly his heart began to beat. Oh, control yourself, he said. Don't be a fish. Jennie always was a washout anyway.

"Jennie's hurt," said Marie.

"I know," he said. "Daisy's here?"

"Yes, she's in Jennie's room. Jennie was yelling, but she ain't yelling now."

Marie began running through the long hall into the flat. Then she stopped and walked slowly into the kitchen. Jim followed.

"Hello, Mr. Williams," he said.

Mr. Williams did not answer. He was reading his paper in the window light. He had his shoes off, the socks were darned in different colors. He had his glasses on. His coat was off and his collar. His hair was all grey. He was getting old.

Something was boiling on the stove. The floor was dirty. The table was set for supper. Marie sat by the table and read the funny paper. Jim wanted to smoke. He was afraid to.

The radio downstairs was still going. Dance music. Damned good dance music, said Jim. He wouldn't mind dancing to it himself. His foot slipped out to tune. Then he controlled himself.

He went out into the hall and knocked on a door. Daisy opened. The shade in the room was drawn. Jim just made out the outline of the bed.

"Jimmy," Daisy said, "go down the drug store and get some headache powders."

"How's she feeling?" asked Jim.

"She's got a headache."

Headache powders won't help you when you've been hit over the head with a club, Jim said, going downstairs. Nothing will help you. It's got to wear off. When a cop's club hits you no doctor can help you.

The dirty sons of bitches. Going around beating people up, like they owned the town. Nothing can be done to them. You can't argue with a cop. He may be feeling bad, he may be drunk, he may have gone plumb crazy, and you can't argue with him. If you make a wrong move, he'll hit you over the head with a club. You're resisting an officer, you're interfering with an arrest.

He became terribly angry. For two cents he'd punch the first cop he met. Let them arrest him, let them do whatever they wanted to him. Just to show them they were not so much, that they couldn't go around beating people up, and get away with it. By God, he'd hit him. He'd kick him in the groin, throw him on the ground, gouge his God damned eyes out, and step on him.

He forgot everything, ran downstairs two steps at a time, ran out through the hall on the street. Come on, cops. I'll show you.

"What's your hurry? Look out where you're going."

I'll show you where I'm going. I'll show you a sight you've never seen before. I'll show you how a cop gets some of his own medicine.

He ran on the street, past the iceman's wagon, past a truck, past some little girls roller skating who got in his way. He slowed down to a walk, to a steady, determined walk. Where's a cop?

He saw one on the corner in front of the drug store. Not a very big cop. No bigger than he. Didn't even have a club with him. Traffic policeman, said Jim. Well, I'll show the traffic policeman.

The cop turned and looked at him. And the cop was all right. The cop nodded to him and winked, and Jim nodded and winked back, and went into the drug store.

"What kind you want?" asked Mr. Finkelstein. "You want in two papers or in one paper? You want first you put in blue paper and then pink paper, so it should fizz, or you want all in the same paper?"

Just then a woman came into the drug store, and the light was bright outside and dim inside, and she didn't wear a petticoat. She was a nice looking woman, and you could see away up her. Jim tried to look inside of her without her notic-

ing and he tried to answer Mr. Finkelstein's question. The woman smiled at him — must be from the neighborhood and thinks she knows me — and he couldn't answer the question. She went into the telephone booth, shut the door, dropped a nickel in, and again smiled at him. He wanted to wait until she finished her call.

"A quarter," said Mr. Finkelstein.

He paid a quarter, then he remembered something. "Give me three," he said leaning his head over the counter right near Mr. Finkelstein's ear. "Fifty cents," said Mr. Finkelstein and handed him a manila envelope. He stuck it into his watch pocket.

The woman might have seen him, so ashamed of himself, he walked out of the drug store. "How they're coming?" asked the cop. "O. K." he said.

Oh, Christ, he said. Oh, why? Oh, what the hell is the matter with me? Suddenly he didn't want to do anything. He didn't want to go out tonight. He wanted to see no one. He didn't even want to go home. Let her head ache. I don't care. I didn't split it. He didn't want to see Daisy, nor even Ma. And Phillip. . . . By God, if he'd open his mouth again, he'd bust his face open.

He felt very sad and very lonely. It seemed to him that he was not going home, that where

he lived was not just a few doors away, that he would not go up three stone steps, past the little vestibule where stood a baby carriage or two, into the smelly dark hall, and upstairs. Going home he felt he was not going home. He didn't have a home, had no place to go to; and it was better so. To walk along the street without anywhere to go, always walk along the street, never tired and never hungry. There should always be a long narrow street, with shops from time to time into the windows of which he might look.

Then a ball thrown by a child to another child came his way, and automatically he cupped his hands, caught it, brought one arm back and threw the ball again. For a moment he stood watching the children playing, then he became self-conscious — I have a newly pressed suit on: Jennie is lying upstairs with a terrible headache; I am going into Broadway tonight with a cute little girl, and something is going to happen before the evening is over — he stopped following the ball with his eyes, went on, not wanting to go on, the feet refusing to move and he forcing them.

A kid sat on a stoop and ate a big slice of bread and butter; the Italian iceman talked to the Italian banana pushcart man; Joe of the stationery store still talked to the guys he didn't

like — didn't they ever go home? — noticed Jim, said: "Hello, Cowan." Jim answered back: "Hello, Joe," felt good at being talked to and didn't look at the guys he didn't like; more little girls roller skated — he used to roller skate himself, and then the old man bought him a bicycle — ; a hole in the sidewalk pavement; a big dirty black and white alley cat messing around with a garbage can, "Shoo, cat. Here kitty-kitty-kitty"; another cat, this one not so big and its tail missing; the Elevated went by in the next block; a very little kid yelled, his mother five paces ahead made believe she was leaving him behind because he wouldn't walk quicker; two more houses; the kosher butcher shop, the butcher with a bloody apron sat outside with his wife and children, the butcher and his wife sat on boxes, the children sat on the sidewalk; next house; come on, steps; one, two, three; Mrs. Oberwager with her baby; "Hello, Mrs. Oberwager"; Mrs. Oberwager was so busy with her baby she didn't answer; "To hell with you, Mrs. Oberwager."

In the hall he saw Marie running to the street.

"Here, Marie," he said. "Take this up to Jennie."

He handed her the package, gave her a nickel; Marie nodded and ran back up the stairs.

Jim followed slowly through the hall that

stank of unswept garbage, that got darker as he neared the foot of the stairs. He turned to the right and went up. The window at the landing was broken dirty stained glass. The steps could hardly be seen. Here was the broken step. On the landing, turn about and continue going up. First floor. On the left lived Mrs. Meyerowitz, and on the right Mr. Nolan, and the radio set Mrs. Nolan kept going all day long. Now that it was summer and the windows were open, the music and the announcements were heard until late at night. You woke up you thought very late at night, and you heard: "Station So-and-so. It is two o'clock. Good night, folks." Didn't Mrs. Nolan ever sleep? Second floor landing and then after a few steps second floor. The apartment on the left was empty. Instead of a safety lock in the door there was a hole stuck with paper. On the right lived . . . who? He didn't know them. And then quickly, running up the stairs to the landing, and third floor. Here lived Mrs. Martha Cowan. Her son Mr. James Cowan. And her daughter Miss Daisy Patricia Cowan. Open the door. "Hello, Ma. Thank God, Phillip isn't here." "He said he'd come back later, Jimmy." "Well, I'll be gone later." And thank the Lord for that.

The time was before seven, so Jim took off his

coat, hung it up on a chair, got a pillow from the armchair, put it at the head of the dining room couch, and lay down with the paper. He lit a cigarette, threw the match under the couch, and started to read. But the paper was full of Sacco and Vanzetti, so he let it drop on the floor and stared off.

For a few moments he did not think of anything; then his eye got caught on Eugene's picture hanging on the wall above him. On the left was Eugene's last letter written from France; on the right there was Ma's black arm band with a gold star on it; and in the center, above a small silk American flag, was an enlargement of a kodak picture of Eugene taken in training camp. Eugene's features could just be distinguished. The whole was mounted on grey cardboard and framed behind glass.

He didn't belong in Verdun, everybody said when Jim told of Eugene's death. There was never anything about Americans at Verdun. But Eugene had been killed there. They got it straight from the War Department. Killed in action at Verdun. They kidded Jim. What was your brother doing in Verdun? Must have been chasing a woman when he got shot. While he was small, Jim let them kid him; but when he grew up he smashed a few, so they shut up. Eugene

was killed in Verdun, and that was all there was to it.

Eugene was in court often: once before the Juvenile judge for smashing windows on Election night; then much later for getting a girl into trouble. The girl was a little bitch that was good to every guy that came around; but the old man had a good job then, so she thought if she could rope Eugene into marrying her, she'd be fixed for life. The judge said: "Either marry her or go to Reform School." The old man said: "You'd better go to Reform School then. I wouldn't have her in the house." So Eugene got sentenced to Reform School until he was twenty-one, but the old man pulled a few wires, and he was released on probation. The little bitch had the life frightened out of her, and shut up.

Eugene always did raise hell. He'd get into a fight with a cop, get beaten, locked up, and fined ten dollars. He always had plenty of money, and the old man could lick him for an hour, and he wouldn't tell where he got it. Ma liked Eugene, but she couldn't do anything with him. He'd always bring her presents, a wrist watch once, and once a tortoise shell comb, and once again he promised to bring her furs for a coat, but she didn't know where the things came from, so she wouldn't take them. Then Eugene would go out,

and he'd come home drunk, and he'd yell. Jim remembered how he yelled. By and by he got stronger, and he beat up the old man, so the old man had the police chase him out of the house. Eugene did not come home any more, but Ma used to sneak out from time to time to see him. When the war broke out Eugene was in the Army. He got shipped to France and wrote long letters home to Ma. She knitted things for him, and sent him money. And then the news came he got killed at Verdun.

The influenza epidemic came, and the old man got the flu, and then pneumonia, and that took him away. They had a hell of a time keeping things going for a while. Ma wanted them to go on with school, and Jim went to High School for two years and then to work, and Daisy the same.

Now Daisy was getting married and going away. Of course she promised to take care of Ma, but Phillip wanted her to quit work, and Phillip was not making much. So all that was left was the little insurance money from the Brotherhood, and what Jim brought home. Ma was probably worrying sick wondering how she would get along. And he, Jim, he didn't give a damn. He had been paid off today. He had almost twenty-five dollars in his pocket. And he had the nerve to tell Ma he had no money, couldn't spare the

money. A fine God damned son he was. Spending all he had on every lousy whore that let him pick her up, and trying to gyp Ma out of every cent he could.

The low down crook. The cheap little louse. He tried to remember all the hardest and filthiest names he knew and by these he called himself. He doubled his hand into a fist, tightened it, and with all of his might he struck the wooden edge of the couch. It hardly hurt him. Then he hit the edge again with his knuckles, and yelled with pain. One knuckle was bleeding, the others had skin torn off them. He remembered himself. He took the bills out of his pocket, picked a ten dollar bill, yelled: "Ma."

He heard her go out of the kitchen. I'm crazy, he said. He looked at his fist; it was bluish and felt dull. What did I do that for? he said. Ma appeared at the door. Without looking at her he said:

"You'd better take this," and handed her the bill. Then he went into the kitchen, put his hand under the cold water faucet.

"But you said you couldn't spare it," Ma said, going after him.

"It's all right," he said. "Take it."

For a moment he thought: I'm not going out tonight. I'm going to stay home. He felt very

virtuous when he thought that. But he didn't believe it. He knew he'd go out. Still he felt good about the ten dollar bill. And to hell with the hand. Let it hurt; it would teach him a lesson.

He wished it was half past seven and he could go. The fifteen minutes that yet remained seemed to him to last forever. He sat on a kitchen chair, nursed his hand, tried to prevent Ma from seeing that he had hurt it. He lit a cigarette, puffed very hard. He was excited over something and he did not know over what.

Sideways he looked at Ma. She sat at the other end of the table, near the window. The light shone through her hair. He looked at Ma for a long time. For the first time in years he really saw her. She was getting old. She must be almost sixty, he said.

He was listening to a popular song. Mammy, he heard. Mammy. You simp, he said to himself. Stop it. The sun shines east. The sun shines west. Cut it out, he said.

It's all right, Ma. I'll take care of you.

You God damned fool, he said to himself. You'd think you'd never seen her before.

It's all right, I'll take care of you.

Ma sighed.

If I want to cry, he said, I'm going to cry, who's to stop me?

You're a liar. You're just weepy. Tomorrow you'll pick a woman up and you'll spend every cent you have in your pocket. No, you'll do it tonight. Why the hell should you go out with this Helen? You don't care anything about her. You just made up to her. You pestered her until she made a date. What's the good of it all?

I'll go out every night if I want to. I'll spend every cent I earn. I'll leave home. I'll get me a room. I'll go away from New York and get a job. I'll get on a ship and go to Europe. I'll bum all over the world.

You will like hell. You'll stay home if you know what's good for you. You haven't got the guts to save ten cents a week. All you're good for is to gyp Ma out of your board. If you ever left home for good, you'd be in a hospital inside of a week.

Shut up, he said. God damn you, stop thinking, or. . . . He clenched the other hand and was ready to strike it against the table. Then he looked again at Ma. Why the hell didn't she say something?

"Wonder what Daisy is doing so long," Ma said.

What's the matter with me, he said. What is happening? I don't know what the devil is hap-

pening to me. Why is everything going funny? What am I going to do?

"I guess I'll go," he said.

"Be back early, Jimmy?" Ma asked.

He wanted to yell: No, I'll stay out all night. I'll never come home any more. I haven't got a home. I am going crazy, he thought.

"Yes, I'll be home early," he said.

He kissed Ma. She put her arms around him and kissed him. He felt terrible. She held him for a moment. He took her arms off him. He went into the dining room, took his coat off the chair, put it on; went to his own room, got his hat, wanted to look into the mirror, became angry for wanting, but did look; adjusted his tie, went into the hall, said: "So long, Ma," went out of the door.

Daisy was coming down the stairs.

Go to hell, he said.

III

THE L

He was sitting legs crossed stuck into the aisle, when at a station a man coming in bumped against his feet, and instead of going around and on, stood and pushed against them, looked angry, as if saying: You've no right to stick your feet into the aisle. I want them out. Jim sat very still, looked at the man; the hand in his pocket closed into a fist, the neck tightened.

Oh, you do, do you? You want them out? Well, suppose you push them out. Fist was shut tight, eyes stared up at the man, the nostrils felt as if they were quivering. If I wasn't going out with a girl tonight, mister, and didn't want to get messed up, I'd fix *you*.

The man stood for a moment, then stepped over Jim's feet, and without turning to look, went into the other end of the car. " Atta-boy," said a kid sitting on the opposite side, newspapers under his arm, and winked at Jim. Jim ignored him.

There was a good looking girl, who looked as if she might be a nigger, in the corner, back of the door, and Jim wanted to look at her, but she might be a nigger and he didn't dare to. There was an old Jewish woman, who every few moments

rose and asked if this was her station. She once asked Jim, but he didn't answer. There was a guy who must have been a prizefighter, he loved his hands so. He sat there and played with them, the open palm of one hand rubbing the knuckles of the other; then he looked at the hands and smiled. There were two wops talking in Italian, every now and then saying " All right " in English. There was the noise of the train, and at the stations the gates clanged and the trucks on the pavement below were heard.

The window back of Jim's head was open, and a breeze came in. He took off his hat, first looked if anyone else had taken off his, wondered what the other people in the car would think if he took it off — maybe they'd think I was a foreigner — and then he didn't give a damn and did take it off. He looked around for someone to grin, fist again tight; then he turned and looked out of the window.

A doll hospital, a dirty white sign with a red cross on it. Full Dress Suits and Evening Dresses for Hire: two dummies, one in a man's tuxedo, the other with long yellow hair and a white bridal dress. Over a dark saloon, Hotel for Men: dirty window curtains, shades drawn; in one open window with a light in the room, a man sat, bare feet on the window sill, and read a newspaper. An up-

stairs poolroom; lamps in green shades over the pool tables; guys in shirt sleeves with cues. Photographs; naked babies playing with their toes; a bridal party. Another Hotel for Men; if you knew the barkeeper maybe you could bring a woman in. And then a station.

But maybe she wouldn't be there, maybe she only said: "All right, meet you Monday night," to get rid of him. He said, and that was last Friday: "Well, you ever going out with me or not?" She said: "Sure, any time." He asked: "Tonight?" "No, not tonight. I'm going out tonight. And tomorrow night I'm going to my married sister's. And Sunday I've got things to do." So he said Monday, certain that she'd find an excuse for that night, too. But she said: "Sure, I'll go out with you Monday."

Well, if she wouldn't be there he'd change lunch rooms. He wouldn't have a waitress laugh at him after she didn't show up for a date. That's the kind of girl I am. They all wait for me, and I just let them wait.

And then why to hell meet her? Why not give her a standup? Let *her* wait, and tomorrow enter the lunch room triumphantly, laughing? Well, you waited for me. How did *you* like waiting?

He smiled. But then he saw her at the counter, nipples of her breasts showing through the thin

silk of her waist, nipples that moved as she moved, made lines in the silk. He remembered himself thinking of her in the elevator going down to the lunch room the first few times after she started working there; wondering if she would look at him, smile at him; ordering another piece of pie, a cup of coffee he didn't want, giving her fifteen cent tip, or even a quarter, instead of the ten cents he always gave. Anything to get her attention. At first she was quiet, looked very modest, never smiled, afraid on her new job with the Greek. But then after many days, she began to have friends, said Hello to this one coming down for lunch, smiled at that one. She even began to have customers of her own, clerks who waited for her to serve them and not the other girl at the counter. There was always a crowd at her side, talking to her, kidding her, while she giggled at one, winked at another, said to a third: "You stop."

It took a long time before she even answered Jim. She didn't like him at first. When he asked: "What kind of sandwiches you got?" she pointed to the list of sandwiches pasted on the glass. When someone she liked asked her that question she smiled and answered. But Jim had to say it himself, while she took his order in silence, served him, gave him his check, and took

his tip, without ever saying a word. He said: Wait, I'll get you yet,— and himself was very nice to her, very respectful, never tried to touch her, even looked at the nipples when she was busy at the counter and couldn't notice it.

Then one day she said to him: " Hello, there. What you going to have? " and " Thanks, see you tomorrow," when she got the quarter. And ever after that they chatted. She told him about a kid who stammered and ate nothing but three pieces of lemon meringue for lunch, about a fresh guy who tried to date her up in the subway, how she turned him over to a cop, and then wouldn't come to court. She told him about her girl friend and how dumb she was. She smiled at him whenever she looked at him. She said: " You better take the pimento cheese today. The combinations were left over since yesterday." His coffee was always hot, there was more ice cream on his pie than there should have been. And once she even said to him: " You don't have to give me a quarter, every time."

But she wouldn't go out with him. She didn't say No, but when asked for a date, she said: " Sure," and when he said, Tonight? she answered: " No, I'm going out tonight." No, she didn't have a boy friend. Not this year. She had one for two years before, but life was too short.

He wouldn't let her look at anyone, nor talk to anyone; and when she worked in Childs' he used to stand outside of the window, watching griddle cakes being made, but really seeing that she didn't flirt with anyone. So she told him where to go. "Can't be bothered. A girl don't last forever." Oh, no, she wasn't going out with a fellow. She was going to her girl friend's. They were going to sew underclothes.

Jim never demanded a date. He never said: "Well, if you don't want to go out with me. . . ." He kidded her instead: "Well, did you put clean sheets on your bed?" he said, "I'm going to sleep with you tonight." She said: "Fat chance you got." But she wasn't insulted. He knew some day she'd go out with him. And last Friday she asked: "Got a car?" "No," he said, "What do you think I am? Ain't a taxi good enough for you?" Then she said: "You know, I like you. Sure, I'll go out with you. Any time."

And always the nipples. She wasn't so beautiful. She had a nice skin, and her eyes weren't bad. But when he sat on a high stool in the lunch room, and looked at her busy behind the counter, he could see nothing but the nipples. The waist was pink, transparent. Under it was some lace, and he was never certain whether he actually saw the nipples. When he looked directly at them,

as her breasts moved, his eyes became dissolved, the breasts became larger and larger and he wasn't certain if he saw anything.

Well, maybe tonight he'd see them. Maybe tonight he could even feel them, lay his hands on their softness and gently press them, play with the nipples. For an instant he thought maybe he could kiss them, then his eyes misted, and he slid a little off his seat, and he remembered he was in an L train, there was a good looking girl who was a nigger in the corner, or maybe she wasn't a nigger, and he could look at her.

Then he became ashamed. Can't you ever go anywhere, in the subway or on the street, or anywhere else you are at the moment, without looking at every woman as if you were throwing her on the bed and taking her pants off? Can't you ever think of anything else, do anything else than chase after her, try to get her? Can you ever see any other spot but where the legs meet?

Listen, he said. I'm going out tonight. I worked all day; I'm tired; and I'm going out for a little fun. I don't want to argue tonight. I'll look where I please. And I'll do what I like. I don't want to think about it. I don't want arguments. If I have to think any more, I'll get drunk, and then I won't be able to think.

And I don't give a damn if she is a nigger.

(Like hell you don't. How would you like to be seen walking with her?) I don't. If I didn't have a date tonight, I'd try to pick her up, and go out with her. (Yeh, you'd go to Harlem with her, where nobody gives a damn.)

At Ninety-Sixth Street there came into the car a man and a woman in evening clothes. The man wore a silk hat. Ha-ha-ha said Jim. What you doing in the L? Why didn't you take your limousine? The woman wore no hat. She had wonderful hair. They both crossed their legs into the aisle. Yeh, said Jim. You'd think you owned the L. The woman had fine legs. He could see her thighs. Beautiful thighs. The man noticed Jim was looking at her thighs, so he took her arm and pushed her a little so that she would change her position. Yeh, said Jim, try and do it. She's got good ones and she don't mind showing them.

He ought to save up a little and get himself a tuxedo. (What do you want a tuxedo for? You wouldn't use it.) Well, you never can tell, said Jim. They're useful. (I suppose you'll go to the lobby of a swell hotel and sit around as if you belonged there.) Might even do that, said Jim.

You can't make me angry, said Jim, still looking at the thighs. I'm a good natured guy.

He felt fine. He looked at the man and the

woman with a smile. He said, All right, don't get sore. I won't look any more. He grinned at the nigger with the hands. He said: If the old woman asks me her station again, I'll find out where she wants to get off at. Looking at the nigger girl he said: Well, you're probably not a nigger, anyway, so it's all right. He smiled at everyone in the car. He winked at the newsboy. The newsboy winked back.

Someone across from him was reading a newspaper, and the headline was big: SACCO AND VANZETTI WILL DIE. He said: They ought to give it to those two birds good and hard. What the hell do they mean by throwing bombs? What's wrong anyway? Why the hell ain't some people satisfied?

He smiled again at the couple in evening clothes. The man with the silk hat sniffed at him. Oh, go to hell, Jim said. What's biting you? Can't you go to the can? He looked again out of the window. The sun in Jersey was just over the tops of the houses. Here and there a very tall building cut the sun off with the light shining on both sides. Women were leaning out of tenement windows watching for their husbands to come home. Many people were at dinner. Here the man was sitting in his shirt sleeves with a cigar reading a paper.

The clean underwear felt good; the fresh shirt felt cool, the collar was not too tight; the tie was well tied; the suit newly pressed: it would last yet a couple of months; the hair was combed. But there were pimples on his face, and it was too damned bad. Maybe he ought to put his hat on. It might hide the pimples.

The girl was not a nigger, or maybe she was. They called themselves Spaniards when they had just a little nigger blood in them. They were just as hot as Spaniards. But if you married one, the doctor some day might come in and say: Your wife gave birth to a nigger baby. Nice surprise.

Once when he was a messenger boy, just out of school, he was sent to Brooklyn, and in the evening before the lamps were lit and you couldn't tell the faces very well, he heard a voice call out: "Come on, white boy. Change your luck for a half a dollar." He had run.

Tra-la-la. Wait till I get hold of Helen tonight. Wait till I get her into a taxi. Hope she isn't going to wear anything expensive because it's going to be ruined. And she herself might not come off so well.

He looked at the people in the car, and with his eyes he said: I'm going out with a queen tonight, and what's going to happen is no one's

business. Before I get through tonight. . . . Tra-la-la.

He sang the tune of the train. His mouth moved, his lips said the words, but he didn't make much noise because people might think he was crazy. He was very happy. There was nothing the matter with anything. The thought of his mother jumped into his mind, but he threw it out. Then Simson and his dirty trick in refusing him a raise. Who cared? Tomorrow he'd probably quit. He would become a salesman, travel in taxicabs, live in hotels, and raise hell. (A very little voice said: That's a fine way of kidding yourself. He answered softly: Well, let me think so tonight anyway.) Yes, there was nothing like selling. People respected you. They looked up to you. It was a man's game.

He became powerful. The biggest guy might come to him and he'd sock him on the jaw and drop him. He became the strongest man on earth. There was nothing he could not conquer. He was stronger and stronger until he could think of nothing any more. His chest widened, his mouth opened; he breathed in and out deeply.

He became pure and good. He gave Ma ten dollars every week, and at times he even brought her presents. A pair of stockings, a box of candy, and once he went to a florist and bought a dozen

American Beauties. Everyone laughed as he carried the wax papered bouquet through the streets. He didn't care. Proudly he went up the stairs, opened the door, shouted: Ma, here's something for you — handed her the roses and went to his room.

He saved his money. Every week he put away two and three dollars, and at the end of the year he bought a hundred dollar bond. Eventually he belonged to a building association. He joined a Christmas Club. At the age of forty-five he had over twenty thousand dollars at compound interest. This and the heavy life insurance he carried took care of Ma for life.

He never looked at a woman. They begged him: Please come with me. He said: No. Women asked him to their rooms, undressed for him, said: Come on. He said: No, I'm going home. Never did he look down a girl's waist, up her skirt, peer through the curtains to see someone in the toilet opposite. He was good.

Then into his greatness things began to come. He remembered taking insults. He remembered other boys bullying him, and he afraid to hit them. There was one particularly. He was messenger boy then, at three o'clock taking checks to the bank. Twenty or thirty boys waited downstairs in the bank for the clerk to come out. They matched

quarters. He had luck matching, and he almost always won, but there was one, Charlie Opp, who matched from the palm of his hand instead of from the back. He grooved the palm of his hand a little, and when he saw the match was against him, he turned the coin over and won. Jim said: "You match from the back." Charlie said: "You make me." Jim wouldn't match then, and Charlie said: "You son of a bitch, you match, or I'll gore your eyes out." The other kids laughed and Jim matched. Charlie was not very big, but he had great shoulders, and everyone said he could lick any messenger on the street. Jim didn't want to experiment, so he matched. Now that he was great he became ashamed.

Another fellow and he went to a dance in Brooklyn. He didn't know anyone there. He stood in the corner and watched. He wouldn't dance with a bum dancer, but all the good ones knew the fellows and wouldn't look at him. He asked one after another, and some didn't even answer. They kept their eyes away. He thought of going home, but he wanted one dance. So he asked a little kid, who looked like nothing at all, and who probably had not had a dance all evening. She was wonderful. She followed like a streak, she knew all his steps; when she laughed she looked sweet, and when she talked it was hu-

man. He bought her frankfurters and he bought her a soda, and he liked her a lot. He wanted to please her, to impress her; he talked like he never talked before, she smiled, she giggled, she liked him. He had a hell of a good time.

They danced until Home Sweet Home, and then he took her out. There weren't many buildings in that part of Brooklyn, and they walked home arm round each other's waists. From time to time they stopped and they kissed. She was the sweetest kid he had ever met. He was wild about her. He was only twenty then, but he wanted her to marry him. Never had he felt like that before. She smelled so fine, and she talked so nice, and she kissed so soft. They walked very slowly, and they didn't talk very much, but they knew everything.

And then on the veranda of her house the thing happened. It was late, her folks were in bed, they sat on an old sofa in the shadow; everything seemed funny, and he was terribly excited. At first they sat quite apart, and they said nothing for a long time, but it seemed as if they were thinking of the same thing, for all at once she was lying stretched on the sofa, and he was beside her, killing her with kisses.

She said: No. Don't, but her hands were willing. She wasn't the kind that did this, but it was the moment, and she was willing. Jim was so ex-

cited that he couldn't. He kissed her; his hands ran over her body, but he couldn't. He tried terribly, but he couldn't. He became frightened, he wanted her more than he wanted anything else in the world, he begged her hands, she tried to. Nothing happened.

If she had laughed at him, if she had said: A fine man you are. Why don't you go home and play with yourself?—he might have gotten angry, he might have called her a name, and walked off. But she lay there, breathing deeply, excited, her lips hot, her body shaking; she tried by kissing him, she tried everything. She was so sweet, he loved her so; with everything he had her, but he couldn't.

They both became very tired. His arms, his neck ached. He was sweating. They gave up. It was almost morning. He rose, he took his hat; without saying a word, he went away. He never found out her name, nor her telephone number.

It had never happened to him before and never after. He blushed thinking of it. It was the most shameful thing about himself that he knew. When he remembered it he felt everyone around him must know what was in his mind. He was miserable.

Well, if it happened tonight — God, if it should — Helen would tell him exactly what she thought

of him. But it wouldn't happen tonight. It had happened at a time when everything should have been wonderful, and everything wasn't.

He felt bad again. He was no one, nothing, he wasn't worth a God damn. He had never done anything, been anything. He was a mess.

For a time he sat there without moving, then he said: Oh, what the hell, and he sighed.

From away across the Park the Majestic Hotel appeared, then to the left Ritz Tower went up above everything. Here and there more tall buildings with terraces in different colored stone. Between the blocks the Park could be seen, a little bit of trees at the very end of each street. On Third Avenue where the L was, the houses were reddish brown, dirty, many fire escapes hung to the walls, with boxes on them, a flower pot, a bird cage. On one fire escape landing a naked baby lay on a pillow, its arms and legs in the air. Women leaning against window sills looked up and down the street. A little girl from one of the houses waved as the train went by. The windows were opened wide, no curtains on them, people did not care whether those in the L saw what was happening inside. Some flats were almost empty, just a white chair in them, a table, a bed; others had many crooked pictures on the walls, junk on the mantel-pieces, floor lamps, table lamps, dress-

ers, until it seemed that inside no one could move. In still others there were children, many children around their mother as she stood by the stove. Here someone lay in bed, a chair nearby with small bottles on it. A card game was going on. A woman was undressing with the curtain up. The train went by, and she stood in her drawers with the skirt above her head. More children. More men in the windows in shirt sleeves reading papers.

Above was Lexington Avenue where people were sweller, above that was Park Avenue with great stone houses where people were swell, then Madison, then Fifth, Central Park, and then more houses and more people. At Fifty-Ninth and Fifth two great hotels were building, one white, the other yellow brown; there was the Plaza; again from behind a building Ritz Tower jumped out. The great apartment houses looked quiet, dead, as if in them no one ever breathed, while here nearby where the train was passing, there were trucks on the badly paved streets, pushcarts on the sides, a grocer had a display of fruits and vegetables on the sidewalk, children on the streets, the windows open for everyone to see, wash drying on the roofs, there was noise that could even be heard above the train, while West everything seemed silent.

Away on Broadway the first signs were lit; below at the moving picture houses people were going in; the shops were closing; another grocer was taking his greens inside before locking up for the night; a mother rocked a child to sleep; a girl powdered her nose; in an upstairs restaurant people were eating; here girls were still working, making artificial flowers: not one looked up as the train passed; a warehouse with blank walls; a garage with cars on all floors; a sign: SHAFTWAY; fire escapes.

The nigger girl had left; the newsboy had left, the old Jewish woman was sitting on the edge of her seat, anxiously looking at the streets that passed; the man in the silk hat and the girl with thighs talked quietly. At a station a crowd of kids came in, fellows and girls about eighteen, all dressed to go out, the girls had more paint on than they needed. They came in, a crowd, eight or ten of them, they took all the empty seats, and they yelled one to another across the aisle. They yelled and they pushed, they were having a fine time. When they shouted something they thought very clever they looked at others in the car if they had heard. But no one listened, and soon they became quiet.

Jim thought how he did the same thing a few years ago when first he went out with a bunch,

how happy they all were, how important they all felt, how close they all stayed together when someone from the outside dared to make a remark to one in the crowd, how they all piled in, and there was a fight. He remembered the first time he got drunk, the first girl he took out, the first kissing game party he was asked to when he graduated from Public School. The girls his age did not like him, but the one that gave the party had an older sister who was lame, and this one called him into a dark room, and there very excited kissed him, while he was embarrassed and a little disgusted.

Again he looked across the aisle, and one of the little girls smiled at him while talking to a fellow, she almost looked as if at a station she might get off if Jim got off too, and they could go somewhere. Jim felt a little sad and very much older than this girl. He said to her: Don't do that. If I did meet you, I'd mess you up, and you'd be sorry. Stick to your own boy friend. He won't do anything to you; besides you can handle him. You couldn't me.

Looking at this party of kids he didn't like it. He wanted to be of their age, of the time when he thought every woman could be picked up and mushed. He said Hello, he danced, he held her tight; while dancing he tried to feel her; then

they went into a corner, and there they held each other. Of course she'd say No at first, but every girl he knew then had a certain limit. This one let him hold her breasts over her dress, now and then he met one who let him put his hand inside of her dress, and very rarely there was a girl who said nothing when he pressed her thigh or even went a little higher. That was all. He never thought of anything more. Oh, yes, there was the experience with the farmer's wife when he was in Boy Scouts' camp, when he did not know what was happening as she held him in the grass. He bragged about it to the other fellows, but he really did not start to think of it until he was much older, when he had many experiences of this sort.

Now he had to think. Some girls were out to get married, they didn't care what happened so long as they could finally rope the fellow in to marry them, like the one that got Eugene into trouble; and other girls were just out for a good time. But you needed money for them. There were always guys with enough money to take them out. He didn't belong with either kind. All he got were the leavings or the ones who liked him for himself. But God damn those pimples.

There was nowhere he really belonged. He had no friends, and no girl friends. Not that he

wanted friends, but he wanted to be able to have them, and then to say: I don't want them. Now for instance in this car there was no one whose equal he was. On one side there was the prize-fighter with the hands, there was the old Jewish woman, the one or two who looked as if they slept in their clothes; there was the bunch of loud kids; and there was the man and the girl in evening clothes.

For a moment he imitated the man. He put his hat on his head, a little on the back and to the side; he slid off his seat until he half lay on it; and crossed his legs away into the aisle; and he told the world he didn't give a damn about anything:

He had more than a hundred dollars in his pocket. He didn't take his car because its carburetor was busted. He thought it was such a lark to ride with Violet in the L. They were going to a musical comedy, then they were going to a night club, and they were going to Violet's house, or if he couldn't sneak himself up to her room, they would go down to his bachelor apartment. She'd strip for him. She'd dance an indecent dance. They'd get drunk on champagne or on real whiskey. Then under his silken coverlet they would go. And if anything happened a few months from now, they'd go to a doctor and pay him five hundred, and he'd fix her up.

Jim because envious, said: While I have to use

safes, because I can't take a chance, and I have to do it in taxicabs; but then he didn't care, looked at the little girl across from him, smiled, said to her: All right, I'll get off this station, and you get off next, and I'll take the next train and meet you. But the girl didn't look at him, no one looked at him, nobody saw him, nobody in the whole world knew he was alive; Helen wouldn't meet him; Daisy would take Ma to live with her if only he wasn't on earth; he would lose his job before two weeks were up; and he would never never become a salesman.

The sun was setting. New York got redder and redder. Across the aisle through the car windows, the glass panes in the houses seemed on fire. In the car the lights were lit. They were not necessary. They lit up nothing. Jim shuddered as a little breeze went through him. He was very tired and very sad. He felt much older than anyone else in the car, than the people that walked and rode on the street below, that moved and lived in the windows of the houses. He felt wrinkled, unwashed, unclean. The suit he wore did not fit him. There was something wrong with the tie, with the shirt, with the underwear next his skin. There was something wrong in the air, in the car, inside of him. He as born wrong, he lived wrong, he was wrong.

Suppose he did save his money, what of that? Suppose he didn't try to jump on every girl he met, who cared? What's the difference? he shouted to himself, who the hell cares? If very late at night, he waited outside of a big house on Park Avenue, stood in a corner, watched for people that passed, saw someone who looked as if he had money, hit him over the head with a piece of pipe, took his money, and went away, why then he wouldn't have to work for a while. He would go to the movies, he would get himself a girl who'd live in an apartment, and he'd stay all day long there. At night he would come home and give Ma money. He could even say he got a raise.

If right now he walked over to the swell couple opposite, without a word grabbed the girl's skirt and jerked it up — he did it often in his dreams — what would happen? She'd start yelling. The man would try to beat him up — he might try, but he'd have a hell of a job — . At a station they'd turn him over to a cop. Indecent assault. Six months. Next case. He wouldn't have to give his right name. Ma wouldn't know what happened. She'd go to live with Daisy. After a while he'd be released.

It would be a wonderful sight, the girl yelling with her skirts up in the air, and those thighs

showing. She'd talk about it until the day she died. The guy would be a hero, protecting her from rape. The judge wouldn't give a damn. Ma would be much happier living with Daisy. And he . . . he wouldn't care.

Go on, he said. Do it. Get up and walk over. It will take only a moment. Count ten and it will be all over. There's the edge of the skirt. Go on up, you.

He wouldn't do it, but it wasn't important. (Well, then, why don't you do it?) It wasn't important, he yelled. He wanted himself to understand that it wasn't important. (Well, then, why the hell don't you do it?)

He said: Wait till I get a drink, I'll show you. I won't care what happens then. I'll go around New York punching people's faces, throwing women on the ground. I'll show the cops. I'll show the God damned authorities. I'll raise hell.

He was very tired, so tired he could hardly move. Feet felt heavy, eyes hurt, there was noise in his head, and a pain went through his sides. Hardly able, he walked into a place. Hello, Paddy. Hello, how are you, Jim. How they coming? What you going have? Give me a Scotch, Paddy, a double Scotch, with a beer chaser. Paddy polished a glass, then a little glass, he pulled a bottle from under the counter, set it

all on the bar. Jim picked up the bottle, poured one little glassful, he poured that off into the larger glass, then again he did the same. No chaser, Paddy. He took the glass, he raised it to his lips, he said: Here it is, Paddy. Slowly the stuff went down, feeling better and better, burning just a little, but tasting good, making him feel good. The pain in his side went away. The eyes opened. The head was fine and light. He stood back. He said: Now, you son of a bitch. . . .

(You'd think you were a drunkard, wouldn't you? You'd think you couldn't get along without the God damned stuff? You'd think the only thing in the world you needed was a drink? Just a great big strong man that can't live without his booze?)

Shut up. He was going out with Helen tonight. It took him almost two months to get her to come. She was waiting for him at Times Square. She would smile, take his arm, and they'd go to a movie. He'd sit very close to her. Maybe he'd put his arm around her and feel her. They'd go to a speakeasy afterwards, would dance. They wouldn't drink too much. Just a drink or two. Then into a taxi and he'd take her home. Oh, nothing much would happen in taxi. They'd just ride in it. He would say good night to her in the

hall. He could kiss her, couldn't he? Then he'd go home and go to bed, and tomorrow back to the office.

He'd work very hard. He wouldn't promise anything he couldn't do. He'd try to save. If A. C. Wylie answered that they had a job for him, he'd turn it down and stick with Simson. He'd work very very hard. He'd get himself a steady girl and go with her. She'd save his money for him. They'd get married, ask Ma to live with them. She'd rather live with him than with Daisy. They'd get a little car. They'd have kids, lots of kids.

But to travel. To go, on and on, very far away, so far that it could never be reached. Not to care what happens now, but just go. Maybe to sea. Maybe elsewhere. . . .

A salesman would be best. It wasn't very hard. He knew he could do it if he only forced himself to. If he only had the nerve to drop the certain thing he had now, say: I'm going to be a salesman, and to hell with everything else — go to Ma tell her: I probably won't be making any money for a while, I'm going in for something big. I want you to keep me going for a while — Or to have a long talk with Daisy, speak seriously to her. She had money. She wasn't a bad kid. Tell her: I want to get out of what I'm do-

ing now. There is nothing in it for me. I want you to help me. It will be a business proposition. You finance me, and I'll pay you back.

But she wouldn't. She wouldn't believe him. She'd say: Yeh, and the first time you met a girl you'd want to show off before, you'd blow it all in. You'd take an automobile, and you'd give her the swellest dinner in New York; like as not you'd want to buy her something. Not because you liked her, but because money'd burn a hole in your pocket if you had any. You've made plenty before, and never saved a cent of it.

And the worst of it all was that he would. He couldn't keep a cent ever. When he didn't have any, he always said: Next time I get paid I'm going to give it all to Ma to keep for me. Just get a dollar at a time for lunch and cigarettes. When he did get paid, he said: I have thirty dollars now. I can begin saving. But he couldn't. He'd buy this and that. He'd say: I oughtn't to buy because I'm saving. But he'd buy just the same. Something forced him. And then again broke, again promises and resolutions.

Everybody else saved money, why couldn't he? Nobody else worried, why did he? Why did he feel guilty, why did he think: If they only saw what was going on in my mind they would know what a bastard I am? Why did it always seem

as if he hadn't washed, as if there was something so wrong with him, that it needed all his forces to keep it hidden, and if it ever showed, he'd be thought not human, crazy or criminal?

He shouldn't have gone out tonight; he couldn't save money; women were not safe in his mind; he did work he didn't like; Daisy would not take him seriously. He might hope forever, but nothing ever happened. The only one who ever liked him, Ma, knew nothing about him; she thought that he was good, that he loved her, and though he supposed he did love her, what would happen when Daisy got married, and Ma would depend on him for a living?

He worried terribly. He knew that now he thought he would take care of Ma, but when the time came he probably wouldn't. When rent would be due, when Ma would need something very important, and he would be coming home with the money, he would meet someone or something would happen, he would go, have a good time, spend the money, not think of Ma while spending it.

He wanted to hurt himself again, he wanted to set a mark on himself to prove that he wouldn't spend it. He wanted to burn out on the palm of his hand the words: I WILL TAKE CARE OF MA, so that they should always be there to

remind him. With his eyes closed and his mind rigid against the promise, he swore it.

Then as his station was reached, he knew it was of no use. The best way to prove his new life was not to go out tonight, to go back home; and he almost did it; he said: I will go downstairs, cross the street to the uptown side, and go back into the L, and home, begin again. And saying it, almost certain that he would go back, he walked down the stairs, his mind yelling. He reached the street, he stopped, said: I must go back; — and then went straight on, across town, toward Broadway.

IV

THE STREET

The little runt of a soda jerker paid absolutely no attention to him. Jim stood back of the counter, near the window, looked straight at him, decided not to say a word, but to force the other to speak to him first. The runt wouldn't. He was in the corner opposite, slightly in the darkness, and didn't look at him. Jim said: You'll look at me, if I have to smash your face to make you. The runt still stood away. Jim said in a very loud voice:

"Hey, you."

A kid sitting on a high stool, drinking a soda, turned around, staring. The Greek back of the candy counter raised his head and said:

"What you want?"

Jim said:

"I want service."

The Greek began talking Greek. The runt came over.

"Give me a Coke," Jim said.

The runt was going to ask him again what he'd have, but then Jim looked at him; so the runt took a glass, filled it with soda water, jerked syrup into it, wouldn't stir it, and set it on the counter. Don't I get a holder? Jim said. He pulled out a

nickel, threw it so it should fall on the floor, drank up the Coke, and walked out. He felt very bad.

It seemed miles away. There was the viaduct, and through the opening far away was the Sixth Avenue L, and beyond it, Times Square.

He began running. Let them think I'm catching a train. Then he slowed down. He said: If something don't happen pretty soon. . . .

In the Coffee Pot it was five to eight. In the barber shop it was after eight. In the Sea Food place there was a cake of ice with a big fish frozen, in the center; on one side there were vegetables: radishes, cucumbers, carrots, with oranges and grapefruit bordering; and on the other side, on cracked ice, there was a pile of yellow shrimps, and red and speckled lobsters.

The lobsters' claws were broken off, but the joints moved. People stood and looked. The lobsters were trying to fight, but they couldn't. Somebody ought to put a stone through the window, said Jim. The dirty, God damned . . .

Early spring the cafeteria around the corner from the subway station had an Easter show in the window. The proprietor made it look like a farmyard, with rabbits and little chicks. Everybody from the neighborhood looked into that window. But the sun was hot, there was no awning, so the rabbits got the mange, and the chicks'

feathers came out. It looked like hell with the animals lying sick in the window case, but the proprietor did nothing. One guy couldn't stand it and smashed the window with his fist, got all cut up and was led off to the station. The kids from the neighborhood tried to rush the cop who was leading him, but they got socked with the nightstick. The guy was sent off to Bellevue for observation, and it came out he was crazy.

Yes, said Jim. He's probably in Matteawan now. And the proprietor ought to be hung, and this whole God damned town ought to be blown up.

And, he said, if I don't shut up, I'll get sent off to Bellevue myself.

He walked for a little while, then he said: There are entirely too many people on the sidewalk.

If one of them would look at him, he'd get into an argument; he'd talk, then he'd close his eyes, and: s o c k !

He looked straight into everyone's face ready for an argument, but then he'd see a woman, would look at her ankles, her legs, whether she had any breasts or not, whether she'd be good. At one girl he stared straight off, she was so soft, and she showed so much. He wanted to turn after she passed him, to see more of her; but then again

a tough face showed, and he got hard and said: Come on.

All the time thoughts were trying to force themselves into his head, and he was keeping them off. Little phrases were jumping into his mind. What you going on for? You won't have a good time. Besides, you're doing wrong. You know you ought to go home. All he could do was to close his mind against them. He couldn't argue. He was wrong. He knew it. But he was going on.

A guy who looked like a detective, with a cigar in his mouth; an old woman with bundles; a Jew couple: the girl was nice (Jewish girls were nice, but he'd never know any); another couple, both ugly as hell, walking arm in arm, loving; a kid with papers; three girls dressed to kill, walking very slowly, stopping in shop windows, looking at men, giggling; a son of a bitch he'd like to knock down (Yes, you) — if he'd look back, he'd hit him; a girl walking alone, wonderful legs showing to above the knees (Please look at me); an Italian, thick gold chain on his belly and soup spots; another bastard; at the corner in front of the cigar store three guys stood and swayed. Did he have cigarettes? Yes. And Lexington Avenue.

Waiting for the traffic to stop he took a ciga-

rette out of his pocket, lit it, then not waiting for the traffic, he crossed. The cop was talking to a guy, probably a detective.

Commodore Hotel. From the lobby, with palms and soft couches, a doorman escorted a party in evening clothes into a taxi. One of the women in a red velvet cape was smoking, and after the doorman slammed the door, and the taxi started, her hand came out and flicked the ashes off. The doorman did not get a tip, and Jim as he passed him, winked, but the doorman ignored him. A long line of cabs stood before the Grand Central. Here was the newsstand. Here porters. A taxi was being unloaded of baggage. A little girl holding to her mother's arm stared at Jim. A crowd of people came out of the subway exit and made him stop for a moment. A man ran quickly for his train, grabbing a paper and dropping three pennies. The headline was SACCO AND VANZETTI WILL DIE. Jim said: Well, let them. Now under the viaduct. From under the tunnel street cars came. In the West the sun had set. A fellow came up to Jim and said quickly, the cop shouldn't see him: " Give us a dime for a cup of coffee." Jim at first was not going to, but he did. The fellow didn't even say Thanks, but hurried away, and Jim wanted to run after him and get his dime back.

On the corner there were piles of papers all saying SACCO AND VANZETTI WILL DIE. Vanderbilt Avenue.

Then he got pushed. He was crossing to the opposite curb, when he felt something strike his back, and he almost lost his balance. Quickly, he turned, fist up. A big guy stopped. He was much bigger than Jim. He said: "Look out," smirked at Jim, and went on.

Jim stood there looking at the guy's back disappearing in the crowd. He tried to bring thoughts into his head and couldn't. Nothing seemed to exist: no street, no buildings, no girl that he was going to. The back felt a little dull, the legs were weak, the neck tight. Then he noticed his fist was still in the air.

He hated the guy. He looked at his back away in the crowd, and he wanted to run after him, to jump on him, throw him on the ground, and kick him. He didn't know what he wanted, but with each step the guy was taking farther away from him, something more awful was happening. Somehow nothing could go on until the guy was down. Everything Jim had, everything he thought, he was, was gone with the guy who now had disappeared beyond Forty-Fourth Street. There was nothing left, except the fist up in the air, and the fist meant he could have hit him, but

he didn't. The guy said: Look out, the guy grinned at him. And the guy was still going on, was still alive, was probably still grinning.

Jim went on, without knowing where he was going. He kept near the buildings, out of the way of people, afraid someone might hit him, and he not able to defend himself. The street grew wider, the buildings got taller, the people became big, much bigger than Jim. He was in a great city, built for men many times his size, who walked straight and were not afraid of anything. He couldn't look up into people's faces. New York became dangerous, terrible. Automobiles were going by, people were hurrying, crowds were coming out of the subway station, street cars were ringing bells, away from the river came the sound of a boat siren. Jim became frightened.

The pain in his back increased. It wasn't pain at all. It was heat that stayed in one spot and burned him; it was the insult that could never be forgotten, as if a little kid had spat on his face and was laughing, and he like in a dream could not strike out. He couldn't think of it, it was so awful. It got worse and worse, and he couldn't go on. He stopped.

He was alone in New York, without a home, without friends, with no money in his pocket. He

was hungry, hadn't eaten in days, and he wanted a drink of water. Any moment a cop might pick him up for a vagrant. He hadn't slept in a decent bed since he could remember. He wanted work; he could find none. Who'd give work to a bum? He wanted to go up to a fellow and say: Give us a dime for a cup of coffee. He almost did it. He saw one who looked soft, and came close. The fellow must have known what he wanted, for he looked at Jim and walked quickly away.

He went on, very slowly, moving from one end of the sidewalk to another. The heat in his back was almost gone now, but his whole body felt tired, listless, dull. His head ached a little. His feet shuffled close to the pavement. He heard somebody say: " Look, he's drunk."

A taxi horn woke him. When he heard it, he was almost run over, but he jumped back and cursed. The taxi driver cursed back, and passed him. The cop standing near said very slowly: " Where the hell do you think you are going? " Jim didn't answer.

He crossed to the other side of Madison Avenue. The clock said quarter after eight. A girl was standing under the clock waiting for somebody. She had a nice body and she showed it. Jim went on.

He didn't feel so bad now. Something still hurt

him, but he didn't care so much. He almost forgot it. From time to time he remembered the push, and stopped, his face flushing, his lips swearing, but he really didn't care. Again he looked into people's faces, especially girls'. The trouble was that when they were alone they were going somewhere, and wouldn't be picked up, and when they were in twos and threes they wouldn't look at just one fellow. (But you're going to meet a girl in a few minutes. Can't you wait?) Sure I can, he answered. I'm just kidding. (Like hell you're kidding. You'd probably walk off with one if she looked at you.) Sure I would, said Jim. Why shouldn't I? (But. . . .) Oh, Christ, said Jim.

Now, nearly Fifth Avenue. In a few minutes he'd be there. Count his steps. He counted one, two, three, four, to over forty, then stopped in Childs' to look at a flapjack girl. She wasn't so good. Come on, Fifth Avenue.

Here was the candy store. Here was where you could buy marked cards at a dollar a deck. Here was the store with women's underwear, very silky and very much transparent. Here was the cigar store. And finally Fifth Avenue.

It was warm and soft and quiet. A few taxis went by. The lights on the Avenue were lit in a long line that got lost somewhere very far away.

People walked slowly. A man in white spats and gardenia struck the ground with his stick. Red signal changed to green, and the bus came over. The conductor said: " Full on top. Three inside." Some women went in, but a young couple waited. The girl leaned against the fellow, looked up to him, and smiled. Jim tried to catch her eye, but she didn't see him.

A very old woman went by, dressed in rags, with a flower wilted on her shoulder and a dirty feather in her hat. She carried a knitted market bag. She talked to herself. She said: " You needn't think so," and shook her head. She saw a cigarette box on the pavement, picked it up, opened it. It was empty. She put it in her bag.

The pigeons from the library roof swooped to the ground, and flew up again. Two floated around the flag pole. A bit of mist rose from the pavement. The automobiles made no noise. People passing did not talk.

There, not so far away, was Sixth Avenue. Three minutes for that, and in three minutes more he'd be in the drug store. He'd wait for a while, and then out of the crowd she would come and smile. He tried to picture how she would look. He'd never seen her except in her pink waist and apron. She'd wear a hat, a coat, a waist, a dress. He hoped the waist would be cut low. Not

so much to unbutton. And it was hard to make them unbutton in the beginning. Later when their lips were warm and their eyes shone, they did not care. But before they were ready it was hard.

In the taxi, she was leaning on his arm, kissing him, her tongue in his mouth. His hand first touched the outside of her waist, pressed it. Then one finger crooked into the groove, and kissing her hard, very hard, she should not mind the hand, he slipped it into the warm inside, gently squeezed the roundness, stirred the nipple. She moved. She said: Don't, a weak Don't. But her lips were hot and her tongue stayed in his mouth.

The lights on the black and gold Radiator Building were turned on, and the gold became alive. Thousands and thousands of lighted windows went away up into the sky, the black walls holding them hardly to be seen. The back of the Library shone, and Bryant Park was dark with fences around it. Something had just been built on the right; pieces of scaffolding still lay on the sidewalk; and on a log sat a guy with only one leg and sold pencils. Women dropped coins into his hat.

Maybe the Paradise was better, after all. He knew everybody there, and if she couldn't dance, he could leave her alone, and take one who could.

Of course, if she proved to be good there was the chance of somebody cutting in. But maybe he could handle it. Again it was hard to love up in the Paradise. Oliver didn't like it. And no liquor. You couldn't do a thing without liquor.

But the Paradise had a band, and Paddy's only a mechanical piano. In Paddy's sometimes drunks raised hell, and she might not like that. But there were times when after a few drinks people from all the tables began to talk to each other, and drinks were ordered around. Everyone became happy, and as more and more drinking went on, no one cared what he did. Everybody danced with everybody else. A girl sometimes got so excited she ripped her clothes off, and began screaming and shaking. People yelled and clapped, and more and more girls went wild. If an evening like that happened everything would go fine.

In the Paradise it was respectable. They had to dance. Oliver knew that whenever he turned his back they stood in one spot and rubbed. He didn't care. But the place was not a speakeasy, and cops wandered in and out, and anyway the police didn't like him. So they had to behave. There was a good band, but no liquor, and no raising hell. So it was to be Paddy's and taking a chance.

Jim was under the Sixth Avenue L, zigzagging between the many cars going to the theatre. The private cars had chauffeurs, and people in them sat apart, looking straight ahead of them; while in the taxis the couple sat closer together, holding hands, or the man with his arm around the woman. In one they were kissing. The cab appeared before Jim, stood a few moments waiting for the cop to signal it, and then went on, and the two were still kissing, she bent over him, her arms about his neck, and he holding tight her waist.

On the other side everything was lighted. It wasn't altogether night yet, and the lights lit nothing. They existed in themselves, in brilliant spots, the filaments in the nearby bulbs still showing. In a photographer's studio there was a blue light that distorted faces as they passed. Next there was a store with a red light. Farther on, beyond Broadway, the theatre signs, great brilliant words. Farther yet, at Eighth Avenue, the lights stopped, and there was darkness there.

With each step there were more people, looking into shop windows, leaving restaurants, walking very slowly, going nowhere, or hurrying to appointments or the theatre. Taxis sounded their horns. A trolley car rang its bell. A mounted cop rode by, horse prancing. A newsboy yelled:

"All about Sacco-Vanzetti's death." A bell rang from underground, the steel door on the sidewalk in front of a store slowly opened, and a man with a couple of crates appeared. There were many more people now; those going toward Broadway on the right, the others near the curb. Occasionally someone in a hurry ripped through the wrong side. A fat woman, pouch belted about her middle, stood in the doorway of a dark store, selling magazines.

There was noise, and people talked loudly. Some faces were looking forward to what was going to happen; they walked through the crowd, seeing no one, pushing people; others were blank, staring at everyone that passed, almost trying to speak. There were couples, loving ones, and those that knew each other for a long time. There were parties, four or six or more young people together, hurrying and calling one another in the crowd. There were parties of fellows, running and stumbling. There were young girls laughing. There were lights, there was noise, and there were many people.

Suddenly Helen's face appeared in Jim's mind, and he was certain that she was already at the drug store, waiting for him, impatient. He sprang and began running toward Broadway. He pushed, he was pushed, but he saw nothing.

He wanted to get there, immediately. The Times Building was right there. He wanted to make a tremendous leap and jump into the drug store. "What the hell," people said. "Hey," they yelled. Jim ran.

She's waiting, he said. There she is. It's half past eight. She came early and she's tired of waiting. Hurry up, she'll go.

The crowd was so thick he couldn't run. He put one fist forward and shoving people to the right and left, he went on. Once his fist pushed something soft. It was a girl. She was angry. She was going to say something. But he jumped, and was ahead of her. He felt very strong. If a guy pushed him now, he'd show him. He'd smash his God damned face for him. Come on, he said. Quick.

It was hard work. People didn't get pushed easily. So he used both hands. He took them by the waist and set them aside. Some he even lifted. He did it oftener to women. He said: I'm going to get hit in a minute. He laughed: Come on, hit me.

There were more lights yet, lights everywhere. The street looked like a theatre stage. At one spot there was a mob about a guy selling something, His voice came loud above the noise. He said: "The best. . . . The only one. . . ." He said:

"Ladies and gentlemen. . . ." Jim wanted to stop a moment. But he became impatient again. Hurry up, he said. She's waiting.

Broadway was brilliant. Lights. Colors. From a radio store came a song. Jim leaped across. Piles of papers lay around the Times Building. From a headline SACCO-VANZETTI jumped at him. There were blue boxes of candy in Liggett's window. The door was open. He rushed in.

It *was* half past eight. His eyes jumped from one face to another, went around the lunch counter, searched behind pillars, went far into the hall and the tobacco stand. Maybe she was downstairs at the newsstand. She had said: "Upstairs, at the soda fountain." She wasn't there.

She wasn't coming. She was giving him the run around. She was standing him up. Right now she was with some bastard saying: There was a guy begged me to go out with him so long I finally made a date with him for tonight. If he's waiting for me to come, he's got a long wait. She was laughing. The guy was saying: The poor sucker.

Why the hell wasn't she here? Who the hell did she think she was making him wait for her? What the hell . . . ?

A cute thing leaned against a pillar, chewed gum, and looked at the entrance; two fat women

from Jersey talked, one looked at a wrist watch; a fairy waited; a guy with a brief case between his feet lit a cigarette with a lighter; people drank at the counter; people came out of the subway stairway in the hall; two college boys who had just picked up two cuties, tried to make them go some place the cuties didn't want to go to; an elderly man and an important looking woman talked seriously; voices came from the outside: "Chinatown, a dollar the round trip." "A dollar to Coney Island"; noise came from the outside; Times Building shook a little as a subway train went by below.

If the guy the cute thing was waiting for didn't show up, Jim might come near and say: Let's have a consolation party. The cute thing would probably call a cop, though, or she would just make believe she didn't see him. Her eyes would go by his eyes without meeting, her face wouldn't change, and he would stand there looking foolish, not knowing what to do.

Or she might say: Why, I don't know you. Well there was an answer to that. Or she mightn't. She really might take his arm. And then (Goodby, Helen) to the movies, to Paddy's, into a taxi, in the taxi, and home.

It was twenty-five to. The movie would be mobbed. Line outside, and inside waiting room

only. How long did she think he was going to wait anyway?

He and Hank Wilson were walking up Forty-Fourth Street, trying to look like college boys out on a row, when a couple of blondes said: "Hello, where you going?" "Oh, nowhere," they said, "we're out for a walk. Where *you* going?" "Want to go to the Dizzy Club?" the girls said. "No," said Hank, "anywhere but the Dizzy Club. I don't like the Dizzy Club. Want to go to a hotel?" "Maybe after the Dizzy Club," the girls said. "No," said Hank, "why you so anxious to go to the Dizzy Club? Take you anywhere else but." "No," said the girls. "Well, go to hell, then," Hank said. And they went on.

The cute looking thing wasn't waiting for a guy at all, but it was for her mother. The mother came in, and began bawling her out, and the cute thing looked pretty sick and said: "Mother, not here." They went down into the subway, arguing. A little man came after the two fat women from Jersey, took theatre tickets out of his pocket, and they left. The two college boys were still arguing with the cuties. One of them said: "Now, come on," and grabbed the girl's sleeve. She said: "Lay off." Jim said to the two college boys: You'll be spending the evening alone yet. One of them

caught Jim's eye, and saw Jim was grinning, and started coming Jim's way.

"Hello," she said.

She had come, but Jim was busy. He said: "Wait a minute," and watched the college boy coming near. There was going to be some fun. He stepped forward.

One of the cuties ran forward and caught the college boy's sleeve. She told him something. He said: "Let me go." She held him. The other kid came over. The college boy began swearing. Jim grinned.

Helen was mad as hell. "If that's the way it's going to begin," she said, "If that's the way you get me to come out, and then. . . . If that's the way you act."

The cutie evidently said she would go anywhere the college boy went if he'd only come back. The four looked hard, talked, argued, and left. Jim looked at Helen.

"Hello," he said.

He felt fine. Maybe he ought to have gone over and hit him. Yes, he ought to have. Why the hell didn't you hit him?

"I'm going home." Helen said.

"He's a college boy," said Jim, "They think they own the town. They come to New York on their vacation, and they raise hell, and there's no-

body in the whole God damned city to say No to them."

He took her under the arm. "I didn't know you were coming. I waited, and he looked at me, and he got funny. I ought to have hit him."

She wasn't as tall as he thought she was, and her arm was soft through the georgette sleeve, but her waist was cut too damned low. People passing looked into her bosom, and Jim didn't like it. A guy stood at the corner of the Times Building and stared at her. If I'm going to spend the rest of the evening watching other guys looking at you, said Jim, it's not going to be a hell of a lot of fun.

"You fight a lot, don't you?"

"No," he said, "I just came and there were those two kids trying to make a couple of bums go some place. Imagine a guy grabbing a girl by the arm when he wants her to go with him."

"You wouldn't do that, would you?"

He didn't like the way she looked at him.

"No, I wouldn't."

"You'd go about it a different way."

"Yes, I would. We got to hurry, too."

"Where we going?"

"We're going to the movies."

"Oh," she said.

And she was damned lucky to go even there.

For nothing at all he'd say Excuse me and disappear.

And this was why he went through all that hell. He made Ma feel bad, and he felt terrible himself; he thought something wonderful was going to happen, and . . . this was what he got.

They could hardly get across the street, so many cars were going by. Helen was afraid to zigzag, and when he took a better hold of her arm and tried to pull her between the cars, she hung back and said: "Wait a minute. Where's the fire?" Her face was hard; she didn't like him, and he didn't like her either. He should never have made the date, nor have come down. If he had not come he could have had a laugh tomorrow in the lunch room.

Now he would have to spend the whole evening with her. At least he would have to take her to the movies. (You don't have to at all. Tell her you've got a date.) That would look fine, wouldn't it? (Well, then, don't say anything. Just let go of her arm and run back.) It would be easy, too. There were a million people on the sidewalk. Maybe he would. (You would, like hell. You haven't got the guts.) Oh, didn't he? (No, you haven't.)

They crossed into the mob. There were so many

people everyone was walking slowly. Parties got separated and yelled to one another through the crowd. Cops stood on the edge and kept the people on the sidewalk. "We've got a fat chance to get into a movie," said Jim. She didn't say anything. She probably thought he should have gotten tickets for a show.

He became ashamed of himself for having even thought of kissing her later. He was afraid that she guessed that he would try and she was saying to herself that he wouldn't get a chance. He wanted to impress her that she didn't mean anything to him. He was taking her to the movies because he had promised to go out with her. That was absolutely all. She would be put on the subway when the show was over, and tomorrow he would go to another lunch room.

They came to a crossing, and the cop held the crowd back, and Helen who was just then a little in front was pressed right against him. It doesn't mean a God damned thing, he said. It's the crowd.

But she looked up and smiled. "Ain't it crowded?" she said. He wanted not to answer, not to see her, he hated her. He said: "Ain't it," smiled back and pressed her elbow to him. He felt her warmth and pressed closer. She smiled again.

The traffic lights changed, and one car didn't stop at the whistle. The cop made the crowd hold back, jumped on the running board of the car, and began bawling out the two women in it. "You go back where you started from, see," he yelled. "You think you're in the country, don't you? Grass around. And trees. And nothing to kill but chickens." Somebody said: "Hurrah for the law." The cop turned his head, winked, then began yelling louder.

They crossed. Jim didn't care if they never went to a movie. The crowd was fine. Girls laughed. Fellows yelled after them: "Oh, you." Girls turned, waved their hands back, and went on. No one could reach them in the crowd.

"Would you like to see a real show?" Jim asked.

"Too late now," she said. But she added quickly: "It's all right. I don't mind a movie."

Oh, don't you? But he wasn't going to fight with her. Might just as well spend the evening friendly.

"I'll take you to a real show next time."

He waited, then:

"You don't believe me, do you?"

"Oh, sure," she said, "Let me know. I'll get my ermine out."

"You're wise, ain't you?"

She was going to saying something, but he stopped her: "Let's cut it. All right?"

"Suits me," she said, and her arm stirred. He squeezed it.

That was nice. She wasn't so bad, after all. He made her mad, and she showed it. Girls don't like fights when they're around. (Oh, don't they? Hell of a lot they got to say about it.) No, they don't. And they can't be blamed either. (Is that so? And if he felt like fighting, he couldn't?)

"No," he shouted.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing, I was thinking."

"You think, too, don't you?"

"Yes, I do."

"Don't get up in the air," she said. "There's no cause to. You can stand kidding, can't you? Because if you can't I've got a home I can go to."

To hell with her.

"Go ahead."

"So long," she said.

"Goodby."

She wrenched her arm free, turned, and began walking back through the crowd. The movie disappeared, the taxi dissolved, the hall he was to take her to wasn't there at all. He felt alone in the crowd. He went after her.

"Listen," taking her arm. "Be nice. I don't

mean nothing. I'm sort of crazy tonight. I don't know what's happening. I didn't feel good when I left home. I don't feel so good now. If you want to see a movie, come on. I won't say another word."

She tried to get her arm free, but then she looked at him. He really wanted her to come. (What the hell. Let her go. You're better off alone.) Shut up, he wanted her to go with him. She took his arm, and they went back.

"You're all right at noontime," she said. "There's nothing the matter with you then. You got as good a tongue as the rest of them when you want somebody to go out with you."

Through his mind went the girls he had ever gone out with. Acquaintances on the corner, in the hall, meetings at dances, the times Pete Winston had a car, and they went cruising in the streets looking for pick-ups. The girl who almost yelled out back of the filing room at the office. Again he remembered the girl in Brooklyn, and he became red in the face.

"Well, you're not as bad as some of the fellows that want you to go out with them. There was one said he was manager on the eighth floor. Said he had a car, do you want to take a ride with me some night, just to get the air? Begged and pestered, and I said All right. We went out,

went to Preston Heath Inn. The money he spent. Sandwiches two dollars apiece. And he must have had a case of gin with him, I never saw so much. He was a nice behaving fellow, too. No nonsense driving. Said he was lonely, and wanted a girl to go out with him. Said his wife was a bum. We got back, drove near his house — we wanted to drive some more that night — he went to get his coat. And he came back with a cop; and he said: "You getter take the subway home. I got to go some place." I never was so mad in all my life. He was no manager at all. He'd stole the car, and had the nerve to take me out riding in it."

"Sure," said Jim, "they won't look at you if you ain't got a car. Taxis' not good enough for them. They don't care if you steal it, only you've got to have one."

"I ain't like that," she said. "If I like a fellow I'll take the subway with him.

"But, I got to like him a lot," she repeated, "otherwise they think you're easy. I got caught before. They think if you save their money you're in love with them, and everything goes. They don't buy you a thing. They take you to a beanery and think they're doing you a favor. The one I went with for two years had the nerve to ask me to darn his shirts for him. He'd have asked me to wash them if he'd dared. And jealous . . .

Wanted to start a fight every time I looked wrong. And what did I get? Saturday nights we'd go to the movies for thirty cents; and if we didn't go to the movies we'd drink a soda. Said he was saving money for when he got married. I was supposed to think that was meant for me. Never said: When *we* got married. I'd been willing to wait. No, he said when he got married. Up at the house none of the fellows would look at me. They said: Your gentleman friend is here. I waited for two years, then I gave him the air. Told him just where he got off. That didn't faze him, though. He went to Miss Gannon, the landlady, and he complained. Said I wasn't treating him right; said I'd strung him along, and was dropping him flat. I almost had to move out the hard looks she gave me. I told him if he ever come around I'd throw a chair at him. Told him to get out of my room and stay out. Told him I didn't hire out as companion to no lonely guys, and if I did I'd get paid for it. And when he saw it was business, he got. He hung around Childs' for a while giving me hard looks. So I told the manager he was a pest, and the manager fixed him right. That was the end of that.

"But it wasn't the end," she said. "The manager thought I owed him something because he threw the other one out. And I fixed the manager,

too. I went to his wife and what I told her. He had to ask for a transfer, and he wrote me a letter and said it was all a mistake, and he loved me — I'd show you the letter if I had it with me — and any time I wanted he'd ditch his wife and come with me, and him with two kids. . . ."

There were fewer people on the street now. The shows had started. A man came close to Jim and whispered: "You want a couple of good seats for the Palace?" "No," said Jim. "I'll give them to you cheap," the man said. "They're all I've got left." "No," said Jim, louder. The man looked around for a cop, said: "I'd show you, if . . ." but his words were lost as Jim and Helen went on. Helen was still telling him something, but he didn't listen. The movie, he said. They'd be sitting together, side by side; it'd be dark. He'd take her hand. He looked at her, squeezed her arm, brought it to him. She smiled, got closer, went on talking. Their sides touched. They swayed a little. They walked, she still talking; then he asked:

"Want to go in here?"

"Sure thing," she said.

The doorman bowed very low, said: "Twenty minutes wait for seats in the orchestra, please. Seats in the upper balcony now." Helen said: "Look at the doorman. Ain't he cute?" Jim

bought the tickets. As they went in, the ticket taker bent very low and said: "Thank you." They walked up the steps, marble and lights around them, paintings on the walls, soft carpet under their feet. They went into the elevator, the attendant bending low, they rode to the balcony. A flashlight showed, the organ played below. On the screen there were airplanes flying. The usher bowed: "This way, please." They went up the stairs. They pushed some people. Knees and legs and a button catching. They were in their seats. "Thank you," said the usher.

"He's a fairy," Jim said.

Helen giggled.

V

THE MOVIE

There were pictures of fliers getting ready to cross to Hawaii, while the drummer in the orchestra made a thing sound propellerlike, and Helen said: "I knew a fellow. He was an aviator. He promised to take me up next time he got a chance. Then he got killed. It was in the papers. He said they're always drunk when they go up." Then the audience applauded because there were two foreigners reviewing the cadets at West Point, and Helen applauded, too, and said: "I had a girl friend. She was engaged to a kid, but he got appointed to West Point, and ditched her. It broke her heart." Someone back of them said: "Sh-sh." Jim turned and stared, but there were only women back of him, so he said nothing. He missed the next news item, because he looked at Helen to see how she took the Sh-sh, but she paid no attention to it. He wanted to take her arm. It was near him on the seat, and it looked as if it wanted to be taken. But it was too early. At first she should get used to the movie, and to him being with her. Then when they got warm and close together he would take her arm.

The conductor had a light at the end of the

baton. It waved and flickered, and when a new reel was put on, it went out; the orchestra stopped for a moment, then started playing something else, and the light went on. Jim didn't watch the picture, but the audience applauded again, and it was the President back from his vacation. Helen was applauding, so Jim applauded, too, very loud, and then turned again to the women who had said Sh-sh, stared at them, and applauded some more.

The row stood up, one after another, to let some people through. It was a guy and two girls, the guy in the middle. Helen didn't stand up, only put her knees aside, but since a girl who looked nice was going to sit next to him, Jim did stand up, and let them pass. When he sat he put his knee to the girl's side, so she should touch it. She did, looked up, said: "I'm sorry." Jim said: "That's all right," and looked at her. But she was taking her hat off, and kept her eyes in front.

The guy said something, and the two girls leaned forward to hear, then straightened, and she was laughing. She lifted her skirt a little, crossed her legs, smoothed her dress. Her toe pointed toward Jim, and it wriggled a little in the dark. Jim crossed his legs, too, and with the tip of his shoe touched her shoe. But she withdrew it, uncrossed her legs, then recrossed them again

the other way. Her face was expressionless, and she looked at the screen.

To hell with her, said Jim and turned toward Helen. She too was looking at the picture below. He took her arm very gently, saying: I'm only doing it to be nice and sociable, so don't take it away. She didn't. She even leaned closer to him, and their shoulders touched.

The newsreel stopped. The curtains were drawn, the orchestra lights went out. From below rose the organ, a spot fell on it. Then the curtains separated, and a song was flashed. Jim cleared his throat.

She didn't know he could sing, but he'd show her. She'd like him a lot when she heard it. At first it was an old fashioned song that he liked. The audience was shy. No one wanted to start first, just hummed. When the chorus came, Jim hummed too, and then wanted to sing loud. But the guy with the two girls said: " Now some fool will begin to sing," and Jim got red in the face because the girl next to him said: " They always do," and he stopped even humming.

He sat for a few moments perfectly still; and there came a popular song. More people hummed, some began to sing in an undertone. Helen hummed, and he thought he heard something escape the girl on his right. He became angry,

said: So that's the way you are, — and when the chorus came he sang right out. People looked at him, and he got scared, but Helen's arm that was in his hand moved and helped him. Soon other people sang, his voice was drowned, and when they applauded they looked at him, and he felt fine. Helen said: "That was swell," and the guy on the right kept still. Jim looked triumphantly at the girl, even touched her arm as if by accident.

There were more songs, and Helen said: "Go on," but he didn't sing, just glanced to the right. Then the presentation came, the orchestra rose, was lit, the curtains parted, and there was a garden in bloom, with a full moon, and a girl sang. Then a fellow came, in short pants and a flowing tie, and sang some more, feeling his heart. They held hands, walked around the stage, and to the side (Helen applauded), when a rock that stood in the center of the stage slowly opened and a girl came out of it, seeming naked. A husky guy appeared; she fell in his arms. He threw her, on the floor, and over head, and finally he climbed the rock and flung her out back stage, so it seemed as if she was smashed to pieces. The orchestra ended with a bang, and Helen applauded.

Now the inside curtains parted, and the jazz band was seen, dressed in white silk coats and black silk hats. The conductor came quickly,

raised his hands, dropped them, and there was jazz. Jim tapped his foot in a circle, came to Helen's foot, tapped it, looked at her. She smiled and took it away. He placed his arm around her and pressed her to him. In his mind the jazz went. Two black face comedians came, sang coon songs, did a soft shoe dance. When they did a difficult step there was clapping, and at the end they had an encore. Jim felt marvelous. He brought his head very close to Helen's, let her hair brush his face, and shivered. She didn't mind. They would have a wonderful time. They would dance, and then go to Paddy's, and then. . . . But he felt so good, he didn't want to think any further.

Sixteen girls came, also in white, with black silk hats, and did a dance routine. Helen said something, but he didn't hear it, only nodded his head, the jazz going through him. His hand felt the softness of her shoulder, slipped under her arm, tried to touch her breast; but she tightened, pushed him away, sat straight herself. She didn't feel the jazz. Again to hell with her. Once and for all, if she couldn't understand he didn't mean anything, he'd go out and get someone who could. He touched her again.

"Don't do that," she said.

"Don't do what?"

"You know what I mean," she said. "Stop pawing. You're in a theatre. Not in bed."

His fingers began ripping the programme. He didn't look at the stage, nor at Helen, nor at the girl to his right. He made ribbons out of the programme, then he tore them sideways and let them fall on the floor. Not in bed meant later, or it didn't mean anything. Probably nothing. The show was lousy, Helen was a pot, and the evening was wasted. He became restless. He wanted to smoke. He thought of Ma. The dishes were washed; she was leaning out of the window, watching the street below. Daisy and Phillip were window shopping. They spent every evening outside the show windows of furniture stores, wishing they could buy things. Or went apartment hunting. He'd gone with them once. Daisy wanted a clothes drier you could lower from the ceiling, and she wanted an opening in the wall for the garbage can. She would like to have a tiled bath, but they couldn't afford it. Every Sunday they went to the suburbs to look at houses they couldn't buy. Phillip wanted to live where he could have a garden, but Daisy said it was too much work for her. Especially if there were to be kids.

A girl was singing. They couldn't hear her in the balcony, but in the orchestra they laughed.

She was putting her arms around the orchestra conductor, making love to him, while he tried to get away. The orchestra roared. When the song ended, they went wild. They whistled, and yelled, and when she kissed the conductor they wanted more. Again she started and went through the same thing. Again they applauded, yelled, stamped on the floor. The show stopped. " Ain't she wonderful? " said Helen again talking to him. He wouldn't answer her for all the money in the world. He set his mouth and kept silent. He leaned on the right seat rest and with his shoulder touched the girl near him. For a moment he thought her shoulder pressed his, and he leaned harder. But she turned to the guy on the right, said something, and he nodded Yes, several times. Her face in the twilight scorned the show below. She was much above it. You don't like our show, do you? asked Jim. You think you ought to have gone to the symphony concert, don't you? The show ain't good enough for you, is it? You're above it, ain't you?

He was so mad, he would like to have smashed the guy who was with her. With his high brow, and his superiority, and bringing the lousy high hatting women with him.

Then again the sixteen girls, kicking as one, and Jim watched the faces of those on his right,

and said: If I see them laughing up their sleeves I'll start something. But they kept quiet; and when the girls were through, the guy applauded. Jim tried to see if he meant it. Because if he didn't, if he was kidding, if he thought this was a God damned burlesque, by God. . . .

Then the grand finale, and the whole company came out, and sang, and danced, and great applause; then the curtain, and lights.

Many rose, got their things on, and, pushing, left. At the balcony entrance there was a crowd that as soon as the usher let them rushed for the seats. People read their programmes, looked around them, talked. On the floor, under Jim's feet, there was a little pile of torn papers. A few stuck to his trousers. He brushed them off. Helen wasn't saying anything. She might not have been with him. She was mad because he'd tried to touch her. He'd let her stay mad, then there wouldn't be any chance of his trying again.

Below the organ played, above it the heavy green curtain, and above the curtain a sculptured group held a motto. He couldn't read it. Away at the ceiling, in a painted sky with a million stars, the chandelier hung. Some of the bulbs were spoiled. Below, in the orchestra, crowds. And in the balcony, beneath him, around him, back of

him, more crowds. They spoke, they read, they turned.

"He's talking to you," said Helen.

"Who?"

The guy with the two girls was bending over.

"Pardon me," he said. "Did you see the news reel?"

"Yes," said Jim.

"Did they have Sacco and Vanzetti pictures in it?"

"Whose?" asked Jim.

The guy looked knowingly at the girl between them, and said:

"You must have heard. The two men in Boston. They're dying tonight. Did they have anything about them?"

"No," said Jim.

"Thank you," said the guy, and speaking to the girls, added: "Well, I told you. They wouldn't."

"Why do you suppose he asked me that?" said Jim.

"Asked what?" Helen said.

Jim sat there, looking below, and then suddenly said aloud: "Well, why the hell shouldn't they run their pictures?"

"Whose pictures?"

"You wouldn't understand. It'd mean nothing to you."

"I don't have to stay here, either," she said, "if you can't be polite."

He wanted to say: You don't have to at all. You can go. As a matter of fact you can get to hell out of here, and no one will miss you. All you're doing is using a good seat. But it seemed unimportant, and he didn't care whether she stayed or not. He wouldn't even bother telling her. She could do as she pleased. If she stayed she'd get touched. She had a sweet body and he didn't mind feeling it. And her breasts would be fine to rest a head on. But if she left she wouldn't be missed.

"Did you hear what I said?" she asked.

"Listen," he said, "You're alone. I'm not with you. I only bought your ticket. Look at the show and have a good time." And for Christ's sake, leave me alone, he said to himself.

She looked at him as if he was cuckoo. My God, her face said, what did I go out with? Her eyes looked at him, and then at the hat in her lap, her hands made a motion as if she was going to put it on; but then she shrugged, left her hat where it was, and paid no more attention to him.

The theatre got dark, the organ played, the curtain rose, and the picture started:

1

It was almost dawn.

On the coast all that could be seen was the white crests of waves breaking over the surf, and away in the East the sky lit up a little.

In the mountains the snow began to shine; shadows began to fall.

On the side of a hill cattle, huddled together, stood sleeping.

A dog barked.

In a white birch wood the rain fell.

An express train rushed through the fog. The curtained aisle of the sleeping car was empty. In the smoking compartment the porter slept curled on the seat.

A baby cried.

The doorman of a night club helped a tired party of four, in evening clothes, into an automobile.

Off Pittsburgh white-hot blast furnaces threw flares into the sky.

A policeman walked his beat, tried doors, and banged the shutters with his nightstick.

2

The door of a farmhouse opened, and the cat was let in.

A light.

A figure with a lantern went into the barn.

Woman's hands scooped ashes from the stove.

The rim of the sun showed above the edge of the ocean.

In the harbor ships stood in the fog. Ghosts of sky-scrapers loomed through. A white foam appeared as a tug ripped through water.

An Elevated train rushed.

There was more light now.

The woman poured kerosene over the kindling, and set a match off. The men combed his hair.

The cattle awoke and began grazing. Birds sang. Chickens came out of the coop.

The milk train came in, and the cans were transferred into waiting trucks.

The milk wagon stumbled over the cobblestones. Bottles danced.

Street corner. Workmen with dazzling acetylene torches, repaired the car tracks.

On park benches, wrapped in newspapers, bums slept.

A mother nursed her child.

In a bank building the watchman stamped his clock; shadows falling over the walls, the floor, the ceiling.

The man was milking. The woman went into the barnyard, and as she swept grain over the earth, fowl came flying from all directions. One chicken fought another for a kernel. The dog wagged his tail and barked joyfully.

The air mail left, flares illuminating the ground, the planes, the pilots.

Charwomen stored brooms in closets of office buildings, and left one by one, shawls over their heads, and tired feet on the pavement.

Fields of wheat rolled in the morning breeze. Leaves fluttered.

A farmer awoke his help, shouting.

It was morning.

3

Breakfast was cooked. Coffee boiled. Eggs sizzled. Griddle cakes baked. Bacon fried. Table was being set.

The man was milking, face unshaven, sleepy.

The baby cried, until a bottle was stuck between its tiny hands and, mouth twitching, it began to suck.

In the woods, from a log cabin, two men, pipes in their mouths, rifles slung on their backs, went out, followed by a hound.

Now the children were awake, and they dressed squabbling. The mother shouted.

An early ferry, its bright eye searching the fog, came into the dock, and two or three figures dispersed into the streets.

A man tossed in bed, eyes wild, trying to sleep.

In the west horses grazed.

A great manufacturing plant was seen from an airplane.

The hired men ate breakfast at a long table set outside in the yard.

The fireman fired the locomotive, steam whistled; now the engineer climbed into the cab, and they started for the terminal.

4

The busboy in an all night lunch room sleepily mopped the floor.

The first workman left, lunchbox under his arm.

A door opened, and a housewife, head covered with shawl, shuffled into a near-by store.

The water sprinkler passed. A taxi hurried by.

An alarm clock rang, and a hand reached to shut it off. Another alarm clock. Still another.

The housewife came out of the store, can of milk and loaf of bread under her arm.

The mist was rising.

The tractor was started, the great combine attached, and followed by help it rolled to the fields.

5

Trucks arrived at the docks. Boxes of oranges, tomatoes, barrels of apples, onions, turnips, lettuce, beets, were piled on the sidewalks. All

around confusion, wagons with tremendous horses, drivers swearing, people shouting.

Shades were raised in bedroom windows.

The great gate of a manufacturing plant rolled open, and whistles shrilled accompanied by an escape of steam.

A man with a scythe cut hay.

A wheat field. As far as the eye could reach, men with cradled scythes rhythmically mowed the wheat.

A large wheat field. The giant combine, dragged by a tractor, crawled toward the wheat, cutting it clean, folding and flopping the grain in its threshing machine, where fans and belts beat off the wheat heads, and filled a great bin.

The counter of a city cafeteria, lined six deep. Customers shouted orders, the counterman yelled them to the cook. He worked lightning fast. The customers did not wait to sit at a table, but ate standing, or on their way out.

A truck full of laborers, spades and picks on their shoulders, rode by.

A negro mammy tried to wash her little black boy behind the ears. He wriggled and struggled,

and great splashes of water fell everywhere. A little pickaninny on a high baby chair yelled for food.

The streets were filled with workmen. — In a small town the father went into the bedroom, kissed his sleeping little girl goodby, kissed his wife, took the lunchbox, climbed into his flivver, and drove off, his wife waving.

An apple sorter in operation. — A grain fan. — The silo was being filled. — In a lumber yard the cranes rode overhead, carrying great piles of boards held by chains.

In a radio broadcasting station a physical culture instructor, wearing athletic shirt and trousers, spoke orders into the microphone. People awoke all over the country, and in various stages of undress, all sleepy, went through the daily dozen.

A time clock was being punched by many hands.

Oranges were picked in California. — Cotton in the South. — A herd of sheep on the side of a mountain, shepherd dog running in great circles prevented the lambs from straying. — A bee hive.

The door of a city apartment opened, and a hand reached for the milk and the paper. — The buzzer on the dumbwaiter sounded; a woman's hand opened the door, and ice was delivered.

6

In the mountains rain fell. — A bird perched on a branch shivered. An auto camp. Bedding was folded. Breakfast dishes washed. Children called. Everything was tied on the flivver, the family climbed in. A lot of exhaust, and they were off.

In a small town the postman in a buggy delivered mail. An old maid, high whaleboned collar and prim dress, expectantly rushed out. The postman shook his head and drove on.

More breakfasts. Table was set with baked beans, brown bread and pie. Another table with herring and black rye bread. Still another with boiled potatoes and sour milk. A very elegant breakfast in a hotel: grapefruit in bowl of ice, toast warmed under a napkin, coffee in a silver pot; the liveried hand of a waiter poured the cream.

Looking through the peephole of an open hearth furnace in a steel mill. The white-molten

metal shimmered and boiled; a half naked man shovelled on.

They were haying. — A rotary saw, attached to a gasolene engine, sawed the logs, while the family looked on. — They were digging ditches. — A lone horse grazed.

Little girl, face clean washed, left the farmhouse for school. She began to climb a high hill. — At the state road children waited for the school bus. — In the city they came out of tenements, pieces of bread and butter in their hands.

Commuter ran for his train.

On the East Side of New York the pushcart market was in full swing. The peddlers prevented people from going, they were so anxious for sales. Fish were stuck under the noses of passers-by. Women fitted underclothes over their ample persons. A policeman ambled by, took a banana from a pushcart, ate it.

7

An uptown subway entrance. People went down. A newsboy stood at the entrance, newspapers between his feet. Deftly he snatched papers out of the pile, folded them, and slipped them under people's arms.

They were tapping an open hearth furnace in a steel mill. The white heat showed through the holes of the fire bricks. A workman stood at the opening, smoking a cigarette, and poked at the stopper. He was having trouble. A shout below. Everyone ran. The man poked through, jumped to the side, and a tremendous flow of white metal poured into the cauldron, millions of sparks showering everything. The workman puffed his cigarette. A tremendous crane rolled over, picked the brilliant cauldron, weighing hundreds of tons, and rolled toward the molds; sparks flying, licks of metal falling on the ground, smoke jumping.

Subway turnstiles. Hands dropped nickels. Bodies shoved through. Train came in, and they mobbed.

New York seen from an airplane, flying right over the tops of the skyscrapers. The smoking pyramid of the Bankers Trust, the flat roof of the Equitable Building, up to the spire of the Singer Tower, and the Gothic top of the Woolworth. Humans below looked like ants; automobiles like beetles.

Ferry. Men's compartment. Long line of men wearing straw hats, puffing cigarettes and reading papers. Through the window could be seen

the sky line of New York. — Women's compartment. Women's legs. Beautiful legs crossed high, then fat ones, and thin ones, and a little girl's spindly ones.

In a room with shutters drawn so that only little sprays of light illuminated the interior, the shadow of a naked woman was seen drawing on a stocking.

A moving subway train from the outside. Terribly crowded. People trying to read newspapers. A girl trying to make up. A man looking at the ceiling.

The rock crusher in a cement plant. A gasolene locomotive drew the cars in. A great car dumper picked the cars full of ore, and tilted them over. The rock fell below into a massive cylinder with large nobs, that turned and ground the rock into little nuggets. The ground trembled.

They were picking apples. A comely girl on a ladder, basket attached to her waist, bit into a luscious apple, and threw it away.

They were building a large dam. A charge was planted. Everyone ran. The lever was thrown. Mountain of rock and mud jumped into the sky and splattered everything.

8

From the steps of the Customs House in New York, looking North. The subway station at Bowling Green spat out black mobs of office goers, who radiated in all directions, hundreds and hundreds of them, each going into an office building. Skyscrapers on all sides. Looking up and up, and finally a small patch of sky was seen between the roofs.

Cat and dog fight in a small town. Loafers around the general store chewed tobacco, whittled, slept in the sun. A small dog began yapping, jumped and barked. The cat ran away along the fence.

The elevator dial in an office building. It stopped at the numbers of the various floors, then went on.

Road along the desert. Sand and cactus. The wreck of a car along the side of the road.

9

Street coats were taken off, office coats put on. Safe was opened, covers of typewriters and adding machines removed. The pen was taken

off the stand, dipped in ink, and began writing in the ledger.

An old gardener lovingly cultivated the formal garden of a large estate. Shrubs. Flowers. Tennis court. A young girl was returning from a canter.

In Minnesota great cranes lifted iron ore into conveyors, that travelled down to the Lake steamers, and were dumped into holds. — Textile mill in operation, with thousands of spindles. — In the forge room of a steel mill the hydraulic press was shaping a red hot steel ingot. — In a power house the pistons of a great steam engine raced. — A grain elevator was being filled. — The electric panel board of a power plant. A workman polished the dials. — In a roundhouse a locomotive was being reconditioned.

Typewriters raced, adding machines. — Clerk called figures to another, who checked them in a ledger. — Telegraph boy sent with urgent message pitched pennies in a hallway with a crowd of runners. — Salesman entered the reception room of an office, gave his card to the information clerk. She sent it in. — Stock room of a clothing manufacturer. — Stock room of a radio supply house. — Man, his feet on a desk, smoking a cigar, dictated to a stenographer. The office boy entered, presented the card.

A woman was washing dishes. The telephone rang. She dried her hands and went to the receiver.

Grocery store. Woman handling vegetables, fruit. Grocer's clerk pointed to sign: DO NOT HANDLE. — Cash registers rang. — Packages were wrapped. — Money was counted out. — Meat market. Women pointing. — Little girl handed the butcher a crumpled bill and a piece of paper. He smiled at her and began making up the order.

Gasolene station — Boy asked for a lift. The car stopped, and the boy ran after it. — On the side of a road the ruin of a house that burnt down, with only the chimney still standing. — Two men were shooting rapids in a canoe. — Tall red pines towered at the edge of the desert. — Roadside stand, with fruit and vegetables. — Long freight train passed, hoboes peering out of the empty cars. — They were relining the road. — Detour sign. — Hudson River liner passed the Palisades. — Flash of Niagara Falls. — In Yellowstone National Park a tame bear came out to be fed by a party of automobilists. — Glimpse of the Grand Canyon. — Petrified Forest of Arizona. — Levees on the Mississippi.

10

In a Wall Street office the ticker began to splutter and suddenly started. A boy called the quotations to the board boy who posted them on a large blackboard. Comfortable chairs. Spittoons. Customers lolled about, talked, smoked, leaned over the ticker.

Trader in stocks at his desk. There were some twenty telephone instruments about him. Working lightning fast, he talked to two or three at a time, hands leaping, taking the receiver, shutting it.

Messengers ran on errands. Comparison clerk handed slips through window.— Many stock certificates. — Bank teller quickly counted hundred dollar bills.

Interior of the Stock Exchange. Mobs ran in all directions. Noise. Confusion. Hands reached out.

The church choir in a small town held a rehearsal.

The college team on football practice, tackled dummies.

Entrance of a great hotel. Guests arrived and left. Revolving door was pushed by a flunkey.

A solitary man sat by the bank of a stream, tackle in his hand.

Large barber shop. Mirrors, polished nickel, marble. Men were stretched in chairs, barbers over them, having faces massaged, nails manicured, shoes polished.

Tobacco auction in Virginia. Samples lay around. Niggers. Buyers from all over the country. Auctioneer on a stand.

Crowded shopping street. Automobiles, taxis, people went in all directions. Traffic cops directed at the crossing. Doormen opened car doors. Show windows of Lord and Taylor's, Tiffany's, Saks'.

Woolworth Building, slowly from the very bottom to the top. The Shelton Hotel. Wrigley Building in Chicago. Telephone Building in New York. Then, very quickly, many more buildings: Ritz Tower, The Flatiron Building. Wacker Drive in Chicago. Park Avenue from the roof of the Biltmore. An air view, very low, of Atlanta, of Cleveland, of San Francisco. All interspersed with old fashioned views of: a fine Colonial house in the Shenandoah Valley, a brownstone front in Philadelphia, and adobe dwelling in Utah, a

prosperous Illinois farmhouse, fire escapes on the outside of tenements.

A ride in the front car of a Sixth Avenue L train in New York. Then the Loop in Chicago, and the large railroad bridge in Cleveland. The ride stopped at a building in construction, the riveters were seen, the construction gang, perilous steps, the view below.

A steam whistle. Blast of steam.

11

Lunch hour.

The tractor stopped. The hired hands went under trees and waited for lunch the farm women brought out.

Wall Street office buildings poured a stream of employees.

The temporary elevator on a building under construction, descended full of workmen.

Italian ditch diggers sat by the side of the road and bit into enormous lumps of bread and bologna.

The crowded Automat during the lunch hour. — A quick view of a private luncheon club.

Children stormed a candy store during the lunch hour recess. Fingers pointed at lollypops, gum drops, all day suckers. Greasy palms dropped pennies on the counter.

A stenographer ate lunch on a tomb in Trinity churchyard.

Hot dog, sauerkraut and lemonade wagon. Office boys swarmed about.

Exterior of a Childs' restaurant, with pretty girl flapping cakes, a crowd pressing noses against the plate glass.

Several high school girls sat on high stools in a drug store, looked adoringly at a good looking but very aloof soda clerk, and ordered concoctions of ice creams, whipped cream, nuts and jellies.

12

Old New England lady with beautiful expression — stock broker, high stiff collar and pince nez — giggling flapper — negro workingman — freckled country boy — Italian laborer, bandana about his neck — pickaninny — elderly bearded Jew — good looking young married woman — lumberjack from the North — Greek bootblack — wrinkled old Indian — vicious type — farmer — comfortable housewife — Polish

steel worker — blond Scandinavian — fat good-natured type — infant weeping — infant laughing — very old man of the old fashioned farmer type, wearing Union hat — gum chewing stenographer — college football player — country wench — Russian iron miner — Broadway fop — Latin type from the Southwest — English type — burlesque chorus girl — sailor — powerful looking Iowa farmer — long necked office employee — locomotive engineer.

13

The Rockies illuminated by sunshine — apple country in Wenachee, Washington — field of wheat not yet harvested — the sky with wild geese flying south — oil field — swamp — Northern forest — Columbia River — desert sands — deserted marble quarry — wild rock off the Atlantic coast, with bell buoy floating, the bell intoning — storm clouds gathering — airplane views of cities taken at high altitudes — the swelling ocean.

14

In a small town a woman made cake for a church social. Her little boy looked on, mouth watering. — Three women in a mid-Victorian room, mementoes and photographs on the walls,

knitted and chatted. — The village constable tried to stop a speeding car. — Two boys raced frogs. — Children went nutting.

A boy asked a girl for a date.

The church social. In the rectory yard long tables decorated with bunting. Old ladies wearing bonnets arranged the gifts. The elderly minister shook hands. Village urchins peered through the fence. Little girls, starched and prim, looked very good, but uncomfortable.

Farmer in the hardware store talked crops. — Again a flash of the harvest in action — They were building a haystack. — Boys on the side of a hill roasted corn.

15

The background was Henry Ford's endless belt assembling system. From the time the parts were first put together, until the shining car rolled away under its own power, the belt slowly moved on. Interspersed with this:

A drop hammer in a forge mill — a locomotive lifting crane — meat canning machine — cigarette making factory in Richmond, Virginia — electric cutter in a large tailoring shop — factory chimney of the Anaconda Copper Company,

Anaconda, Montana, the tallest and largest in the world — the interior and exterior of the power plant in Iron Mountain, Michigan — an expansion bend for a steam main — interior of the shops of the General Electric Company, Schenectady, N. Y. — gasolene reduction plant — agitators of the Texas Company, Port Arthur, Texas — gravity conveying system in the plant of the American Can Company, Maywood, Illinois — a river unloading tower — a locomotive shed — furniture lathes in Grand Rapids, Michigan — interior of the plant of the Cadillac Motor Company, Detroit, Michigan — great electrical power transmission towers — the water pipe line of Seattle, Washington — the oil pipe line in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

16

Country fair: exhibits; corn, apples, dairy; livestock show; dog show; horse show. The midway; games, giant coaster, the whip, witching waves. — A one ring circus: the barker, the freaks. — Beauty contest.

17

A five mast schooner sailed away.

A cop bawled out speeders he had stopped on a country road.

Interior of the Grand Central Terminal in New York, with thousands hurrying, trains entering and leaving.

A shipload of bananas was being unloaded. — Crated automobiles were loaded into a ship.

Down the Mississippi rolled an old fashioned back-wheeler excursion boat. Scenes on deck with couples spooning. An orchestra played dance music.

18

A man painted a flag pole hundreds of feet above the ground.

Golf course. Fat man played golf; colored caddy looked on and grinned.

City playgrounds amid tenements: swings, trapezes; a ball game was on. Hundreds of youngsters. — Little girl played with her dolls.

Indian reservation. Half naked children. Dirt.

Postal clerk deftly sorted mail in a moving mail wagon.

Telephone Central girls at work.

19

Subway train left the tunnel in Brooklyn and emerged on Brooklyn Bridge speeding toward Manhattan. Through the girders could be seen the high downtown buildings.

Horse, sweating, was led off to the barn.

Quick succession of whistles blew steam.

Steam engine stopped.

Typewriter covers were put on. — Pen was replaced on the stand. — Ledger shut, placed in the office safe, door shut and combination turned.

Feminine nose was powdered.

Cigarette was lit.

Hands removed hats from hangers.

Workmen in crowds left the factory doors.

Chauffeur opened the door for his employer to enter.

Glimpse of the mobbed subway.

20

Dinner was being cooked.

Table was set.

Suburban railroad station. Wives and children in parked cars waited for the commuters to come home. Train came in. Kisses. Packages brought home. Toy for a child.

In the country a young fellow washed his hands at the pump. A pretty young girl pumped the handle, laughed at him.

Women leaned out of tenement windows. A man, in shirt sleeves, pipe in his mouth, read a paper. A mother cooked dinner, children gathered about her.

In the suburbs a man cultivated his garden, children helping him. The wife appeared in the doorway and called them to dinner. He picked the youngsters in his arms and carried them in.

21

Maid serving — the mother herself bringing dishes from the kitchen — in a household where the mother was dead the father opened a can of food, fed the youngsters — in the country club

they were dancing at dinner — again at a table set outside the hired hands ate, the women bringing steaming pots from the kitchen — a butler served an elegant dinner — a travelling man, lonely, ate at a hotel table d'hôte — a boarding house meal — two girls in hall bedroom heated the food on an electric iron — an old New England farmer said grace before his meal.

22

They were resting after dinner, all over America: sitting on the stoop, walking around the house, lighting cigars, pipes, faces relaxed. The radio was put on. A minister turned the dial, heard the sound of a dance orchestra, and he quickly turned it off. He dialed into a lecture and contentedly relaxed. In another house the youngsters danced. A little colored boy in the South did the Charleston. In a Pullman smoker salesmen told jokes, slapped one another's backs, roared with laughter.

Young girl dressed to go out. She peered out of the door, if anyone was looking, opened her mother's perfume bottle, and poured it over herself.

In a railroad roundhouse the crew played poker.

Broadway. Crowds slowly walked in two lanes up and down the street. — The exterior of a radio store. The horn blared away. Listeners stood around.

Boy stopped his Ford, sounded the horn. The father in shirt sleeves and nose glasses peered through the window. The younger sister shouted up the stairs: He's here. The girl put a final dab of powder on her nose, rushed downstairs, almost tripping.

Long line in front of a movie house.

Little girl in her nightgown said: Now I lay me down to sleep, — climbed into bed, got a good-night kiss from her mother, was tucked in, and the door slightly left open.

Automobiles arrived in front of the theatre, the doorman in attendance.

Loafers stood at the corner drug store and made remarks about girls passing.

The berths in the sleeping car were being made up.

A crowd of darkies were shooting dice.

In a Polish settlement the man sat on the doorstep, and played on an accordion, his son on a harmonica.

The overture was finished, the conductor waved his baton, and the curtain rose.

23

The sun was setting.

Hens were roosting.

Four old maids played bridge.

Two girls walking on a road continually looked at passing automobiles until they got picked up. One girl sat in with the driver, the other man got in the rear with the second girl.

Man knocked on the door of a speakeasy. Peephole was opened. He was given the once-over. The door slowly opened.

A line of chorus girls went through an intricate dance routine, the half naked principal in front.

An old fashioned barn dance. Country fiddler. The old people sat around, the younger danced square dances.

In the power house the lever was thrown. City streets became lighted. Lights on a long driveway.

Audience applauded.

Crowds walked the boardwalk at Atlantic City.

24

It was getting dark now.

The car was parked on a lonely road. The young fellow put his arm around the girl. She pushed it off.

Large dance hall in the city.

Outside of apartment house with lights being lit and shades lowered.

On the farm they went to bed.

Boston Post Road with miles of automobile lights. Arroyo Saco Bridge between Pasadena and Glendale, Cal., with bridge lights and head lights.

In a concert hall they dreamily listened to a violin recital.

Cop stopped a petting party.

Over the chimneyed roofs of New York, with smoke curling, toward Jersey where the sun had set.

People smoking in the theatre lobby, between the acts.

The lights of Broadway, of State Street, Chicago; great electric signs.

25

Sitting beside a haystack, boy and girl were earnestly talking.

Fifth Avenue. Lighted show windows. Promenaders.

American Radiator Building on Fortieth Street, New York, with golden top lighted.

Venice, California, from far away at night.

Lighted ferry boat crossed the bay.

Tom show. Uncle Tom got whipped.

Several lads drove by, whooping it up.

Niggers with lanterns and dogs went into the woods on an opossum hunt.

In an open air prize ring the referee was counting over the prostrate form of a pugilist, while the crowd went wild.

26

Lights went out in the country.

Hotel roof. Orchestra. Couples dancing.

In an automobile parked outside of a country club, a man and a woman in evening clothes passionately kissed.

Cats on a back fence, illuminated by moonlight.

Leviathan left. Streamers and confetti thrown between ship and dock. Parties in evening clothes. Waving. A woman wept.

27

Boy and girl were walking home hand in hand in the moonlight.

Cowboys gathered around a big fire told stories. The forms of their horses loomed in the night.

Sleeping farmhouse. Dog asleep.

Corner in a small town illuminated by single light in front of the drug store. Quiet and deserted.

The curtained aisle of a Pullman sleeper.

Standing at the door, arms round each other, boy and girl kissed.

Night club. Dancing. Men inebriated. Women laughing.

Lights in the city began to go out.

Cat was put out.

The boy was seen walking home along a country lane.

The watchman at the bank made his rounds, shadows falling over the walls, the floor, the ceiling.

Again were seen the mountains in the snow.

Waves beat against the coast. In the moonlight white crests were seen, that slowly faded out.

VI

THE SPEAKEASY

"I want straight Scotch, with a beer chaser," said Jim. "And what do you want?" he asked Helen. Then without waiting for her answer: "Give us two Scotch with beer chasers."

"It's nice here," said Helen.

"It is nice. Wait till the crowd gets in."

His hat was on his head, his feet were crossed, he was smoking a cigarette. Helen was smoking, too. She wanted to put her gloves and bag on the table, but Jim stopped her, yelled: "Andy, get a rag." Andy said: "Just a minute," brought the drinks, wiped the table, set the glasses. Jim took out a five dollar bill, got back three singles and a dollar in change, gave two quarters to Andy, gave him a nickel, and said: "Put that in the piano."

A smell of beer came from the bar, and voices. "Give us some lunch," said Jim. Andy went to the bar, and they were alone. Jim looked at Helen, took her hand, pressed it, said: "Let's have a drink."

The piano began playing. "They dance here," said Jim, "when there's a crowd. They raise hell. It's the best place I know. Anything is liable to happen.

"But don't be afraid," he said. "Lots of women

come here. Nothing will happen. It's just a good place."

"I'm not afraid," she said. "I can take care of myself. Don't worry about me."

"Listen," he said, "let's not fight. Let's have a good time. Just make believe you like me. See? We'll drink, and we'll dance, and when you want to go home, just tell me, and we'll go."

"O. K." she said. "Let's drink it up."

They did, looking at each other. Jim wouldn't take his chaser. He yelled: "Andy."

Andy came bringing the lunch. "Fill them up again," said Jim. "Big crowd last night, Andy?"

"Yes," Andy said, "Sunday nights are always big. Didn't get home till eight this morning. Couldn't sleep all day. It was too hot. Can't get any sleep."

"That's too bad," said Jim. "Have a drink Andy."

"Don't drink," said Andy, "I'll take a cigar."

"All right. And, Andy, put another nickel in the piano. — Let's dance," Jim said to Helen.

They rose. They pushed the chairs under the table. They stood very close together, Jim feeling her breasts and her belly, his knee between her knees. They danced.

"Let's *dance,*" Helen said, moving away from him. "Let me breathe."

"All right. Anything you say. Anything to please you." But he was excited. "Let's not dance. Let's sit down, and drink. Wait till the crowd gets in. You ought to see show girls that come down. Hell's the limit — Andy! That bastard must be lame. Here are the drinks. Let's drink."

The outside bell rang. Andy put down the drinks, his face got hard. He went to the front door.

"Where's the ladies' room?" asked Helen. Jim told her, and when she left he drank up his drink, drank up hers.

Paddy came in, and he didn't say Hello to Jim but stopped at the door and allowed an old son of a bitch with two women to enter. The old son of a bitch was little and yellow; he had a flower in his buttonhole, and he wore nose glasses. The women were fat, blond and soft, and wore big hats. The old son of a bitch must have been damned important the way Paddy was hanging around and not letting Andy wait on him.

"Andy," called Jim not very loud. Andy came over. "Do you know who that is?" Andy said. "That's a senator. State Senator Parker. He's a big guy up in Albany."

"Yeh?" said Jim. "Bring us a couple of drinks. Make it the same."

Helen came back, and after her Padlock, his tail in the air. One of the women with State Senator Parker, said: "Oh, look at the cute cat. Here kitty-kitty-kitty. Come here, kitten," Padlock paid no attention to her, but came instead to Jim, purring. Jim picked him up, put him on his lap, began stroking his throat. Padlock stretched out, his tail became rigid, and he purred aloud. The woman looked in Jim's direction, called again: "Here kitty-kitty-kitty."

"Give him to me?" said Helen. "The nice kitten. The pretty yellow kitten."

"Don't let him go," said Jim.

"I won't," said Helen looking at the woman.

The other blond woman laughed. "The cat don't like you," she said to her friend, so Jim and Helen could hear.

Helen had Padlock on her lap, was stroking his back, so he wriggled and stretched.

"Like a steam engine," she said.

"He doesn't like everybody," Jim said. "He's independent. You can't catch him if he doesn't want to be caught."

Paddy was sitting with State Senator Parker talking to him. Paddy didn't take a drink. The two women were smoking and looking at their drinks. The bell rang again. Padlock jumped off Helen's lap and walked toward the door. The blond woman got up to catch him.

"The dirty brute," she said. "He scratched me. Get the hell out. Look, Senator, he scratched me."

The senator went on talking to Paddy. Padlock walked out. A man and a woman came in. They didn't know the place very well. They looked around, and waited for Andy to get them a seat. They were from out of town and scared. The woman was about forty. She smiled at Helen. Helen smiled back. The two sat down.

Someone was singing in the barroom, someone else was yelling. The voice of the bartender came: "Don't use that language here. There are ladies in the next room." A drunk said: "I love ladies. I wouldn't say a word against them. Where are the ladies? Lead me to the ladies."

Paddy got up, said: "See you in a minute, Senator. Pardon me, ladies," and went into the bar.

"This is a damned good place," said Jim. "It's a wonderful place. The best liquor anywhere around. I know Paddy. He's got good booze. Don't you like your drink?"

"I do like it," said Helen, "I like the place too. It's nice here."

"Andy," yelled Jim, and the two women looked at him, the senator looked at him, and the two from the country also turned around. "Same

again, Andy," said Jim, without looking at anybody.

There were voices in the hall, women laughing, and a crowd came in. "Where do I know that guy from?" said Jim. "His face is familiar." He looked into the guy's face, but that one didn't see him. He was talking to a girl, kidding her, she giggling as if he was tickling her.

"He's sweet looking all right," Helen said.

"I know him from somewhere. Can't tell from where. Know him well, too."

"Jesus Christ," the guy said, "if it ain't Jim Cowan. What have you been doing with yourself, Jim. Come on, meet the crowd. Lady friend with you?"

"Yes," said Jim. What the hell was the guy's name? "Helen, I want you to meet a friend of mine. . . ." Just then one of the girls called: "Eddie, Eddie, come over here." And if that wasn't Eddie Mitchell. Jim grabbed Eddie's hand. "Eddie Mitchell. My God."

"Yeh," laughed Eddie, "Eddie Mitchell all right. Didn't think you'd forget me so soon."

"Helen, this is Eddie Mitchell. He's a wonderful guy. Wait till I tell you about him."

"Never mind," said Eddie Mitchell. "He'll tell you later. Come on, sit with us."

They moved to the crowd. Three tables were

put together, chairs set around, Paddy was there to say Hello, Andy ran around. The senator and the two women with him stared, the two from the country looked, too, as if they wanted to join it. The piano started playing. A fellow and a girl began to dance, the fellow with both his arms around the girl, and she holding a bag in one hand and a cigarette in the other.

"Folks," yelled Eddie Mitchell. "This is Jim Cowan and his lady friend. Jim Cowan and I tried to ruin a cop one night. Didn't we, Jim? We tried to deprive New York of its police department. Only I passed out just then, and what did I do after that, Jim?"

Helen was looking at Eddie, her mouth open, and when they sat down, she managed to sit near him, and they began talking. Jim got the unfinished drinks, and was going to bring them over, but he looked at Helen (Come back, you), saw she was busy, so he drank up his drink and then hers, lit a cigarette, and when drinks were passed around again, he emptied his and was mad.

Eddie Mitchell was a good guy, good to drink with, good to go out with on a row, but girls liked him too damned much, and there was no holding them when he appeared. It was all right in the Paradise, everybody talked to everybody else

there, and when one girl was good to the boys, word was passed around, and everyone had his chance. But this was Paddy's, not the Paradise, and in Paddy's when he had a girl with him, she was his girl, and no God damned Eddie Mitchell was going to horn in.

"Helen," he called, but she didn't hear him. She was busy talking.

One of the women with the senator caught his eye, and it seemed as if she nodded or something. He wanted to go over and ask her to dance with him, was afraid she'd say No, she was with a senator. He looked in her direction again. Her head was away, but she slowly turned it, and again their eyes met. He got up, walked around the big table, the woman's head was turned away (she didn't mean anything). His heart beating he almost went over, then, suddenly, he turned to a girl in Eddie's party and said: "You want to dance?"

"Sure," she said, emptied her drink, rose, and without looking at him, took his hand, put the other one around his neck, and they danced.

The little bitch wore a corset, and it was no use. She got very close to him, but all he felt was the corset. She looked at him, and she smiled, and she said: "Gee, you can dance," and it didn't mean a damned thing.

Again he looked in the senator's direction, but the woman was talking to him. Helen and Eddie were still busy. The music would never end. "Ain't Eddie sweet," the bitch said. "Yeh," he answered. Sweet. Too God damned sweet.

The music stopped, and after saying Thanks, he went to the bar. It must have been five deep, not a chance to get an order in. At the little side tables, there were arguments. Jim listened to one.

"It hasn't got a story. It hasn't got a plot. You can come in one minute and go out the next, and you wouldn't miss anything."

"Yeh, a lot of machinery, a lot of scenery, and a lot of kids, and that's all."

One guy was very drunk, shaking his head, speaking very slowly, loudly:

"You got to have a story, don't you? You can't look at a picture, where there ain't some guy trying to get a girl to go to bed with him, and then a big fairy comes in, and saves her from fate worse than death. You can't look when somebody's trying to be honest and show you the country you're living in, how it looks, and what's in it. . . ."

"I saw it," broke in, Jim. "Just saw it tonight. I couldn't make head or tail out of it. What's it all about?"

"Oh, God," said the guy who was drunk. Then he leaned his head on his arms over the table, and went to sleep.

"That picture was no good," said Jim to a fellow holding a glass of beer in his hand.

"I didn't see it," said the fellow, and moved away. There was no one at the table but the drunken guy asleep. Jim went to the lunch counter, got a cracker, put a slice of bologna on it, a slice of cheese, some burning English mustard, then another cracker and began eating. A sailor came to him. "Where's the can?" he asked. Jim told him. "Thanks," said the sailor and went to the can. A man with an English accent who must have been an actor was telling things to a little fat man, pointing into the air with his finger. Three taxi drivers were drinking beer; one wiped his mouth with his sleeve, brushed lunch crumbs from his front, said "Going to my stand, so long." The little Jap porter swept the floor, his broom going around people's legs, very carefully. Andy was cutting up cheese. "Eight beers over here," somebody said.

Jim began pushing his way to the bar. "Pardon me," he said. "Excuse me." "I beg your pardon." "Do you mind?" He got to the bar. The bartender knew him, raised one eyebrow. "Give me a Scotch with a beer chaser," said Jim.

He got his Scotch, drank it, put down a dollar, got fifty cents change, wouldn't drink his beer chaser and pushed his way out.

"Hello, Jim," Paddy said.

"Hello, Paddy. Nice crowd you have. Place growing, isn't it? You're getting a nice little business, aren't you?"

Paddy didn't hear him, going back of the bar. Paddy was getting too stuck on himself. Only six months before, all he had was a little speakeasy, with a locked door, and scared stiff to let anyone he didn't know come in. Now the doors were wide open, anybody could get a drink. Money was rolling in. And all because Jim and a couple of others liked the place and liked Paddy and brought people. Now Paddy had a partner who used to be a police captain, who wouldn't talk to any customers, but kept the books and went around fixing people, and Paddy had a Lincoln, and Paddy's wife had an imported roadster, never came into the place any more, but hung around Fifth Avenue hotels.

He'd have to change speakeasies. Paddy's wasn't good any more. Too damned big a crowd. Too many strangers and Paddy wasn't friendly, offered nobody drinks, and spoke to no one except sons of bitches like State Senator Parker.

Who cared? What was the difference? Who the hell was Paddy? A year ago he hung around the Paradise, with a couple of hundred in his pocket, took drinks people offered him, never bought any himself, got friendly, opened up a speakeasy, passed cards around, had pretty hard going the first few months; so he started a free lunch counter, and people said: "Just like an old fashioned saloon," and Jim and a couple of others told everybody: "You want to go to Paddy's. He's got the best liquor in New York. He's a personal friend of mine. You tell him I sent you, and he'll fix you up wonderfully." Everybody came, and now look at him. Somebody'd think he'd been a politician all his life, done nothing but collect graft, and slept free with all the whores on Broadway.

Now to open a speakeasy. All Jim needed was some cash, and a nice, winning personality. He got a little place back of some business, where people went in and out, so the police didn't get suspicious; and he got to know a syndicate that supplied him with beer and gin, and took care of any prohibition agents that got too curious, and he went to people he knew, and he said: "I'm opening up a little place. Come around, I'll treat you right." And money came in, and women — how women hung around Paddy, and how they

hung around Oliver in the Paradise — women always liked a man who had a place of his own, and could help them out. If Paddy wanted to, he only had to lift a finger and the best of them would come right to him, would strip for him, would do anything he wanted them to do.

Back he went to the bar, and shoved himself through, and again he had a whiskey, and then he said: "I'm going back into the ladies' room and smash Helen on the jaw, and if Eddie Mitchell gets funny he'll too get something he doesn't expect. Tightening his fist, he pushed his way out. Andy came his way, and he tried to push Andy, but Andy stepped aside. Mad, he walked out of the barroom, passed the hall where hangers-on sat, walked straight through the door into the ladies' room.

Now there were more people there; instead of three tables together, all the tables were pushed to the side, and everybody sat with everybody else, drank with everybody else, talked loud, ordered drinks, danced. Jim didn't see Eddie and Helen, but the woman who had been with the senator was sitting a little apart, her hand around her drink. Her eyes looked up at him. He walked to her, commanding, and she rose, they joined arms, he pressed her close to him, and they danced.

Every part of her body was wedged into him, until he could hardly move. There was something else too that prevented him from moving. His head was clear, he knew everything that he was doing, but it somehow was hard to enjoy her body, to feel it as he wanted to feel it. He didn't care so much about it, now that it was soft against him. He shook his head and began moving very slowly, trying to close his eyes that were wide open, and forget himself in her, when he didn't feel like it.

Eddie and Helen were dancing; she was talking, and Eddie smiled at her and nodded his head. They seemed much too friendly for having known each other a short time. Jim didn't care about the blond woman dancing with him, but seeing the other two enjoy themselves, he wanted to make them think he too was having a good time. He danced slower, rubbed his body against hers. She breathed hard. She came yet closer to him. It seemed as if they could never be apart. He forgot Helen, and Eddie and even the woman with him, and closed his eyes into softness.

The piano stopped. Someone said: "Let's all have a drink." The woman separated herself from him, smiled. "What's your name?" he asked.

"Oh," she said, "I'm with that gentleman there."

"I know," Jim said. "Let's have a drink. What's your name?"

"Anna."

He led her to a corner of the room, made her sit near the wall, himself sat before her, so he screened her from the others, took her hand. Her eyes smiled at him, her lips were a little open, and the tongue could just be seen. She said: "I've never danced like that before." She looked at him, until he wished they were alone, and he could do something.

She said: "Where's your girl friend that was with you?"

"Oh, her. She don't like me. I just took her out because I had nothing else to do. She doesn't mean a thing to me. She's with that friend of mine, Eddie Mitchell."

He let go of her hand and stroked her thigh. He tried to reach the edge of her skirt and then go up under it, was afraid she would say No, get angry, go back to the senator. He caressed her flesh over the dress, pressing it, slowly pinching it.

"Would you like to take a ride," he said. "In a taxi. It's wonderful night. We could go through the park, with the top open, and. . . ."

"I can't," Anna said. "I'm with the senator and my sister. She's his friend. He'd get sore."

There was Andy. "For Christ's sake, Andy, bring us something to drink. Our tongues are hanging out."

"Sure," Andy said.

"Can I take you home?" Jim asked. "Where do you live?"

"I sleep with my sister. I don't live in New York. I guess not tonight. Another night."

She wasn't fat at all. Just small bones with much flesh around them, that fitted into his when they danced. She was different than when he first saw her. She wasn't hard like she seemed. Her eyes laughed, and shone. She was all bed.

He pictured her in a hotel room, undressing. He looked at her mouth and wanted to kiss her. He wanted to squeeze her soft looking lips. He dug harder into her flesh.

Her face came nearer to his. Now he couldn't see her eyes for the large hat she wore. Very lightly they kissed, and she bit his lip, bit it hard. At first it was a shock, and he felt like hitting back, then he sank again.

Andy brought the drinks. They emptied the glasses looking at each other. "Can't you get away, Anna?" asked Jim.

"I can't," she said. "I'd like to, but I can't. I've got to go back with my sister. I'll meet you some other time."

"When?" he said.

"Call me up. I'll give you the telephone number. There's my sister now."

She rose, and without looking at him, crossed the room to the opposite corner where her sister and the senator were sitting holding hands. When she sat down her sister began to whisper to her, still holding the senator's hand over the table.

Jim didn't feel so good. His head acted funny, he didn't want to leave his chair, yet he was uncomfortable. His mouth felt bad. He still felt his lip burning.

"Here's our friend James Cowan," said Eddie Mitchell stopping to dance, his arm around Helen. "Mr. Cowan is very sad. His girl friend left him. He is all alone, and he's sad."

Eddie was drunk, and Helen's eyes could not look in any one direction. There was black, too, under them, and her lips looked weak. She held a glass in one hand, crooked.

"Go on, dance," said Jim. "Beat it out of here."

"Mr. Cowan doesn't like us, kid," said Eddie Mitchell. "He doesn't like me, and he don't love you any more at all. In fact, he's got no use for you. He thinks you're punk."

"Who's punk?" said Helen. "Who said I was punk?"

"Yes," said Eddie Mitchell, "who said my little girl friend is punk. I'll fight any God damned son of a bitch who said she was punk."

"Get out of here," said Jim, louder. "Get out before I hurt you."

"You'll hurt whom?" asked Eddie, pushing Helen away from him.

Jim got up, stood before Eddie, brought his hand forward, and gave him a push. Then he closed his fist.

Eddie must have been drinking long before he came up here, because he didn't fight at all. He turned around, walked to a chair, sat in it and said:

"To think that my best friend would hit me. Jim Cowan would hit me. My God. Here I am drunk and I get hit. My God."

Jim felt worse. He didn't know what to do. He walked to Eddie.

"I didn't mean to hit you, Eddie. Don't think I wanted to. Honest, I didn't. I wouldn't hit you. . . ."

"Hit who?" said Eddie, waking up. "You hit me? You and who else?" And he shot out.

He didn't reach Jim. He was too drunk. Jim went away.

Helen again wasn't there. Not that he'd talk to her. He didn't know anybody else. He said:

"Andy, please bring me a drink."

"Come over here," said Anna. "The senator wants you to sit with us. I told him you were a friend of mine. I met you in Philadelphia. What's your name?"

"Senator," said Anna. "This is Mr. Cowan. He's a friend of the family."

"So you're from Philadelphia," said the senator.

"No, sir, I live in New York. I used to live in Philadelphia. I know Anna well." He was sorry he had added the "sir." Who the hell was the senator anyway?

The senator must have wanted him to come along, so he could be alone with Anna's sister. That was all right. The senator would pay for all the drinks, and the Lord only knew where they would all end up tonight.

No God damned senator would pay for his drinks. "Paddy," yelled Jim. Paddy said: "What, Jim?" "Bring us all the same, Paddy, and bring me straight Scotch with a beer chaser."

"You seem to be pretty well known around here," said the senator.

Jim said: "I'm connected up with Paddy."

"Is that so?" the senator said.

And if Paddy said he wasn't, he'd fix Paddy.

The senator was looking into the sister's eyes,

caressing her hand. The senator was half way drunk himself. The sister let her hand be caressed and looked all over the room. Anna sat next to Jim and behaved herself.

One minute he wanted to grab Anna's waist and go dancing with her around the room, and the next minute he wanted to go off in a corner somewhere all by himself and die. He felt like ripping Anna's clothes off her, and going to it here among these people he didn't know, and then he wouldn't be caught by the senator doing anything the senator didn't approve of for anything.

He was sorry he had come to sit with them because with the senator around there wasn't a thing doing. The drinks came, and they all drank them half way and then set them down at the table again.

Anna's sister was paying no attention to him. She was bored as hell. Anna looked at him as if she wanted him to dance with her, but wouldn't with the senator around. He wished somebody would take Eddie away. He was sitting at the other end of the room, staring sick at everybody and seeing nothing. Helen wasn't anywhere around.

The place was mobbed. Tables again set in the middle of the room. They stopped to dance. All

sorts of people coming in and out. There was noise. Women giggled. Andy ran around with his tray full. Paddy stood in the doorway and looked at the crowd.

"Well, well. If it isn't Senator Parker."

The senator was drunk, looked at the guy, recognized him, half rose, and said:

"I just came in with those friends of mine. We haven't been here ten minutes. We just came in to get a glass of beer to cool off."

"That's all right, Senator," the guy said. "I don't give a damn where you go. I wouldn't want the editor to know I'm here myself. I'm on an assignment."

"Sit down," said the senator. "Have a drink. Hey there, boy."

The guy sat next to Jim, winked at him and whispered: "He's a good guy, the senator. He's got the best liquor up in Albany."

"You-ou-ou-who-oo," yelled Eddie Mitchell from the other corner of the room. He was pointing his finger at Jim. "You-ou-who-oo. Oh, you." Jim didn't know what to do, but Paddy quickly went up to Eddie, picked him up, and carried him out through the door, Eddie's arms hanging to the ground.

"Friend of yours?" asked the guy. "Yes, he's drunk," Jim said. "He looks it," said the guy.

Jim wanted to add: I'm drunk myself. I'm as drunk as hell, and what are you going to do about it? But he was sitting with the senator, and he couldn't say a thing.

The woman from the country was trying to kick a glass off the table. "That's the way we do it up in Binghamton," she said. The guy who was with her said: "That's wrong, Tessie. That's not the way to kick them. This is the way." But before he could show her, she kicked the glass off. She wore white bloomers and a petticoat. Everybody clapped his hands. "Hurrah for Binghamton. Hurrah for Tess." The woman's face was red. "Give me some more glasses. I'll show you how we do it up in Binghamton."

"We don't need glasses in New York to show our legs," a girl said. It was Helen. "Here, watch this." She kicked above her head. She wasn't wearing drawers. Another girl said: "Now, let me." "No, me." "No, let me."

"There's municipal pride for you, Senator," the guy said.

Anna's sister said: "We wouldn't make a show out of ourselves in Philadelphia."

"Of course you wouldn't," the guy said. "Who ever heard of doing anything like that in Philadelphia?

"Nor in Boston," he added a minute later.

"They're not doing that in Boston tonight. Hey, Senator?"

"No," the senator said. "Not tonight in Boston." The senator was pretty drunk.

"They're doing something better in Boston," the guy said. "Aren't they, Senator?"

"Come on, out with it," Anna's sister said. "What are they doing in Boston?"

"Yes," said the senator. "Tell us what's happening in Boston."

The guy began laughing. He slapped Jim's back, and he slapped his own knee, and he cried out: "Well, I'll be damned. So you want to know what they're doing. What do you care, Senator? It's out of your state."

They looked at him. He stopped laughing, and he said very slowly:

"I'll tell you what they're doing. Tonight, they're murdering two men in Boston."

"Oh, that," said the senator. "Well, they had it coming to them for seven years. They wouldn't have lived even that long if I had anything to do with it."

"Of course not," the guy said. "If you had anything to do with it they'd have been hung before they were tried."

"You bet your life," the senator said and then he stopped. "No, I don't mean that. But they

were Reds, weren't they? They were Bolsheviks? There's no room for them in this country."

"You've got to hang them, don't you, Senator? Hang them, burn them, do away with them. They don't agree with you, so kill them."

Paddy was standing over them, listening. He interrupted:

"They were tried. They were guilty. Why all the rumpus? They don't raise hell all over the world every time two wops get condemned."

"They should be made an example of," said the senator. "You can't trample on everything we hold sacred and get away with it. Not in this country you can't."

"They were tried fairly," said Paddy. "They had every chance under the law. They didn't get railroaded. I know a lot of fellows that did. And some not any more guilty than people say these were."

Jim said:

"I know a girl that got hit over the head by a police club in Union Square today. The doctor took three stitches. There was a riot about those two guys."

"I'd have taken a machine gun," said Paddy. "And I'd have just played on that crowd. Give me a couple of marines and two machine guns and I'd have shown them a riot."

"I know you would," the guy said. "So would the senator. A bootlegger and a drunken senator."

"I'll tell you what you can do if you don't like it," said Paddy moving toward the guy. "I'll just show you . . ."

The senator rose and looked scared. "No fights," he said, and to the guy:

"He's just excited, that's all. He doesn't mean a thing. You don't mean anything do you?" to Paddy. The senator looked terribly scared.

The guy got up, laughed and said: "The power of the press. But the press's not using its power. The press is afraid of losing its job. Goodby, Senator. See you in Albany. Hope the liquor holds out."

"Well, of all the nerve," said Anna's sister. "How does he get that way talking to you? I wouldn't have stood for it one minute. I'd have shown him."

The senator didn't say anything.

"Lay off, Flossie," Anna said. "He knows what he's doing." The senator tried to grin. "You leave things you don't understand alone," Anna said. "You're not in politics."

"Is that so?" Flossie said. "You come straight out of Philadelphia and run things, don't you? You make me sorry I had you come out."

"Well, I can go back," Anna said getting up. "Right now, too. I don't have to stand talking from nobody, and not from you."

Jim got up, too. Hotel room, with him and Anna. Anna undressing. Anna naked in bed. "Come on," he said, "I'll take you wherever you want to go."

"You don't have to get mad," Flossie said, "I didn't mean anything. Keep your shirt on. Sit down and behave yourself. You're in New York now."

"Sit down," the senator said. "We're not through with the evening, yet. We're going on. They do fight," to Jim. Jim grinned. "They certainly do." He winked at the senator, and sat down again.

He saw Helen leaving. She and another guy arms round each other's waist. Hat in hand. Good riddance, too.

"What about a drink on me, Senator?" asked Paddy. "We'll give you the best in the house. What will you have, ladies?"

They ordered and Paddy went to the bar. Now the senator was holding the sister's hand, trying to look into her eyes, while she didn't want to see him. Their heads came near, and the senator whispered something. "No, Parkie," said the sister. "Not tonight." She nodded her head

toward Anna, looked at him and repeated: "Not tonight." The senator leaned back, put a cigarette into his holder. Anna's sister lit it for him.

Jim was holding Anna's hand under the table, squeezing it. She squeezed back. From time to time she gave him a look, and then put his hand against her thigh and pressed it. Her dress had raised itself, and the flesh above the rolled stockings could be seen. Jim wanted to touch it, to grasp it, all his thoughts were on this flesh. His gaze became dissolved. He saw two bare thighs, then four, and then a long row of bareness, stretching out of view. In his head there was noise, bells ringing, something rattling. He felt heavy, uncomfortable. He wanted to get up, to take a walk outside in the air. He didn't want to. He wanted to grab Anna, do something to her. He wanted to go away, see no one, lie somewhere in the dark, in quiet, his eyes closed. He wanted to sleep, to dance, to yell.

The evening would never end. Here were the drinks. The senator took his, wet his lips. Flossie wouldn't touch her glass. Anna squeezed his hand. Paddy was smiling. Jim didn't want the drink. He never wanted anything to go through his lips again.

"Here we are, folks," said Paddy, and they

drank. The whiskey was bitter and sour. "Give me a chaser," said Jim.

"Here it is right in front of your nose."

"All right."

The senator looked at the sisters. "Come on, girls, get ready."

"Where we going?"

"You want to dance, don't you? We'll find some place."

Jim didn't know if he was invited. He didn't care about going, but he was going to get invited. He wouldn't say a word, just sit quietly, but they'd better invite him. His sides ached, his eyes wouldn't keep open, he knew he couldn't get up again. He wanted to lie in bed and drop off very deeply, but they had to ask him to come along.

Taxi home. No subway, no changing trains, no walking from the station to the house, but a long ride in the dark, lying on the cushions, bumping a little, until home, and then quickly up, quickly undress, into bed, under covers, stretch out, and . . . fall.

"Here you are young fellow," and money jingling. Jim opened his eyes.

"Here, Andy, let me pay this."

"That's all right, young man," said the senator.

"Let me pay this," Jim said.

" It's paid," said Andy.

Well, to hell with them. He closed his eyes again. Sleep.

" Is he coming? "

" Sure he's coming, Floss. Didn't we ask him? "

" But he'll fall asleep on you. It's a nice party with somebody you don't know, and he's drunk."

" Well, he's coming," said Anna.

Anna was a damned good kid. He ought to do something for her. Buy her something. Buy her a wrist watch. Platinum, with little diamonds around. A small watch, no bigger than a quarter. Here, Anna, is something for you, because you were a damned good kid the night I met you.

" I'll tell the senator you never saw him before tonight."

" You tell him that, Flossie, and I'll tell him you and Teddy went to Atlantic City."

" Come on, girls. Ready? "

A hand came on his shoulder. It was hard to open his eyes. Softly:

" Aren't you coming with us? "

He got up, stepped on broken glass. There weren't so many people now. It was quieter. A chair lay on the floor. Against the walls people talked.

" Yes, I'll come along."

He began walking out with his eyes closed.

"Here you are," said Andy. Jim looked. The bill was nine fifty. He took out his money, gave Andy eleven dollars.

"Much obliged," said Andy.

"Good night, Senator. Goodby, ladies. So long, Jim. Come around again soon."

VII

THE TAXI

Taxi, Senator?

Here you are, sir. Yes, sir, taxi. Right here. Taxi. Taxi. Taxi. Taxi.

You, go on back till I call you. This way, Senator.

All right, boy. This one will do. Get in, all of you.

I ask you, why don't you behave? He'll pass out cold on you. Why don't you leave him here?

Oh, shut up, and mind your business. I've got a good mind to leave you. I'm tired of you, see. Why don't you shut up and hold hands with your Parkie?

Get in, honey, and get your sister in, and her boy friend. All right, there.

Thank you, Senator. Good night, Senator.

To Seventh Avenue and go on down. What's the matter with your boy friend?

He's indisposed. He's had too many lemon phosphates. They don't agree with his Philadelphia stomach. He ought to be drinking milk.

Ha-ha-ha-ha.

Ouch.

He-he-he-he.

You're crazy. . . .

She's jealous of me and my boy friend. She ain't satisfied with you, Senator. What's the matter with you? Can't you give her loving? Is that the way to treat a hot little girl from Philadelphia?

Ha-ha-ha-ha.

Ouch.

I'll teach you. . . .

Talk louder. The senator don't want to miss none of it. We're all on a party. We're raising hell, and having a swell time. Hurrah.

Move over, Flossie. Give me your hand, honey. Nice little senator's honey.

You feeling all right? Want me to open the window more? You sure you're feeling all right? Put your head on my shoulder. Like that.

Nice honey Flossie. Come closer. Like that. Sweet honey senator's Flossie.

Them God-damned lights. Pardon me, ladies, but them lights. No luck at all tonight. Every time I move, them lights go against me.

Flossie love the senator?

Flossie crazy about the senator. Flossie crazy about the whole world. Flossie happy like hell. Flossie go jump in the river.

What's the matter, honey? What's biting you? Come here, sweet little. . . .

Get your damned hands off me. Don't paw

me like that. I'm none of your bloody trash to be handled. I got my rights, too, even if you do think you bought me.

Honey . . . honey . . .

I'm none of your dirty bitches. I told you not tonight. When I want to be touched I'll let you know. Get that?

Nice loving couple. Senator's honey and sweet lollypop. My God, if I had to live like that, I'd take poison.

I'm going out. Stop this cab.

Yes, ma'am.

I won't stay another minute with her. I'm tired of getting insulted by every son of a bitch around here. You thinking you can treat me like a whore, and you picking up every stray bum you find in a barroom and dragging him along. Let me out of this cab.

Hold her, Anna. She's drunk.

I've got her. Hold her other arm. Now quiet.

You're damned right I'm drunk. Let me out, I say. God damn you, let me out.

Need any help, lady?

No, no she's all right.

Oh, my God, what am I going to do? What will I do? Oh, my God. Oh, Christ Jesus. Oh, God Almighty.

There . . . there . . .

Look at that bastard lying drunk there. I told her he'd pass out on her. I told her Don't pick stray bums up when you're with me. I said I'm going out with the senator and he don't want no bums with him. What did she do? She laughs right up my nose. The first time I go out with her, she sees a drunk, she likes the shape of his nose, and she's got to take him along. Look at him.

If you wasn't drunk, God what I'd do to you.

Oh, Jesus, I'm sick. Oh, I'm going to get sick. Oh, let me go. Oh.

Not on my cushions you won't. Get her head out of the window.

On my dress. Get her out. Lean her over.

Nice Flossie going to get sick. Nice senator's honey going to get sick and then she'll be all right again.

Go on, throw it up. Go on, strain.

Oh. . . . Oh. . . . Oh. . . .

Excuse me, lady, for butting in like that, but them cushions is new and expensive. I can't afford to buy new cushions every time . . .

Oh, all right.

You wouldn't want to get into a cab with the cushions all dirt over. I can't afford to be buying cushions like that new every time . . .

You driving this cab? or are you arguing with me?

Excuse me, lady . . .

How you feeling?

Flossie will now sit on senator's knees, and she'll feel better. Like that, on senator's knees.

Look out she don't fall over. Hold her tight. I thought she'd learned to drink in New York.

I can drive this cab and I can talk and I can mind my cushions. If I couldn't, I'd be a hell of a driver.

I said get that bum out of the car. I don't ride with no bums. I'm with the senator because I like it, and I'm with my sister because I have to, but I don't ride with bums if I can help it.

Well, at least he don't puke on everybody the way you do.

I can puke in my own cab if I pay for it if I want to. I can throw up everything every time I got the feeling to do it. No snip like you is going to stop me. And, what you bring him for anyway? He's drunk, ain't he? He's out, lying there back of you.

Them lights again.

Kiss the senator, honey.

I don't feel like kissing now. Ain't I got my rights? Have I got to kiss you and slobber over you every time I don't feel like it just because you say so?

All I asked . . .

Let's get down to business. You don't own me, do you? You didn't buy me whole, did you? All you get is a piece at a time. Well, I ain't parcelling tonight. Store is closed. I'm free and equal now, that's what I am.

Go on, give him a kiss. Stop trumpeting.

I ain't trumpeting. I got my rights. Nobody is going to get away with nothing with me. I'm. . . .

You're drunk, and tomorrow you'll be sorry, writing little notes: Sweet little Parkie. Come around tonight. Flossie all lonely.

I will like hell.

Where did you say you wanted to go?

This party's shot. I want to go home.

You don't want to go home yet. We're going on, ain't we going on, Parkie?

How's your boy friend feeling?

He's all right. The air made him sick a little. He'll be coming around.

All right. We'll go to Tommy Murphy's. You drive down till I tell you to stop.

Right. Love my little Angelina, Love to play her concertina. When I treat her rough, she says: That's enough. When I treat her right, She sleeps with me all night. Then I take my big machina, Strum Angela's concertina. Oy.

Oh, you're tickling me. Oh, I can't stand it. Ha-ha-ha-ha. . . .

Oh, kiss, kiss. Yumie-yumie.

Listen, I can't stand it another minute. Where can I get sick? Hurry up.

Sh-sh. Right here. Back of my dress. On this side. Put your head down. I've got my foot away. Go on. Quiet.

What's the matter with him now?

Go on back to your Parkie and yum-yum on. Mind your business.

Hey listen. . . .

Oh, shut up.

Come over here, honey and another kissie.

All right now?

Yes, fine now. I was sick. Thought I was out altogether. You were fighting, weren't you?

Sh-sh. Yes. She wanted to get you out of the car. Now whisper, what's your first name?

Jim. God, you're nice.

Don't. Not just now. Wait till later.

They can't see. She's got her back to us. She's busy herself. Gee, I wish I could get you alone.

Can't you talk quieter? She's got no use for you. I'm scared of her. I want to stay in New York, and my mother won't let me if she's against it.

Tell her where she gets off. You ain't no kid to

be told what to do every moment. Put her where she belongs.

Sh-sh. She's my sister. All right now. All right. All. . . .

Like that?

All. . . . Go on. Go on. Oh. . . .

Youmie, Senator. Youmie, Parkie. Now Flossie will do this.

One way street. Look out back there.

Don't, he's looking.

Get on my knees. He won't see. How'd you ever happen to pick me out?

Liked your looks. Ain't you satisfied?

Ain't I? Kiss me. Like that?

Where will I stop?

Drive a little ways on.

Where's the light here? Where's my bag. Flossie, let me have your mirror. Feeling all right now?

Yeh. Was I bad?

Fighting drunk. You wanted to throw everybody out.

He-he-he-he. You're a sight.

Wait till I make up.

Good evening, sir. Good evening, Senator. Coming up?

Yes, got a crowd?

Oh, middling. Get you a nice table.

All ready?

Wait one minute.

Let me pay this.

It's on me, young fellow.

No, let me pay this.

Let him pay. He's got more money than you've got.

No, I want to pay it.

Young fellow, I said I was going to pay this.

Well, you can't. Here you are.

What about the cushion?

What cushion?

The cushion you dirt over?

What the hell you talking about?

I'll tell you what I'm talking about. You give me two dollars for the cushion you messed or I'll get a cop.

Oh, you will, will you? Well, call your . . .

Here you are, driver. Here's your two dollars.

Listen, guy. You may be Senator Whoozis but I'm paying this bill. We didn't dirty the cushion. And any bastard of a driver. . . .

Jim, come over here. Don't. You'll get us into trouble. Let him pay it. He can afford it.

Well, I can't, and I'm paying this bill.

No, you're not. You're our guest, see. You keep your money.

Is it all right now?

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir? Good night, sir.

Ain't he fresh, the kid? He ought to be glad we let him come with us.

You shut up. Don't pay attention to her. She's sore as a pup about something.

Am I? Wait till later — They ought to have more lights on these stairways.

Don't. Not now. He'll see you. Oh, don't.

Give us a kiss quick.

Sh-sh. Don't.

Good evening, Senator. Good evening, ladies. Welcome.

Let's sit at the bar and drink beer. It's more fun. We're not going to stay long, Mr. Murphy; we're all tired, and we just want a beer for a nightcap.

Four beers.

Four up.

Right.

Let's dance.

No, I'm going to dance with the senator. You dance with Flossie and get around her.

You want to dance?

Oh, can you dance?

Can I? Watch me.

You don't want to listen to what I said in the taxi. I was sort of feeling bad. And the senator. . . .

Come on, get closer.

Do I dance as good as Anna? Here, *like* that?

Oh, baby. Come closer.

You don't want to pay attention to what I said in the taxi. I got to act that way with the senator around. He's jealous as anything, and the minute I act nice with anybody around my own age he raises the devil.

I don't care. You're nice, and your sister's nice.

Yes, but I'm nicer. You don't know how nice I can be. *Like* that?

Oh, boy. Come on closer.

What you doing with my boy friend? Why don't you hang around your senator?

Come on. I'm treating. To hell with beer. Let's drink something. Give us four Scotch, with beer chasers. Let's dance, Anna.

No. You like my sister better, don't you? You get a better time with her.

Oh, Anna, cut that out. Didn't you tell me to get around her?

Yeh, I said get around her, I didn't say go inside.

Come on, Anna, let's dance. Sweet Anna. Nice Anna. I don't care anything about your sister. Come on dance, Anna.

All right, but keep your eyes straight, and don't rub around.

What's the matter, Anna?

Nothing's the matter.

Anna, what the hell's the matter?

Get away from me.

Oh, Jesus. Oh, Lord. Again — Pardon me there. — Bartender. . . .

You're all right with me. You're there, kid. I could care for you in a big way. If it wasn't for my wife, I'd make it legal and everything. Any time you let me park my shoes under your bed, kid, you'll never be sorry, kid. Take it from Hugo Smith, Esq., kid. I keep my promises, kid. I don't promise no diamond necklaces, because I can't afford them, see. You and I know that. But there's a hell of lot that's of use to a nice little kid like you, that don't cost as much as a diamond necklace, and anything within reason, kid, is all right with me, kid, see.

A Scotch.

You want a chaser?

To hell with chasers. Give me Scotch.

All right. Here's your Scotch. Don't get excited.

I'm not excited. I told you what I wanted.

You're a sweet, Hugo, but I can't go out any more with you, Hugo. My daddy's kicking now. He says it's no use going out with married men. They don't mean no good to you, whatever they mean. He says he don't mind what I do, but when there's damage it's got to be repaired, and

you can't repair it, Hugo, seeing you're married now, see what I mean?

Kid, don't listen to your old man. He don't know a thing. He's an old timer. He can't have good times now, so he's jealous. I bet when he was young he raised a rumpus, all right, all right. Kid, I'll get you a job, and a better one than you got now, and anything that's within limit, that's short of a diamond necklace, understand? that you want I'll buy you.

Don't, Hugo. Not here. Hugo. People are looking, Hugo. Oh, I don't want you to.

Give me another Scotch.

Can I have a drink with you?

Give the lady a Scotch.

You're mad at me, Jim? — Jim.

What?

Don't be mad at me, Jim. Only, Floss gets all the fun in the world, and as soon as I get a boy friend, she tries to take him away from me. Oh, gee, Jim . . .

All right, Anna, drink your Scotch.

Jim, come over here. Listen. You want to be my boy friend, Jimmy? I don't get to New York often, but I'll try to come as often as I can. I've got a job, but I'm trying to get my sister to let me live in New York with her. She's a good kid, Flossie, and maybe she will. You'll come around

to see me. I'll send her away, and we'll be all alone. All right, Jimmy?

Let's have a drink, Anna.

I don't want to drink. I'm feeling lousy. I hate Philadelphia, and I hate Floss, and I hate her senator. He gives her a hundred and fifty a week, and he expects her to be always home, and go to bed with him. She leads one hell of a life. She's crazy about a guy who lives off her, and they go away to Atlantic City as often as she's got some money and the senator is not in New York, and if the senator'd find it out, back she'd go to the notion counter. That's why she gets drunk, and raises hell, and the senator thinks she's crazy about him, and only worried because he's too old to.

Le's have a drink, Anna. Hey, give us some Scotch.

Jim, you need any money? I got some right here. I've got over two hundred dollars. You can have it, Jim.

You're drunk.

I'm not drunk. Just say you want the money, and I'll give it to you. I'll give it to you anyway. Here it is, take it.

Who the hell wants your lousy money? Put it away before I get mad.

Gee, Jim, will you be my boy friend?

Sure, I'll be your boy friend. Sure, I'll treat you right, too.

Give me a kiss, Jim. Right here before everybody.

Here are the loveydoves. Come on, Parkie, let's drink with the loveydoves.

How you feeling, young fellow?

All right, how are you, Senator? Everybody have a drink on me.— Here you're sitting on the lady's seat.

This ain't no lady's seat. This is my seat.

Well, get off it.

Yeh? And, I suppose you're going to make me get off it?

Sure. Get off it? Quick, too.

Well, I'll be God damned. Well, if you've ever heard . . .

B A M !

Take me home, Hugo, take me home right away, or I'll go crazy or something. Hugo, if the police come, my daddy will find it out, he'll throw me out of the house, and I don't know what I'll do. Hugo, I want to be a good girl, and I don't want to get into trouble, because my daddy will find it out, Oh, Hugo, what will I do?

It was this man't fault, Mr. Murphy. He took

my sister's seat, and this gentleman asked him to get up, and politely, too, Mr. Murphy. And this fellow slams my gentleman friend in the jaw for no reason at all. And Mr. Murphy . . .

Get the man out, Murphy. He's looking for trouble. I can't get mixed up with the police.

I'll see what I can do, Senator. He's drunk.

Well, I was sitting there just as quiet as a lamb. Let go of me. And I didn't say a word. And this pimply runt. Let go of me before I . . . He says: "Get out of my seat." I'd been sitting there drinking beer.

Listen, you've got to get out of here.

What did I do, Mr. Murphy? I wasn't saying a word to anybody. The little . . .

Don't give me arguments. You're in my place, and I don't want you here. Now, like a good fellow.

Well, I'll be . . .

Just what I was telling you and the senator and everybody, if only anybody would listen to me. If you pick up a bum on the street, that's all you can expect.

Yes, and you're so particular now, and ten minutes ago you were rubbing with him all over the dancing floor, you'd think the front of your dress'd get all rubbed away.

Shut up. Don't you see Parkie?

I'm tired of you. I'm sick and tired of you and Parkie. Oh, don't . . .

You'll have to get him out of here, Senator. I'm in trouble now. Expect a raid any day, and one more racket and I'm closed up for good.

Jimmy, how you feeling?

Give him a little whiskey. It'll bring him to. Just a drunk passed out. The other guy could hit. It's a wonder he didn't crack his skull.

You get him out, Senator, as soon as you can. I'd be in an awful shape if anything like this came out. You can have anything you want to that's in the house, but I can't afford fights.

Give him a good stiff drink. Help him to his feet. Let him sit down. No, let his legs go. Bring the chair over. Now, sit down. A drink.

Get your morning paper. Sacco and Vanzetti dead. Just died. Morning paper. Here you are.

Get out of here. How many times I told you not to come here peddle before. Get out before I kick you out.

All right. You want a paper? They got burnt an hour ago. Just about an hour ago. Sacco, Vanzetti dead. Morning paper. Who wants . . .

Stop standing there as if something happened. He'll be all right in a minute. Go on back of the

bar. Get back to your seat, gents. I'm afraid of cops. Go on back, you.

Help me with him, Flossie. He can't walk. Take his arm.

My God, you're crazy. Where'll we take him?

Well, we're not going to leave him on the street. We'll take him back to where we got him. Parkie, that all right with you? It wouldn't look nice if you just left him on the street like that.

All right. Take his arm, honey. Now, steady.

You're all crazy drunk.

Sorry, Senator, I'd like to oblige you, but I'm expecting a raid. I'd get into trouble, Senator.

That's all right. We'll bury our own dead. Ha-ha-ha, Murphy.

He-he-he, Senator, good night. Good night, ladies. You want help getting him downstairs?

No, he's all right. Good night.

As I've been saying for the hundredth time this evening . . .

Oh, shut up. Ain't you even got the decency to take care of somebody that's with you?

Who's with me? He certainly ain't with me. I'm with the senator. I said he was a bum, and I still think so. And for two cents . . .

For two cents I'd scratch your eyes out. And I probably will without it.

Taxi, sir. Taxi.

Yes. Help us with this man.

All right, set him there. I'll sit near him.

You want to sit on senator's lap, honey?

Get in and sit on his lap.

Who you're ordering around?

You. I'm going back home tomorrow and I never want to see you again.

Where do you want to go to?

To Seventh Avenue and up. Turn in at Forty-Sixth.

Yes, sir. Gentleman sick?

Yes, he ain't feeling well.

I ain't feeling any too well myself, lady. I've been driving this bus all night, for two weeks, and my missus won't let me sleep days. She says I get enough sleep waiting for fares. I asked the boss to change me to day time, but there ain't enough money in the day time to keep the missus and the kid alive. I can't sleep in the day time, and I can't sleep at night, because I can't earn enough in the day time to keep live. It's tough.

Gee, you're out of luck.

Anna, stop talking to the taxi driver.

Listen, Flossie. One more word out of you, and something's going to happen, and I mean it. Don't you order me around again like that.

Ya, give it to the lady, lady. What does she

think this is, a street car that you can't talk to the driver? Drivers's human too, lady, and like to be talked to.

Well, go right on talking and you'll get reported to the company.

Ain't that swell, lady. I've been trying to get reported for the last couple of days. Then I wouldn't have to work at all, and I could get some sleep. I've tried to insult passengers, and all they say is: "The poor guy is drunk. Let's get out of his cab." So besides not getting fired, I didn't get any money, and the missus raised hell when I got home. Lady, will you do me a favor and report to the company that I got fresh? They call it discourteous. Tell them I got good and discourteous, tried to bite you, lady.

Go on, driver. Go on, don't mind me, I'm nobody around here.

It's like this, lady. Some people wants to die, like me now, I wouldn't care if I was alive or dead. I get so tired driving, keeping the damned foot on the damned accelerator, sometimes, when I get near a good strong Elevated pole I just want to shove it on, and go to hell. Or the little kids that act smart standing in front of the cab, until just before they get run over they jump away. I tell you some day I just get so tired of slowing down for the kids. I'm going to step on

it, and smash one of them. That's what I'm going to do. Say. Or drive into a big truck.

Well don't do it now, whatever you do.

But, lady, there's people that don't want to die. Take the two guys up in Boston that got burnt tonight. They've been fighting for over seven years now. Some people say they did it, and some say they didn't. There was a young fellow in the place I eat, he says guys like that who call themselves anarchists never would even dream of killing a poor working guy like the paymaster these two got convicted for killing. He said the anarchists, well they might kill a rich bozo that just sits on his sitter and clips coupons, but what do they want kill a poor guy like themselves for. He says they're gentle, they're good guys. He says they never killed him. He says nobody really thinks they killed him. He calls it class war. Well, I don't know anything about this class war, all I know is these two never wanted to die. They fought like hell to get free and they couldn't. There's an Eyetalian I know who gives one tenth of his salary every week, and he ain't making a hell of a lot, just to help free these guys. The papers say there's a doubt, they say give them life so that if they should find out they weren't guilty they might free them. And don't forget these two guys didn't want to die. They

must have lived hell these months sitting in the cell. Where did you say you want to turn in?

Forty-Sixth Street.

All right. Say, you want to hear this?

Go on, go on. This ain't Sunday, but we might just as well be in church now.

You won't hear this in church, lady. There's no money in this. I ain't got it quite figured up myself. But see driving like this, and trying to keep off sleep, you get thinking, and you wonder about a hell of a lot of things. Now, I for instance thought I'd be willing to give my life for those two. I've got nothing to live for, anyway. It was all right with the missus the first few years after we got married. There was nothing I wouldn't do for her, or she for me. But you sort of get used to the other after a while, and it ain't so marvellous any more. I don't blame her for not wanting the house all messed every day while I'm asleep, and the kid's got to keep quiet, and never see his old man. She says get a good job where you don't work at night and sleep in the day time. I tried, but there's no money in it. Well, anyway, talking about those two that got theirs tonight sometimes I figured I'd go to Boston and say: You don't know yourself if these two guys killed that paymaster, and you yourself ain't so sure about it. But if the public

wants somebody killed, well then go ahead and kill me.

He's nuts this driver is. He's absolutely . . .

Seeing I'm so sleepy, not caring if I live or die. Oh, well, when I get my one day in fourteen off, I just laugh at myself. I say to myself, just like you do. You're nuts.

Let's get another cab. Let's get out and walk.

Oh, no. I'll get you there all right. Seeing those two guys are dead, seeing I can't get another job, seeing I can't sleep, seeing . . .

P-h-e-w p-h-e-w h-e-w e-w e-w w w w.

All right. All right. I'm stopping.

Go on, pull over there. Where the hell do you think you are? Where the hell do you think you're riding? Who the hell . . .

Officer.

Let's see your license.

Officer.

Let's smell your breath.

Tell him who you are, Parkie.

Did you ever hear of a speed limit?

Officer.

Hey, do you want to go to the station house. Can't you hear me talking to the driver?

Officer, I'm Senator Parker. Here's my card. We're in a hurry to get home with someone ill in the cab.

Sorry, Senator. Didn't know it was you. Sorry to bother you, sir. All right, driver, go ahead. Good night, sir.

I don't want ride in this cab. This driver's drunk or something. Let's get out.

No, lady, I'm not drunk. Just a little sleepy. I'll get you there, all right. Well, for God's sake we have with us tonight a senator. If it wasn't for the senator, I'd have got my license revoked, seeing it's two times I got pulled in before. It seems I'm bound to be riding this cab till the day of doom.

This is a nice quiet refined evening. I go out with my sister and the senator for a little dancing and maybe a drink or two. And we pick up a bum on the way — yes — I said a bum — and we get into arguments, and he starts a fight with a guy for taking his seat away, and gets hit in the face and passes out, and then we get a taxi driver who's as cuckoo as a canary bird, and he gives us a sermon about how he'd like to give his life away, and then we almost get arrested and what now? Come on, I'm ready for anything.

You'll get it, too, lady.

I'm not talking to you. Keep your mouth shut.

So it seems I can't even get reported to the company. I'm way out of luck. Well, and here we

are on Forty-Sixth Street, and where did you want me to stop?

A little farther. Go on. God, I'll be glad when we get rid of this drunk. And I hope this will teach you a damned good lesson, too, not to be picking them when you don't know them. Now, stop right here. Driver, will you go to see if that door is open?

Help me pick him up.

Go on get up. You're not half as sick as you look.

No, lady. It's not open.

Well, help me with this man. We'll set him down at the stoop. He lives here, and he'll come to in a while and go upstairs. Get your shoulders here. Now, hold him.

All right, lady, I've got him. Come on there, young fellow. Hold on to me.

Anna, you stay in the cab. You hold her, Senator.

Stay in, Anna. Sleep this off, and tomorrow you'll forget about it.

All right, lady. He's on the stoop. There's another one there, too, that's passed out. This must be a good place. Well, now where do *you* want to go to . . .?

VIII

THE LUNCH ROOM

His jaw hurt, his mouth felt gritty with sand; and when he tried to open his eyes the eyelids hurt; so he left them closed, tried to breathe, and found a pain in his chest. A thin line of dazzling light danced in his eyelids. He raised them just enough to see a lamp-post above him. He closed his eyes very hard and tried to fall into nothing. He was lying on something very hard, and it hurt. He was uncomfortable. Slowly he picked himself up by his elbows, sore all over, and slowly opened his eyes.

Before him in a bit of mist was a long line of houses, dark with one light in a window high up. An automobile stood parked for the night. Down the street through the mist he could not see, only the light of another street lamp. Then another street lamp, dimmer and still another one. Then nothing. He heard a taxi horn somewhere, something like a bell in another place, and far away, the sound of footsteps.

He could not remember what put him where he was, could not understand why his jaw hurt, why his head felt heavy, and he wanted to close his eyes. He tried to bring his thoughts together, but the ache increased, and he gave up. He

reached in his pocket for cigarettes, found them, took one out, looked for his matches, lit the cigarette. The chest hurt when he inhaled, but he felt better. He wanted to lean his back against something, turned, and saw someone was lying against the wall.

The someone's hat was on the ground near him, and he was sleeping.

My God, Eddie Mitchell.

Things came back to him slowly. Helen and Eddie Mitchell coming in, and Helen going away to him, and the party, and Helen drunk, and Eddie yelling You-who-hooo, and being carried out. He looked above at the door. It was the entrance to Paddy's. The son of a bitch couldn't put Eddie in a taxi and send him home, but just had him laid out in front of the door. The dirty bastard. Didn't care what happened to his customers when they'd spent their money.

"Eddie."

No answer. Eddie breathed slowly. Jim got on his knees, picked Eddie's arms, let them go. They fell back, and Eddie's head turned sideways. He was out.

"Come on, Eddie, get up."

Jim pushed him, shook him, got on his feet and tried to make him stand. Eddie was still out. His knees didn't hold. His head lay sideways

on the shoulder. Somebody was walking down the street. It was maybe a cop, and Eddie had to be wakened, Jim held him with one arm, and with the other closed into a fist he hit Eddie in the stomach. Eddie started to say something, then fell asleep again. It *was* a cop. If he didn't say something they would both get locked up.

"Officer, this guy's out. Help me bring him to."

"All right, buddy," the cop said. He came near, got hold of Eddie, and shook him hard. Eddie began to swear. The cop said:

"You don't mind if I hit him with the stick just a little. It'll wake him up all right."

"No," said Jim.

"Hold him, then," the cop said, and as Jim held him, the cop hit Eddie over the shins. Eddie woke up, looked at the cop, and swore again. The cop smiled, said: "Wouldn't he be sorry if he wasn't drunk?" and went on. Jim called: "Thanks." The cop called back: "That's all right, buddy."

"What did he hit me for?" asked Eddie.

"Shut up," Jim said. He took hold of Eddie's arm, and they began walking down the street.

A garage. Mechanics, helpers, taxi drivers stood in the entrance and talked. A great shiny

black automobile drove up, turned and drove into the garage. The chauffeur said: "Hello, there." Jim and Eddie stood a moment, Eddie getting heavier, almost going to sleep again. "Come on," said Jim. Eddie said: "Oh, all right, I'm coming." They went on. Jim had Eddie's arm under his and with the other held Eddie's wrist straight. When Eddie felt like falling, Jim turned the wrist; then Eddie said something and went along. A guy stood in the entrance of a door with the number painted big on it. A speakeasy. Inside a barber shop a light over the cash register fell on the nickel fittings, on the bottles, on the mirror. Another garage. The entrance to a Russian night club. A big guy with mustaches a foot long in a funny uniform stood in the doorway and looked tough.

"I want to say hello to this bozo," Eddie said.

"You'll say hello to hell."

Eddie said: "I like him, and I'm going to say hello to him." Jim turned the wrist hard. It hurt Eddie and he went on.

"What you want, young fellow," Jim said, "is a cup of coffee."

"I don't want coffee. I want to sleep."

"You're going to have coffee, see."

They came to the corner. A taxi driver parked near the curb, got out of the cab, opened the door,

and said Taxi. Jim said No, looked up and down the street for a lunch room. An L train passed shaking the pillars. Eddie gave a yell just then, but he couldn't be heard because of the train. Jim told him: "You try that again, and see what happens to you." Eddie said: "Let me go. I'm going to puke." He took his arm out of Jim's grip, stood over the curb and threw. Jim closed his eyes and didn't listen. His head ached, but he was sober. There was a bad taste in his mouth. Eddie asked: "Got a cigarette?" and when they lit and began walking he said: "Don't hold me now. I'm all right." Jim let go again, watched Eddie. He was all right.

"Would you like a cup of coffee?"

"I certainly would."

They walked downtown on Sixth Avenue.

"Liquor's getting worse and worse," said Eddie, and then added: "or maybe it's me."

Jim didn't say anything, and Eddie went on: "You had a nice kid with you. What happened to her?"

Jim said: "She's a bum and she don't interest me."

"She was a nice kid just the same. Where did you get her?"

Jim didn't answer. Eddie said: "I'd like to see her again sometime."

Jim said: "She works in the lunch room in my building. She's a bum and a teaser, and she can go to hell."

"She seemed to like me all right."

"Well, go on and have lunch down the place and see how you come out."

"Maybe I will."

"Go ahead."

They went on. Then Jim said:

"Hey look at me in this light. Have I got a black eye?"

Eddie looked. "No."

"Well, I must have got hit in the jaw then. My face hurts."

"Where did you go?"

"I don't remember."

"Did you go out of Paddy's?"

"I don't know. Wait a minute. Yes, I did. I was in a taxi and went somewhere. There was a girl that puked. Then a kid came in and yelled Papers. About the two guys that got burned tonight."

"Did they get it?"

"I guess so. Why?"

"I don't know. Nothing."

"How do you feel?"

"Rocky."

"I got a headache. I must have got hit in the jaw. It hurts terrible."

"I wish to hell we could find a lunch room. Cup of coffee, and a plate of beans. Beans bring me around always."

"If I saw a plate of beans tonight I'd die."

"That's what I thought, too. Once. But a guy told me one night, and I tried them, and they made me feel fine. There's nothing like a good plate of hot beans when you want to sober up."

"All right. Let's talk about something else."

"You must still be feeling bad. Why don't you stick a couple of fingers way into your mouth?"

"Go on. Everything came up that's supposed to come up. The rest's got to work its way."

A figure came out of the dark and came toward them. A woman. It must have been three in the morning. A girl. She walked near the store fronts. She came nearer and nearer and then passed them. Jim and Eddie turned around, stared.

"She's nobody's sister to be walking at this hour."

"She's a hostess in a night club."

"She's a telephone girl."

"Go on. She didn't even wear a hat."

"Nice piece."

Again they started walking. "Where to Christ is a lunch room. I'm burning up." "A cup of coffee or even a glass of water." "There's a taxi there. Maybe that's one." "Hurry up."

A fruit stand. "Want an apple?" "Anything." Jim got two large, red apples, paid for them, gave Eddie one, took a big bite of his, sucked the juice. "Oh, for a glass of water."

ATHENS COFFEE POT. Tables for Ladies. Bus Boy wanted.

Lights on white tiles, rubber plant, oranges, grapefruit. Smell.

The tables were crowded. "Wait a minute," and he went through the talk, past the tables, to the water tank, got a glass, rinsed it, and drank cold water. One glass. Another glass. Still another one. A little dizzy, he shook his head, looked at two guys whispering over empty coffee cups, at a man nodding over a clean table, at a woman alone, tired as hell, who looked at him. He went toward the counter. At a table sat a party of four, the men with their arms around the girls, their eyes black, sleepy, the girls trying to giggle, their hats crazy on their heads, hair escaping, a bare thigh showing. "Come over here," called Eddie. The counter was occupied, but there was a place beside him.

Under the glass, pieces of pie that didn't look good, nor the buns, nor the stewed fruit. "What the hell am I going to have?" Jim shivered. The guy next to him ate crackers and milk, another

one ham and eggs and fried potatoes, another one pie. "Beans," said Eddie.

The counterman was a fairy. Blond hair and pale face. Looked all washed and clean at this hour of the morning. Smiled brightly and showed his teeth.

"A cup of black coffee."

A train passed. The guy next to Jim said: "I don't care what they do, or what happens, but they've got to let me in on it." "I suppose you'll make them." "If they don't," the guy said, "there'll be a hell of a lot of trouble for somebody." "I suppose you're man enough." "I am," said the guy.

The coffee was set down by the counterman with a smile. "He ought to have it wiped off his face." Eddie wasn't listening. He poured tomato ketchup on his beans, put mustard, poured salt and pepper. He began eating. Jim looked away, tasted his coffee, again shivered.

He was very tired. He could hardly sit on the stool. "We ought to have sat at a table," he said. He lit a cigarette, very slowly, hoping he'd like it, drew on it, found it bad, and threw it away.

The door opened, with it a movement of warm air. A fellow came to the counter, between Jim and Eddie, with his finger called the counterman

and said: "Get me a taxi driver you know. I've got a barrel of beer outside." "It's late," said the counterman. "I know," the man said, "I'm in a hurry. I'll give him a five dollar bill."

The counterman said: "Wait a minute," took off his coat, and went outside. The man left.

Sleep. Sides ached. Bed. My God, another hour or more.

"What I'd like," Eddie said, "is a nice cool glass of beer. Let's find a place that's open."

"I'm going home."

"Listen. Don't go home yet. There's got to be some place that's open."

Something crashed on the floor. "Ha-ha-ha-ha," from one of the guys with the girls. "She dropped a plate." "He-he-he-he," giggled the girls.

Jim felt as if violins were going through him. The arms of the players went up and down, up and down. "Whee-whee-whee-whee," said the violins.

In the lunch room it was very quiet. Nobody talked. Only the fan buzzed, and turned from one side to the other. Little ribbons of red and green were tied to the fan. They flew, rippled. The dishwasher in the kitchen again clanked the dishes. One of the girls did: "He-he-he-he." Again the violins.

Eddie finished his beans and lit a cigarette. The counterman came back, put on his white coat, smiled at the lunch room, took off the dirty dishes, asked Eddie: "Would you like anything else?" "Give me some ice cream," Eddie said. "We have vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry," said the counterman.

A train passed. It was getting hotter. Jim loosened his tie and opened his collar. His hat felt moist, he took it off, found the band wet and smelly, wiped it, put the hat back on his head.

"They're dead," somebody said. "All your talking won't bring them back to life."

"But don't you see what's right?"

"Shut your mouth. I'm tired of hearing of those two wops, whether they did or not, whether they're guilty or innocent. Have I got to lose my sleep? have I got to listen to everybody screeching in my ears, they're killing men? What do I care? Didn't they kill off millions in the war and did somebody yell about that? Were they worse than these? Did they know any more what it was all about? They went off and got killed and that was all there was to that. What do I care what's right? Where's right? Go on, buy it, or sell it, or feed it to your wife. Weigh it against your pocketbook and see what hap-

pens. Hire a great hall and cry about it and see how many will listen to you. Keep it where it belongs inside of you, and shut your mouth about it. They're dead I said, They're in hell now. There'll be many more dead before they find what's right."

One of the girls again giggled. Everyone raised his head, listened. Everyone turned back to his coffee cup, to his ham and eggs, to his ice cream.

" Smart guy," Eddie said.

Jim said nothing. The smart guy went on talking, but no one listened. The guy was excited, raised his voice, hit the table, interrupted the one who was talking with him. No one paid attention. The counterman looked anxiously into everyone's face, then walked to the table where the smart guy was talking, whispered to him. The guy said: " All right, if I can't talk as loud as I want to, I'm going to get out." He and his friend got up, paid, the cash register rang, and walked out. The counterman announced: " You should have smelled his breath. He was so drunk," and smiled.

The bus boy began piling chairs on top the tables. He began sweeping. The fan went on, then its buzzing was drowned by a train passing. Windows shook. The dishwasher came out of the

kitchen, his cigarette hanging on the lower lip, his face very white, and his eyes red.

"You're ready?" asked Jim.

"Let's go and get some beer."

"No. Finish what you got. I'm going home."

The bus boy swept under the seats. He didn't say anything, but got his broom under feet, and pushed it. The line of sawdust became higher, cigarette stubs lay in it, black spittle, matches.

"I've got to begin to get to the office not so damned sleepy. I'm going to get fired as it is any day now."

"What do you care?" Eddie said. "Tell your boss where to get off. You can always get a job."

"I can't keep them," Jim said, "I never got a raise once yet. Just about the time one's due to me, I quit or I get fired. I'm no good."

"Oh, wake up."

"I mean it, Eddie. I'm no good to anybody. I can't get along. I don't know what the hell is the matter with me."

"What you need is a drink," Eddie said. "A double Scotch, and you'll feel all right again."

"I don't want a drink. Eddie, listen. I don't know what I want. I ain't satisfied, I got no friends."

"Who said you got no friends?"

"Eddie, I mean it. I don't get along. Not with a soul. I can't even take a girl out and have her stick to me. I treat her nice, I spend good money on her, and the minute she sees somebody else she gives me the run around."

"Jim, she's a bum. Don't pay attention to her. Come on, we'll get a drink."

"I don't want a drink."

The bus boy got a pail of water and a mop, wet the mop, wrung it and began. There were fewer people in the lunch room. The counterman put out some of the lights. A cop came in, hid behind the counter, and puffed on a cigarette.

"I got a sister," Jim said. "She knows exactly what she wants and she gets it. I wouldn't live her kind of a life for all the money in the world, but she's a damned sight happier than I am."

He watched the bus boy mop.

"I got a mother, and she's a better mother than a guy like me could ever expect to have. Yet for any God damned bitch that I wouldn't give two cents for, I'd gyp my mother, and then have the lousy time I had tonight, and I'd do it again and again."

Eddie looked at him. "Hey, what's coming over you?" he asked.

"I'm a bum."

"Sure," Eddie said. "So am I. What do we care?"

"You don't understand. I'm a damned sight worse than you think I am. I'm no good at all."

"I bet you've got a hangover a mile long."

"I got a headache and I feel terrible."

"Listen," Eddie said. "I know a couple of girl friends up on Sixty-Fifth Street. They're sisters, and I did them a favor once. We can go up and stay there. They're not so hot, but then they're not so bad."

Jim said: "Tonight I wouldn't touch a woman with a ten foot pole."

"Well, you can sleep on the sofa, then. You're a hell of a sight to greet a mother's eye."

(You're going home if it's the last thing you do.)

"I don't know," Jim said.

"Sure, you're coming. Wait, I'll give them a ring and see the road's clear and there's no competition."

Eddie found a nickel and went to the booth.

The girls were still giggling. One of them stuck a man's hat on top of her head, made faces, and laughed and laughed.

The bus boy came up to a man nodding, alone, gave him a shove, picked him up, escorted him to the door, and pushed him.

(If you don't go home, you're lost. It's half past three. Ma's sitting up. She won't go to bed till you've come. Tomorrow sleepy. Tomorrow fired. No job. No money. Got to go home.)

He took a quarter out of his pocket. Home or stay. Flipped it, caught it, looked. Heads, and he went home.

He felt a little better. Still tired, but the head didn't ache so. He turned in his seat. The woman, alone, looked up, and caught his eye. She brightened. My God, what a face. The guys were still whispering bent over their coffee cups. The party of four was leaving. In a corner by the window a man talked to a woman in a low voice. She shook her head. He bent over the table toward her, his finger pointed at her, and he nodded insisting. She said No. Jim looked away. The woman, alone, opened her bag, took out a dirty handkerchief and wiped her face. As her head rose, Jim turned.

Eddie came back. "It's O.K., he said. They're good kids. Come up in half an hour."

Jim said: "I'm not going."

"My God, you're not going to start that, after I fixed it all up."

Jim looked at him. "I'm going home."

"Well and what am I going to do with two women?"

Home. Sleep. God damn it, I want to go home.

"All right," Jim said. "Come on."

"I thought you'd change your mind."

They paid. The counterman smiled, even said Thank you. "Let's walk. We've got time yet."

Jim said: "I don't know why I'm going. I don't want a woman tonight. What I want is home, and bed, and get into the office tomorrow and try to hold on to my job. Yet I'm going," he cried.

"If you didn't worry," Eddie said, "about yourself so damned much, you'd be a whole lot better off."

The air was good after the lunch room. Jim breathed in deeply, rushed the little breeze into the very bottom of his lungs, his chest rising, falling. With each step he was freer, less tied up inside, only the feet and the ache in his side stopped him from forgetting that he was walking, that he was still drunk, that if he let himself think the least thought about tomorrow, he would leave Eddie, get on the subway, run for home, would try to save the little something that was still in him that would allow him to work tomorrow. God, with each step he took he was falling deeper, deeper, never would he get out — Ma gone, job gone, everything lost — Please let

me go home, he begged. I don't want to go on, I don't want to meet the two sisters.

He tried to remember some prayer that would save him. Get thee behind me, he said. Oh, save me, he said. Somebody save me.

His feet were taking long steps. He was taller, and Eddie almost had to run to keep up with him. "What's your hurry," Eddie said. "She said not for a half hour."

Past an undertaking parlor with a small light over the desk, and a sign Night Bell; past an A. and P. store; past some garbage cans filled; past an L Station begging him to go up: across the street where a night newsboy stood and cried to the empty street: "Get your morning paper and all about the execution"; to a florist shop with the show window empty but for a palm or two; to another chain store where a great cake of ice lay in the doorway waiting for morning; a drug store window lighted up, with a man's insides bright on a colored poster, and liver pills for sale; a woman in a fur coat and no hat exercised a lap dog; a man walked ahead of them, steps echoing. Above them dark, with but a light here, and a light there, and what was happening inside. "Let's walk on Broadway. There's more people there."

Into a side street. An all night combination lunch room, fruit stand and delicatessen, with the

man arranging fruit; a peanut stand; past a theatrical hotel where they walked all day in the halls with not a damned thing on, and slept with whom they wanted to sleep; past an abandoned beer garden behind which there was probably a speakeasy; past a closed stationery store; past two men walking very quickly; past a garbage truck making a racket; a music store; a dark cafeteria.

A taxi went by them, top down, women laughing with men inside. "Oh, you," cried one of the women to Jim and Eddie. "She's feeling safe in a cab with a guy beside her."

"They're going to finish the night in Harlem. There's hot places there. The music moans, and they stand in one spot, arms tight round each other and just rub."

"We ought to go to Harlem some night when I'm not broke, and we don't want to take a woman along. There's plenty there."

"I can get hold of a car."

"Some night next week."

Harlem, with beautiful women, with naked brown girls, with hips round and round, and breasts shaking, and mouth open, and jazz going, and hot.

A drunk appeared and walked toward them, his legs stiff, going from side to side, went at

them, passed by them, was saying: "Atta boy, baby. You show them."

Into Broadway, with no lights, no trolley cars, no people. Across Times Square, empty, looking queer. In one corner, dazzling light, with goggled workmen behind a screen working with acetylene torches over car tracks. Z-z-z-z went the torches. Two empty taxis, drivers sleeping.

And then figure it out: You will get to the house. There will be an elevator boy sleepy. He will take you up. Ring the bell. Noise inside, and then giggling, and then: "Just a minute. We're not ready." Wait a while. Then the door will open. Into a dark hall, into a little living room. From the bedroom, whispers. Two girls will appear, dressed in nightgowns with robes over them. Maybe black nightgowns. Nice time to call people up. You, a good retort. Light cigarettes, sit down on a sofa, talk about the weather, try to separate the two, have each one talk to one of you. Maybe a drink then. A gentleman friend gave us a bottle. We haven't tasted it yet. Glasses and a corkscrew, and laughing, and Let me open it up, and touching. Pouring and Down the hatch. Feel better, talk more sociable. Girls crossed their legs. Maybe a phonograph would play. Too late for music. What do we care? Push the table to the side, roll up the carpet. Want to

dance? Come close, hold each other, stand in one spot.

Or Let's put the lights out. The girls are not dressed. They'll be embarrassed.

Or maybe they're bums. Why should I? What is there in it for me? Leave me alone. Want me to cross your palm? What do you mean? This ten dollar bill mean anything to you? Oh, put away your money. I can trust you.

"Eddie," he hesitated, "Eddie do you mind if I go home? I'm awfully tired. Eddie!"

Eddie said:

"Go on home. Hurry up. You'll miss your God damned beauty sleep. Well, what are you waiting for? Go home."

"For Christ's sake don't get sore. Or get sore. I don't care."

"Good night," said Eddie.

IX

HOME AGAIN

The shuttle train started; the guard came into the car, sat, and read a paper. The train went over a switch, rattled. It went quicker; it shook a little on its sides. The passing pillars dissolved into a wall. Another train was coming in. Its passengers were rising. The other train disappeared. Again black. They were under Sixth Avenue.

In the East Side local he'd be able to sleep. It would take at least an hour on this damned local they ran after one o'clock. The sun would be rising. Just a few hours in bed, then again up, again on the subway and to work. Quicker, train.

The car stank of people. Its floor was dirty. Chewing gum wrappers, chocolate containers, old newspapers. A headline with the word VANZETTI stared. Jim kicked it. The other side appeared with the word SACCO.

A man smoked a cigarette. You could smoke at this hour in the subway. Jim took the package out of his pocket, and some change with it. He counted the change, searched his pockets for bills. He had forty cents. And before he'd had twenty dollars, and thirty if he hadn't been a fool with Ma. Now he had to say: "Ma, you've simply got to let me have five dollars." Ma would; and Daisy

would make it her business to hear it, and say: "He wants to start in business on *my* money."

Forty cents after a week's work. He would be a salesman, would convince people they ought to buy his goods, would exert his will power over them. Will power.

He put the forty cents back in his pocket, and should have felt bad, but didn't. He lit a cigarette, puffed on it, stared at the ads above the windows, at the other people in the car, but didn't see them very well. He began to whistle.

He committed suicide. Took an express elevator to the top of the Woolworth Building; took the local elevator, went out on the platform, and got on the parapet. He looked below at the smoke, at the bridges across the river, at the houses, the people, the automobiles; slowly opened his arms, and dived below.

He became a maniac: suddenly jumped and screamed; rushed at the one nearest to him and began pummelling him; threw him on the ground and kicked him; closed his eyes and screeched; ripped off his clothes and ran wildly.

He killed. While the victim's back was turned, he took a long bright knife, and rammed it into the flesh. Took it out, watched the blood spurting, the blood on the knife, and rammed it in again.

He kicked and yelled and he died.

His head turned and began going round and round, fell forward, a pain went through his temples. He jerked himself stiff, tightening the throat, the head. Ma, he said.

They were under Fifth Avenue. The train slowed. The man before him threw away his cigarette, stamped on it and went forward. Jim rose, holding onto the seat, and tried to walk. His knees were weak; his head would not stay up. Taking one strap after another, he moved to the door.

It opened. The guard said: "Watch your step." Jim crossed and walked along the platform. Another train was leaving.

At least three blocks underground to the East Side train. When he got there he would have to wait. Under the bridge, and through the tunnel, and past the Queensboro elevators, and to the sign DOWNTOWN on this side and UPTOWN on that.

He stopped, leaned against a pillar, looked into the chewing gum machine mirror. There were two faces, green; there were rings under four eyes. Besides, he was seeing double.

It was all very beautiful, but it wasn't getting him home. A little self control. A shake of the head, a push from the pillar, and he was walking. The station deserted and no one could see him,

and besides he didn't give a good God damn if anyone did see him. Like that.

(Yeh. The gent don't give a damn, but let's bring a little girl forward, with nice titties, and a swing to her hips, and we'll all straighten out, and we'll try to pick her up.)

Listen, I had a chance to go up with Eddie Mitchell, and see two of them, and probably world beaters, and I didn't take it. I'm going home, because I want to go home.

(Yeh. We'll believe that.)

Under the bridge now, and into the tunnel. Tracks on one side, a wooden balustrade, a walk of wooden planks, with cracks between. He tried to walk every third plank, did for a while, and then their size changed and he had to walk every fourth one. He absolutely knew he was alive, couldn't forget it one minute, would never be able to forget it. Whatever he did he would always realize that now he was and that some day he would not be.

(And so to the lunatic asylum.)

Try as he would he could not forget it. Through all the years, later when he settled and got himself a nice girl, married her, and watched the kids grow he always . . .

Which wasn't a bad idea, this getting married, except that it meant finding a girl, and liking her

well enough to let her come and park through all the years that she got old and creaky, and never to know another girl, and never to be by himself, and never to do what he wanted to do.

Another word and he'd burst into tears. Poor he who worried what would happen if a girl got him. Nagged and worried and sad. While he never could get in a word, never knew what bed was his own, hated to go home in the evening, and drank to forget instead of drinking as he did now for pleasure.

The best thing for him . . . would be a kick in the pants. Somebody to say, You should do this and you can't do that, and you must save so much or I'll give you a beating you'll never forget. Horses' language was what he needed and not human talk that would never do him any good because he didn't mind it. No use reasoning with somebody who didn't listen to reason, who made a resolution, then broke it, who wouldn't even control himself for someone he loved.

A figure appeared at the opposite end, came, steps echoing, in the walls, the ceiling, clack clack; came closer, without seeing him, walked straight, was very near, and passed him. Now he heard the steps behind him, at first loud, then lower and lower until they were lost in the rumble

of a passing train. Above, the street seemed to crack, as a trolley went by. From very far away came the noise of an automobile. Now he passed an empty news stand, the magazines red and green and yellow behind wired glass. In front was the Queensboro elevator, a nigger attending. A couple stood inside. The woman tired, leaned against the man. Somewhere a train came in. Jim ran, his legs hurting, past the pillars, looked at the clock, past the DOWNTOWN side, grabbed the post and swung down the stairs round it, rushed down, and it wasn't the train.

He walked from one end of the platform to the other in a straight line, saying If there are people in my way they will have to move or I'll push them. He stopped for a moment at the foot of a stair to see a woman and a man go down, the woman's legs showing under the dress and something above the legs, he couldn't tell what. The man caught his eye and he walked on. One got out of his way, but he was not important, looked like a bum that slept the night in the subway, and probably scared of everyone. Next were two wop boys leaning against a stair wall, not looking in Jim's direction. He went on stamping on the stone floor, they should hear him. They did, stepped aside, and he passed them, not looking.

The thing to do was to walk always like that, never ask permission, just take what he wanted without looking. (But you are a God damned fool.) All right, all right, he was too tired to think. Simson could get out of his seat. He was the new general manager. His salary a hundred bucks a week, a wife, and a car, and a little apartment his wife didn't know about where he invited somebody nice and had a little fun. Daisy could go and get married and stop plaguing him. Whatever she said was right, and he was a bum and a louse, but let him live the way he wanted. Besides, she knew that even if she was better than he, Ma didn't like her half as much.

He could ask Ma to borrow the insurance she had up to the last cent, and she would. Which was an idea, and maybe if he could get the few hundred he could open a place where a few friends could take a drink, and shoot a couple of rounds of craps, with a bedroom off the side or maybe a couch, where they could take their girl friend. No risk, they all being friends of his, a little easy dough, and the cash Ma gave him as safe as in the bank.

(Well . . .)

Oh, all right. He never would do it. No use arguing with him about it. Just a nice idea, and could be worked perfectly, and no risk. Ma's

money was Ma's money. He wouldn't monkey with it. But a good thought for the future.

(Get it out of your mind. There's nothing sacred to you. There's nobody you wouldn't gyp, not even Ma. If you want peace of mind, if you want quiet, if you hope there's still a chance of your becoming human, forget it. Don't think of Ma's money. It's not for you. Little as it is it's her life. She'd look fine without it, with the son she's got. For God's sake forget it.)

Why get scared about it? He wouldn't take the money. Honest, he wouldn't. Just a joke. Just a good idea. He could think, couldn't he? At least he was allowed that much?

(It's your thinking that does it. There's not an honest thought in you, nor a good one. Sometimes you feel like being good, but if it ever interferes with your comfort you'd sacrifice everything, yes, even Ma.)

The train came, stopped, the door opened. Passengers sprawled over the seats, faces covered with hats and handkerchiefs to keep out the light, slept. Jim found a seat in the corner, fell into it, relaxed his muscles, smoothed out his neck, let his hands drop down. The doors were shut. The train gave a lurch, started.

Anna. Lord, he'd forgotten her. Beautiful, soft, blond Anna, who liked him, who fought her

sister so he could stay, who lied to the senator. Did he have her address? He looked in his breast pocket, took out some old letters, an advertising blotter, a postal card picture of Ma taken in Coney Island, examined them carefully. Where was Anna's address? He remembered her saying: Call me up. Where to hell was her telephone number? Anna.

He didn't have it. He looked in all his pockets, again took out his money, found it forty cents, and wanted to throw it on the floor of the car. Maybe she'd told him the number. No, she hadn't. Never would he see her again. Not in Paddy's, for it was certain she wouldn't be there again, and besides she lived in Philadelphia, and after a night like this maybe she'd be sent back.

There was a girl for a guy to fall for. She met him, she didn't know anything about him, only that she liked the way he looked, and she was willing to tie up, was willing to give him everything she had, even her money. Not the lousy bitch Helen proved to be. A straight, honest, You're you and I'm me and let's be friends, girl.

And the God damned luck that he lost her. Go look for a girl you hardly even saw. Yell in New York I want my Anna. She's a decent kid and I must see her again. Anna.

Never was he really given a chance to begin again. Never could he say his past faults were over, he would try to do better, would begin to act like a man. If he wanted a new job his last references were bad. If he asked for a raise his work for some time before was careless; he wasn't interested up to the day he asked for the raise. He wanted to become a salesman, and he couldn't because he didn't save previously. And when he finally met a girl, well, he was drunk, and he didn't behave himself, or he got himself thrown out of the taxi and never asked for her telephone number.

The funny part was that he really didn't give a damn while the thing that ruined his future happened, but was always worrying afterwards, always promised to reform when the chance came, and when it did come, to hell with it.

He was pretty sure he wouldn't reform, either. With forty cents in his pocket, at almost five in the morning and his mouth tasting of mud, and not a feeling in the world, somebody give him fifty dollars, and a date, and he'd go right to it.

(Not really as bad as all that. You did give up the two Eddie was talking about. And you did hand Ma the ten. And you didn't take Anna's money when she offered it to you.)

And he didn't rob a bank, nor rape somebody's

grandmother, nor punch a two year old baby in the face. Which was a consolation.

The judge said: Has he got any money in the bank?

No, said Jim. But. . . .

No buts, the judge said. Proceed with the case.

Ma was standing back of the judge, dressed in white with a gold ribbon to hold up her waist. She leaned over the judge and said something in his ear. He grinned, and Jim was angry that they took the case so lightly. He wanted to say something but his mouth was closed, and he really didn't care a hell of a lot.

His lawyer got very excited: I object, he said. This is a courtroom. Not a parlor. Everybody whispering, and smiling, you'd think we were here for fun. We've got to cut it out and get down to business.

I wasn't whispering, said Ma. I just said something.

Who the hell is trying the case? asked the judge. Me or you? Did you ever hear of contempt of court?

The orchestra began playing, and Ma and the judge put their arms round each other and danced. Andy brought drinks. Everybody got one but Jim. Which is only to be expected, said the lawyer, because they don't know if you're

guilty or not. But you leave it to me, and I'll fix everything.

You fix nothing, Jim said. You're one fine lawyer. For two cents I'd punch you in the nose.

You and who else?

Me alone. Just to show you.

But the fist wouldn't punch, the muscles wouldn't act, and the lawyer laughed. They're all the same, he said. You try to help them, and this is what you get. I hope you'll like your jail.

Ma and the judge danced past. They were very close to each other, and Ma looked fine. Jim got up to tap the judge's shoulder, but Ma made a face, as if saying: You let me dance with him, and I'll get you off. Jim didn't want to get off, he wanted to dance with Ma, but already she and the judge were far away.

Two cops danced with each other, proving they were fairies. Two girls went by, both naked, but when Jim tried to see below their waists, they dissolved. He discovered he didn't have his shoes on, so naturally he couldn't dance. He asked his lawyer: Did you see where I put my shoes? No, said the lawyer, but I'll fix that, and ran off into the crowd.

Jim was standing before the library at Fifth Avenue and Forty Second Street, leaning against one of the lions, and he still was without his

shoes. A girl went by. He said: I'm asleep, and so I can do whatever I want to. If she calls the police I'll awaken. He rushed for the girl crying: Give me your shoes, and grabbed her, but there was no girl. More women went by, and he ran after every one of them. He decided to go into the hotel, and break into some of the rooms. If they arrest me I'm asleep. He rode up the elegant elevator, got off at a floor, went into one room after another, found women, but there were no shoes. He got tired of it, and sat on a bench.

The worst of it was that when he covered his feet with his hands people could see his face was full of pimples, and if he hid his face they asked: What did you do with your shoes? He lay on the bench doubled up, face covered by his knees, and hands clasped over the bare feet. Nobody could see him, he was as good as whole. It wasn't very comfortable, but he didn't care.

He found he couldn't open his hands, nor stretch. He tried very hard, and a little electric shock went through him, that got stronger. At first it was pleasant, then began to hurt. He wanted to free himself, to unclasp his hands, wriggle a toe, to lose the shock. He couldn't. He burned. In a moment he would die. He tightened all his muscles, there was a jerk, and he woke up.

The train was standing, the lights were out,

only the emergency lamp at each end of the car still burned. Passengers rose from their seats, walked to the exit. A man remarked: "This is a swell hour for a tie-up." Jim got up, stretched himself, sat down again, and tried to go to sleep.

A drunk was addressing the car:

"We've got too many politicians," he said, not very steady on his feet. "What we need is a soldier. We ain't strict enough. We let entirely too damned many get away with murder. What we need is law. Everybody toe the mark, and if they won't to hell with him."

The drunk got up. "Sit down," somebody yelled, "you're rocking the boat."

"Never mind me," the drunk said, "think of the republic. I'll be all right. But what about us? Are we going to let foreign nations dictate to us? Shall this great land of ours . . .?" The train started with a jerk, the lights went on, and the drunk fell back in his seat. Everybody was awake and grinning. The drunk tried to rise again, but couldn't, tried to speak, but words didn't come. He closed his mouth, his eyes, and then his head fell forward.

A man sitting next to Jim was talking to another.

"What if I stood before this car and told the people here a terrible injustice, and awful crime,

had been committed. Imagine me suddenly talking in the street, or during a performance, running forward in a theatre and crying: 'You must not look on the stage. Look at me. I shall tell you of horrors.' What's an injustice, a crime, a horror? They wouldn't know. They would listen to me for a while because they listen to everything, and then they would hear the name Sacco, the name Vanzetti, and they would turn away. Oh, yes, we know about that. The two who were burned. We read about it in the newspapers. Some tried to get them off, some said they were guilty. Who cares?"

The man's voice became louder.

"Try to think of a way to reach them, these rulers of the country for whose benefit all this was arranged, as a warning, as a lesson. Somehow try to wake them up. Words mean nothing to them. They're old, stale, they have been used too much. A wrong decision in a boxing match is an injustice. A bandit shooting a greasy bootlegger a crime. A straw hat worn after the fifteenth of September a horror. The newspapers have been screaming headlines at them for months. They read them and look elsewhere. The same headlines were used in other ways. A kept woman blackmails her lover. The newspapers shriek. A bank clerk steals some of the bank's deposits.

Headlines. Two men are hounded and framed into death. More headlines. Always the same. The sports page is more interesting, the comic page more amusing. Why read what's under the headlines?

"Why read newspapers? Why try to feel the moment? Why be one of the world? If you feel indignant, they laugh at you. Go hire a hall. If you do to convince them, they laugh at you more. Who cares?

"Find a way to wake them, to make them realize words. Try to talk to them, to make them understand. Do something."

The drunk got up, pointed his finger at the two men, and he shouted:

"Go on, say something. I'm tired of hearing about those two bozos. Explain what you've got to say. We're here, we're listening, we don't know what it's all about. You seem to know. Here is your chance. Talk."

Everyone in the car laughed. Somebody whistled, somebody else began to speak. "Let those guys talk," the drunk cried. Someone yelled: "A speech."

The two men rose, and looking very pale, walked down the aisle to the door, opened it and went into the other car.

"Razzberry," shouted the drunk.

There was handclapping. "They blow, and they blow, and then they blow off."

The train stopped at One Hundred and Third Street and went on. Jim wished there wasn't so much noise. Anna, where was she? Darling, soft Anna. What was she doing now? Pretty Anna. Remember him? Anna in the speakeasy, Anna drinking, laughing, talking back to her sister, in the taxi, kissing, loving.

Sacco and Vanzetti were two guys who loved his Anna. Sacco and Vanzetti were not allowed in the movies. They were burnt for the murder of a paymaster. They were guilty. The judge wouldn't let them off. Sacco and Vanzetti were gentle; they were too good to live, they were framed up, they were electrocuted, they were in heaven or hell. There were headlines. Sacco and Vanzetti wouldn't hurt a fly. They were a fish peddler and a shoemaker. Vanzetti stank and Sacco made shoes. The Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court would not let them off. They were guilty as hell. There was a lot of trouble over it. In the Argentine, in Paris, and in New York on Union Square where a little girl called Jennie got hit over the head by a policeman's club, and the doctor took three stitches. The senator said they were guilty and they ought to be killed anyway. The reporter said they were

innocent, that it was murder. The taxi driver said he'd like to give his life for them. They were burnt and buried. They were dead.

The thing to do was to do something. To go to Boston and ask them where to hell did they get off killing two guys who wouldn't hurt a fly? To go to the governor, and tell him: "You may be a good guy and very wise, but you don't know everything, and if so many people are sure they didn't do it, why don't you give them a chance? The governor would say: "Get the hell out of here, or I'll call a cop." "Well, call your God damned cops. There are people here who would give their lives for Sacco and Vanzetti, and they're not afraid of your lousy cops."

The thing to do was to call the governor a son of a bitch of a liar, and then have it out with him. Either fight him, or have it out in court. Let him sue you. And then get up before the judge and say: "I may not know everything about it, but so many people think they're innocent, so why don't you people give them a chance? Why don't you lock them up for life and then if somebody comes up to prove they didn't do it, why it won't be too late to admit you were wrong?"

But no. He was a wise guy, the governor. He wanted to make sure he wouldn't admit he was wrong so he had them killed, and that made him

right for always. Once they were dead people wouldn't care so much whether they did it or not. So they'd forget about it and the governor would always be right. Like that.

Anyway, there was no reason to get excited about it. They killed people every day, and nobody ever said a word. The damned fool Eugene joined the army because he didn't know what to do with himself, and suddenly found himself in a war, and then found himself dead, and nobody objected. The papers said nothing. There was a million poor suckers like Eugene killed off in the war and not even one drunk got up in the subway car, and shot off his nose about it. It was too damned bad these two were killed if they were innocent, but some people said they did it, and it didn't make much difference anyway. Tomorrow he'd have to go to the office just the same and make believe he thought Simson was a great man, and if the two had been let off, he'd have to do the same thing.

There were much pleasanter things to think of. There was Anna, whom he'd never forget. There was the thought that he'd go to the lunch room tomorrow, order a big meal from Helen, as if nothing had happened, and then would go off without leaving her a tip. By God, he'd do it every day, until she got so tired of him, she'd quit.

He'd just sit there, looking at the nipples of her breasts, and if she'd as much as say one word, he'd go to the Greek and tell him his lousy waitress was getting high hat, and if she didn't change he'd find another lunch room. Just sit there and eat and look at her breasts, until it positively drove her crazy.

It would make him feel good. Every day, between the morning and the afternoon period of work, between kowtowing to Simson, and treating Simson as if he was the salt of the earth, he would try to make Helen jump out of her skin. Never a personal look, never a good morning, never a tip. Just a cold Give me this and Give me that, very polite and his eyes screwed on her breasts.

The cigarette he lit began to taste like tobacco, and the hurt through his body slowly disappeared. He wasn't sleepy any more. He wished it was eight o'clock, and he on his way to the office so the meeting with Helen would come so much sooner. This morning she would be sleepy, after the drinking she'd done, and all the way in the taxi, fighting the guy who'd taken her home. Seeing Jim come into the lunch room she'd get all ready for a nice battle, while he would pleasantly sit on the high stool, order his sandwich, his coffee, would not answer anything

she said, but look at that soft and nipply part of her.

Maybe even today she wouldn't catch on to his game. But he had time. There was all summer to annoy her. He'd even work harder in the office, so by no chance he should get fired, and have to give up. He'd make her pay him for this lousy evening.

And then the whole business would have to get better regulated. This going out on blind dates with girls whose dispositions he didn't know a thing about would have to stop. The whole affair would have to be talked about first. I'm willing to take you out, and show you the town, and buy you drinks, and what do I get? No more mornings like this morning. A week's pay out, and all he had was headache, and the prospect of a tired day ahead.

Everything would have to be settled beforehand in a businesslike manner, without getting personal and nobody insulted. I ain't taking you out because I want you to think I'm a good guy, nor to marry you. I'm taking you out just for one thing. I'll give you as good a time as you ever had, be so pleasant, dance so nice, flatter you all you want, but . . . do I get it?

(You must think you're buying groceries. Here's a dollar and you give me a pound of onions

and a pound of meat and a couple of pounds of bread. You'd look nice talking to a girl like that. You'd get very very far. She'd laugh in your face, or smash it.)

(Besides, if all your going out in the evening isn't going to bring you any better ideas than that, you'd better stop going out.)

Which was right. Ideas at this time of the morning didn't amount to a damn anyway, nor ideas hatched out after a night like this. The thing to do was to get sleep, and plenty of it. Eight hours at least, and then to the office, and feeling on top of the world he'd put away such a hell of a lot of work that Simson would look petrified.

Anna, where was she? With a girl like her, with a pal like her.

(Just like a song. . . .)

What did he want from him? Why was he butting in all the time? Why, if he didn't like the way he managed things, didn't he tell him how to do better? If he didn't want him to go out nights, why didn't he show him how not to, how to occupy his time? What the hell was he to do? Go to night school?

Why, if he was bum, didn't he make him respectable? Wasn't he afraid of him? Didn't he shake every time he came into his mind, and try

to keep him away? Why the lousy jokes and the constant kidding, and always making him miserable, and never helping him? Wasn't he willing? Didn't he beg to be good? to be liked? to be at peace with him?

But no. If he ever had a decent resolution, it was: You can't do it. You're not strong enough. You ain't got the will power. You like your good times too much. Never: Sure, you're trying to be good, well, I'll help you along. I'll keep your mind quiet, I won't dirty it up with cheap jokes, with confessions that you can't do it, with wondering, and sighing, and hoping, and never a damned thing done.

(. . . . . .)

Shut up. He was doing the talking now. He was the boss now. If he had to go crazy, he'd keep him down, below, where he belonged. He was going to be free, to do what he wanted. When he wanted to go out he'd go out, without the inside of him yelling, What you going out for? And when he wanted to settle down to work, there was going to be no screeching: Oh, so the gent is tired of the gay life, and is considering business.

Anna, help him. Somebody help him.

(You're a great, great guy. You're simply wonderful. Don't make me laugh.)

The conductor was bending over a little kid. Must have been no more than ten or eleven. The conductor woke him up and asked:

"Hey, how far you're riding?"

The kid woke up from his seat and looked scared.

The conductor said for the benefit of the other passengers:

"This kid's been riding here since twelve o'clock. Where you live, kid?"

The kid didn't answer.

"Ain't you got a home?"

The kid looked as if he was going to cry.

"Do you think this is a hotel for a nickel?"

Somebody said:

"Let the youngster alone."

"Who's the conductor here? You mind your business. Hey, kid, what am I going to do with you?"

The kid began bawling. Louder, and louder, as if they were tearing him to pieces.

"Hey, what you yelping about? I ain't touching you."

The kid screamed and cried, and tears fell.

"One Hundred and Twenty Fifth Street," said the conductor, and ran to the gate.

Jim went after him, then through the door that opened, into the fresher air. The train rang

back of him, gave a push and started, went faster and into the tunnel. Jim went up the steps, at first slowly, then as the air got fresher, he began running; got to the downtown platform filled with people already going to work, rushed up the next stairs to the main platform, ran through the turnstiles, up the side stairs three at a time.

Was the sun out? Was there light? Did a day begin? Don't let the sun come up before he did. Hurry up.

Street lamps were out. Everywhere there was a gloom and haze, but in the east there was a little light. Jim shivered. It was the darkest part of night. Cold and a little moist. He turned up his collar, pulled down his hat and began walking home.

Now he really did not know where he was going. Through this murk there was no home, no apartment that was warm, no bed that would cover him, no Ma who was waiting for him. There was nothing but darkness, and cold dew that went down his neck and made him shudder. Back of him there was a long night full of fighting, nightmares, drinking, yelling, cops, women naked and wanting, and headaches, and awful feelings. Before him there was nothing but fog, and no home, no peace, no Ma. Jim wanted to run, but he couldn't, wanted to shout, but he was afraid to.

Oh, for a little light, for the fog to dissolve, for the darkness to go, for it to get warm again. Oh, to feel good, to be at home, not to be afraid. Oh, to stop thinking. To have the sun. Oh, for the sun.

There was the drug store with a little light inside, and the telephone booth the woman had entered. Joe's, with a kid already there selling papers, while Joe himself lay asleep with his fat Italian wife. There was the empty pushcart. There was the cop patrolling on the other side of the street, trying doors, and knocking shutters with his stick. Here was the kosher butcher market, boarded up with sloppy red boards. There was home.

He looked up. In the right third floor window there was light. Poor Ma. He looked at the East for the sun. It wasn't there yet. There he stood. He suddenly remembered and said: "Oh, my God. They're dead." He went into the house.

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