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We Are the Ones Who Work

by Henry Spikes

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CONTENTS

	page		page
SOLDIERS IN THE RANKS OF THE PEOPLE	5	The Rocking Chair	213
CITIES OF CROWDED STREETS		I Was Sad One Day	213
1. Taking A Walk On A Saturday Afternoon	8	Dreaming Away	213
2. People in the Crowded Streets	15	So How You Been?	214
3. Meeting Someone You Know	25	Wedding Anniversary	214
4. Passing Familiar Places	32	He's Gone	214
5. Stopping at the Grocers	41	A Neighbor's Home	215
6. Home At Last	65	Whiskers	216
7. This City Will Be Ours!	67	Got T'Take It and Like It	216
WE ARE THE ONES WHO WORK (sec Title Outline)	72	The People's Oldest Lesson	216
HUNGER IS OUR INHERITANCE	196	The Empty Canvas	217
OTHER STEPS ALONG THE WAY (some smaller poems)		Those Changing Skies	217
Struggling People	211	Striving	217
One Big Family	211	The Rules of the Game	218
To All What Must Be	212	What Is It All This Universe?	218
Cold Winter, Two in the Morning	212	Children, Yell It Out!	219
He Dares To Learn	212	Sweethearts All These Years	219
For A Short Time	213	All the Sorrows of The Working People	220
Together Again	213	Me and the Wife Surrounded by A World	220
Unwanted	213	Gert and Me at Twenty-one	220
		They'll Get Around To It	221
		It's Bound To Be	221
		MARCH FORWARD FOREVER!	222

SOLDIERS IN THE RANKS OF THE PEOPLE

SOLDIERS IN THE RANKS OF THE PEOPLE

When too carefully I count the cost . . .
When too filled with fear I measure the consequence . . .
When so weary with the length and turns of the road
I grow impatient, or discouraged . . .
Walk beside me Oh Memory of Our Martyrs!

No matter what happens —
 as long as it awakes us
No matter what the price —
 as long as in the struggle it shakes us
And from that old-warped self-seeking soul
 rips and with a new light sheds us!

When it seems, that all, is lost
And the awfulness, of our enemies make me afraid
When all we've won, at so TERRIBLE A COST
Is taken back, and hopes and lives are lost,
Oh Martyrs of My People . . . lift me to the passion of your belief
Remind me once again of your undying faith!

Onward and upward and striving ever more —
Clinging to our high faith that working groups can soar!
With anything blocking our path an open challenge to war;
With unity of will and purpose that nothing on this earth can ignore!

Not for nothing do I say: Hold out!
For the bitterness of the people is gathering about!

Suddenly, it struck me with force,
Every honest worker with character
In time — moves to our side
And swears vengeance on the world of the boss!

Oh I'm a soldier, a soldier, no grandstand fighting man,

But I'll revenge myself with all the fury that a bitter man can.
Ohh the suffering I have seen -- Oh my people
No bottom to your daily sorrows anger piling higher than the highest steeple.

Oh I'm a dreamer, a dreamer, but I'm made from flesh and bone
And the hard and dirty facts of life, don't you worry, they've been driven home.
No more "a lonely eagle" that rides below the clouds --
This voice a rising challenge in union with a million mouths!

Oh I'm a patriot, a patriot, a son of the workingclass
And I'm keeping my head up high no matter what'll come to pass.
The old flag! the old flag! the red and white and blue --
Don't let them make a mockery of what it symbolizes for you
Up with the banner that first for freedom was flown
And stars for every human right and space for more were sewn.

The New Man -- the New Man, I don't know EXACTLY what he'll be
But the shadow he casts before him is already working out in me.
And You may want to own things -- and You may want "success" --
But the New Man -- the New Woman -- will love his kind, and in teaming up
with the whole people find his humanness.

THE END

CITIES OF CROWDED STREETS

TO MY DEAR FRIEND RICHARD

*Whose compassion for all
people is as movingly profound
as his forbearance with human
imperfection and failings*

Do your cryin' moneybags on somebody else's shoulder
I was wise to you when I was young, I'm twice as wise now I am older.
Which "apartment" in your opinion, dear sir, after all these years needs paint?
And please! don't ever repair anything right away . . . My eyes roll back
in shocking faint.

So often you don't even know the person living next door, so often you do
But when it comes to the people living in my house — Take it easy down the steps,
I could tell you a thing or two!

Everyone living in this house — except
the running up and down the stairs
careless noisy shouting children —
has come down with a fever:
Malarial Money-fright.
It's a regular epidemic.
From grocery stores, clothing places, shoe
stores, the Super-Markets, the chain
drug stores, the little candy store,
butchers and bakers and barbers
The foul air of High Prices has seeped
thru the tenement cellar doors, and up
and around the double-landing stairs
Carrying with it the deadly blood-poisoning
mosquito: The Bite of the Poor Man's Fear.

The widow-lady next door — How is she
going to bring up her children? Every
day she's looking more run-down.
That pale old man, in the front to the left
on this floor, if he hardly got along
on what he gets for a pension, even with
the 5 dollars his daughter sends him
once in awhile what next — what else
is he supposed to do without now!
And the crippled woman right underneath him
on the second floor she takes in sewing

(your eyes could NEVER forget it if you
saw her on the streets lugging bundles)
is it going to be O K for her? Are
things going to be easier because she's
with a chill brought on by rising prices?
And the top-floor couple you meet often now
resting on the steps, the young wife's
eyes lighted and glowing shining with
expectation — surely all this will put
her in a pleasant frame of mind for her
first confinement.
That "well-to-do" family of the house first floor
front - the man is a salesman with Worth &
Fleigel — who has always been able to
cram in their kitchen all the advertise-
ment kitchen helps last year bringing in that
fancy-white electric ice-box (managing to live
like this by paying cheap rent) even they
with all their getting along so nicely
are shouting at each other now, and calling
names that can be heard thruout the whole
house, and arguing at night banging doors.
Next door neighbor to them — the veteran of
two wars. He tells his high school kid
brother with whom he lives: "Big and small
frig 'em all — you got to take care of your-
self kid, nobody else will." With all this

ex-soldier's bitterness of self-seeking (he has a nervous tremble to remind him of his service) with all his hopes of getting out of all this by owning his own home, and his own business (a gas station's on his mind) the plague of high costs and prices is on him. And on the ground floor in the back — Louie, the drunken janitor. TB's got him 'n he's on his way out. A good merchantmarine sailor in his day but now: "Whiskey's damn high!" your best friend for a drink.

That grouch of a woman in her late forties — she's always slapping her children and they're always crying, she's always yelling and they (the three boys and a girl) are always fighting. What a STRUGGLE she's putting up trying to bring up her children right — and in three box "rooms" and a room, and the toilet on the other side in the hall. On Wednesdays and Fridays she goes out cleaning by the day to help things along. Her husband tries. One day her heart and insides broke!! "I wish I HAD NEVER HAD . . . I wish I had drowned them while they were young . . . (both hands before her face, body shaken with moaning) My GOD! My God! Mr. Higgins I've done my best . . . They — they — they don't let you LIVE ANYMORE nowadays. (one hand on fist before mouth trying so hard

to keep from crying. Bursting into a bitterness of tears) If only things weren't so-so (eyes wild) sinfully high!"

And in the front rooms with a window out to the sidewalk that gentle, kind, — but queer-acting, considerate man. For a long time he's needed some kind of treatment. Nothing he enjoys more than to fix something broken for you, like a clock or the iron or the radio when it goes on the blink — but you mustn't offer him pay or somethin' or he gets mad on you and awfully insulted. A careful clean worker in other people's houses but in his own home . . . As if he had moved in an hour ago. His neatly patched and faded overalls and his worn-out dilapidated shoes show only too plainly the ravages of that dreadful disease: Strangling-Prices!

An uncle of mine was up the house and he said: "Can't you do better than this — (his hand waved around the room) the trouble with you — You people don't know how t'live." And just before we hit the stoop and walk into the street we meet the little children . . . playing with old magazines in the hall cutting out pictures of beautiful houses and beautiful homes.

The City uproarious bursting at its seams
Engulfing with a chuckle its borderline suburbs and villages —
Burning their bridges behind them
Melting down the country lanes.
Out of itself like time-bombs exploding zones and neighborhoods and sections
Downtown and Uptown and Business and Residential areas . . .
From the biggest city to a bigger one! cargos forever shifting and people changing
at these swirling world community terminals.

What City but was built from the crushed and ground-up ruins of a Thousand Years of Cities?
A thousand Ghost Towns hide and linger about built-over or buried and forsaken.
An old landmark; an ancient building; or a site too long gone to be recalled except by the mark
of a bronze tablet —
Ancient cities with forgotten names — and all hazy memories that cling and touch the lost and eerie past
Give proof . . . New Teeth in the grinding mouth of city-life cannot grow in — unless
The outdated set is pounced upon and tooth for tooth wrecked and forcibly wrenched out, clearing away
the mess!

What a city! you can go in any direction and lose yourself for hours —
And in any direction the double-personality arrogantly displays itself:
THE WELL-OFF and those who can hardly get by.
In a few minutes, coupl'a steps more, up Northern Avenue to 47 Street
We've hit the high-priced homes.
Twenty-stories high on both sides of the street
Colonies of the city rich in their city pleasure pavilions
Serviced — Starched — Uniformed, varnished and extravagant!
Aloof from the harassed, the struggling, the heartbroken and suffering poor.
Or am I being offensive? — here on the neatly tailored sidewalks
Well-pressed for dainty and swaggering feet.

Waiting for the lights Northern and 54th can't help noticing those boarded-up buildings
Just for spite you'll see them everywhere, and people going nutty looking for rooms.
Patch-eye rent boosters for the Real Estate boys!

Every city street a mountain pass; a highway and a rolling parade!
A straight-laid civilized path draws on the hordes of wheeling horses . . .
as if in tow by invisible hands.
With bulging eyes and puffing and panting these thorobred animals trained to wait at the Red Light,
and bolt at the green: are rumbling for the take-off signal!

can sit down for a moment on one of the benches and wonder once more
at the city skyscrapers.

But just a minute: Look at that “Help Wanted” sign hung loosely at the side
of an entrance door.

You’d have given half your life . . . to have seen ONE “Help Wanted”
a couple of years ago or more.

And now, you can’t take two steps, and they stare you in the face!

Men!! Women!!

Boys!! Girls!!

POSITIONS OPEN. ADVANCEMENT. DAY WORK. NIGHT WORK.

Overtime . . . plenty overtime.

We NEED you. We WANT you. We LOVE you: Apply upstairs Room 512.

If you had your way you’d rush over and tear that sign down

smashing it over their heads

And you know just what you’d say—sticking out your tongue and a nose to them:

“Y’got a job open? you need someone . . . y’sure you
need someone—well keep on needing it I don’t
want it. You and your lousy job can BOTII go to
hell. You — you — *°!!!°—!!° bitch—drop dead!
I hope you choke before you find another person
working for you.”

and walk out banging the door!

First there’s no work and then, they’re killing you with work.

Glad to make something extra there’s no telling how long it will last

Glad to overwork myself. —Will I be just as glad hanging around doctors’ offices?

Waiting in the clinics? It hurts me here and it hurts me there . . .

But work—even too much of it, can only be gotten when it can be had.

Tall lanky buildings standing on their tip-toes over-reaching themselves—
sky-high in their stocking feet.

Unsavage buildings to their peaks in stately repetition

Billions and billions of hours of work Upheaving all these brick-encircled tents

In ranks across each other, in wall to wall embrace.

Not ponderous like the moat and walls of an old castle, not a fortress,

But poised and hovering the skyscraper in its outspoken massiveness!

Way below in the deep-channeled canal cuts there's restlessness and rushing about,
And cut deeper still the undergrowth of subways, basements, pipes and cables
But straightbacked and immovable—unblinking thru their thousand-holed windowed pits—
The towering structures drop their weight floor by floor from their lofty staggering
monumental heights.

2. PEOPLE IN THE CROWDED CITY STREETS

The streets of City Town not for nothing are they known the world around!
Who can rest more than a minute in Temple Square
When street-names and guide-posts are murmuring in the air?
Who can wait when the pull of the sidewalks is so great?
The Club House--The Assembly-rooms—pleasure-grounds where the people meet
A cast of thousands in the Grand Ballroom of an ordinary street.

people . . . people . . . people wherEVER you go
trying so hard to get along without coming to anybody
crowds of people at every hour patrolling the streets
intermingling in the millions
the rice of countless spilling streaming numbers—
the burst bags of human life pouring themselves
into the endless streets!

THE CITY MAN a city creation
Some may speak sing-song-like . . . some may drawl . . .
but the city person breaks his breadth in jerks and phrases.
Let's go someplace and when we get there let's go someplace else—
ever poised on the curb of his life for a reckless spurt!
How often have I heard him proudly announce:
“I'm so over my head in debt—so—I'll owe a hundred more!
What's the good of money if you can't spend it?” His.—and his wife's glory:
Cheap stuff 'n showy sign the dotted lines in the instalment store.

You can try, you can sigh, you
can argue and holler
But there'll always be some
damn expense, or another,
To help you say goodbye to
that last dollar.

Goodbye Goodbye Goodbye
Hope I'll see you soon again
(unfaithful lousy fly-by-night
to us workingmen)

The minute you're in my arms all
the business-boys from miles
around (Just about)
And landlord, doctor, grocer, insurance man
Come rushing in from all sides palms out
slobbering for a hug and a handout.

The goddam dollar is a goddam flirt
It cuddles for a second in papa's arms
and leaves
A wide, wide space between her hocus-pocus
and his shirt.

When my billfold is empty and my
change-pocket is bare
Calmly I walk around but inside
I tear my hair.

In the city EVERYTHING IS AN EXPENSE and everything you've got to buy
And you just CAN'T get along without a dollar no matter how you try.

The City person carries a chip on his shoulder—to hell with you and yours!
Angling to be taken out of turn and pushing himself ahead
His! His own! His family! His kind! And I don't care what happens to anybody else.
YOU DAMM-N FOOL I don't care how long you've lived here you're still a stranger, uncitified!
For where else even in boss-split city is this -This here true:

One truck breaks down and for miles the traffic snarls . . .

One crazy nut goes wild and thousands of people are shocked and horrified . . .

One mistake—yours perhaps -and a whole neighborhood is searched for where the stuff has
disappeared . . .

One person catches that deadly crippling germ . . . Will it flare into a community tragedy?

One little fire—will it leave our city half in catastrophic ruins!

Here it's nobody's business what you do or where you go, here you have the last word
in the privacy of living together. But don't forget the lesson of the crowds:

One by yourself, but also one of many.

City people who have not yet become one hundred and one per cent Citified.
Smart—but not smart enough

how CAN I See These
Before me
Not swear by all that's true and free
IT ALL MUST CHANGE—
So that their lives can grander be.

I'd like to make friends with that old bent hatless Negro man lugging those three heavy bundles, his boney fingers around the handkerchiefs under the cords. Both arms are pulling to the ground but he plods along. He's seen a lotta of work in his days, and a lot of sorrow.

"Hey, mister, c'n yuh help a guy t'eat that's hungry? I just got out o' the hospital—couple'a pennies 'll help." A professional beggar if ever there was one. Too bad . . . this young man without an overcoat and looking so down and out I'd like to know and help him; bring him back to the self-respect of work.

Introduce me someone to this shoulder-humped mother no more a girl finding it Not so easy to walk even the few blocks to the station . . . the grown-up fifteen-sixteen-year-old daughter holding on to an arm of her mother and beamingly chattering about their shopping purchases.

Who is this lean, lanky, sad-faced man who folds his arms around under his sleeping baby, as he emerges slowly coming up the subway steps? Who is this big-brown-eyed wife of his coming from behind loaded with an extra blanket—a wooden toy—her pocketbook—and the loose bag of bottles and diapers? Why is she also tired and sad?

Do what he wish—Do what he can!
A touch of sadness creeps into every man.
For life is bigger—Than all our efforts combined
And Our Hearts are larger
Than the heights and expanse of the mind.

. . . there . . . there . . . sitting in that parked car! he's the prosperous looking rather stout gentleman that swung by us a minute ago carrying an impressive brown-yellow leather briefcase. I wouldn't mind knowing him but I don't think he'd want to know me. You see, he's of the city "Mid-dle Class." I don't want to misjudge him by appearances but you can bet your bottom dollar he's true to his type. These people don't associate with just anybody; you've got to be worth—while! that is, are you "good contact"? can something be made on you? How much are you "worth"? For Middle Class people never, never take you as you are, but for what they believe you own—and make—and are worth. Your best friends for what they can get out of you.

The middle-classes—split in two—
Ten for the bosses, and one, workers, for you.

Let's stand and watch mr. petty peanut bigshot now—is he in a fix. In trying to get his car out of line his bumper locked with the one in back of him. Already a few people have gathered and are giving him advice. —But brother meedle clahss you need much more important advice.

Middle of what . . . that's what I'd like to know!

One minute you shake your head like somebody because you think you're set for life—and the next you're frightened stiff: maybe you'll have to “lower yourself” to do some “common ordinary work,” only one step away from living by selling all your belongings.

“We people of the MIDDLE CLASS . . .” How little a person must have to be considered rich in a poor man's eyes!

I know . . . I know, I can't tell you anything; you know it all. And that's why you're so pleased with yourself. And that's why when your nose is down you're better than anybody else. And when you're looking up you melt with gratefulness to think that such wealth and position thought enough to notice you!

“IF YOU'RE SO DAMN SMART why the hell aren't you rich? . . .” people who have decided there is only one important thing in this world and THAT'S money—and they don't care how they get it . . . changing sides for a dollar and changing back for two.

“Me! I don't care what happens to anybody else except my family . . .” hurrah! the world exists for me and mine! — as long as it doesn't hit them personally it doesn't bother them one way or the other.

Selfish and egotistic as they are they want to appear angelic . . . Didn't we all hear about your generous donation? What an expensive stone a good guy like you set on your mother's grave! And your wife hasn't she been doing “welfare work” on occasion?

(What a good woman his wife is: she knows just the right thing to say without meaning a word of it)

The City “Middle Clahsses”—those who make out a little better and those who make out a little worse—How dare you insult them so by saying: Ladies, and Gentlemen—you're just another variety of the many kinds of the struggling poor.

“Middle-Classes” don't be asses
Know which side you're REALLY ON
Meet your friends let's all shake hands
For ALL that toil are of the masses.

. . . Well whoever our street-dressed polished gentlemen is he's certainly having trouble getting his car out. A young kid around eighteen full of energy is standing on the bumpers as he sways them up and

down. A policeman's come along and he's asking the people to "stand back" -then he also is looking on and giving advice. The gentleman behind the wheel looks disgusted.

Well, there's nothing we can do, let's keep on walking. But I'm curious -I can't get him off my mind. Who was he? It would have been nice to know this fellow and hear what he had to say no matter what. Was he a professional . . . a doctor perhaps? why DIDN'T I notice if he had MD on his license plate!

The rank and file doctor he's not a workingman
He gets paid when he gets paid catch-as-catch-can
He's on call every hour day and night—the bell is on his door
And for that privilege every service, businessman, and landlord
charges and soaks him more.

The rank and file doctor he's A PROFESSIONAL MAN
and it's "Doctor" when you're talking to him, and not just plain Sam
But uh-rr- bills are bills and rent is rent,
So we find the doctor (in a dignified way) haggling over every cent.

Please — can't you understand — a doctor has "status" he's not a workingman
So don't be so vulgar as to talk to him about a "socialized medicine" plan.
The High-priced Clinics put the sign on him from the moment they began
but How dare you suggest that he be helped and subsidized all that the government can!

Professionals, Professionals, who don't seem to see, Among themselves, the split
between rich and poor
So hired out or in an "office" they bite the rich man's Success and Riches lure.
And with few exceptions—few indeed—they spit upon the outstretched friendly workers' hand
The only possible, — the truest, the best friends they'll ever have in the whole wide land.

Was he a "businessman"—he and Rockefeller,—or some small service owner with his name-plate downstairs in the directory; or some small loft-rent manufacturer? I couldn't say . . . But they all have something in common, most of them. Grab as much as you can for yourself—get yours!— and to hell with the next person. Run him down and run him over but get yours. Using the crook's excuse: What the heck, if you don't somebody else will. It's business! Y'got'a be practical. (Too many of these feel it's smart to be tricky—it's clever to be paid twice) Not workers, but as near as it is possible for someone to put in a hard, long day's work and still not be of the workers

Not workers, but whom does it remind you of that fretful and haunted look as the run is made for the morning mail: **BILLS BILLS BILLS** and a check.

the papers switched from desk to desk, checked—filed—rustled around,
the snapping back of springy nipples,
the click-a-ding and the clack-a-ding of white-collar-machines
and typewriters all nerved up — can't stand it anymore -- PIN-NGG!
the warning bell

it can blink and start the keyboard pianola fingers hopping all over again.
the telephone, brrr, brrr-r-rushing stammering in your face
(it gets so mad if you don't attend to it right away)
the flitting pencil—the bent over concentrating back—the foreman or
the forelady watching

hurrying us along—the same as in any other place of work
. Eye-strained, hard-worked, “Miss” and “Mr.” people
street-dressed, feeling themselves better, “middle class people”
smooth-hand, please thank you—but just the same, Ordinary Working People.
. and the day IS long, and the nerves of a human being are not so long
and even IF you use a rubber stamp AND you sign with initials
white-collar factory worker think of this:

he who can't help but be a worker
Can LEAST AFFORD to spit upon
and ANTAGONIZE his fellow-sister brother workers.

In the Land of Silver Gold and dollar everybody's rich, except the poor.
The poor are Middle Class.

Where everybody has a “high standard of living” as long as he can still
mortgage himself with payments.

. . . and all kinds of people have learned how to play ball
have “accommodated” and compromised and corrupted themselves
and lost their self-respect to the clink of a lousy coin and the smell of a greasy dollar.
All kinds of people seeing themselves as what they least wish to be
Saying things they don't mean, and doing things they'd rather not talk about
Hating themselves for the excuses that spring to their lips
Disgusted and dishonored inside.

There are bombs of hatred in my soul
And whenever I see unfairness and injustice in any section of our people
Dangerously they bump and jostle.
For when our hands grip the prison bars of our everyday life

All seems hopeless

And it IS hopeless . . . useless . . . dismal and empty

Unless you make your choice: ON THE SIDE OF YOUR OWN The Laboring People!

Getting back to the street-people we're passing . . . I'd like to know that old lady with one or two teeth in her mouth who has just handed me a slip of paper with an address on it: she can't read. Face haggard but with eyes alive like an adolescent. She returns the piece of paper to her pocketbook after I've read it -- wrong address, that's her oldest son -- today she's visiting her youngest. A little fishing around and out comes the right paper. "See that building there -- on the other side in the corner? Where the big sign is, it's in back o' that." Yes lady, thanking me again and again in broken English, I would like more than anything else to know and truly understand you and your language.

In a rain-stained fedora hat, in a gray overcoat hanging over brown n' baggy pants, head bent thinking -- this average man strolls around. An ordinary average fellow but he knows more than he's willing to admit; much more than he's being given credit for. There isn't a lie in creation, practically, that he hasn't been taken in by but you can see, he's walking along thinking. And sooner or later he'll catch up with himself.

Oh the ordinary worker, the simple average fellow --
Listen, punk, he's not simple and he's not soft as jello
There's a lotta things he sees and says Goodbye to
When all the time he'd give anything to take on and say Hello to.

The ordinary person he's NO ORDINARY MAN
For fancy-talk and double-talk he doesn't give a damn
For bootlickers and crooks and rats and phonies--
It's not like him to stand for these with head below
two shaking knees!

OH the ordinary worker is no ORDINARY MAN
Y'GOTTA BE a cockeye-genius to TAKE IT the way he can
Oh the ordinary--the ordinary man, the workers me and mine--
Hard as a hickory nut and tender, softer than the green-leafed
creeping vine.

Who then is this average man coming my way with his hands in his pockets--I don't care. I'm willing to meet him half-way. For every human being is personal to me and in two seconds I could stop and let this man tell me all his troubles. Alone the crowded streets without the touch of natural friendliness -- alone

when most they're people-weary. Speak to whomever is walking along beside you even if you'll never speak to him again . . . He is no more a stranger. So much of him is you. So much of him is greatness waiting for the chance to display itself. So pour our friendship down a glass and watch it come up to meet you. But who, who is that plain man who is he, you don't know whom to trust? Well watch him — but let him prove himself before you mark him lousy! I'd like to know him and his people. I'd like to know his name and address and be invited to his home. And who is to say I won't be a better man for having known him!

Mrs. Elmslie! WELL I'LL BE! Of all the persons I know she's the last one I'd expect to meet. I must stop and say hello to her.

(For PEOPLE are important — no
matter whom you meet
And people are the essence,
Over all the cities
down every street)

3. MEETING SOMEONE YOU KNOW

(a plump little lady is coming your way wheeling a brown carriage . . . two of her children, Jeannie 7 and Larry 9 are hopping and skipping along)

Mrs. Elmslie: "Oh hello — I didn't hardly recognize you."

(me) Eddy Higgs: "Have I changed that much?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "No — it must be . . . What are you doin' here?"

(me) "I can ask you the same question, I'm taking a walk."

Mrs. Elmslie: "So, So how have you been what have you been doing with yourself? — I heard your aunt died . . . s'too bad! What was . . . CANCER tsk, oh my!
(as children come near) Do you remember Mr. Higgs used to live in the same house on Broyden St. — no, I suppose they were too young to remember."

(me) (admiring baby in silk knitted hat deep in cushions and blankets) "That's a cute one you have there!"

Mrs. Elmslie: (tickling chin) "Cuchee-cuchee-cuchee ooh! she's like sugar 'n candy."

(me) "Very sweet."

Mrs. Elmslie: "Even the man next door my neighbors are crazy about her! They're cute at that age but they're a lotta work. Blupb Blupb she takes after me don't you think?"

(me) "Yes, the eyes."

Mrs. Elmslie: "I have another one you know — WHERE DID YOU LEAVE STEVIE I told you to . . ."

Larry: "He's alright, Mamma, he's playin' in front of the house."

Mrs. Elmslie: "Y'sure!"

Larry: "Course I'm sure . . . He's with the kids." (runs off with sister to watch some men painting a store front nearby)

Mrs. Elmslie: "You know I'm no more with George . . . we're separated — Right after she (baby) was born."

(me) "You di-ID? When did all this happen?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "Well — What is it (to whining baby) Mamma's little one got a tummyache? Upsy-daisy (sits baby up pressing milk bottle to mouth) Well-er, you see —"

(me) "Don't tell me if you don't want to but if you insist, I'll listen."

Mrs. Elmslie: "Well come on aside here we're blocking the sidewalk. I was merely wondering if you'd care to hear . . . it's personal . . . not pleasant." (hurt expression, hand straightening hair)

(me) "'nother woman I suppose?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "He must have many times but I attached no importance to that on account of you know how men are. Well, he always drank but he became worse and almost every night he'd start a commotion. I warned him I wouldn't stand for it **THAT'S ONE THING I WON'T STAND FOR** bringing up my children in such an environment. So he promised me . . . dopey me I believed him! but there was nothing but arguments all the time. One night (biting underlip) he came home so drunk he fell on the stairs I was ashamed of the neighbors."

(me) "Was he hurt?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "No"

(me) "So what else?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "You shouldda heard what he called me. Well like I always say a person can take so much but no more. I told him to leave me alone and get out and stay out or I'll have him locked up. The result being . . . now he's living with his mother. I wish t'God . . ."

(me) "Does he support you?"

Mrs. Elmslie: ". . . I had never seen him! that finishes me with . . ."

(me) "Does he?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "Yes — Yes — he deserves a gold medal with diamonds on it a father supporting his

own children. I never have no luck with people (sighing in self-pity) but, I got no one to blame but myself. When I met George it was one – two – three (clapping hands three times) other boy friends turned into nothing. (sighing) And that's the way it is . . . you start out to be happy and with hopes and it turns out to be different . . . happens all the time. I ought to have left him a"

Larry: (interrupting with a rush) "Mamma c'n I go to the movies tomorrow?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "We'll see tomorrow."

Larry: "Buck Rue is playing can I mamma can I?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "We'll see if we live we'll see – now don't bother me. Larry Come back!"

Larry: "What I do now?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "Just look at you!—at the way you're walking around . . . fix your tie and your hair it's wild like an animal. Look at you! filthy, like someone stepped on you."

Larry: "F'cryin' out, Mom, whaddayuh. . . ."

Mrs. Elmslie: "Larry—I'm tellin' you—don't get snippy 'cause I don't like it. Wait a minute: I'm not done yet. (tidying up the boy) Hold still!"

Larry: "Mamma, Ma, can I have something?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "Y'just had a malted what MORE DO YOU WANT!"

Larry: "A Hershey."

Mrs. Elmslie: (to me) "Sometimes they set me so crazy I think I'll fly outta the window. All right —you can go now, but don't go far."

(me) "How do you think you acted when you were his age?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "Maybe you're right – I don't know, but both he and she are old enough to know better. Children,—they make you old before your time."

(me) "That Larry of yours is a big feller, soon he'll be out workin' for you Mrs. Elmslie."

Mrs. Elmslie: "I hope . . . maybe. You work hard trying to bring them up decent – and that's no easy joke, and just when you think you'll get some pleasure out of them the army takes 'em. You see, I know what I'm talking about."

(me) "That reminds me whatever happened to Henry – Henry! Henry! you know Henry use t'live over the candy store – Did the army"

Mrs. Elmslie: "The colored boy?"

(me) "Yes, yes."

Mrs. Elmslie: "Ohh! Whatsa matter with me (slaps forehead) I don't know; he married and moved away."

(me) "Nice feller. Go out of his way to do you a favor and-a"

Mrs. Elmslie: "Positively nice, I What are my kids up to now? JeanNIE LARRY Wait, I'll give it to you (shaking closed fingers except one) GET AWAY FROM THERE (man painting on ladder) GET AWAY — RIGHT NOW! YOU HEAR ME! As if I didn't have enough o' that two weeks ago. They painted in my house two weeks ago — what a job it was. DON'T MAKE SO MUCH NOISE! I'd rather move anytime. The painters they don't care they got paint over everything you ought to see my hardwood floors. And the windows in the living room they're stuck now now the paint's dry. (stopping for a minute to fix blankets around the baby . . . suddenly) Mr. Higgins, it ain't right without a man around the house."

(me) "Isn't it possible — not that I mean to interfere mind you (biting thumb) for you and George to, I mean, you used to hit it off so"

Mrs. Elmslie: "Never! hardly. I should cheapen myself by begging him to come back. Nothing he can do can nearly make it up to me. I'm only sorry for the children . . ."

(me) "Well?"

Mrs. Elmslie: ". . . they miss him so, I know it."

(me) "I know he drinks and that's no good but Mrs. Elmslie — Let's not make him out worse than he is."

Mrs. Elmslie: "I can't lie my way out the way he does . . . meets people puts on a face — Innocence! but people like him are good actors believe me I know my Georgie . . . Even so, if he didn't drink up his pay money I'd stand for anything. Mr. Higgins, honest to God as true as I'm standing here I'm an easy person to get along with but his drinking . . . No, no, there I don't agree with myself, we got along splendidly until his mother — the witch! come to live with us . . . then the fireworks began. When it comes to his moth-er you can't say a word — it isn't even funny! That woman, she can drive anybody to"

(me) "That's tough."

Mrs. Elmslie: ". . . to t'drinking. But what can you expect — He was an only child so she babied him. I always say . . . You fell! (to Jeannie who has just come over wiping her tears with one hand and rubbing her bruised knees with the other) T'me you wouldn't listen I told you not to be so wild. Now stop crying or I'll give you something to cry about."

Jeannie: "My foot got caught so I fell so I (fearfully) tore it." (shows rip in stocking)

Mrs. Elmslie: (slaps child) "Oh! these children, I tell you . . . Do you think I got money to throw

away, hah! I been having it hard enough to-to – ”

Jeannie: “Yih hurt me ma.” (rubbing face)

Mrs. Elmslie: “Was it for nothing!”

Jeannie: “Well, nrrr, not exactly.”

(me) (passing my hand over Jeanie’s silk-like hair) “You don’t understand, Mrs. Elmslie, Jeannie doesn’t mind if you slap her, Only it mustn’t hurt.”

Jeannie: (crying and smiling) “Yes Mama yes!”

Mrs. Elmslie: (catching sight of her son) “LARRY come here. (comes over bouncing ball) I asked you not to put it on like this, didn’t I? (straightens cap worn sideways) What makes you so silly?”

Larry: “Aw gee Mom all the kids on the block are wearin’ it that way.”

Mrs. Elmslie: “Do you have to be a me too! and button up your sweater – no, it’s chilly – Do as you’re told.”

Larry: (to an elderly lady passing who’s stopped to pat a stray cat) “Mrs! that yer cat? (answer, no my dear) Mamma! can I take him home wit’ me?”

Mrs. Elmslie: “That’s all I need yet, make my life complete . . . NO! I said no!”

Larry: “Awww, gee can I never have nuttin’? (on second thought) then can I have an ice-cream you promised me.”

Mrs. Elmslie: “When?”

Larry: “Yesterday.”

Mrs. Elmslie: “How many since”

Larry: “I wan’ it mamma c’n I have it anyhow, c’n I?”

Mrs. Elmslie: “Larry, I want to do what’s right by you, so don’t bother me no more. You’re eating too much sweets as it is . . . how old do you have to get before you learn better? (to me) You start up with my dentist EVERY TIME it costs you a nice piece of change. There’s no end to it, – n he expects me to pay it yet. When there’s four children there’s never . . . (deeply sighing) It’s awful when you have children and there’s never enough money to bring them up right.”

Larry: “Mamma, y’know what, I tink I got a nickel – a dime some place.” (looking thru pockets. looking again. still looking)

(me) (amused) “That’s funny Larry, how is it once you’ve spent your money, no matter how many times you look thru your pockets you never can find a penny? But I’ll tell you what (digging in my pocket) here’s a couple’a cents – go buy yourself ice-cream, and for your sister too. How ’bout you Mrs. Elmslie?”

Mrs. Elmslie: “No, no – No sweets for me. – Whataya say!”

Larry: "Oh 'tanks, 'tanks Mr."

Mrs. Elmslie: "Hurry back 'cause we're goin' home. — You shouldn't have done it, Mr. Higgins.
Tell me, what is your brother doin' these . . ."

(me) "He's a certified public accountant."

Mrs. Elmslie: "Hmn! that's nice . . . And your father?"

(me) "He's gone . . . like that, last April."

Mrs. Elmslie: "mmAIIII! NO! must've been an awful shock to your mother they got along so nice."

(me) "She still hasn't gotten over it. But what can you do when your time's up, it's up. Where are you situated now Mrs. Elmslie?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "Right here . . . On 75th street near that jewelry store on the second floor. Wait . . . I'll give you the address (picks out an envelope from a shopping bag hanging loose over edge of carriage) It's an advertisement — you can keep it. There's my address on it. I don't know what they keep sending it to me for?"

(me) (pulling out dress advertisement from envelope) "That's dressy! — You'd look nice in it."

Mrs. Elmslie: "Oh dear-ar! heh heh, I can see myself in that MY figure! — you're being nice to me. Yes . . . no! I like gray it goes with everything. But me, I never can buy something without having to hem it and alterations. It never can come out right, tellin' you! Oh this — (the dress she's wearing) it's an old thing. Each year I swear I'm gonna throw it away and each year I wear it. It's always the case — the things you don't like wear the longest. That's a fine-looking suit you got on, Mr. Higgins!"

(me) "It was good in its day, but it's wearin' out already." (pointing to trouser cuffs)

Mrs. Elmslie: "Why don't you get a pair of pants to match it! (palms up) I don't . . ."

(me) "I will, I will, I'm looking around. So what else goes on between you and George, I'm interested to know."

Mrs. Elmslie: "What else can there be: I'm not going to live with a drunkard."

(me) "T'tell you the truth I don't blame you."

Mrs. Elmslie: "But there is one thing if you want you can do for me . . . it's a favor and I don't want you to say no. What I want is if he will tell me where I stand . . . so I can have a life of my own, I'm young yet I'm only . . . Oh yeah I see him pretty often but we're not on speaking terms we don't speak to each other. And that's what I thought you could do for me go up to see him — I'll give you the address — and find out what his intentions are. It's gotten to the point where I don't miss him . . . much."

(me) "But Mrs. Elmslie, I'll only get in bad with George – He'll figure I'm buttin' in where I'm not supposed to."

Mrs. Elmslie: "Do you have to tell him what you're there for? Use your head! And in th –"

(me) "Well – all right – but I'm not promising you anything – I'll have to think it over."

Jeannie: (bumping and racing into me swirling around catching her mother by the dress)
"ma MAH! MAH Larry's chasin' me!"

Larry: (slowing down sucking Eskimo pie)

Mrs. Elmslie: "A little more respect, please! – And you, what have you been doin' to her?"

Larry: "She started up with me."

Jeannie: "I didn't – I didn't! he hit me first."

Larry: "You liar you . . . You said 'dummy' – STUPID."

Mrs. Elmslie: "That's enough – That's all I want to hear – from both of you! and you (shaking Larry by a shoulder) You forgot last Tuesday . . . hah . . . hah?"

Jeannie: "Nnyeah! Nnyeah! Good for yuh smarty. Next time you won't – OUCH!" (mother yanks hair)

Mrs. Elmslie: "And you – I'll knock you on the head with something . . . I don't care what happened I want you to act like a lady. All right . . . all right . . . keep it up (as children chase each other around mother and carriage) This time you'll both stay home – All day long and cry your eyes out."

Jeannie: "Look what you went and did!" (ice cream on coat)

Larry: "I did not. Don't you go blamin' me now. You bumped into me!"

Jeannie: "Got me all wet."

Larry: "I didn't mean it, Ma, honest I didn't."

Jeannie: "You did so – you did it on extra."

Mrs. Elmslie: (quietly hands Jeannie handkerchief. To Larry) "You were startin' to say somethin' before?"

Larry: "Who's this what's his name called me 'lousey.'"

Mrs. Elmslie: "Who – Who called you it?"

Larry: "Mickey."

Mrs. Elmslie: "Don't play with such boys – never. I'll give his mother a – LARRY! YOU PROMISED NOT TO PICK THAT SORE . . . be a good boy Larry and leave it alone. And I want you up for supper 5 o'clock sharp! – Did I, did I say so? alright then half past five but no later. And be careful the way you cross the streets YOU KNOW THE WAY YOU ARE. Larry – You're not listening."

Larry: "I am so. I heard everything you said and — and, I know what you're going to say . . . and don't get into trouble, and watch where you're going, and eh eh don't dirty yourself keep clean like a good boy, and don't get into fights, and, and, see if there's any mail."

Mrs. Elmslie: (very pleased at the recital hugging her boy)
 Larry: "And don't play rough 'n tear your clothes."

Mrs. Elmslie: (laughing to herself) "Go go now — and don't forget to bring up Stevie with . . ."

Larry: "Supposin' he ain't there?"

Mrs. Elmslie: "Go after him — Please Larry you're the oldest. Just don't come up without him.
 (as Larry hop skips and jumps away Jeannie is pulling at her mother's sleeve) Now what is it you want?"

Jeannie: "The key."

Mrs. Elmslie: "Can't you wait a minute I'm going right up."

Jeannie: "It hurts already from holding it in."

Mrs. Elmslie: "Where'd I put my pocketbook . . . What I do with — OII! here it is. 'n don't forget it, (the key) we were locked out a coupla weeks ago y'member had to go down the firescape from the roof. Leave it with Mrs. Binley in the grocery store tell her mamma's comin' in to buy a few things. And darling (bending over a hand on Jeannie's shoulder) don't even talk to that old one if she's on the stoop . . . she don't mind her own business. Tell her nothing, yes, sweetheart — and (as Jeannie hurries away) Wash your face and hands while you're upstairs! your whole face, not just in the middle. Behind your neck too! (both hands resting on bar of the carriage as she stands watching her children Larry way off and Jeanie running calling after him. Another minute, and then, half to herself) Will I ever live to see them . . . grown-up and married?"

4. PASSING FAMILIAR PLACES

81st St. — guess I'll turn around and head for home; it's time I did.
 But the old familiar city scenes again keep holding me back.

the street's ripped up
 exposing ruthlessly the systems
 of water mains, steam, and telephone
 wires and pipes.

Passing that large shoe store still on strike, it's a chain and they all went out.
The pickets are walking back and forth. Did you read in the papers how a bunch of
them were arrested last night? Oh — it doesn't interest you — not your business!
The right to stick up for our rights, it doesn't interest you?
The firm has the right to make as much money as they can on us, but when you put
your foot down — it doesn't interest you!
Well I have no respect for a man that lets himself be stepped upon: Talks of "liberty"
and talks of "freedom" and never takes advantage of them.

Talk to me less of freedom and give me more of it!
Don't tell me I have a right to my opinion — as long as I keep my mouth shut!
Don't tell me I can go where I please — do what I please — live anyway I like!
leave me stranded without a meal.
Don't tell me I'm free — and ask for my "background" and color credentials!
Don't tell me anything! and with slimy bought-off explanations fix it so it really isn't so.

street corner speaking man
he hollers loud
wipes his head, and shakes his
finger,
and throws his arms out like
a revival singer!

Good words are good; but no matter how they shine
It's what you do afterwards that show them up as fine.
So don't tell me Mr. fine speaker of "freedom and equality for ALL in our great
and glorious land"
How right you are, blabberer, if you skip, the countless millions beached along exceptions' sands
So don't tell me to lock the door and leave the key in!
because I BELIEVE in an even chance for all **NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE
YOU'VE COME AND BEEN!**

To every man his Manhood —
to every woman her own!
To every child his span of childhood
With joy in school and joy at home.

— If you'll turn your head you'll still see the pickets walking back and forth, carrying the sign:
ON STRIKE — Brotherhood of Workers — for union recognition and decent living-wages! PASS EM BY! —

Up on its hind legs the coal truck scuttles its load
— a familiar winter sight —
Shooting the coal down the sliding path thru the sidewalk hole.
With an old broom the dusty-blackened driver sweeps the coal that's jumped the chute
and before you know it — the truck is off — the rasping serenade is over.

Passing a wire fenced-in empty lot —
Oh rare sight! exceedingly unfamiliar
A rare sight indeed -- a city empty lot
A forgotten wastrel
Not a park — Not a country field — Not a lawn
Or even a tenement backyard,
But a broken-down neglected gatherer of
rusty tin cans
A bitten out spot of winter wilted grass
A remnant of The Natural Glory of a wildness
and a countryside.

Why then do I stop, and why so hypnotized —
At this freaky misfit! uncivilized
This untamed wild beast in the city zoo
roaming out of place, —

Because a vacant lot is all the jungle
that a city man like me can face.
Oh I've looked a lion straight in the eyes
thru the bars of the Bronx Park Zoo
I've faced a gorilla, outside his cage
Unarmed and unafraid
More than once I've clung to the back of an elephant
as he stamped the wounded tiger!
And fought with a knife the crocodile. . . .
In the comfort of a movies.
And yet city-beast that I am: a live turkey —
fish swimming in the window of the fish store —
a puppy — and even an old horse pulling
a dilapidated wagon
As well as a postage-size empty lot
Brings out the ferocious hunter in me.

Like a machine-scissor cutting thru the flimsy gauze of heaven
The steady-powered airplane rips the veils of height and distance.
a growing familiar speck and sight.

Overflowing on the sidewalk. Red – Purple – and Green and a simple costume decoration of hanging bananas.

This walk is making me hungry, let's have a piece of fruit – it's good for you!

(The sidewalk lunch – the sidewalk nibble: Nothing like it.

A frankfurter in one hand soda pop in the other

An ice cream a piece of chocolate a pretzel

and you walk along nibblingly satisfied with the world)

Always these fruit stands remind me of my kith and kin the country folks and little farmers.

You walk along unconscious of grass and country – Not even a weed in a sidewalk crack

not a flower, not even a daisy, – and then this display of gorgeous country prizes!

Everything is man-made in the city and there's nothing wrong with that

But no potato ever grew on a city sidewalk or a radish on a city road.

And so the cities keep juggling their wrists can-opening the treasures of Orchard Garden Country!

I swear it! I swear it! like a quarter ham is still ham

The ordinary sweat-hustler on the farm has the same blood running in him

Like the ordinary city man.

I know it! I know it! and you should know it too

It's a damn shame not to know your friends

Because o'lies bein' told to you.

A farmer hard-works his life away – he's a worker too

A city person to keep going has all that he can do

And anything that keeps us even this much apart

. . . a curse on me and you.

But when the farmer AND the city-worker HAH! even walk on the same spot

There's an earthquake tremor . . . A shaking rumble

And all those fattening themselves on us by taking advantage

Are frightened stiff: For they know on whose head the Ax of Labor's Might
shall tumble!

This walk is making me so hungry I swear I must have lost ten pounds.

Everytime I pass a restaurant this is what the chirping cheerful mouth-watering signs seem to say:

FOR EVERYONE
Come and get the
Good Things Now.
Hot Stuff –
there's Enough
Plenty for You and All.”

Ann! plate o succotash
It's all so tasty 'n that's no bosh.
Corn Beef!
Corn beef and cabbage
Enough to feed the wildest savage.
Green peas
green pea soup
Doop doop doop doop doop-a doop-a doop.”

Oh I can't go on like this, I'm getting hungrier by the minute. PORK CHOPS – 'n EGGS AND BACON
mmmm! my empty mouth is movin' achin'
MEAT BALLS & SPAGHETTI-Oooh, BOILED BEEF & CABBAGE-ahIIIH, VEAL baked, LIVER fried,
BROILED MACKERAL, YANKEE ROAST!
I surrender . . . My appetite respectfully, appreciatively raises the hat mumbling a gurgling toast
But I don't want to boast. Frankly, it's your prices that keep me from embracing you as My Most Welcome
Host!

“Eat first
THEN pay the check –
If you want to enjoy your meal bah heck!”

Hungry or not hungry I can't pass this fence where a sky-whopper is being put up without checking
its progress. Only the other day they were tearing down some old buildings and now . . .
the massive foundation pit!
Tearing down the whole block of old tenements – some were boarded up – demolishing the past.
Stripping and wrecking the pieces of housing junk! Creeping all over the place but mostly
on the top floors, dust-begrimed workmen are using sledge hammers and wrecking bars. The
box chutes are only too ready to take loose rubbish down their sloping gangway throats . . .
with dust and cinders dropping the loads into the waiting trucks. But don't go away
Mr. amateur passerby – you're safe – under the covered-bridge and lifted barricade of
pulled out wooden doors. For this is no ordinary slap-down bing-bang fall apart job, but a
controlled and careful wrecking demolition. Husky slivers of wood are placed in their place;
the derrick properly lowers a torch-cut beam; the rubber tired wheelbarrows know their scrap
heap; and nothing is recklessly ripped off and damaged that stands a chance of being used
once again. Only at the appointed time does the slow-swinging iron-wrecking ball batter
the crumbling walls!

Now look at it — who can pass this prodigious river-bed size hollow, this monster crater? the vast open hollow stockaded all around with 40-50-60-story cloud busters rising even higher as they look down in the depth of the foundation cellars! A sun-diffused grassless cliff-sided mammoth river-bottom — mud dried and dusty — What desert heat baked and drained this river! How mixed up everything is, how confusing — to you — sidewalk peeper! things are lying this way and that way and parts are fixed in the earth sticking up half-way and rubber pipes are slithering over and around — earth is heaped — the riveting is rocking the air with a clattering and shattering noise, smoke coming from the riveter's feet, — lumber is laid out lying around or buttressing the scooped up or blasted sides — the claw-shovels drop and drag along then lift and suspend their monster bites — the 6-tired heavily-loaded dirt trucks groan up the wooden ramp There is much doing; yet everything seems jumbled and mixed up except for one thing: The helmeted and work-experienced white and Negro workers — The Construction workers in knobby shoes, thick gloves, dirt-ingrained overalls who are scattered here and there in groups down in the man-dug valley. Shouting and climbing and guiding and pulling — heeding the advice of the taut string and rolled blue-printed paper — they are going about their business right . . . and getting things done — For a failure would be a tragic disaster.

And one day I'll be passing having missed the pouring of the concrete and the pounding of the steel piles, and there before me open to blue skies the orange-painted bony framework — a ribbed and airy cage for the Bird of Space! — a flimsy steelwork structure suspended in the air. Was it a host of wing-buzzers that swept thru this being and left it stark and bare! Up on the fifth floor from working scaffolds the bricklayers have already started buttoning up the outside walls. Plasterers and carpenters and roofers are driving head-on to a finish zipping and stitching up window frames and floors and doors. A hammering is going on and a striking of metal against metal, a clang and a grind and a rattle. For time is money — and **WHEN IS THIS GOING TO BE FINISHED** — can't you speed it up a bit? Every little thing here turns out to be a major construction!

So we got to figure out how long it will take and cut down costs — got to cut down cost. Time — money — money — time and never don't you **EVER** forget it! A slapping motor says less talk, let the work go on — There's gas and steam and elevators and electric to put in, and how about the water pipes? Hooded men way up are **STILL** riding the beams sparks trailing now and then from their wedding-instrument hoofs — boards are still being passed from floor to floor — hot rivets are flying — the long-reach trestle framework crane **STILL** gently pleads with tons and tons to be contented as they are placed where it pleases Man to place them . . . but painters, plumbers, steamfitters, electricians, — glaziers who claim the sight of even one neglected window-hole makes them sick in the stomach, — are all impatient men. Nothing's finished and already something else is begun . . . A marvel how

everybody can and is co-operating AT ONCE in all the different stages.

And one day I'll face this spot in open mouth amazement . . . unable to believe my eyes. A colossal completed structure with only the X's marked in white on the window-panes. With only the roadway still dug up for needed connections. And the sign "Renting Agent On Premises" up. Like coming back to some old place and seeing the children you remember married and with children of their own. Where are the flags! where the banners? The orchestra music for so wonderful a grand opening! So new — Such poise! Such posture!

What's this — one of those quiz weighing machines standing by its lonesome between two overdecorated drugstore windows. I'd like to get my correct weight for 1c and turn the knob as I ask MY OWN QUESTIONS!

How wised up are you? Are fairytales real to you?

Drop one penny here and get your questions answered . . .

Will I be rich?

Answer: Who're you kiddin' bub?

What's the difference between a politician and a gangster?

Ans: How it's split.

Does a poor boy have the same chances as a millionaire's son to get places?

Ans: Yes — but it's not the same when they get there.

Am I free to travel?

Ans: Anywhere you please! If you can peel that magic money!

If I haven't got the rent and the landlord's banging on the door — should I answer?

Ans: Do as you like: but he'll be back some more, some more!

Is sex beastly or human?

Ans: It's beastly if you don't and ver-ry human if you do.

When is the best time to ask my boss for a raise?

Ans: When the union, dear, is there behind you.

I certainly would like to ask a couple'a more questions but I'm short in pennies. Anyhow, even if the card says I didn't lose any weight I'm glad I'm nearing home. But the long threatening snowstorm is getting there before me.

Like an old forgotten song that strikes with pleasantness the bells of rusted memory
Two friends, the snowstorm and myself, meet face to face
and beam with the meeting — and hold each other's hands — and laugh
with simultaneous greeting.

Now look at it – who can pass this prodigious river-bed size hollow, this monster crater? the vast open hollow stockaded all around with 40-50-60-story cloud busters rising even higher as they look down in the depth of the foundation cellars! A sun-diffused grassless cliff-sided mammoth river-bottom – mud dried and dusty – What desert heat baked and drained this river! How mixed up everything is, how confusing – to you – sidewalk peeper! things are lying this way and that way and parts are fixed in the earth sticking up half-way and rubber pipes are slithering over and around – earth is heaped – the riveting is rocking the air with a clattering and shattering noise, smoke coming from the riveter's feet, – lumber is laid out lying around or buttressing the scooped up or blasted sides – the claw-shovels drop and drag along then lift and suspend their monster bites – the 6-tired heavily-loaded dirt trucks groan up the wooden ramp There is much doing; yet everything seems jumbled and mixed up except for one thing: The helmeted and work-experienced white and Negro workers – The Construction workers in knobby shoes, thick gloves, dirt-ingrained overalls who are scattered here and there in groups down in the man-dug valley. Shouting and climbing and guiding and pulling – heeding the advice of the taut string and rolled blue-printed paper – they are going about their business right . . . and getting things done – For a failure would be a tragic disaster.

And one day I'll be passing having missed the pouring of the concrete and the pounding of the steel piles, and there before me open to blue skies the orange-painted bony framework – a ribbed and airy cage for the Bird of Space! – a flimsy steelwork structure suspended in the air. Was it a host of wing-buzzers that swept thru this being and left it stark and bare! Up on the fifth floor from working scaffolds the bricklayers have already started buttoning up the outside walls. Plasterers and carpenters and roofers are driving head-on to a finish zipping and stitching up window frames and floors and doors. A hammering is going on and a striking of metal against metal, a clang and a grind and a rattle. For time is money – and **WHEN IS THIS GOING TO BE FINISHED** – can't you speed it up a bit? Every little thing here turns out to be a major construction!

So we got to figure out how long it will take and cut down costs – got to cut down cost. Time – money – money – time and never don't you **EVER** forget it! A slapping motor says less talk, let the work go on – There's gas and steam and elevators and electric to put in, and how about the water pipes? Hooded men way up are **STILL** riding the beams sparks trailing now and then from their wedding-instrument hoofs – boards are still being passed from floor to floor – hot rivets are flying – the long-reach trestle framework crane **STILL** gently pleads with tons and tons to be contented as they are placed where it pleases Man to place them . . . but painters, plumbers, steamfitters, electricians, – glaziers who claim the sight of even one neglected window-hole makes them sick in the stomach, – are all impatient men. Nothing's finished and already something else is begun . . . A marvel how

everybody can and is co-operating AT ONCE in all the different stages.

And one day I'll face this spot in open mouth amazement . . . unable to believe my eyes. A colossal completed structure with only the X's marked in white on the window-panes. With only the roadway still dug up for needed connections. And the sign "Renting Agent On Premises" up. Like coming back to some old place and seeing the children you remember married and with children of their own. Where are the flags! where the banners? The orchestra music for so wonderful a grand opening! So new — Such poise! Such posture!

What's this — one of those quiz weighing machines standing by its lonesome between two overdecorated drugstore windows. I'd like to get my correct weight for 1c and turn the knob as I ask MY OWN QUESTIONS!

How wised up are you? Are fairytales real to you?

Drop one penny here and get your questions answered . . .

Will I be rich?

Answer: Who're you kiddin' bub?

What's the difference between a politician and a gangster?

Ans: How it's split.

Does a poor boy have the same chances as a millionaire's son to get places?

Ans. Yes — but it's not the same when they get there.

Am I free to travel?

Ans: Anywhere you please! If you can peel that magic money!

If I haven't got the rent and the landlord's banging on the door — should I answer?

Ans: Do as you like: but he'll be back some more, some more!

Is sex beastly or human?

Ans: It's beastly if you don't and ver-ry human if you do.

When is the best time to ask my boss for a raise?

Ans: When the union, dear, is there behind you.

I certainly would like to ask a couple'a more questions but I'm short in pennies. Anyhow, even if the card says I didn't lose any weight I'm glad I'm nearing home. But the long threatening snowstorm is getting there before me.

Like an old forgotten song that strikes with pleasantness the bells of rusted memory
Two friends, the snowstorm and myself, meet face to face
and beam with the meeting — and hold each other's hands — and laugh
with simultaneous greeting.

What a roomy world when snow spreads itself out padding and piling it deep
Chalking the whole city with an edge of fragrance and furry white
Lathering up for a hearty winter shave.
And now the talcum swirling in the air freshening up the body of the earth;
purifying the body odors; winter-scenting winter-nipping the cleansed and breathing air.
Over the hard sidewalks the bosom-softness of the snow
waftingly it wallows downward
bedding every little flake to sleep.
Not gushing out like water from a street pump
or pinking the puddles like a menacing rain,
but gently, ever so gently, as a Father holds his six-month old
pulling aside the blanket to show his winning child;
timidly – shyly, snow falls testingly like the first steps of timorous Spring
as lingeringly hesitantly it again Its warmth of greenery uncovers.

Two little impish boys have been sent to bed up high in a featherbed of clouds
But they won't just won't fall asleep fighting instead with their pillows
Suddenly there's a rip – and then another – and down twirls the windy drafts of snow:
 Hopping and skipping gleeful and naughty, blowing and spiralling down
 Twinkling snow-specks in a hurry, in a flurry, besides themselves in a wild escaping spree!
And NOW look what the mischief-making boys have done with their tumbling and tussling –
The featherbed itself is open and torn. And the air is misty, hazy with all those sifting feathers
And distant skyscrapers loom up in the grey and foggy sky. And the whole city –
Every ledge and nook – the firescapes building-signs automobile tops
the pump with his peaked cap, the fire-alarm box the "U. S. Mail"
the streets the stoops and all the houses
have been given an equal chance to be white-furred and snowed under.

The City of the Jagged Mountains is humbled but not licked
People are going about their business
People are trudging with heavy feet like a letter carrier with his morning load
with each step they feel the packing of the snow.
Already human tracks are leading everywhere crossing tangling mixed up
Wandering it seems any place and nowhere. In a few minutes
and the trails are gray and dingy like the deepening ruts in the auto roads.

Why snow is cheerful I don't know —
Kiddies tumbling all around us snowball fighting laughing so
Does it make the room glow warmer as we come in thru the door
Shaking off that snowy fur and shaking off some more?

Is it the wet-cooling caress of melting snowflakes on my face?
Is it the cold, crusty air that follows — tingling nose and frosty fingertips?
Is it the galoshes and rubbers? Is it the outdoors teaching us respect?
Or is it — Oh it couldn't be — gloomy twilight ten times gloomy after the snow has subsided?
But anyway you look at it the gigantic city, taken aback, by tomorrow will re-assert itself.
Manholes will be opened . . . men will answer the call: Laborers Wanted On Snowwork.
Snow plows will range their mountainous snowbanks along both sides of the street flatlands
The scraping-scratch of snow shovels on sidewalks will be heard
And awnings will be poked, and growling stalled cars will receive their ashes.
For this is the city . . . and such are the city ways
The all winter ice-locked snowed-in scene is pretty but all too countryfied:
The trees unable to budge stiffened in filaments of frozen tracery
The large hills and expanses of fresh white snow untrod and shining
The sloping roofs, the rambling fences . . . a winding path and a lesser used road
have all received their full-time season's coating.
But here in the city the life of this sprinkled stuff is a matter of hours and seconds
mud — slush — and by tomorrow people will find it difficult to cross the overflow
from sewers on the corner.
But by tomorrow or the day after "Sunfire" in a fury at being blocked out
will gaze with extra dazzling brightness
and the last remaining effects of the late storm will be evaporated out!

5. STOPPING AT THE GROCERS

The way it's snowin' out I'm glad I'm only two blocks
away from my house. It's 47th street and I live on
45th. While I'm down better bring something up
from the grocery.

(a small corner grocery store with the usual overstocked displays and walls covered
with brightly-labeled canned goods . . . And the counter piled with packaged
cakes . . . And the aisle pyramided with "Today's Specials." Mr. Julius Hillback

owns the place — a fifty-five, sixty stout — half his head is bald and the rest sparse and lightly red . . . a pencil sticks out from his ear pointing right at you . . . wears an apron with string tied before him. Freddy, his clerk, is tall and round-shouldered. Black eyes and jet black hair. At the moment he is off in a corner standing on an upturned beer case as he places breakfast foods and toilet paper on top shelf . . . shelving them stairlike, with stepped-in sides. Mr. Hillback is discussing an order with a salesman)

- Hillback: "Whattaya mean I'm entitled to it ain't I?"
(salesman) "The discount yes, but no more. This item's hard to get."
Hillback: "Put it down . . . (pointing to order book) I'll take a case of it."
(salesman) (very short and thin, with big folds on his face as if he had once been fat) "It's a good seller you won't be sorry."
Hillback: "How can you say that when (thumb against forefinger fist closed) all the time you know different?"
(salesman) "Now you can still stock up, but later . . . the army's taken up all that stuff. Say — How are you in salmon?"
Hillback: "Uh, — put me down for the usual."
(salesman) "Juices? Last time I didn't . . ."
Hillback: "This is not the section for it. Beer is what they want."
(salesman) "Twilley's Peas and Carrots? 's a good label."
Hillback: "How much you guys soaking me today for that? . . . that so. Well the last shipment you billed me 9.60 is 19c retail in my money."
(salesman) "They've gone up considerable."
Hillback: (leaning over counter thumbs up both hands out) "The trouble, prices change so you tell a customer he thinks you're cheatin'. You fellers don't let a small man make a penny no more. — not you, not you, the wholesalers. And I get the dirty end of it (hands curved in). ME, the customers sec, the corporations — well, and I get the bawlin' out t'hell for it. (a tot about five years old opens the door and walks right over to the counter. Her brown hat with tuft and green coat is snow speckled. Hillback, gently serious) Are you the snowman?"
(girl) "Oh no I'm a little girl. I'm Elsie."
Hillback: "And what does this sweet little girlie want?"
Elsie: "Mamma sai-id . . . gi'me, gi'me half'a pound bolognee. (holds up hand with two quarters) . . . Somet'in else!"
Hillback: "What?"
Elsie: "I dunno."

Hillback: "Try — try to remember."
 Elsie: "Ketchup!" (all smiles)
 Hillback: "Good little girl! (patting cheek) Now tell Mamma she'll owe me a couple'a cents."
 (leans way over counter lifting bag to child. salesman holds door open; Mr. Hillback turning to him saying) "So — what were you mumbling to yourself a minute ago?"
 (salesman) "Give a guy a chance I'm figuring your order out!"
 Hillback: "Don't figure so long — I'm lucky if I took in 175 today — And another . . ."
 (salesman) "So slow!"
 Hillback: ". . . another thing I don't want you fellers sending me in twelve dozen when I only order eight. — No no no! I wouldn't take these packaged nuts for half the price." (to salesman who has just shown him a sample)
 (salesman) "WHY — Mr. Hillback, these . . . they're a hot number!"
 Hillback: "They must have cooled. I don't care how good a thing is if it doesn't bring in the business it's no good. Naww! I wouldn't handle that for no money."
 (salesman) "How are you fixed in this — " (points to printed item on order sheet)
 Hillback: "Could use some — at the old price."
 (salesman) (eagerly) "If you take 6 dozen boxes comes 14 a piece and if you take . . ."
 Hillback: "I know how much it comes — I know — (enthusiasm shown amuses him) — but by rights (shaking finger) you should let me have it at 8.64 — didn't I ask you two weeks about it, 'member?"
 (salesman) "Mr. Hillback you're a hard man to deal with (Hillback's pleased) but you win — I'll let you have it at 13 . . . 'n I'll be put on the carpet for it. Well, anything else . . . tuna fish, baked beans, rice — I can give you a good buy on that — alright, — er (glancing around on shelves) I see your . . ."
 Hillback: "Hello Hello Mr. Milestone — How are you, Mr. Milestone!" (as couple enters)
 Mr. Milestone: "How are you!"
 Hillback: "Trying to make an honest dollar."
 Mrs. Milestone: (tall and straight like her husband, wearing a long brown fur coat and carrying a richly designed head-bag) "Say . . . you've been putting on some."
 Hillback: "Much more fun putting on — (patting stomach) then taking off "
 Mr. Milestone: "Where do you keep th' tomato soup?"
 Mrs. Milestone: "What do you want that for!"
 Hillback: "It's right behind you — on the next shelf."
 Mr. Milestone: (places couple of soups on counter) "Sardines — Wallace's."
 Hillback: "We're all out that but here's something extra special good . . . costs 10c more."

Mr. Milestone: "What the hell is it so high for?"
Hillback: "Imported."
Mrs. Milestone: "We don't need it."
Hillback: "But Mrs. Milestone these are boneless — in olive oil. What — No comparison!"
Mr. Milestone: "Let's have one. I'll try anything . . . Go 'head, lady, I'll look around (to a young quick-moving woman in an old faded sweater, hair untidy, who has rushed in)
(lady) "Do you mind — thank you! I left my supper on the stove. — Got any rolls left, lemme have four o'them . . . 'n two boxes that soap powder with the sign in the window."
Hillback: (to clerk) "Freddy . . . be a good boy and hand me those — there! Use the pole the stick! . . . Anything else — no." (snaps register down and passes change)
(lady) "That reminds me Julius (Hillback) I owe you a couple bucks; I don't want . . ."
Hillback: "I'm glad something reminds you."
(lady) ". . . you to think it slipped my mind altogether. Soon as my husband's check . . ."
Hillback: (hits bag to customer) "When you can spare it be alright. (slips around to where salesman has opened door as lady hurries out. Pretending to look thru glass door Hillback leans whispering to the salesman. Mr. and Mrs. Milestone are off away arguing about what and what not to get.) I'll pay you next time and that's the last you'll see of them . . . running up bills 'n not paying for them . . . (gesturing thru door at his last customer) If I had — y'hear — half o'what people owe me all these years I would be a rich man today. On the interest alone I could live like a king. Who lets me have it for free for nothing? And what makes you so mad burns you up could kill somebody when there's a dollar in the pocket (patting trousers) run run quick to the chains . . . the chains 'll give 'em a bargain — hmph — they're in business for love not money. It's PLAIN COMMON SENSE you get what you pay for RIGHT? (salesman nods tactfully silent) If people would only stop to think they'd realize there's plenty o'water at home in the faucet — you don't have to lug it from all the way over there. If that's the way they want to act when hard times come LET THEM GO THERE 'N ASK TO PUT IT ON THE CUFF."
(salesman) (standing close facing inside of store; smaller man his head tilts up) "Why do you trust so much?"
Hillback: "In this business I don't have to tell you you gotta trust. A man comes in here

claims to be a butcher from the other side looking for work s'how can I refuse him?"

(salesman) "Say I meant to ask you what happened to your old clerk?"

Hillback: (taps register) " — so I had to let him go. (salesman questions with a lift of eyebrow) This one! he wouldn't touch a penny if it was gold. The union sent me him."

(salesman) "The unions are all right if they're"

Hillback: "C'm here! C'm here! — see that feller there (wipes frost on door-glass) that one, gettin' out a'the car . . . mmm-mh if I had HIS MONEY."

(salesman) "What would you do with it?"

Hillback: "I'd KNOW what to do with it . . . hnuhh . . . that guy's worth close to half a million dollars if he has a penny . . . so! that's the way it goes (hands out shoulders down) Some people got the luck!"

(salesman) "What kind of a racket was he in?"

Hillback: "He was a car salesman during the war and he cleaned up. Under the table alone they say he made a hundred thousand, so now . . ."

(salesman) "You're positive."

Hillback: ". . . he lives in clover. (with hands in pockets under the apron, stomach bulging, head shaking reflectively Mr. Hillback pauses for a second or two) I might have been a rich man today if my father wasn't — er — how to call it . . . There was nothing left. For all his hard work and skimping AND BY HARD WORK I mean 15, 16, hours, my father before he got this stroke was no loafer he was an ambitious man, but — he was stung like all the rest. If it had been a parcel five or six lots on one spot — yes, yes what you heard me saying to that man the time you were here — on one corner say, things would have . . . Two for a quarter, Mr. Milestone! Go right ahead lay it on the counter and when you're finished let me know and I'll add it up. So to make a long story short they talked him into with waiting — I remember two lots, empty empty — on Eldridge Street, people told him he was foolish but my father always said with him it was all or nothing — and-a, and, if I could remember so far back there was another one in New Jersey. 'nWell, you can guess what happened. The old story. Everytime someone came around with a good offer 12 — 14,000 dollars he turned it down. HE was going to wait until a rich corporation handed him out millions. 'Dumbell!' my old mother may she rest in peace, 'Stupid dumbell' she was yelling all the time:

‘What are you waiting for until you’re dead! Then we won’t need it anymore. What kind of enjoyment do you get with every dollar paying taxes . . . assessments and taxes that’s all I’ve been hearing about the last fourteen years.’ So, that’s the way it was — you try and try thinking someday you’ll be rich and in the end you’re cheated out of what you’re entitled to.”

(salesman) “It’s all in the breaks you get, Mr. Hillback; you’ve got to take what comes and like it.”

Hillback: “Been in business all my life — more times than I like to remember. Failed a couple o’times. — What happened, I dunno. Honest to God I dunno. . . . there was no reason for it. If I had gambled taken a chance had a fire or something — to this day I have never been able to find out. All of a sudden it went flop. If I TOLD YOU I WAS ONCE OFFERED \$30,000 for my corner on Cliver’s Street — you’d say I was lying!”

(salesman) “No, No, Not lying . . . stretching it a bit. (smiling) Cliver’s ’n Beach? I know that store. It’s a good location.”

Hillback: “It’s a DAMN GOOD LOCATION . . . A BEAUTY a nice store . . . ANOTHER TIME NO REASON FOR IT! (hands in front shaking with emphasis) Small business ain’t what it used to be . . . every day they make it a little harder for us little fellows. I tell you small business don’t stand a”

(salesman) “I thought you were making out pretty nice, that’s what you”

Hillback: “Ugh-tsk you make and you don’t make. You make enough but not enough to make a living, a good living, ’n bills? ’n expenses? Look, look how many things I got to sell before I pay up for this — this (pointing to counter refrigerator) what they soaked me — Yes instalment, on time, but you got to pay it up don’t you? Some days I’m a lucky man if I — What’ll you have (to a heavy-set woman puffing as she approaches counter taking out empty bottles from oilcloth shopping bag) I’m lucky if I take in enough to pay the electric.”

(woman) “Eight bottles.”

Hillback: “This — and this bottle — and this, doesn’t come from this store.”

(woman) “I bought it here!”

Hillback: “Impossible!”

(woman) “I wouldn’t be so cheap for five cents . . . I’m not lying! embarrassing me f’”

Hillback: "Calm yourself – Who said you were lying . . . maybe him across the street why don't you go 'n ask. I just don't keep . . ."

(woman) "Oh it's just too bad about you! you'd think I'd need tha'dime – I'll never step my . . ."

Hillback: "Wait a minute give me a chance – I forgot what I have to say (claps forehead) Why get so upset over (remembers) I DON'T KEEP "BROWSER'S" GINGER ALE (cutting with outstretched palm on counter) WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME? (woman leaves in a huff, taking remaining bottles with her) Can you imagine such a woman! When people start making a damn fool out of me they gotta go a long way . . . tellin' me what – what - - -"

(salesman) "What are YOU getting so excited about now?"

Hillback: "- - - what brand I keep in my own store. Customers! No kiddin' you got to have an iron constitution . . . Crazy – Cranky – Ughh! can they be nasty! You don't know the half of it until you've worked in a place like this behind the counter. You feel like taking them by the neck and shaking them kicking them outta store! (over the counter pulls salesman closer by lapel – whispers) Someday I'm gonna open up in a naborhood with a better class of people know know what I mean?"

(salesman) "Yes – one where customers would run up big bills and never pay you. Most of the time. Where they'll look upon you like a worm."

Hillback: (taken aback) "You're a little man but you got brains."

(salesman) "Never known anybody yet to think with their feet! But as you were saying, Mr. Hillback, things are getting worse for the small businessman. I meet them every day on my route and what they tell me better you shouldn't hear. I remember years back when anybody with a few dollars – not much – Not an investment like nowadays (Hillback shakes head in agreement) could open himself a store . . . and make a living. So you think I don't know what you are talking about. I'm a fool . . . a route salesman. But I got eyes to see – A man puts in a lot of work and sacrifice, and just when he's comin' to somethin', beginning to get bye, along comes a depression, a chain, another store opens across the street, God knows what – and he's talking like you! Another good business and it's fallin' to pieces."

Hillback: (straightening up looking at the salesman with a lot more respect)

(salesman) "You're pretty long here, aren't you, Mr. Hillback?"

Hillback: "Long . . . I'm a fixture here."

(salesman) "When you're in business you are your OWN BOSS, NO, and what a boss you have over you. From seven in the morning when you take in your bag of bread to . . . when? eleven at night? on your feet, and I'd like to hear you say you get used to it."

Hillback: "You sit around doing nothing you get lousy with rot – so I don't mind. You were in business?"

(salesman) "Nopel! never. But observation – All you businesspeople are alike. Once I had the pleasure of listening to – I don't think you know him Mr. Cooke uptown – Well anyhow, he spoke plain: 'Uhh-h' he says, he's an old man, 'If I had my life to live over again I'd get myself a job, and live like a human being! When a man works in a shop he's got his hours and when he comes home he's free his time's his own. Me – it doesn't make a difference where I am my headaches go with me. When you're - - -"

Hillback: (lips out) "Small business is like that."

(salesman) "- - - in business you got no life the morning it comes and the night it goes and you've been nowhere and seen nobody. A customer comes in goes out – the same merry-go-round and-a . . ."

Mr. Milestone: (toppling handful of cans and groceries on counter) "Well how are you making out Hillback?"

Hillback: "Fine – I got no complaint."

Mr. Milestone: "Business good?"

Hillback: "'tank God I never had to come to nobody – knock wood."

Mrs. Milestone: (for the second time coming over from the rolling-door icebox) "Can I have four quarts?" (milk)

Hillback: "As much as you want . . . Need any juices (points) we got a sale on them."

Mrs. Milestone: "Never use 'em."

Hillback: "Anything here (steps over behind gleaming white-framed refrigerator) roast beef – liverwurst – potato salad –"

Mrs. Milestone: "Cream cheese . . . Philadelphia."

Hillback: "What else – Anything else?"

Mr. Milestone: "How much is that – the I & C liver spread -- (on low shelf in back of refrigerator) there! next to the olives, the stuffed olives . . . I see . . . 'n how much is the can next to it? – I'll take that. That'll be all!"

Hillback: "Eggs? they're down today, only –"

Mr. Milestone: "I won't be able to carry it all!"

Hillback: "Your car ain't outside?"

Mr. Milestone: "I finally decided to give the damn thing up."

Hillback: (astounded) "But what kind of a man ARE YOU without a car?"

Mr. Milestone: "So what — maybe I'll get myself a Cadillac next year."

Hillback: "I'll give you a shopping bag won't charge you for it. Let's see now (takes pencil from ear and ordinary small bag from under counter) — er — 35 for this, (writes on bag) 45, 24, er (left hand moving over cans) 2 for 17 — these are 2 for 17 — 69, 21, 15, 4 cans 6c each — 24, 8 cents, these are the salted, o k, o k, — er, er 19, 43 — where did you get this? 43, 43 is right, and-a that's it. One two (counting grouped items) four five sssix-seven ten eleven fourteen. (checks lines on bag sweeps pencil under them adds) 44 4 goes over, that's-a 9, 11, 16, 19, twenty twenty six, 31, thirty"

Mrs. Milestone: "Where do you keep the tea — the tea balls?"

Mr. Milestone: "Whatsa matter with you! why don't you let the man reckon up?"

Mrs. Milestone: "If I need something! (Mr. Hillback, having lost count, patiently points to a section) Is this it — it says here 3 for 10."

Hillback: "No, not that, the one up — that's it. Sure help yourself." (about to resume adding)

Mrs. Milestone: "And some eggs."

Hillback: "A dozen? (adds price, mumbles counting again) That'll be 4.71 and 10 cents off for two bottles — 4.61 is the damage! Look around, look around I got plenty time . . . (an old wrinkled woman with tiny lighted eyes, a shawl over head, is opening door) How do you do Mrs. McNally, I'll be right with you. WAIT — Freddy FREDDY customer!"

Mrs. McNally: "I can wait — people my age can wait forever." (shaking snow off shawl)

Hillback: "Well — all right — (Freddy's here) Check me over (hands him pencilled figures fast putting order in shopping bag) Well, if that's all Mr. Milestone here it is (lifts shopping bag) and thank you and call again." (Mr. Milestone has given grocer his check and now he and his wife leave. Freddy is waiting on Mrs. McNally)

Freddy: "Isn't your jaw swollen Mrs. McNally?"

Mrs. McNally: "Something awful (touches cheek) it hurts. I went in for a filling and he stuck me with a hundred dollars, my dentist . . . 116 to be exact. You start up with one tooth your whole jaw hurts."

Freddy: "What did he put in there, platinum!"

Mrs. McNally: "'You'll have a wonderful pair of teeth' (false set) he says . . . 'n what'll I have left to put between them . . . 'But there are wide spaces should be

closed with bridgework.' . . . Dr. Spencer the spaces in my pocket are even wider! . . . You're laughing but they'll take your last penny if you'll let them – ouch! ooo, I opened my mouth too wide. I don't charge you for this, – and I don't charge you for that but for a person that doesn't have to pay hardly anything I certainly have a big bill."

Hillback: "Do you have to pay up the bill? What does he . . ."

Mrs. McNally: (twinkling) "And what do you think I do?"

Hillback: ". . . need all that money for his wife should have a mink? There aren't thousands of dentists in the city? LOOK (leans over the counter finger holding jaw) see it! next to th'space I had it pulled that time I closed the store TWO HOURS earlier, I'll never forget it."

Mrs. McNally: "But that's gold – good-looking."

Hillback: "So – I owe him forty bucks – Let him sue me."

Freddy: (gently) "Could I do something for you, Mrs. McNally?"

Mrs. McNally: "I come in for some cheese."

Freddy: "American? sliced? very good quality – here (takes out cheese loaf cuts off slim slice) Taste!" (balancing on tip of knife)

Mrs. McNally: "I'll have a quarter."

Freddy: (slips loaf in slicer. Next moment weighing portion on scale) "It's a little over . . . 17c all right?"

Mrs. McNally: (nods head) "'n how do you sell these? Let me have a pound. (clerk swings tiny bunch of grapes held by stem into bag. weighs) Put some more – put some more – the bag weighs something don't it?"

Hillback: (who's waiting on another customer) "Excuse me, but when you step on the scale you take off your clothes?"

Mrs. McNally: "Oh! he's the limit!" (smiling)

(little Elsie and her mother have just stepped into the store . . . mother shallow-breasted, high checked, shock of red hair. Excited at the moment)

(mother) "You didn't give my Elsie change, should be change!"

Hillback: (pushing Freddy aside) "I'll attend to this . . . what's the matter, lady?"

(mother) "I sent my kid down with a dollar – where's the change?"

Hillback: "A DOLLAR! I only saw 50 cents and you owe me 2 cents yet. And don't come around accusing people."

(mother) "I'm not accusing you of nothing, I just want to know where it went."

(salesman) "I don't like to interfere, lady, but your little girl came in with two quarters; I was right here."

Hillback: "Lucky for me this gentleman fr'm Wholesale Products is a witness!"

(mother) "Elsie, I won't hit you, tell Mamma where did you change it? Where's the change?"

Elsie: "I lost it."

(mother) "Where? Where?"

Elsie: "I dunno."

(mother) "Tell me somethin' — You both look like a man that's had a lotta experience in life, — you got children . . ."

Hillback: "Grown up and married!"

(mother) "When does a child become a man? How long . . ."

Hillback: "A thousand years, my lady, a thousand years, and how many lives you got to live I don't know (pats head of kid) — She'll learn."

(mother) "One minute I think she understands and then — Well, come on let's go — Wait I might as well get something now I'm here."

Hillback: "Some potatoes?"

(mother) "How much are they?"

Hillback: "Five pounds 25c"

(mother) "Since when!"

Hillback: "Went up."

(mother) "Got any cottage cheese loose?"

Hillback: "All out of it — PLEASE you don't have to squeeze them! they're tomatoes you you know! If every . . ."

(mother) "Can't I see what I'm buying?"

Hillback: ". . . customer that came in squeezed them what do you think . . ."

(mother) "I'll take a couple . . . And let me have some matches."

Elsie: "Mamma I want some smashed pota'ters!"

Hillback: "I got something for you little one. (lifts cellophane box-cover takes out a muffin — holds it high) Are you the kind of a little girl that likes sweets?"

Elsie: "Yes, yes!"

Hillback: "I thought so. But first I must look it up in the book to see how you been behavin'. (muffin on counter Mr. Hillback solemnly thumbs thru battered ledger) A B C—"

Elsie: "My name's Elsie."

Hillback: "I know! I know! Ahhh — here it is (chubby index finger on book) mnnh . . . Ah-huh . . . good, good, so far good. (finger slipping down page) What's this-s! Oh-o! a black mark."

Elsie: "Y'mean th'time I came home late mamma was cryin' ten o'clock?"

Hillback: "Yeah, yes yes."

Elsie: "It was that dopey Sylvia's fault she got me lost I — I . . ."

Hillback: "We'll let it go this time (extending muffin) but when Manma says come home . . ."

(mother) "Half'll do I don't want it to spoil her supper thanks."

Hillback: (with one sweep of hefty knife cuts in two, and as mother refuses piece, eats half himself. Thoughtful and silent for a moment, he steps over to the cash register and strikes 'No Sale'. Fumbles in popped-out cash draw)

Elsie: "Wha'ya lookin' for?"

Hillback: "I'm kind-a mixed up Elsie sweetheart: I ate up half — and I gave you half — and where's the rest of it? (Elsie's gurgling) You see! she understands (tousling child's hair) Freddy! are you thru there, come here anyhow . . . Get some change dimes quarters anything anything, 'cept nickels. And while you're about it take in some o' those cases on the sidewalk that's all I need a summons and I"

Freddy: "I DID"

Hillback: "You did?"

Freddy: "Hours ago in the cellar."

Hillback: "Excuse me, excuse me, I got so much on my mind — er — Here's the ten-spot. — You're leaving Mrs. McNally? Did you hear what happened to Mr. Scarponi the crippled guy who owns the newsstand 49th next by the subway? he was in an accident. wait I'll tell you . . . Anything else please?"

(mother) "There was something else but I don't know how to ask for it. I keep a clean house but — but — what can I do they come around the bugs the bedbugs. I've been trying hot water kerosene 'n everything but I can't get rid of them."

Hillback: "You don't have to apologize for such a thing — I got just the stuff f'them! Here (reaches next to top shelf tips box from bottom) this manufacturer puts it out it's ADVERTISED, IN ALL THE PAPERS . . . this is the right stuff take it from me! You"

(mother) "Kil-fast cockroach powder?"

Hillback: ". . . and you get another one free for nothin'."

(mother) "I don't know."

Hillback: "They're advertising. Two for the only price of one . . . and everything the directions you'a supposed to know it tells there in the back of the box."

(mother) "I'll take your word for it . . . ELSIE! pher! pher! putting it in your mouth and it just comin' f'm the floor. (of dropped piece muffin) That isn't nice

Hillback: "What the hell's the matter with you people don't you know how to run a business.
And another . . ."

(salesman) "I don't own the place I only work for them."

Hillback: "... thing I don't mean you exactly what's the matter with them fellers, what I
need badly doesn't come in and what I didn't order I should live so
ON THE SPOT (bangs hand on counter) is here! Alright, I'll let
you have a coupla bucks (rings register and withdraws check) I'll
endorse this."

(salesman) "That customer's?"

Hillback: "He's good for it."

(salesman) "I'm not saying anything got to be careful."

Hillback: "You tellin' me. Last year I got it but good. I cashed a check for 22 dollars, and it
bounced. My signature was on it and I gave it to a driver and I had
to make good for it. Yeahpp."

(salesman) "They catch up with those guys . . . How about it, Mr. Hillback, spaghetti and
meat balls, a case?"

Hillback: "Like I told you when you first come in Apex is letting me have it for 4.90. . . .
Meet their price and you can have my order."

(salesman) (hand moves over forehead — nose — ends stroking chin) "I don't know — that's not
up to me. SAY you know what you forgot to order I forgot to remind
you the cucumbers, sour-sweet. I'll tell you what I'll stick you with
two dozen see how it goes. (Hillback consents, digs under apron into
pants pocket comes up with stout wallet. Places bills, check in front
of salesman) That'll be fine. The bill comes to—I think—142 dollars,
35 on account. O K Mr. Hillback (rubberband around his papers)
if you run short you can always give me a ring." (adjusts scarf turns
up collar leaves)

(Freddy has returned with change and is back at shelving. Mrs. McNally is stand-
ing close to counter a hand against cheek, an arm supported at elbow by other.
Mouth open head shaking slightly, shocked at Hillback's description of the
accident to their mutual acquaintance, Mr. Scarponi)

Mrs. McNally: "Hear a case like that (a tremble) puts the shivers in me!"

Hillback: "I spoke to his father poor man owns the hardware on Douglass Street, on the
other side of the A & P (sighs) told me all about it. Well — while
there's life there's hope—maybe he'll pull thru it. (thoughtful silence)
That's your life—you're here today and gone tomorrow. And when

your time's up you gotta go you gotta go. Look! like in the papers (coughs hand to mouth) cold, can't get rid of it—did you read about it how the guy killed four people went screwy up here . . . Now the people that was walking in the street they didn't know they're number was up—that's what, I don't think anymore. I come in open the store sweep up polish around and sit down and read my newspaper. It seems . . . what are you smiling about Mrs. McNally you . . ."

Mrs. McNally: "Didn't I cry all my tears out when I was young?"

Hillback: "You-you, you mean I'm a sour-puss?"

Mrs. McNally: "Sometimes."

Hillback: "It comes up on you all of a sudden—you're 60—and people are calling you old. And you're wondering why you don't feel old. My doctor . . ."

Mrs. McNally: "To live you grow old. I'm 74 . . ."

Hillback: ". . . tells me I have twenty years to go—I didn't thank him. Like an old automobile, you fix one part and another breaks down. I'm not afraid of dying but I don't like a long drawn out sickness. I don't . . . feel, the way I used to. —No, no not only my knees all over . . . I can't do the things I used to. Maybe I am getting old."

Mrs. McNally: "Sure 'n every age its divil of troubles! But when you're old **AND YOU HAVEN'T GOT MONEY** it's the time people are throwin' you around. A graceful ship on the ocean when the weather is nice . . . but when the storm comes along and you got no money tossed on the waves of the ocean. (head bent) Seems only yesterday I was forty."

Hillback: "Social security don't they help you out?"

Mrs. McNally: "Keeps me from dying. I don't even . . . (her grandson, 12-year-old, wearing leather jacket hatless swinging books rushes in)

(grandson) "Grandma! I was lookin' for you."

Mrs. McNally: "Where were you!"

(grandson) "We just got outta th'assembly."

Mrs. McNally: "So late!"

(grandson) "Yeah they was given us a play."

Mrs. McNally: "Where's your hat—lost a**GAIN**?"

(grandson) "I didn't lose my hat Grandma only, only I can't find it."

Mrs. McNally: "**LOOK FOR IT**--look for it and go upstairs, I'll be right up. (as boy closes door) That's my daughter's, the one that died last year. As long as she was alive I knew I always had a home. —My son? —he's got his wife."

Hillback: "Pity—so young! your daughter. . . . Used to come in the store buy something . . ."

I-I (a customer walks in; Mrs. McNally silently turns to leave) tell Mr. Bridges (son-in-law) I was asking for him. God bless you too likewise."

(Hillback and Freddy are alone in the store. Freddy has finished arranging in a pyramid round oatmeal boxes on the top shelf. Standing on an empty case he's now placing price signs here and there. Mr. Hillback is straightening up the packaged cakes and delicacies crowded on the counter)

Hillback: "What happened to that fruit cake we was pushin' on the counter? I didn't sell it—did you?"

Freddy: "No."

Hillback: "Must'a been swiped. YOU CAN'T TURN YOUR BACK FOR A MINUTE they —FREDDY! WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO USE THE LADDER! You'll break your neck in fifty pieces."

Freddy: "I'll get a lotta compensation."

Hillback: "It won't be so funny USE THE LADDER! (disgusted goes for the ladder) Here! Why shouldn't you . . . (the door opens and an old man, ear-lapped cap, white mustache, enters shaking a charity box can) I know—I know it's for the orphans. (rings register, drops coins in can. Old man goes his way. To Freddy) Comes around regular! graft . . . suckers. I don't mind giving, I give I give Red Cross the cops with the tickets hands out the charity this the charity —I never told you about the banquet I went to last year, set me back twenty dollars. Twenty dollars a plate so help me! You hear, Freddy, and sitting right next to me you'd never believe it we shook hands—Judge Barlton. The same one, he's senator now. And-a, across a little ways—as near as I'm to you—on the other side of the table sat Mr. Larrup, the manufacturer, as true as I'm talking to you . . . The money went for charity."

Freddy: "That crook?"

Hillback: "You mustn't believe everything you hear. Business is business and I don't blame any man if he can get away with it. I'd do the same if I was in his place."

Freddy: "You'll never be 'his place,' don't worry. 'His' is a corporation, millions—what they can get away with you can go to prison for."

Hillback: "For once I think you're right."

Freddy: "You betcha boots I'm right!"

Hillback: "Well what can you do, some people are not smart that way. Other people they give themselves a turn around this way—(flings hands to one side) they've made a dollar, a twist that way (hands flung to the other side) they've made themselves two. Not all . . . What are you looking for? (Freddy has come off ladder and is searching under counter) What do you want?—why don't you. . . ."

Freddy: "A rag. The dust up there is this high." (finds it shuffles back)

Hillback: "Freddy if you don't mind my saying so why do you walk so humped up? a young man STAND UP STRAIGHT you'll get. . . ."

Freddy: "People'll think suddenly I got stuck up."

Hillback: "People! people are damn fools. Ignorant—like my . . ."

Freddy: (looking down from ladder) "You're not part of the people, Julius?"

Hillback: ". . . landlord. — Shut up, shut up, I got somethin' to tell you. Did you know my lease is up in two months and that bitch SO MEAN I can't explain it to you that guy wouldn't give you a glass of water if you was dyin' he's playing around feeling for something. (thumb and finger rubbing) Last time he says—he's afraid now to ask with the rent control—I don't want to be avaricious' he says to me 'but-er-here's the idea: It strikes me I'm entitled to something. Taxes everything going up—mmmUH—I'm agreeable to anything. Of course, underneath your hat.' "

Freddy: (giggling) "What a bird!—You're not going to give into him are you?"

Hillback: "What else can I do? —Don't lean over so far! get down and push the ladder don't be lazy . . . Did you wet the rag you're making such a dust?"

Freddy: "I thought they were strict on that point."

Hillback: "Ehh! (palm up swings down) Don't you believe it. Lies—lies, all of it. With a poor slob they're strict, otherwise (tickling outstretched palm) — Don't look at me with such knives — Whatsa matter — You couldn't be bought off?"

Freddy: "Nobody owns that much money."

Hillback: (dropping tiredly on wooden box) "Ahhh-hh- my feet kill me . . . Nope I'm not as young as I used to be. (lights a cigaret puffing reflectively) When I was as young as you are old I also had ideas—that's in the past. Even when they put something over that's good the politicians, they fix it around so it comes out the opposite. Racketeers! one is . . ."

Freddy: "Then you have to fight that too."

Hillback: ". . . worse than the other. They're only lookin' out to line their own pockets. Bunch

a' crooks and grafters . . . gimmie gimmie gimmie always got their hands out. But what can you do go fight City Hall."

Freddy: "Maybe that's just what you should do."

Hillback: "You say things like that they'll call you a name. It's like my father used to say 'Shhh (fingers bunched to lips) a poor man's got to keep his mouth shut.' A workingman can only work and keep quiet. If you say anything—if you open your mouth and say boo-boo you're in trouble, you're against the"

Freddy: (with rag in hand downward gesture of contempt)

Hillback: "You think you know a whole lot you know nothing. Wait . . . when you're as old as I am . . . (with two fingers holding cigaret) you'll see . . . there's always someone around to catch when money is thrown up in the air. It can't be different. The reason I can give IS becaus-se people like to be fooled to be put over on. So . . . So you see now . . . I don't bother my head. If I can get by I'm satisfied."

Freddy: "Will they let you—Julius? will they let you?"

(Julius Hillback is blowing his nose hard cold bothering him. His clerk down on knees applies cleanser to outside glass white refrigerator. His circular movements are vigorous. Relaxed on an unopened cardboard case is Jimmy — all his weight seems bunched in his chest and shoulders — wears a cap and black-shiny raincoat — is munching a roll sandwich just bought off Julius, one jaw bulging as he smiles happily having started something when he blurted out he'd like to leave his job . . . auto mechanic in a garage . . . and go into business)

Hillback: ". . . n'ugh, there's no two ways about it, you have to agree with me nobody can get rich working for somebody else."

Freddy: (looking up from floor) "Did you get rich working for yourself?"

Hillback: "That's something else different! . . . ME, I like to be my own boss . . . I couldn't work for anybody and he should give me orders. The way I figure it you have twenty thirty thousand dollars you invest it. . . ."

Freddy: "That's all?"

Hillback: ". . . in something you've got— Smart guy! look the way he talks 'n I give him a living. Why aren't . . ."

Freddy: "This is no snap of a job you know!"

Hillback: "I didn't say it but why aren't you rich you're so smart . . . I'll tell you why, because, a rich man is got brains besides being smart in other ways."

Freddy: "Y'think so?"
 Hillback: "Don't you?"
 Freddy: "You and Rockefeller, Julius."
 Hillback: "Listen—I could tell you plenty if you got me started so don't . . ."
 Jimmy: "You two guys both are a picnic, always arguin' —I'll have another Julius, same same roast pork and don't spare the mustard — All I said I always had an idea I'd have a place of my own where you can be independent but I got married can't complain, she's all right, but she's got no understanding—(thrusts legs out, draws mouth together, places hands on head) Maybe I should'a left this job long ago but I hate to go lookin' for one and they should —all right you ain't got roll gimme rye— I don't mind the job so much I HATE THE IDEA OF LOOKING FOR WORK if it wasn't for that I'd have left long time ago. Y'see, you work in an office nice easy job, y'haven't got the headaches. . . ."
 Freddy: "No place they let you make a living without you working hard."
 Jimmy: "Well yeah yeah . . . the headaches on a job like mine, y'see Freddy, it ain't the same there's always something coming up and you got to think it out see what I mean?"
 Hillback: "Like the bible says (reaching Jimmy his sandwich) you want gold you gotta dig —Sol someone said it! it's true ain't it?" (blows nose loud in handkerchief—coughs and blows)
 Jimmy: (with a broad smile) "Whatsa matter Julius, fallin' apart?"
 Hillback: "Got any telephones I can still take care of myself."
 Jimmy: "That's what you think. I'll bet if . . ."
 Hillback: (jokingly to tall stout customer approaching) "Nice weather we're having."
 stout man) "Yyup—I can't put my arms up. Smelter's (beer) four."
 Hillback: "I only got let's see three on ice."
 stout man) "Three—how much? WHAT, the hell they go up again! Everytime I step into this store the prices' been hitched. Gettin' so a poor fella' can't. . . ."
 Hillback: "They always got an excuse to raise taxes and prices—I'm not to blame. (takes bill customer holding out hand for change) Thank you. (leaves growling) WHAT DOES HE WANT FR'M ME! WHAT DOES HE THINK I MAKE ON IT? the companies if I told you what they charge me—Jimmy, y'hear—"
 Jimmy: "mnh! I believe it."
 Hillback: "You'd think I was getting rich the way he acts! No brains—No brains (tapping

head) That feller he's a what you call it on-a . . ."

Freddy: "You're both being gypped by the same crooks."

Hillback: ". . . on-a, buildings, a high-priced union man. WHAT DOES HE EXPECT WHEN THEY PAY SUCH WAGES high there wouldn't be high prices? THEY'RE JEALOUS. The average man doesn't like to see a small man get ahead . . . getting r-rich on their money!"

Freddy: "Mind if I ask you something?" (looking up kneeling on the floor)

Hillback: "YES! (turning to Jimmy two fingers shaking at Freddy) I don't want to scrap with him later on I should eat my heart out. Why should I get excited . . . Why should I be an idiot because somebody else (pointing to Freddy) not right up here is an idiot."

Freddy: (stands up wiping hands; grinning) "What-what, what brought this on?"

Jimmy: (leaping up pinning Freddy's arms from behind by the elbows) "Hah! that got a rise out'a you—Hit him, Julius, hit him . . . Well what are you waiting what'a you afraid of?"

Hillback: "Nothing—as long as you're holding his hands —It's what'll happen to me when you let go that's got me worried."

Freddy: (wriggling away) "Look . . . same day I met Julius I been explaining this . . . look (fist on palm) people have a little more money some of it will find its way in your store quicker you pay up those bills you always bellyachin' about. Stands to reason (down fist) when they make—please, please, don't look at me like that because I spoil your bubble! I don't know, Julius, you're an intelligent man—no, no I'm speaking with respect long as I do my work here you got nothing against me and I can speak my mind—no—right, Julius?"

Hillback: "Irregardless, when wages go up prices — Don't I pay you 64 dollars the union . . ."

Freddy: "Awrrr! it's no use—(picks up broom stick and is using it to open transom) This polisher is nice stuff but it smells to high heaven: need some air here."

Hillback: (who's come around to look at the refrigerator) "Mmmm! shines up fine! you could see yourself in it. (to Jimmy who's lit a cigaret) Got one for me—no—good! I'll smoke my own HaHaHa gotcha that time. Go 'head Freddy (arm around his shoulders) I like to hear you talk; don't know where you get such ideas but erIUH . . . talk, talk. Me while there's plenty o'this around (rubbing thumb and second finger) I intend to get my hands on it—Jimmy?"

Jimmy: (relaxed puffing) "Somebody's cashin' in so . . ."

Freddy: “What makes you think the people that have the money won’t hold on to it? Corporations that make a million dollars easier than you make a hundred they goin’ to hand it out to you? Why? because you’re not a pedlar—you pay your bills in checks—you’re a **BUSINESSMAN!** When the chains come along, or any other reason, and you go broke you’re just as out o’luck like the next fellow. Take it from me, Julius (lowering his voice) the workingpeople and the small business people had better get together—s’about time! And I don’t like the way you are always sneerin’ at the union—it wouldn’t hurt . . . just a minute I got something to say, you can tell me afterwards, now don’t be like that give a man chance—er, er (scratches cheek) I was about to say it wouldn’t harm you fellers to get into some kind of a union . . . go ’head, lot of good it’ll do you making fun . . . Go ahead stick on the side of ‘business’ — Big Business Morgan and you!”

Hillback: “He’ll never own up he’s wrong —that’s him. Jimmy (bending over pleading) I ask you, what we was referrin’ to,—when I got to pay a clerk don’t I got to put it charge it on the price?”

Jimmy: “Goes without saying.”

Freddy: (grabbing large can of peaches off shelf) “This millionaire company paid I don’t know 1.80 on its shares — dividends — you follow me? Well can’t they pay a dollar, isn’t that enough, and give the rest to those that work there—and without raising prices? Why . . . why . . . (interrupted by heavy-built woman black coat fluffy grey collar coming in) Something I can do for you?”

customer) “I bought these eggs here (out of bag on to counter) and they’re spoiled.”

Hillback: (speaking up) “But lady you bought these last week maybe you kept it by some heat, the steam—”

customer) “I don’t cook my eggs on the steam!”

Jimmy: (laughs out loud enjoying himself)

Hillback: “Oh all right, Freddy, please, the pullets. But next time bring them back sooner.”

customer) “If you want to change my eggs, do it—but don’t do it and make dirty looks at people.” (stamps out)

Hillback: (hand over face giggling) “More you try to please worse it is.”

Jimmy: “. . . . when I dress up you mutts around here wouldn’t recognize me. You think I’m always dirty in these clothes. You think because I’m a mechanic

I don't know anything. Brother, when I step on that pedal"

Hillback: "I believe you got to spend money while you got it."

Jimmy: "That's what I say: make it while you can spend it while you're able. Good car runs good—mine, can hit 70 miles like a breeze! . . . say Julius did I ever tell you how I talked myself outta ticket . . . hnee! hnee, I'm a good one . . ."

Hillback: "What make you got?"

Jimmy: "Cadillac 49 she's . . ."

Hillback: "I certainly could go places in a thing like that. Mine has a rattle. Why don't you get something like that? Freddy, or don't you believe . . ."

Freddy: "All these things are good . . . if you don't have to spend your life for them."

Hillback: "Think of the pleasure—"

Freddy: (shaking the cleaning mixture, with rag polishing the white refrigerator rim) "It don't work so good on the porcelain, enamel whatever it is (steps back and considers) could be better. (more rubbing, then) Anybody wants a car it's HIS business, his car!"

Jimmy: "If the Finance company don't come lookin' for it."

Freddy: "That's it! American people—and I'm American—have money for everything except necessities. I'll never forget how one day about two,—three years ago, I took my kid sister to the dispensary poor kid she suffers from eczema pimples still got 'em, and I heard the nurse—the clerk, whatever she was say to a woman: But we can't give you free service you way over scale. You'll have to go to a city hospital for your confinement, and I don't even think they will accept you. —But miss I just explained to you, I owe 400 to Ludlow for furniture and 900 for my automobile. How can I . . . Look Mrs. Janeson (the nurse was saying) if you don't pay for the furniture they will come and get it— if you don't pay for the automobile they'll come and get it—and if you don't pay the hospital will we come and take your baby back? —See! see Jimmy, for a confinement she hasn't got a penny."

Jimmy: "Well it's the only pleasure a car I can give my children. . . . Now what the HELL did my wife send me down for (touches ear) I forgot . . . What the heck I'll send one o'the kids down. Don't take any wooden nickels, Julius—I'll be seeing you, Freddy . . . s'long!" (closes door)

(Freddy, having finished polishing, has turned to his new task throwing sawdust

over the tiled floor to keep as Julius says “somebody from breaking their heads.” The “boss” is drawing and turning his immense knife over a sharpening stone meanwhile chattering about his competitor across the street)

Hillback: “He never says a word to you except mmmh! and yeah . . . I thought he was an idiot. Right, wouldn’t you . . . But let a woman walk into the store and he lights up is such a different person with a sparkle and a wise crack you realize he’s got intelligence. Ah-h, a woman! (feels edge of knife with thumb) That shmo (waving knife) has a different price anybody walks into him. (draws knife across stone) I don’t like that. ‘Your prices are not what they should be’ he says to me, ‘should be more this and you don’t charge enough for that’ that cockroach — I could buy him out ten times — gonna tell me how to run my business. (tears slip off paper roll tests knife) Just like my son’s partner before they split up he was always. . . .”

Freddy: “Your son’s in business too?”

Hillback: “In furniture. Used to be an accountant until the firm went broke. Made good money thought he was fixed for life . . . A little more around here (sawdust at doorway) Freddy, you’re not listening I don’t want anybody to slip I should have a case on my hands . . .”

Freddy: “So how is he making out?”

Hillback: “He writes me he’s having a sale now . . . on some junk. Did a nice business bought himself a car a house two family, but lately it dropped a lot. Business conditions I don’t have to tell you are not so hot, all over . . . covers expenses and a living, I hope. I warned him (shaking knife) honest as I’m standing here not to go in partners with that damn fool such a stupid man he signed a note for 800 dollars and my son STILL . . . IS MAKING GOOD FOR IT. Now he writes me—his wife’s O K my daughter-in-law she’s smartening him up, nice woman you can’t help liking her,—someone’s offered him 19,000 dollars for the key and dollar for dollar for the merchandise but he wants more. So—er (pulls hair out of head blows across knife) AH—that’s good! I got this knife for eight years like an old friend I wouldn’t take a hundred dollars for it not on your life (pulls hair) eww! the few hairs I got left I got to pull ’em out yet!”

Freddy: (cheerfully) “Put some of this (sawdust) on your head it’ll grow back . . . ha ha. guarantee!”

Hillback: "Why not — tried everything else — why not? What I spent already on . . . What are you doing here today **NOW HE COMES AROUND** (to William, window-cleaner, lean brown nose-hooked Negro. Has placed his pointed ladders against building and is carrying in brush and pail) Where were you. . . ."

William: "We're busy. I'll do inside today."

Hillback: "But I haven't got the window ready . . . alright, alright, Freddy come here! (Julius and Freddy are soon hustling clearing things away. The window-cleaner goes to the back and returns with a pail of hot soapy water) So how are you feeling these days Willie where you was shot in the war?"

William: "Doc tells me to take it easy. You can leave that there I can make it now — take it easy! how can a poor man take it easy?" (standing against the plate-glass he dips long-haired brush in water . . . across with right hand swing, changes, across with left . . . skilfully uses wiper taking surplus water off with blackened chamois . . . hangs wiper on strap)

Hillback: "How is your brother you told me sometime ago he was graduatin'?"

William: "He'll be looking for work."

Hillback: "Maybe I could help him . . . let me see now who did I do a favor lately? Well, let him come around maybe I'll think of somethin'."

William: "He put in a coupl'a applications. You'd think they were gonna give the kid a ten-thousand dollar job the way . . ."

Hillback: "Yeah-yeah, they look you up in and out, and after you got it what have . . . watch yourself! (a hand to William who's finished and climbing out) What business is it of theirs all those questions?"

William: (has gathered everything in pail and is leaving thru doorway) "It keeps people out." (significant look at Hillback, door closes)

Hillback: (as clerk is putting back canned goods fruit vegetables in the window) "Nice man — for a black one."

Freddy: "And you're not prejudiced!"

Hillback: "Not me, never!"

Freddy: "That's what you think!"

Hillback: "How can you say that (index and thumb up) when — **DON'T I KNOW MYSELF BETTER THAN YOU DO?** there's good 'n bad all kinds so I don't want you . . . I was only saying —"

Freddy: "I know what you said you don't have to repeat yourself. If a Negro person is good enough to take money from when he comes in to buy he's good"

enough to be talked about respectably. I don't see"

Hillback: "What are you stickin' up for them? (helps Freddy swing a crate of oranges onto window platform) oho! you can get ruptured with that."

Freddy: "I'll stick up for anybody. It is SO MY BUSINESS, you don't like it when somebody makes nasty cracks about you!"

Hillback: "Do you mean to say you think they're as good as you are?"

Freddy: (exasperated) "No! they grow up and down and we grow sideways."

Hillback: (in a fit of laughter) "HIA-HA-HAH nherah nherah y'such a funny man. But I like you you ain't afraid to say what you please."

Freddy: "You don't want to put these back do you?" (pointing to some half decayed grapefruits)

Hillback: "Throw them away — Throw them away, I already made my money on it. (opens cash register . . . fingers bills . . . sighs) ohhh! sometimes I think you're right. Maybe you're right about it, Freddy, about business — everything calls itself a business — On the job you don't have to think you do your work and you go home, you can forget about it. No troubles no bills no worries. (a deep sigh) Here, there's always something to do you bend for this and cleaning up, and if you sit down for a minute a customer comes in — always happens. I'm as honest (hands on chest) as the next man — But in business you sometimes got to look the other way. And for that you got to be a certain type person. If I had known what I know now maybe I wouldn't have — Now I'm stuck with it. It's not an easy thing to start a business nowadays you can lose your . . . LEAVE IT LEAVE IT, didn't you ask me to go home a half hour earlier today THEN WHY DON'T YOU REMIND ME? it's five minutes to"

Freddy: "I'll make it up Monday."

Hillback: "Go wash already — who's asking you? — and here's the key for the store. s'alright I'll take care of it — go and have yourself a good time and enjoy yourself." (at register counts and recounts — bent and worried)

6. HOME AT LAST

A half a block more and I'm back home again standing with a bag of groceries in front of the house talking to Louie, the janitor. Louie — a white-haired man with a stubble beard and tumbling mustache — is leaning on the long handle of a wide snow-scraper resting for a moment from his job of cleaning the sidewalk of snow. His heavy-knit blue sweater is frayed at the elbows; a wide belt meets in a bronze

buckle where his stomach rounds out. Grouchy as always – he'll always do you a favor that's the kind a guy Louie is . . . "I'm sick and tired o' being a slob f'everybody in this house . . . Next month I'm telling the landlord (each time he says this) to get himself somebody else for his coupla bucks and lousy rent. What people in this house! What I gotta do with it if the rooms are small? All I know is the landlord's complainin' to me inspector gave him a last warning: no keeping things in the hall! It's against the fire regulations. But you can't speak to some damn people, they don't wanna know . . . aww, you don't know – STOP THAT NOISE (to children knocking each other around in the stoop doorway) OUTSIDE if you want to make a nuisance of yourself! YOU WAIT 'TIL I GET A'HOLD YOU . . . kids . . . god damn them. The people in this house – they want to do anything they want I shouldn't open my mouth. That one next to you I caught the children myself marking up the halls and I'm supposed to keep quiet and say nothin'. Then they complain to the landlord. Throwing garbage down the dumbwaiter what a class a people. I tell you if I can get another job I'll pack up 'n run and I don't mean another janitor-porter work! – Some people you can never satisfy that old one on the first floor I SHOULD CLEAN UP FOR HER CAT! Seven months I've had this job and I've never had so many arguments – So many headaches – t'hell with it all." . . . pushes snow-scraper couple of times and continues . . . "landlord doesn't want to fix what am I supposed to do about it! and another thing, f'xample, that big loud mouth on the second floor with the two kids her husband's away, fightin' with me – there's mice in her kitchen. I tell her to set traps 'n not t'bother me no more. What goes on in this house you'd never believe it even 'f I told you. That one next to you – not Mrs. Lanton – opposite the other way, another bird, keeps me going ten times for her rent. 'Her husband eezn't working . . . next time . . . come around again . . . maybe tomorrow.' What the hell does she think I am? – I got eyes, ain't I? her husband I seen him go to work ev'ry morning. Some people. I – HEY YOU . . . WATCH YOURSELF THIS TIME (to iceman with tub on shoulder) I got enough with everybody dragging in the mud without you wettin' on the floor. Somebody's gonna fall on the stair and break their neck. (to me) Then the landlord 'll have it in for me. (as I'm leaving for upstairs) I'll be up 'bout that switch you'll be home tomorrow? . . . alright, you be home I'll fix that rope for the window too."

They're at it again, the two of them, Mrs. Williams' 18-19 year old and that girl from the next house. I can't see them but I can hear their voices from behind the stairway on the ground floor.

Cut it out . . . for goodness sa-ake! DON'T someone might see us. Ohh-nn! Oh-hhh! Billy, have a heart . . . I'm only human. DAR-ling-g, your hands you got no control over them.

Whatsa matter, can't I even be nice to you!

Not if I don't want to.

Say, doll, you you . . .

Please! – Billy – y'HURTING me. STOP! you get me all mixed up inside.

A rather stout woman in her forties . . . resting her bulging shopping bag on the window sill between

the second and third landing . . . “These stairs – they’re enough to kill a person before you get to the top of them. Did they paint in your place yet . . . four years I’ve been here and they never painted yet. He promised me for Christmas he gave me his word I was all ready but the painters never came around. That’s why I’m not paying him rent if he drops dead – let him throw me out! – first he’s got to paint. Louie comes around everyday, he’s abusive, you’d think he owned the house. The ceiling’s coming down I’ll show you sometimes you come upstairs why don’t you come in sometime, it’s no joke in the kitchen. It’s liable to crash ’n kill me. It happened to a friend of mine and she had to go to the hospital with nineteen stitches, happen to me I’ll sue him. I’ll take his . . . Oh do you like this coat you keep looking at it. I just had to (stroking fur collar) get myself one of these. The last coat I had d’you remember it the brown checkered one I wore it and wore it finally tore under the arms and I threw it away. The janitor he doesn’t even sweep the halls anymore once a month he wakes up when the landlord’s around. Splish-splashes you call that clean? gets drunk that’s all he’s good for (hand swings to open mouth) and you don’t see him for days. Imagine! me payin’ my rent every month without keepin’ him (the landlord) waitin’, like Mrs. Davis does not that I blame her she has to wait for her . . . How do you do (to an elderly couple coming down the steps. A moment of silence until they are out of hearing) They say they was once rich . . . but I don’t know . . . people have a way of bragging. – So every receipt, I’ve kept that’s how much I trust him.”

It was on this floor that I heard a relief investigator say to the widow-lady: Why didn’t you SAVE your money? What did you DO WITH IT all these years? a curse and a black plague on a situation where billions are taken and billions are thrown away and the widow-lady has to worry about her children. This is my floor. the key. home . . . the end of a good Saturday’s walk.

7. THIS CITY WILL BE OURS!

The City is my darling sweetheart and I am married to its ways
Here I’ve lived, and here I’ve worked, and here I’ve sworn to end my days.

City of ripping seams and ponderous proportions

City where one upswerving skyscraper is just another unnoticed upliftment

City where everything is flung out on a chain-store scale, on a capital investment
scale, on a super-colossal scale.

Shut your mouth and hold your breadth here comes a piece of soap IN BILLIONS
a cracker . . . a soda bottle . . . a little handkerchief in hundreds of millions.

City of spacious well-lighted immense acre-plains of Five and Ten cent stores

Hothouses of assembled flowers and seeded little things and counter festive trivialities

Take the goggle-eyed auto-lizards miles and miles of them parked on both sides of almost every street
Take the sunburst colors on city corners — The gorgeous magazine petalled open-air Newsstand
(the owner huddled and cold)

Go ahead take that subway ride down, below the city! bolts of light and human freightage screeching
thru the darkness, shot from station to station. Rumbling thumping knocking rattle transporting
their daily millions! jet-zooming in a smear of yellow light. Out of the cave-mouth slides in
the “Local” but not without its piercing squeaks — shrieks! snapping open and shutting its hasty
doors (WOW! I JUST MADE IT) Onsweeping onrushing in a sunken alley racket!
(Strangers staring at each other worse than cattle crowded:
Angrier than ever at the rising fare)

Take the expanding enormous bridges swung out over the river wide and
movementless, over the piers, over the red-painted tugboat, over
flatbottoms looking flat so far below

(a slim fellow this bridge with a foot on either shore, whose jutting purpose is
to prove at one sweeping sight how jammed in are the rooftopped buildings:
the immensity of this aggregation stops all our thought and awesomely
lifts us away . . . dazed, in the arms of unbelieving density and crowdedness of sight!)
the harborside misty and calling in the ships to broad outreaching docks and portside terminals.

Take the freight train yards and the slithering tracks, noisy clattering hooting hissing with
cars knocking into each other . . . restless for the open spaces and dark tunnels and the swoop
of the Wild Express Runs

Take the Grand Skyscraper hospitals and their workshop clinics — shining corridors of rich pavilions
for the real rich and wards and semi-wards for all the plain and poor

Take the differences all along the line sharp and glaring!

Take the fast service business-owned community eating-places!

Take the used-car lots! the second-hand stores! the bargain-hunting dress houses

(girls'n'women old young waiting on sidewalks for stores to open)

Take it all! the fever-stricken cities

perspiring forever in ceaseless births and labor-pang confinements.

Oh city temptations and the call — drawing me on to go places

Oh changing restless me child-waif of the churning waters

Ohh . . . light and night and to live all the thousand lives in ecstacy and
fling and all my might

Oh the daringness in an Hour of Life!

Hot spot for night-life and cabaret entertainment . . . but even for us people there are ways of busting up the daily hardness and boredom, the crushed feeling, and Ordinariness of it all.

City of roped off communities ingrown and stand-offish. Some folks fenced around because they don't know better — some, like the Negro, ghettoed. And everywhere the grinding split of rich and poor.

A city divided against itself: Our city — but They own it!

The City where so much starts on the level and ends corrupted

The open-town of Grand-scale tie-ups between gangsterdom and top business and officialdom

City of clankingly “free” people until a few of them stand up for even that much
of their rights!

City where you're judged by how much you make and frankly by how much you own!

A city of Millions of people who can no more live without it — Just as they can't live without waiting in lines! without water-faucets! without pre-packaged things and foods

OUR CITY — even if it doesn't belong to us!

Love people as they are and glory in the greatness that is to be

For the dust of ages of bossdom took a long time to settle in you and me

This is just the beginning: New kinds of cities shall arise

To take us humans by surprise.

The time-bombed aggregations shall give way

To the newly-built shining planned projects of the day.

And costs will be considered, and complicated calculations shall follow thru,

And height and width and space-arrangements analysed too,

And door knobs will continue to be counted, and windows fitted exactly in their
place on every wall —

But human welfare now, shall be the master-measure of them all!

Viva la the encircling city streets!

Viva la the entanglement!

Hurrah for the miles and miles that cross

and can't be beat!

Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! for all the city streets!

THE END

WE ARE THE ONES WHO WORK

to an untiring helpmate
and – contributing critic
who so often showed me
what to write about
where to begin
when to stop
what to put in
and what to leave out.
To Gertrude – who stood by always
INSCRIBED TO YOU

TITLE OUTLINE

	page	
G THINGS WITH EYES OF NONSENSE		
Seeing Things With Eyes of Nonsense	73	24. Kid Expert: The Challenger!
ING ALONG		25. New Workers on the Shores of Laborland
Jobs and Pay and Prices	74	VII. THE MOVIE SKIT:
Troubles and the Middle of the Week	75	“LUNCH IN THE CAFETERIA”
How Long Can We Stand For It	75	26. Just A Company Sergeant At Heart
HURRY ON THE WAY TO WORK		27. Workingpeople Beating the Next Fellow in Playing Rich
Getting Up in the Morning	76	28. Six Women
Catching The Bus	77	29. There Ought To Be A Union Here
The Big-Time Factory: From the Outside	80	VIII. MACHINE-MADE AND MOTHERED
The Big-Time Factory: Receiving and Shipping	81	30. The Worktables on the Move
MACHINE-BABIES TAKE OVER		31. Putting Them Thru the Ropes At the Examination Center
The Big-Time Factory: On the Inside	83	32. The Fashion Show in the World's Department Store
Spee—ee—d!	85	IX. THAT BUS ON THE WAY HOME AT NIGHT
The Rush of Machinery Movements	86	33. That Bus on the Way Home at Night
Changing the Style and Guts of Things	87	X. HOME AFTER A DAY'S WORK
Taking the Little Fellows for Granted	89	34. Expecting Papa Any Minute
Machines and Personality	89	35. Her Son's Letter
Well What About It!	93	36. Papa and Uncle Talk Things Over.
LINE-NURSE MALE AND FEMALE		37. Harriet's Birthday Present
The Whole Bunch of Us Together	94	XI. ALIVE IN LABORLAND
Get Ready Set Go!	95	38. Alive in Laborland
Get Done Hurry Hurry Up	96	XII. SLEEP-DREAMS
“Good Conditions—Pleasant Surroundings”	98	39. Let's Go to Bed
Running Away Way Up In the Clouds	102	40. Saturdays and Sundays Off
Working in the Days of Our Tomorrow	104	XIII. THE MOON IN THE BLACKNESS OF OUR NIGHT
HINE-NURSE MALE AND FEMALE (cont'd)		41. The Moon in the Blackness of Our Night
A Sample Package of Different Kinds of Workers	105	
The First Day on the Job	116	

I. SEEING THINGS WITH EYES OF NONSENSE

1. SEEING THINGS WITH EYES OF NONSENSE

Of the millions he'll get when he gets there
Rich? . . . he'll be rollin' in it.
HE won't have to work, other's 'll do the workin' for him,
A Slot Machine Operator King, or sometin', dressed in
silk-cut style!

All he needs is the breaks.

“Working’s all right, but it’s for guys that ain’t got nuttin’
up here. Me! I’m different. I’m always lookin’ out for Number 1 —
that’s me, see? Everyday I go t’work I says to myself — Billy,
some day you’ll hit the jackpot! Some day — Y’born to be rich
nothing can stop yuh — some day you’ll fall into a pile of dough.”

The bughouse dream that keeps us poor but happy
Keeps you happy in a silly sort of way
sucking at the nipple when there’s nothing in the bottle
In this case A DREAM PUTS US TO SLEEP.

WOW! SWELL!! Whoopee!
\$\$\$ 25,000 DOLLARS \$\$\$ AND IT CAN! BE YOURS
The Chance of a Lifetime*** GIGANTIC CONTEST PRIZES***
who knows IT MAY BE YOURS.
(All you have to do is to fill in one word, —
And tell why you like “Bimbee’s Brand” better
than anything else in the world)
What a bankroll! GOLD-PLATED!!
waiting just for yew-a!

That Grand Dream!
(boss-baited to keep us safe and satisfied, hoping)
That Rainbow Fairytale!
(quick dough and easy — and a lot of it)
And you’ll be the one in a million.

maybe wrap it up in an all night crap game — it's possible;
anyhow, maybe some rich dame will take an interest in you,
 seein' how clever you are,
 maybe your looks 'll get them;
you hit upon an idea starts it comin' in so fast
 you don't know what to do with it —
 how to spend it all;
maybe, even, puttin' something over — not too raw, of course —
 'slong as you get away with it;
maybe, if you play your cards right, someone will die and leave
 the old maestro a hunk of it;
how do you know, this may be the winning Sweepstake Number!
 I don't expect it — mind you — but it might?
All he needs is a little change of luck, and, without working
 he'll strike pay-dirt!

There are so many ways a man can kid himself —
born poor but I'll die rich!
And now for things as they really are.

II. GETTING ALONG

2. JOBS AND PAY AND PRICES

Why should the hardest thing in the world be just to make a living?
 Just because it is — is that a reason why it should be?
always living with the hope of getting a wonderful job, and always
 lucky if he has any kind of a job.
work and again work, but how are you to get along
 on what they pay you?

 after working a whole week only this
 in his hand . . . only this
to work so hard and to be paid so little
And when you go out to buy something you just get heart failure!
 The prices they ask. — the junk they give us.

3. TROUBLES AND THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK

to go sleep one night without a worry in your head — what an experience!
it must be wonderful.
so many different kinds of trouble attach themselves to us
as people
SO MANY MORE as workingpeople.

counting over what's left (on Wednesday)
will he be able to make it to pay day
separating with his finger the money in his hand
counting half aloud:
where did it go? should have more.
is THAT all there is? I could of sworn
there was more.
shaking his head, and sighing
where did it go?
You can't afford this and you haven't the money for that.
as his wife thinks — and often remarks
Never to know what it means to have anything!
(to work all week long and then not to be able to have the things you want)

4. HOW LONG CAN WE STAND FOR IT

no matter where you go
all over the world, you'll bump into them
the overworked working-men and working-women.
the most terrible way to make a living
isn't too terrible
as LONG AS THEY'RE MAKING something on us.
How many times do you come right up against somebody
(a human being)
and you can't speak! That a man should have to
make a living LIKE THAT.
as if They were playing around with Us: teasing, testing us
seeing HOW MUCH we can take and STILL keep quiet.
when it is all over we shall look back on it —

Was it possible? Is it possible that we stood for it even
for a year or a month? Could it ever have happened?
There is no question about it: this is how we live
but it CAN BE OTHERWISE.

III. IN A HURRY ON THE WAY TO WORK

5. GETTING UP IN THE MORNING

You'd give anything to turn over and go back to sleep again
It seems as if you just fell asleep, and here's the alarm clock
waking you up in the middle (?) of the night:

“Wake up!” “Wake up!”
it's time to go to work
something you can't shirk
dead sleepy you may be
but sheer necessity
rings and shrieks
“Get up!” RRRRRR! “Wake up!”
tumble out of bed
shake your weary head —
you'll have to work like this
I'm afraid until you're dead.

so sleepy you can hardly keep your eyes open
dreary eyelids drearily closing
half-asleep, half-thinking “you'll be late . . . You'll fall
asleep again” frightening them open
getting up suddenly sitting on the edge of the bed mumbling
scratching your head and mumbling
“I'm so sleepy I'm dying . . . wish I didn't have to go to work today . . .
maybe I should call them up — aw, we need the money”
closing your eyes tight and stretching some more; stalling
“What time is it?” as if you didn't know
absolutely swearing you'll go to sleep early tonight (until tonight)
a fog in your head and in your eyes
finding it hard to walk even from the bedroom to the kitchen sink.

6. CATCHING THE BUS

What street is this — is this 36th?
Toity-eight lady, toity-eight.
GETTING OFF 'scuse me please GETTING OFF!!

so excited now pushing her way to the middle door
only a minute ago she was in such a hurry to get on and now
she's in such a hurry to get off.

yawning and sleepy like a dog
here we are again bouncing in the bus transfer in hand
another day beginning:

6th Avenue Line NORTH
Monday — Sept. 13th
A. M.-----P. M

this transfer doesn't lie weeks have gone by
and what have you got to show for it?

a minute ago, you were also running for the bus
ting! — you've hopped on and dropped your coin
moving eagerly but unsteady on your feet grabbing ahold of
every bar and strap in sight

you've got a seat!
sitting with that transfer in your hand
looking at the people who are looking at you
all workers going to work or kids to school.

catching the eye of the middle-aged woman who looks me straight in the eye
her meaning plain and simple.
noticing how each man and woman sticks to himself or herself
yet each dying to talk and get acquainted. noticing how wrong it is
anything that keeps them from doing just this.

not more than twenty minutes ago you were putting on your coat
rushing out of the house:

“Have you got your carfare — your lunch money
— WATCH WHERE YOU’RE GOING DON’T BE IN SUCH
A HURRY YOU’LL GET KILLED ‘n’ don’t forget to
bring home your umbrella today always forget-
ting something.”

someone in the family was hollering after you.
no matter how late you were you stopped to buy a paper picking it up on the run.
that early in the morning with no little kids on the sidewalk
things looked bare
horses hoofs sounded louder; and the slabs of ice shivered on the
sidewalks waiting to be cut up and delivered to the homes of us workers.
And Storekeepers swishing the mop getting ready for
the day’s business; and Janitors whisking the broom (with a whisk . .
whisk . . whisk)
and a fog in the air the morning chill —
and you with the blues cursing yourself for getting up so late.

BUT to get back to the time you were still waiting for the bus . . .
Waiting impatiently, on the street corner for that bus.
wish it would hurry up — pulling out your watch — getting off
the sidewalk looking for the bus
kind of worried now it’s getting late.
Other people are standing here, standing straight with the curb
All facing the same way all in a hurry to get to work.

shaking easily from side to side and bumping along
THE BUS a big shakey earthquaky room
a heaving boat; a clumsy wheel-horse
grunting and sighing
stopping to take on people and to let them off.

the bus driver who’s looking ahead in his mirror to see what’s going on behind
yells — “STEP UP STEP UP PLEASE. WATCH the door.
Plenty of room up ahead STEP to the rear
please! LET’S GO”
to the back of the bus then pushing and rubbing your way along sideways

trying to make yourself thin and small as possible.
The way this thing SHAKES YOU ABOUT as you hang on by a hand!
lunging you forward as it stops, twirling you around as it suddenly starts
showing no consideration. the engine puffing whrrrr – rrr – rrr
puffingly catching its breadth at every street corner station
feeling guilty now thinking of how many workers are going to be late.

Riding to work in the bus thinking of the things we'll have to do when we get home tonight
fixing something broken – painting the chairs – and Oh yes you've got to see Mr. So and So
about this and that it's important – and be sure to speak to Tommy about the way he's be-
having lately, I don't like it – And this time you must stop at the janitor's about the
sink there's a leak and it has to be fixed.

(so many things to attend to in order to get along . . . besides going to work)
and let's see now – (the woman's working) – she mustn't forget on the way home tonight to stop
over in the market and bring some things up, especially the matches, and the salt. and-the
the, those shoes for Betty at the shoemaker's they must be ready now. of course there are
a couple of things of the children to wash, and her hair's a mess. the house needs a good
cleaning, a real cleaning this time you can't let it go anymore, and for God's sake call up
Mother already and tell her you didn't call up before because you've been so busy.
(one thing is certain) THERE'S ALWAYS something to do around the house! (all you want –
without a penny for your work)

Overhearing bits of conversation that pull you away from
your own thoughts:

someone sitting next to me – “I don't think I laughed so much
in my life . . . he's nice” – the fellow she was out with last night
HER FELLOW – “did you see the the ring he gave me” – showing it.
He took her to a show and then even if it was late they went dancing.

The man sitting right across me talking loud: HE'S STILL THERE . . . YEAH
that guy'll DIE in that place – And Charlie?
He left. WHERE'S HE WORKING NOW?
Central. 'SAT SO! good job? Pays better.
Well WHATAYA KNOW.

How we can make a better and easier living, the big question in our lives??
in the meantime the years catching up with us
maybe he SHOULD OF taken a course in something to improve himself –

do you think he'd make out better that way?
maybe he should of finished school — or,
what good did it do him to sacrifice so much to graduate?
How long can you hold on to this job anyway?
from this week to next more than that you don't know.
And those two women standing up there having such a good time
telling each other
what they had for dinner Sunday (it sounds real good)
the way they prepared it and the way it was roasted and how juicy it was,
and the browned potatoes (whole potatoes) and the gravy such marvelous
gravy it was so rich and wonderful. and the way they ate, in short
“Did I have good stuff to eat yesterday I
ate so much I thought I'd bust. Everybody did
you couldn't help yourself, it was so good.”
And just as you're about to get off, as you're pulling the cord
you hear someone say sounds like a girl's voice
“ and he tells me that yet — he isn't bashful ”
but now you're too busy trying to push your way to that middle door,
and without stepping on anybody, to listen to what she's so angry about.

7. THE BIG-TIME FACTORY: FROM THE OUTSIDE

there it stands STRAIGHT HIGH UP
the round and yellow factory chimney:
from its mouth fumbling and knotting itself up
breathing hard and fitful
the black-coal-smoke pours out as the chimney reaches.
Now the weak and clinging smoke aimlessly expands itself
yielding in all directions to any sweep of the wind
lazy in its lagging spinelessness.

blockfront factory grounds and areas
flat square-cut tool boxes —
track feelers crawling from under them.
button-hole windows in a dreary punch-board pattern
wired-gates and wired-fences . . . And alone by itself
a water-tank asleep on stilts.

Long before you come to it several blocks away you can see the sprawled out factory;
and walking down the street all going in the same direction you can see the workers, men and women,
talking laughing and saying hello — but watching the time:

Hey Eddie what time is it
It's early 18 — 17 minutes to
Seventeen 's that all
Yeah yeah what's your hurry —
take your time y'live longer

then a few easy words on the weather this morning and how are you feeling Oh I'm all right you know
getting along — but if they could speak their piece right then and there . . . How many would say:
every single day day in and day out to this lousy place I'm tired of it
every morning I get the same feeling WHY should I work for them and they should get so rich
every morning I feel it that my life is being wasted away that I'm getting old
no matter how big that place is you get that locked in all day awful prison-feeling
ordered around do this do that setting you nutty hurrying you up without you having a thing to
say about it
it's the LAST PLACE you'd want to be if you could help it — isn't this the truth!
a life where you have to CONVINCe YOURSELF to go on living every day
all the time worried about losing the job and HATING TO KEEP IT.

8. THE BIG-TIME FACTORY: RECEIVING AND SHIPPING

box-bellied freighter trucks
bumping into port
heaving against the
loading-platform docks
emptying themselves giving up
the raw stock
hot and rumbling as they
smell the finished factory stuff
stacked and waiting to be shipped.

down, down at the bottom
of this House of Making Things
where it cuts the city sidewalk
and smacks against the ground
things have been moving in – and
things are going out!

in and out steady all the time – but,
there's a difference!
the teasing sister with two faces
has turned herself around
the USEFUL side now hides the useless
and The House can hardly wait
to shove these worked-on goods
thru its bottom gate,
and make a fortune by it!

First, it was the raw materials in the lump
rough and raw and bulky
lumber laid in planks
iron slabs and steel in sheets
oil drums, and bales so tightly strapped
and of course the easy-going sack-bags
on each other slumped.

And now, again TO and FROM
To – all points up and down around the roomy world
From – every spot of the earth!
the man-made goods scrubbed and shiny
bundled in tough paper and wrapped in straw
locked in padded cardboard cases
marked in black: “Handle With Care”
“This Side Up”
or if the merchandise is packed and nailed in wooden crates and boxes
the painted sign: USE NO HOOKS insults
a friendly iron claw!

Get the two-wheelers with their legs up in the air
Get the lifting platform-truck for a "piece of freight"
 — I'LL BET IT'S A TON if it's any weight —
these boxes! . . . shipment-lot loafers
each as lazy as it is humanly possible for a box to be
you'd think it was a sleeping contest the way they won't budge
DON'T THEY KNOW
 unless they're sold
 the boss can't make
what he failed to pay his workers!!

IV. THE MACHINE-BABIES TAKE OVER

9. THE BIG-TIME FACTORY: ON THE INSIDE

Inside this swollen Toolhouse your mouth opens you swallow hard
an enormous chunk of space caught and entrapped!
High built and long in the distance with windowed-walls
 and glassed roof
supported on a fishing-net of zig-angled beams
 and stiff-linked girders
the Factory Toolhouse bulges with feet wide apart, swaying with
 its own power!
from where you're standing on one spot you see so many things
 going on you don't see anything at all
and THE NOISE you can't think, a confounded racket of repetition
even if you're used to it it's there and you can't — can't
 get away from it
it surrounds you from all sides and with a BOOM and shattering slam
and a put-put-put-put-put-put
 and a rrrrrrrr — uh, rrrrrrrr — uh
 and zzzzzz — ping! zzzz-ooop, zzzz-ooop, zzzz-ooop, zzzz-ooop,
it reaches into you and bends you over closing your eyes
a world of hemmed in noises fighting for supremacy
collapsing and howling themselves to death in a sweat

fighting to be noticed hoarse from trying to impress us
with their importance!

Like children's voices before school begins
the factory noises rise . . shriek . . jangle . . and intermix.

All the machines are here, big and small, in productive conference
stamping their feet bellowing bawling each other out
. . . but in a sing-song fashion rolling each word around.
the big Iron-Guys smoking and belching heat-flashes in their eyes
are telling them all how it SHOULD be done and how it
could be made
one is pounding his fist and hammering away at his point
sparks flaming from his trembling nose
hissing and swaying with anger he's turned on Light-Machines whose heads,
he bellows, are always in a whirl.
But a short snappy little machine gives him a stinging comeback
striking home the meaning with a

ti-ti
ti-ti
ti-ti
sssssssss — wssh — sh
ti-ti
ti-ti
ssss ssss ssss.

All excited now the stuttering machines begin to stutter,
and the whining ones to whine. the whistle whistles
the screech screeches! and the clash bangs
and rattles itself
until a Blast of Air calls the meeting to order — and a clanging bell
brings it to an end.

yes there was some excitement there no wonder you couldn't hear
the quiet-running Power-Engine humming to himself
with a oohooohooohooheeeeeeooohooheeee
running barefoot to the side of any machine at the snap of a button.

big, big as the big-time factory is it's already packed and crowded
believe me it's hard to imagine what's going on here
the long arm of a hoisting derrick leans over as it slowly sets
 a pulling mass-weight into place
like a bloated sausage with a goose-neck shape the hanging hook
 from an overhead crane
 clutches its load and carries it away
chains that have heaped themselves up for a noise-tormented nap
 can't suck their breath in as suddenly
 they're twisted and dangled in mid-air
belts flow together and flow apart dragging things with them
 which ever way they go
 swirling around over and underneath themselves
 one conveyor going one way and one the other
 and one taking the easy way out right thru the floor.
snake-cobra climbing pipes with guts of gas and steam
 like seamless fleshy tails with knobby joints,
 lie along unpainted walls and fasten themselves
 on unsuspecting machines
long lines of single small machines and chairs upright before them
 and long lines of workers in these chairs bending over from them.
and standing at colossal attention the rows of the iron Big-Guys
 whose answer to the high-ceilings' frightened cry "STOP STOP"
 is to break right thru them!
and last, and bearing it all in a flat and even temper
the greasy oily quivering floor lets go in dusty resignation.

10. SPEE—EE—D!

quick, quicker, move fast
zipp, return zipp, return
up and down at a whizzing speed.
the frenzied Machines must do their job
8 to 5
for only then are we as workers
helping around.

twitching, whirling, wiggling about
blown up in jerky speed
not a second soon
or a second after
Each Machinery-Part waits . . .

BALANCED FOR ITS PURPOSE!

11. THE RUSH OF MACHINERY MOVEMENTS

Forty-thousand parts and pieces locked in a job to do
cuddling up and rubbing one another
nesting thick and cozy in a hairless shiny case
each machine-part as hard as a horn — a tooth — a beak
yet there's a body here, the warm flesh of a living thing
that leaps and tears itself apart at the touch of electric;
in the ripped nick of a second, without a doubt or hesitation
jumping, wheeling, tumbling about . . . sliding easily ahead
shrinking back in fright. now it's here — now it's off again
slinking sideways back and forth bobbing up and down
the movements oiled and slippery
a swarming horde of parts and pieces sized and shaped
rolling under and squirming pulling at the titties of busy Mother Work.

the round and round wheel, the rolling graceful wheel
and its stiff-legged spokes;
head over heels it flings itself landing always on its winding feet.
Stiff iron bars in elegant act and motions
throwing out their linked arms and gliding as they fold them
light and easy in the joints.

Chunky, jagged, iron teeth

ferocious cutters in an iron-wheel-jaw! . . .

kissing and clasping each other;

tiny little baby teeth . . . little chippers

one coming right behind the other so well behaved.

The coiled spring looping the loop around and beyond itself

like a good mother (too good) that spoils her children it takes the shocks and bumps

or a bale of cotton, in a barrel of cement . . . HOPE SPRINGS FOREVER!
And you can't blame them, there's no telling what might happen
with the aid of Fire and a Thousand Waters.

a brightly sprightly crackling fire
irresponsible and impulsive
a-Burst with Light and Gaiety!
the naked dancing yellowed flames
springing and flinging, fluttering
their blazing hunger hands
the ghastly phantom feet and hands
riding Rough and Wild over anything
– but NOT IN INDUSTRY!

the boiling bubbling smelly stinky stuffs
the vats of greenish . . yellowish . . brownish sticky juicy mixtures
pasty and steamy and frothing at the mouth
with a confusion of puffing bursting blisters! —
In a kitchen kettle as big as the kitchen itself
UnbeLIEVABLE gallons cook and stew
dissolving and blending as agreed upon.

in industry, whenever the sign is up:
“Men women at work”
Red Heat with face flushed
and Tropic Flame aglow
are held in check, trained, made to jump
and start and stop to a whistle.

But sometimes the smartest thing to do is wait, just wait
snubbing the supplies and stuffs, until passing Father Time
leads them on to the Useful gate.

13. TAKING THE LITTLE FELLOWS FOR GRANTED

unheard is the tinkle of little tools in the shattering clash of noises
sometimes the old-fashioned hand helpers get the feeling they don't belong
especially when the Big Tools are small enough to high hat them:

then the zigger-zagging saw bares its teeth in a ripping hiss
then the bald-headed hammer knocks his head against things
the stiff-jaw wrench takes a good grip on himself, and as usual
the peace-loving plane tries to skim over and smoothen things.

But once I heard the knife make a cutting remark:

"If you guys are not too big for what YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO DO
I'm not too small for mine!"

After all (I don't like to interfere but what's right is right)
what IS a high-powered drill (for instance) but a kid brother
to the little screw?

say what you want . . . but can you deny, the handtools may have
outlived their day but not their usefulness.

14. MACHINES AND PERSONALITY

There are MANY machines and many sides to their nature:

the calm and capable type
neat certain decisive
big with poise and teeming with machine-like regularity
concentrating on a pattern.

so sure of itself:

drilled as it is in tactics of machinework and design-maneuvers.
Like all machines it has no fears no yearnings no problems
indifferent: craving only a little attention
believing in itself and its own importance.

The Fanatic hot and fiery
trembling wild-eyed and . . . explosive!
rocking to its own power
ooy-yuh-ooy-yuh-ooy-yuh-ooy-yuh
wrapped and muffled in a buzz of speed

so fast you're positive it will overrun itself
working itself into a temperature — face red — eyes
sparking purple, dazzling white, and yellow!

the Brawny Bruisers! shrill hoarse noisy loud-mouthed
these big breathing machines that move around on railroad tracks
— But big as they are so are they lazy!
yawning and taking its time just look at that one unfold itself
moving reluctantly as if it's still thinking it over:
No wonder every now and then it has to be smeared
with black and slimy slippery grease!
And don't you be fooled by this one here, that's plopped its widespread self
upon the even (lucky) wider floor
with a booming whack it slams itself down
stretching and jamming into shape the resistant metal.
after SUCH a crash-landing you'd think it would never be able
to yank itself up again
but up and down and down and up it goes but not without an effort
because it's thinking . . . How much longer will it be before I can go back
to do nothing
to feel again dust specks twinkling as they settle
in all my cracks and places.
— Are they really so lazy? tired or faint
Or is it only MASSIVE POWERS held back in restraint?

the delicate, much smaller, light machinery
closer to our hearts because they make the goods we eat and wear and use.
The frantic needle-jabber: the furious stitcher:
in out under in nimble — but terrified, haste
with five thousand unseeable strokes per minute.
Isn't it just like a machine to gather all its strength, and power —
and gamble it on a single point!
And here's another, that weighs and wraps and binds.
And another that sniffs and feeds on a raw thin metal sheet
going about its work with care and correct technic
so many inches per minute — and at the right times, skipping a beat

trimming, creasing, bulging snapping it off
it knows just what to do to a dot — just when
to use its left-tool . . . to the left

and its right to the right;
IT WOULDN'T THINK of taking its hand away from its mouth
before the Scheduled time to eat!

this type's a mulely number: it starts . . . g-g-grinds . . . and stops
its spirit broken if you don't treat it right.

all the time you have to go around soothing it
with a squirt from an oilcan nipple.

maybe there's something wrong and maybe not
Only the Doctor of Machines — the Machinist, can know.
with a long-handled wrench he's tapping here and tightening something there
on the lookout for a broken rib or a dislocated joint.

When a machine is out of order you don't know what to expect
it can't move here and it moves too much there
it does things to materials it doesn't mean to do
and it's terribly embarrassed by finding itself unable to do
what it's supposed to do.

POOR THING it's simply out of control! — having lost its nerve
to the unusual.

“Hmmm . . . not so good!” says the Machinist bringing the wrench in his right hand
slowly down a couple of times in his left, “Let us hope there are no complications.”

He's worried all right as he listens to the chattering teeth and the rattling knocks
as he starts and stops the motor

maybe they're feeding it too fast . . . or is the toolpoint so feverish
it's soft in the head

if the machine could be slowed down a bit
anyhow, you can't be positive without the patient's cooperation
every time the doctor turns to the machine and says “Ahh! say ahh!”
the machine pouts and whimpers mumbling “oh leave me alone, can't you —
can't you see how sick I am”

“Now PLEASE you must take the right attitude if you want to get fixed and running again.
Won't you tell me where it hurts you? Is there anything coming apart?
Is something worn out?”

but the machine refuses to talk
there's no doubt but it's suffering a breakdown
like a wounded animal it flops and squeaks and tries to get up many times
then sinks frightened licking its wounds.

As if for no reason at all it suddenly doesn't work right,
and now it doesn't work at all.

No matter how good a machine is if it doesn't do its work
it's no good.

After all, no matter how temperamental a Mechanism may be —
it could only be useful to itself when it's useful to the Boss or Me.

What is this — a game, a dance
Look at them flit and rock and prance!
In and out and up and down
Skipping and circling all around

It's got rhythm and it likes quick time
Short step — long step — tapping out a rime
Swing your partners don't be rude
There's your Machine in a playful mood!

The Old-Time tools

the dull, easy-going, old-fashioned wind and water tools
shuffling along on flat feet.

the "sunrise to sunset" homely clumsy tools
doing very little work for their bulk and size
nagging the stuffs and materials.

the Old-Timers, how they long for the good old days
when a man and his machine could warm themselves together:
clinging to the human hand
love-sick for the human eye.

the old-time machine just naturally leaned on its maker
(the new-timer laughs at him!)
relics of the wooden years, rough and unshaven
slow . . . and slow in taking a hint
that it's dead and its days are over.

the LAST word in stylish machines
the self – self – self – Automatic Machiner
glossy with self-importance!
(a skill hog and experience crook just the same:
 It can't stand it if anyone else
 does a stitch of work!)

it hates to be pawed over
a lot of people around gets on its nerves
it doesn't mind a worker or two watching
as long as they keep their hands to themselves
 and don't get in the way.

15. WELL WHAT ABOUT IT!

so, what are they these machines?
that depends upon who owns them
for whose good they're wearing themselves out.
what is a machine but what you can do with it
although, to "them" it's how much they can make on it.
with these machines you can do this and this and that . . . oh yeah?
y'mean, with these machines and those who know how to handle them
– neat heaps of iron junk without us friendly workers!
what it is and what it does and what it does to us
all linked with who it is that owns them.

Wonderful as the machines are there are things they cannot do
– they can make more things that cost less and faster
 (as you know)
– they can dance where we couldn't even dream of walking
– they can gasp IN-STAN-TANEOUSLY as they're switched to
 work without ever once complaining: Am I tired!
(for to a machine all work and no play suits it fine)
that's the most marvelous thing about these "workers"
 strong backs and no minds!

BUT, ask the machine to do something it WASN'T made for?
ask the machine to learn from its own experience?
. . . to strike the unexpected with a will of its own!
And where, Oh Where is that Wonder-boy machine
that isn't alive and crawling with simple simple, slavish repetition?

the many-tongued machines in their clipped and twangy accents
humming-beasts . . . never sad and never melancholy
nor bored nor filled with regrets . . .
nor filled with aches and pains and soreness . . .
Nor forever struggling with their inner selves.
not a worry in all their heads:
 they don't know what they're doing
 so they don't care what's going to happen!
Thousands by hundred of thousands glum, but hard-working, machines
that could make life easier for us . . . But Don't
 as — things — stand.

V. MACHINE-NURSE MALE AND FEMALE

16. THE WHOLE BUNCH OF US TOGETHER

We've found out how to work together
holding hands by factory-millions
the Old-Creep days — the one hand one tool one man days
have sighed and slept themselves away.
already we have changed around the furniture
already we're settled in the new apartment.

sorry, Old-Timer, no more can you sit in a corner by yourself away from everybody.
none of this: "Let it go! . . . so what . . . if it won't be done today it'll be done
tomorrow."

C'mon! take your apron off your lap! the old times and the old styles of work
are not for us anymore.

like something awful that's hopped on and won't let go
the clumsy nose-mask bulges out;
like something inhuman the helmet mask stares wide thru its goggles;
like an egg on many a workingman's head sits guard
a hairless dome of steel;
and the thick toe and his harem of live little finger-toes
are imprisoned, in bull-shoes that should have wheels on them.
And ladies in blue and yellow smocks buttoned all the way down
And ladies in slacks and blouses
and on each womanly head a dainty clinging hairnet
— roping off the crowd of fascinated children
watching laborers at work —
holding each tender wisp of hair by the hand
and gently showing it how to stay in place.
And men with overalls and pockets — pockets that can hold everything
hammers, rulers, wrenches, pliers, pencils — Ahh! what's doing here
sticking up and poking out
And men in shop-aprons and green eye-shades and caps
caps sometimes with the COMPANY NAME on it
and sometimes with the union button.
At last, the nude and acrobatic fingers —
a whole tribe of baby man-creatures
climbing and twisting themselves in heavy canvas gloves
giggling and laughing at the Evil Eye of hot burns and blisters.

18. GET DONE HURRY HURRY UP

the electric spasm speed-up worker
the 8-hour dash
not only how many you're putting out
but faster! faster!
With every split-part of a second counted
For or Against You!

brrrrrUM brrrrrUM brrrrrUM brrrrrUM
ddrrr — ddrrr — ddrrr — ddrrr — ddrrr — ddrrr —
the pumping drum-throb of that dynamo SPEED-UP

Nerve crusher
Stomach ulcerer
Heart ticker-spring buster
Psycho crack-up maker
Suicide teaser

the ripping killing galloping Bosses' speedup
given a Boss-age meaning:
Not only made by man
but swiftly, swiftly as you can!

just a moment there, you were seen . . . you were caught
breathing TWICE IN ONE HOUR
now on you'll mind two machines or maybe three or four.

(Charlie, the foreman)

"Is that all you've done — up to here
F'CHRIST'S SAKE WHAT'S TAKING YOU SO LONG!
Look at this stuff piling up . . . what are you doing
sleeping on the machine? Shake a leg, Joe, that's got
to get out by 3 o'clock."

(it's so easy to get all excited about someone else doing the work
the put-a-move-on Company watchdog
how he can talk work
no matter what you're doing
50 — 60 — 70 — pieces an hour
it's never enough for him
first he rushes you . . . then he says
"See that it's done right!"
but you know what he means
a lot of work fast
so what so it isn't first class as long as it passes)

(Joe, the machine-hand)

“I told him — I don’t take that from nobody — what the hell do you expect in an hour and a half? You shoulda seen the pile of work he gave me then he jumps on me yet. Bastard. No . . . it wasn’t that lot it was 62. The way he keeps after you! I’ve been around the place long enough to know what’s in a day’s work. GOD DAMN IT if he bothers me again I’ll I’m not excited Who’s Excited! Y’asked me to . . . Ahh now you’re talking, that’s just it, for the lousy few pennies they’re paying us they want THREE PEOPLES WORK out of yuh. A guy can kill himself on that machine they’ll never be satisfied.

(but you can’t tell the machine what you think of her
An easy amount-to-nothing pointing-finger push . . .
and she Rocks into startled action!
You can hardly keep up with her
sometimes you just CAN’T keep up with her
this IRON-LADY this Driver
this Juke-box speedup
it’s got the slap me scratch me creepy jitters
it can’t sit still and won’t
twitching us to its maniacal speed
. . . But who’s been dropping in the nickels?
Let US, and our health, and years decide
how fast the fast machines shall ride)

19. “GOOD CONDITIONS . . . PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS”

mmmm! isn’t the air fine here
poisonous and dusty
breathe it in such drafts of drying cough-dust
you can walk thru it
a haze that sifts into your nose, and eyes, and throat
isn’t it wonderful how at the end of a day
you can spit and it’s black.

phew-w . . . that smells terrible! isn't that AWFul
smells up the whole place
sticking to your body, hair and clothes
large-scale production civilized stinks
acidic, scorched, fummy
making you sick to y'stomach.

it's so hot it's roasting
working in a heat-daze swallowing salt-tablets
with red damp face breathing short thru the mouth
dripping with sweat.

or, "it's so chilly it goes right thru your bones
the drafts in this place."

BUT WHAT'S ALL THIS — nothing bothers
the gup of a stepped-up machine!

dead tired falling off your feet keeping up with that machine
that machine . . that machine . . that machine . . that machine
keeping up with that machine
as if someone stuck perpetual motion into you
you are stuck to that machine
your arms zig-zagging and rounding out their motions

Lean and come back

Lift up pull down

Bend and stretch

Reach return

Stop and start

with a hand on the wheel

and the foot on the pedal

Clinging to a moving balance! —

seeing that everything is going all right

taking care of that machine.

Turn the wheel, pull that lever
never take your eyes off never never
Put that piece right in its place
take it out and put another
and another and another
in this endless boring race.

Yes you don't have to tell me . . . I know
— for the flesh in the body is NOT IRON
and the live-nerves ARE ALIVE
and inside us we can see how it's driving us
out of our minds
the feed — quick cut — and timing
and inside us we know we just HAVE TO go on
because we've simply got to.

(On HIS job) “I'm so tired I can't think straight! Y'know
I'm not as young as I used to be . . .
After a day's work in this God-d damn place
I can hardly straighten my back out. I don't know how you can take it Tony
but for my money they're goin' too far. I tell you
something's got to be done about it.
No wonder Louie had to be sent home yesterday in a . . . Yeah! Yeah! Didn't you
hear about it — He was workin' No. 7. The way they're sitting on us
the poor guy was lucky lucky he didn't drop down dead. Then these
son of a bitches would be satisfied, maybe.”

(On HER job) “Boring? — I just felt like I'd get up and SCREA — Ml
sets you so crazy doing the same thing all day long
A little thing . . . like this, up and down IMAGINE; NOTHING ELSE.
I stood it for 3 months and then I quit, I couldn't take it no more.
— No, it wasn't hard but OHH it never let go of you. Sometimes
I thought I'd jump up and tear everything around me to pieces . . . it
got so on my nerves. First this way then that way,
then that way then this way . . . from half-past 8 in the morning
'til a quarter after 5. Think of it! Now tell me couldn't you go
nutty with a job like that?”

And how can she be satisfied on a job like that? Y'don't have to have
brains to do that kind of work . . . she's no dummy. If
she had the chance she's show them what she could do!
How CAN SHE see herself in her work things being what they are?
But she can feel pretty small and unimportant hitched to one part
of only one part of a piece of a section . . .
And yawning when the forelady isn't around.

What has — What does the first class air-conditioned “Super-Market” factory dump
say to him, and her?

“Young lady, Young man it's about TIME you learned this:

DON'T ASK QUESTIONS! YOU'RE ONLY A THUMB AND A COUPLE OF FINGERS IN THIS
PLACE.

THE REST OF YOU — GO HOME! WAIT OUTSIDE PLEASE.

NOTHING IN THIS WHOLE FACTORY BELONGS TO YOU ONCE YOU ARE IN IT
INCLUDING YOURSELF!

FOR THE LAST TIME: you've got nothing to do but snap into it and do as you're told
Anything going on around here is none of your DAMN BUSINESS!”

(and it seems that way, As Things Stand)

“WHAT THE HELL'S the matter with that bell today? HEY CHARLIE
we puttin' in overtime?!”

(conditions are so good so marvelous here you can't wait 'til 5 o'clock —
t'get the hell outta here)

and that's the way it goes . . .

no matter how awful, hard, disgusting hot, freezing, dangerous

no matter how it shortens your life, or gives you a sickness,

there is SOME poor worker . . . some ONE OF US . . . ready to take that job because

Because, since when can we be choosey?

“Light Work! EXCELLENT WORKING CONDITIONS! You'll like it . . .”
and they cross themselves.

(SHE'S at it now drifting) posing in an immense sun-hat on the beach
being photographed. Smiling people all around pushing and struggling
trying to get a look on her — the season's rich Society Actress!
. . . . All the things she has silky-dresses-flowing, hats the latest
dozens fluffed on top of each other so many
they're all over the place . . . OHHH this being rich leaning back
as you stretch out your hand for another candy chocolate Did you SEE
the RINGS ON HER . . . the way she's attracting all the men
the eyes of the other women could kill her — but she
she doesn't give THIS FOR THEM . . . Everybody's turning to look at her
as she lifts her head for a moment on the steps of the main entrance
to the glittering Night Club — She's been recognized!
Wherever she goes NO WONDER she creates a sensation: it's her clothes
and movie figure . . . now she's afloat in ocean waves of
lace trimmed pillows all day long she stays in bed because at night
AT NIGHT HE TAKES HER OUT to all kinds of places
HE has HER in his arms — ohh, the fainting spell — dizzy —

“Whatsa matter with you, Hilda, you're off
in dreamland somewhere?”

“Yeah, y'bet, I was thinking of the dream
I had last night. I don't know who
it was — but what a thrill! 'n at
my age.”

“What do you mean . . . at YOUR AGE. Are you sure
it was a dream, or a memory?”

“Be yourself — Dorothy”

up to the neck in gas and balloon dreams
but to some of us people these . . . these puffs of nonsense
fade out
because our Real Future is so real
it sticks out all around us.

21. WORKING IN THE DAYS OF OUR TOMORROW

the sign is up **MEN WOMEN AT WORK**
in first-class workrooms
stuck here and there
along the earth

Yet people are enjoying themselves
— are happy
for this, this is Laborland

working here and working there,
working in the future
. . . But there is a difference!

I say — and why shouldn't it
be so — people are born
to enjoy work. Being alive
means, of course, having a good time on the job
in Laborland

for work is work, and pleasure is
pleasure, and never the two
shall meet
said an old grandpa on the street — But
he was wrong

In our work we've been unhappy
In our work **ALONE** we shall be glad
Something to look ahead to, hard
to keep away from,
impossible to do without —
But who will want to?
I never heard of such a thing.
What is it — is there anything wrong . . . **SPEAK UP**

this is LABORLAND
when we've got something to say we're listened to
I don't care what it is
if it's bothering you it'll be attended to, for THIS
is Laborland

the unburnt coal-heaps of the future
what fires of work-fevers
they shall feed and light.

Please, please, don't start that again
“ . . . nice to stay home and have lots of money
and never have to go to work
and take it easy and read the sports all day”
I never said this new Land of ours
will be a free lunch counter. Why
should I fool you? Only, at the end of the week,
every week, we'll go home with a nice piece
of change in our pockets, and without the feeling
that our life has been wasted.

the Child of Our Future sleeps
restless and uncomfortable
sprawled out with a leg dangling
on a bed of factories and skybuildings
— But there will be a loud bawling
and an angry awakening!

VI. MACHINE-NURSE MALE AND FEMALE (cont'd)

22. A SAMPLE PACKAGE OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORKERS

the people you work with counts on a job
sometimes the best job is ruined by a wise guy

the World's Prize Staller — look at him
it doesn't bother him in the least trying to put his work over on somebody else
“ME” he answers back “I do my share.” You faker.
it's so unfair to the rest of us keeping your kind around.

And where is there the job without its “Lazy Mary”
One girl standing around and one girl working her head off
but someone's not letting her get away with it:

“I don't care — I'm not going to do her work for her — What do you think I am?
. . . . Don't sh-ish me! if you're the forelady it's your business to tell her,
the lazy thing! Doesn't she get her check or do we get half?
Then let her do some work around here.”

That's the truth — she hasn't done a day's work since she started here.

How can they EXPECT good work when the pay is so little??
Anything you do is too much for what they give you.
Who hasn't learned in his experience it's foolish
to kill yourself for them a lot of thanks and appreciation you get.
Just enough to get by
to do the least you can and still get away with it
that's what they bring us to.

But sometimes it gets the better of him her,
to do a good piece of work — and do it right —
and show up “Old Slow-poke” time for what he really is: **A loafing fool!**
— But why why should they?

“It's just like I'm telling you — Where's Arthur? —
Nobody knows. He's disappeared Come to find out
he was on the tenth floor, he and Pat and that new feller
having a g-great conversation doing nothing while I-cc
was going crazy trying to keep up with the work.”

OH!! can they make a big show of work
(when the foreman is around)

can they talk work

“AM — I — THE ONLY ONE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING ANYTHING
AROUND HERE!”

Ambitious suddenly — and mad because they’ve
been told to do something Get Busy right away — now!

ahh-h here comes Conscientious Katie — greetings to you lady
Friends, you don’t have to worry now, what’s necessary will be attended to
Where there’s work to do she’s just not herself until it’s done
even offering to do a little more than expected
And so she’s rewarded:

By being pulled from all sides to do five times as much!

Katie: “I was brought up when you work you work.”

Her Best Friend: “Well you better learn different. A lot good it’ll
do you to knock yourself out for them. Katie,
listen to me, don’t you work so hard and let
the others take it easy. In the end, you’ll only
pay it out in doctor bills . . . isn’t it so, Mrs. Williamson?”

Mrs. Williamson: “She’s right.”

Katie: “But I’m not THE TYPE. I”

Mrs. Williamson: “You’re doing three times too much already — you FOOL YOU!
SLOW DOWN how many paychecks at the end of the week do you
take home anyhow? What’s a matter with her!”

The Friend: “Now, now, Mrs. Williamson, there’s nothin’ to get so excited about.”

Mrs. Williamson: “I can’t help it. She’s so”

The Friend: “She’ll learn. — When I first came here, Katie, . . . now don’t
please, don’t you know Mrs. Williamson doesn’t mean anything by it . . .
when I first came here I worked hard, very hard,
and what thanks did I get for killing myself the way I did?
Everytime it came to something important, like laying off,
I got the same treatment the same like anybody else So,
so what’s the use?”

capable . . . dependable . . . an EXCELLENT FIRST-CLASS worker on the job
finds out what it's all about
sees she's no better off than anybody else
the more she does the more they ask her to do
decides to get even: I'll show them. If that's the way they're going to act

I'll show them!

What a pity! — it's so unfair a disgrace tearing up this PRIZE BEST FLOWER
GROWN BY SOME MISTAKE in a Bosses' garden.

the Jealous-Good-for-Nothing STAND ON YOUR HEAD
you can't get along with a guy like this
he sees the next person is still living and it hurts him
if you really want to get him mad say something nice about
someone else in front of him — then watch what happens
HE'LL find something to point out as wrong . . . he'll be nasty
even if you're just talking to someone he can't stand it —
why aren't you talking to him?

It starts like this: Monday morning he shoots his mouth off
the power isn't on yet and already he picks an argument
“. . . Some people have all the luck. — Hey Mike, you sure got
a snap of it back there.

What are you special privilege around here?”

Mike (who's never feeling too good in the morning anyhow) is only
too glad to . . . Brrr! — rr! — rr
the bell puts a stop to it.

K61 (the jealous-good-for-nothing) is now at his machine
talking to himself under the nose — but not for long
it's too much to expect of him not to want to pass along his pleasant disposition
no matter how fast or slow you're working he'll find time to dig you like this:
“. . . Where are you running? What's your hurry? You have a whole day in
front of you! Who are you trying to show off to?”
and so on, until lunch time, when he looks around to see
what everyone else has accomplished.

and you see — they jump on him.
The-jealous-good-for-nothing MAKES BELIEVE he has no idea
what it's all about!

the sucker-arounders
the foreman's slimy stoolies
(UGH!! how they disgust you!)
those who roll their eyes and say,
 yes Ma — Ma no Pa-pa
and those who sneak up to the foreman and stool
 in the dark behind your back.
People like that they make it tough for everybody.

a fellow was telling me how he got this letter
from a girl he used to go out with.
They went steady 'til they had an argument.

Darling Herbie,

 Seeing as we're old friends (even though lately you've
been avoiding me, and don't think I don't notice it) I like to
tip you off to something. I heard you been changed
to the night shift and since you're a union member
there's a rat you want to watch out for. Maybe you're on to her
already — it's the checker who works near the elevator door. She's sweet
alright but I wouldn't trust her from here to there. Herbie darling
(you see, you're still my darling no matter what you think) be careful
what you say to her. She tells Mr. Fox everything.

 Honey, I still can't see why you're acting funny like this.
So we get excited that night, and said all kinds of things
we shouldn't have said and didn't really mean — it's human,
isn't it? Please, dearest, let's not be stubborn over nothing.
See me again for old time's sake even if you got a notion in your head
you don't want us to be like we used to be.

Last Saturday who should I bump into but Bobby and Muriel
they're married you know. She's expecting. They asked me to be sure
and remember them to you.

So watch out, darling, for what I was warning you about
and if you happen to be eating at the same table with her in the cafeteria
watch what you say. Maybe I'll be waiting next Sunday at a certain spot
the same time 2 o'clock, if there's someone still cares to know?

Loving you always,
Ruthie

a little gr-grouching now and then is welcomed by the best of men
but you – Useless Cranky Grumbler – make me sick
just mention the word Union to you and you're off again
about "rar-dicals and rackets."
You haven't even taken your coat off in the morning and already
it's "God-damn" this and "God-damn" that
making a BIG FUSS over some little nothing to anybody wants to listen.
You sucked hard on the boss's Sweet Lying Candy of Advancement
and now, soured and crusty with the wrinkled years,
you let it out to any pal or friendly worker around you.
how easy! how convenient a penny's comfort
for the miseries of an ordinary job.

from the time he walked in he was quittin' and he's still there and he's still quitten'
Oh! the wonderful jobs he's held in his life; the money he's made!
"No" . . . he never gets tired of telling you, "You won't get any place staying here.
Get out into the world, and let others work for you, while you – (smart one) –
live on them and take it easy." a crook's dream in an honest-worker's clothing.

What's HE doing in a place like this
(get it – it's alright for other dumb clucks to be working here,
they don't know better . . . But he, he's got brains)
he wouldn't THINK of lowering himself doing that kind of work
. . . if he didn't have to . . .

it's so beneath him. Excusing himself, ashamed, work is work, he says
(which is true) but he doesn't mean it, for he adds
I'm not going to be this all my life, you know.

What's this! What's this! grumbleface is at it again
only this time he's giving himself the works
"Would I be doing this if I had any brains –
What a dope I was not to finish school –
If there was ANYTHING UP HERE I would have left long ago –
If I had my life to live over again things would be different
. . . ahh, it would be the same for me!"
Mr. Grouch, Mr. Grouch WHEN WILL YOU LEARN DIFFERENT
not to look DOWN ON YOURSELF because rich stuck-ups do?

"What's he sore about?"

"Oh, him! don't mind that guy. He's always like that . . .
ever since I know him. gives me a pain!"

nobody likes grouchy but he's a good man just the same
only he hasn't found out yet that grunting and growling
and being moody, by itself, doesn't get you anywhere
doesn't do you a lot of good.

I am not the person to complain about somebody
who has SOMETHING to complain about
but even when grumbler HAS SOMETHING real and is rubbing it
down your ear – nobody believes him.

Still (and don't forget it) for us to go along working hard
never complaining

– What smiles would that bring out! What PLEASED smiles
opening wide

ON DIGNIFIED Stock-Market Faces!

"I'm satisfied Sam: What the hell it could be worse!
I'm working, ain't I, so it isn't the best job in the world
you can't be so particular.

Y'got to work so what difference does it make
where you work, or what you're doing, so long as they let you alone.
In a crummy joint like this you can't take things to heart — Y'aint getting paid
to take things to heart.
See me, I don't care anymore . . . I found out that's the best way . . .
let them stand on their heads if that's the way they want to run things,
it's Oh — Kay with me
so long as I get my forty bucks.”

I don't want to mention names but THIS ONE
is liable to get himself into a lot of trouble:

swiping things from the plant.

“There are millions of these around here. They won't miss a few.
For what they pay here YOU GOT TO MAKE IT UP some way,
don't you?”

“But you don't have to turn yourself into a thief. That's . . .”

“WHO y'calling a crook!! — I heard you, I heard you alright. The trouble
with guys like you you don't know what's for your own good.

And don't make any more insinuations. I don't like it, see!”

a perfectly honest worker: but he's made up his mind to get his one way or the other
except by organizing.

And finally . . . we have NO USE for the kind of worker THEY want us to be
The Proof: this is the Application Blank they'd hand us, if — they — dared!

Restmore Works, inc.

Yourtown, Cashville.

APPLICATION FORM — J267-7 (confidential)

(1) Name

(3) Born

(2) Address

(4) Last place . . . etc. etc.

.....

- (13) Does it make you angry to have your wages cut . . . do you
lose your temper?
- (14) Our policy is to lay off employees without notice: Do you find
such a procedure upsetting?
- (15) The management at Restmore has never tolerated any phase
of union activities. Are you inclined to favor
the reduction of your wages thru payment of union dues?
What do your friends think about this?
- (16) What is your interpretation of the following clause in the Company Rule Book:
“Each employee at Restmore is expected to do the work of three,
four, or five. After one warning, violation of this rule
may be followed by dismissal.”
Does it meet with your approval? Can you state in your own words
why this regulation is essential to the welfare of our employees?

(the sons of the super, super rich: the family billionaires;
the banquet-stuffed scum of the workers' earth
these lazy fattened good-for-nothings, enjoying themselves,
having a good time
these people who don't work, — who never have worked
who don't know what the word “work” means
telling US we're lazy!
telling us of the blessing the joy the holiness of work
so enTHUSiastic, so ambitious with our labor)

- (17) Altho we make little distinction between men and women
where job placement is concerned, employing both at similar tasks,
we do prefer to pay women less. Would this preference
(women only need answer) make any difference to you?
- (18) If we agreed to hire you, would Restmore, inc., mean more to you
than your honor, — your health, — your family? Is your
loyalty so admirable you would do anything for the good
of the company? Would you “tell” on those working beside you?
What do YOU think of the famous Restmore motto:
“Our Company Forever . . . Right or Wrong!”

(19) It is not the usual practice of this firm to hire
Jews, Negroes, and foreigners. Is your attitude
at this point reasonable?

(You people-haters – Black MURDER in me every time one of you spits
and stinks out near me.

I'm not thru with you yet: bitches!

. . . I could kill you.

Everything that's busted and wrenched and held within me
is punching wild-crazy tearing at you now!

YOU STARTED IT – YOU PASSED THAT REMARK – insulting people,
but you're NOT getting away with it, not this time.

THIS for insulting me

THIS for insulting my people
and THIS, and THIS, and THIS

so that to your dying day you'll remember
that human beings are human beings and must be treated so)

(20) Recent studies have indicated the harmful results of lengthy
lunch periods. If, and when, this organization takes steps
to protect its employees by installing a fifteen-minute lunch hour
would you understand its advisability? Would you eat less –
or more – or not at all?

(21) Do you consider a \$1.20 raise in wages per week
quite a sizeable sum? Does it make you cheerful for
months after? Are you grateful?

(out of the summer juice and billions of tons of fatness
we receive our share: Next to nothing.
Holding up the umbrellas, still we walk in the rain,
that's what they think of us!)

(22) Frankly speaking, as an employee – Do you know your place?

(they can't do without us but oh! how they love to put up an act
as if we're not much. But just let us whisper: STOP we're on strike
. . . Is that something they don't like?

We workers are a funny lot
When we sit down the boss is on the spot
When we do nothing, nothing at all — only chew the fat
There's a wild explosion under big-shot's hat!!

and yet we amount to nothing, — they're always doing us a big favor,
reminding us They are giving US a living??)

Please note: The replies to the questions listed above
will be used solely to decide whether or not it would be to
YOUR benefit and YOUR happiness to be one of us privileged
at Restmore.

23. THE FIRST DAY ON THE JOB

The Old-Hand: "Y'new here aren't you . . . my name's Tim — "Pops" is what
they call me around here — What's yours?"

Young and New: "Danny, chh — Daniel

"Like it here?"

"Don't know . . . seems alright.

"Ever handle one of these before? No?"

(passing his hand over the heavy,
black, oil-smudged and grimy
piece of machinery as if it was
a soft-haired baby that had
stopped at his feet and was looking
up eyes big and staring)

"No sir! this is my first job.

"Don't say . . . well, Danny, y'got a treat in store for you. This-this is
the sweetest little thing you ever laid y'eyes on. Good make!
Treat it right, and you can get along with it — anybody
can. There's nothing to be afraid of.

"Oh, I ain't afraid of it, just I don't . . .

"It's easy; won't take long before —

"Yeah, it's easy if you know how.

" — before you'll get the knack of it."

. . . here's the old experienced hand, in his vest and open shirt, a pencil stuck in his ear, a big bald head, and gray hairs stubby all over his face. he's thinking to himself, not much to learn nowadays — still you've got to know how. he remembers when he first came on a job like this it was in a little place called Eastmill, — but that's in the past, forgotten. he likes to show a new kid how to go about it, which wheel to turn and what to watch out for, how much, how little, and when to cut short, finished. the way it should and the way it shouldn't be done. he enjoys himself, why not?

“Mr. — I mean “Pops” alright f'me to call you “Pops”?

“Sur-re son, what's on your mind?

“This — what's this stick over here for? — oh! and this, y'mean you pull it down, all the way down . . . I'm not afraid to touch it! I just don't want to do anything until I know what it's all about.

“That's right, Danny, that's right.

“How do you stop the damn — er — uh, once y'got it going?

“Wait I'll show you. All you got to do is turn the handle to the left, where it says “off” . . . See! it stops. Now watch this: before you do anything else you step on this with your foot — that releases the clutch. Y'put the point in the center . . . like this, but not right up against it, about up there, then you turn the knob so you get it EXACTLY in THE CENTER. Y'see, y'see what I mean, and make sure it's tight . . . so! so it don't slip. D'you understand?

“Yeah! yeah, I get it. Is this where you start pushin' these buttons?

“No! No! Easy there . . . the yellow one! the red is the emergency, for when something happens. O K now, you can press it — the yellow one.

“Gee — gee whiz . . . ain't it super! like a drag'n. — What . . . what, I can't hear you Yeah-h, it carves it out like butter. Ain't it a beauty though!

“Like to try? (shutting down the machine)

“I don't know . . . should I?”

“Go 'head — It's easy! there's a kid here seventeen been usin' a machine like that, and he's good at it too.

“I'm seventeen.

“Seventeen! . . . well I'll be. I took you for twenty, at least.

“Everybody takes me for twenty years. Papa says er-r . . . my father thinks I'm mature.

“I think so too; so go ahead and do like I showed you.

And don't forget, Danny, you pull this as far as it goes — until the arrow in that clock points this way — understand? it's to protect you. If you want me I'll be over there or on the floor some place.”

While young Danny limps, and hesitates — not sure of himself, and decides there's a couple of things he could do but he doesn't know which one, scared he'll make a mistake and do it wrong . . . let's leave him to himself for a few minutes and see the way an experienced worker takes to a new job even if he hasn't been without one very long. A bit of the fear of the unknown walks into him who is about to start on the new job — anybody. He feels like an outsider, isn't he? He's in the way . . . doesn't he know it. But if a man's done this work before he'll soon have things under control. Besides, he's feeling good, at last he's settled. How long he doesn't know but anyhow, he's trying hard so they'll keep him. And one thing more, this time he's not going to make the same mistakes he made before: he's putting something on aside, saving his money; he's going to try to get along with everybody; and he's going to attend to his business. The time hasn't come yet to see the faults on the job and to think may-ybe some place else he could get something better.

It's his good luck, this experienced one, he's found a friendly person willing to help him out: not like the last place where they gave him that cold shower and dirty look — Union brothers, too. You'd think they could finish the season by themselves, forgetting that if deliveries

are delayed there are cancellations. Like always the foreman is busy — busy, but who is this good-natured man who goes out of his way to lend a helping hand: It's Andy. A plain man . . . a union man . . . a good union man. Suddenly he's standing there beside you

Everybody's busy with their work, but you can be certain they're waiting and looking, and sizing you up how you are. Andy, the friendly kind of a fellow, has kept his eyes on you too, but for a different reason. No sooner does he notice that you're acting kind of lost, in a difficulty, he's there introducing himself. My name is Andy, anything I can do for you? — Yes, yes! mine's George. Nice of you to come over. It's this part that's been giving me all the trouble. You can see, it's worn out. Say! — When was this machine used last, tell me. . . . Hmmm 6 months! My God . . . no wonder it could stand such a good going over. How could ANYone neglect — where's the brains — Oh — (excusing himself) I don't mean you. Don't . . . — It's alright, alright mister. — Andy shows he understands— Mister, that's what I'm here for — Wait, I'll be back. Andy's gone. a half-hour passes by, another few minutes, no Andy. You're beginning to think he's just another phony, one of them busybodies. But you're wrong! In another minute he's here again: with a couple of nice new parts, an oil can, and even a wiping rag. In no time at all he's tightened this and fixed that and things are beginning to roll smooth for the newcomer. — Now-a, what was it you were saying, George . . . Oh that . . . that's a neat little trick! — See how he bends over taking his time explaining, in detail, how that new attachment works; some little thing you've never seen before. Again he leaves, and again he comes back, bringing with him this time a finished piece, as a sample. He wants to know your opinion . . . what you think of it. That's Andy.

C'mon, he says (blessings on him) I'll show you around — introducing you to Mike and Nick and Sam, and some of the rest of the boys. Here's where you wash up . . . there's your locker . . . Got your key yet? Soon he's answering what you're dying to know *When do yuh get paid in this joint?* Later (when he knows you better) he'll drop the hint: See that, there, standing by the post — watch out what you say to him, he rats. By this time the foreman walks by Hello, Mr. So and so . . . How's it coming? — Fine! Fine! — What else are you going to say to him? Now everything is all right — thanks to the goodness in a worker like Andy.

— How's the kid, Danny, making out? Learning his Do's and Don'ts!
"Hey, Pops, is this hunk of iron working all right?"
"Why — sure! what's the matter?"
"It's cockeye!"
"You're doing all right . . . these pieces aren't so bad . . . just don't feed it so fast."
"(laughingly) Those are the ones you gave me a start on."
"Oh! but you finished it all right. And the others are fair . . . fair. Don't worry about it, kid, after awhile you'll . . ."
"But looka' this here crummy stuff: I couldn't hold it to size. It wouldn't . . ."
"Try it now! Y'turn this — that's it — now y'turn it back, but not all the way, like this . . . Watch the meter, Danny! that clock-face means something! All right — this way, a little to the side, not too much . . . down — there! What I tell you, easy."

(Poor Danny! — he's sure got his troubles. Scratching his head, he's got the feeling he'll never learn how to handle this darn thing. It just don't come out right. Either he goes too far or he stops too soon. He bumps into things and feels clumsy and is clumsy but he's really trying hard; altho there's little to show for it: What he's finished is one thing, — what he's spoiled another. Danny's still getting in his own way. But now, he's in a real fix . . . he's jammed the machine.)

Danny: "Oho! Look what I did!"

Pops: "Why don't you do like I showed you! You put it in high without releasing the safety clutch."

Danny: "Was I supposed to?"

Pops: "ASK . . . a person's supposed to ask — That's what you got a mouth for."

Danny: (grumbling) "I don't like to ask all the time."

Pops: "I'm sorry I went off like that, kid, but that's a 3000 dollar machine. Tell you what Oh Hello Jim — Yeah, I'm breaking him in. Jim, meet Danny."

Jim: (stooped and lanky) "We seen each other already, 'member, by the ice water. You do this — (picking up a piece from the bin of finished work) — It ain't bad, it ain't bad at all . . . seein' it's the first time. You're catchin' on, quick."

Danny: "Oh yeah — look what I done to this . . . it's stuck."

Jim: "No kidding . . . ha! ha! let Pops worry about that. Keeps him young — eh, Pops?"

Pops: "G'wan! I can still take on two . . . three guys like you.

Jim: "Almost — nhuh? ha-ha-ha. Okay Okay — (walks away giggling)

Pops: "Great guy — knows his business too. been here for years. let's see . . .

Why don't you call it a day, son? Y'might clean off some of these chips before you go — (hands him a brush) and y'might wipe around some — (points to a kerosene-rag). Don't forget, my boy, a machine needs to be taken care of . . . babied a bit. Tomorrow I'll show you how to fill the grease cups and check on the valves. And Danny don't forget to tag on the batch tickets before you go."

When our boy gets home tonight will he show his finger-tip cuts and all his blisters? Will he complain — "Look it the way I banged myself up black and blue all over" — ? Will he want to quit right away — now, before he's even started? Is he so-o-o tired ready to flop down anywhere; doesn't even care WHAT there is for supper HE . . . with his under-twenty appetite! Is there a buzzing in his ears; is he machine-dizzy? — WHAT DO YOU THINK! — asking such foolish questions.

24. KID EXPERT: THE CHALLENGER!

Don't bother me now! I'm listening in to the funniest fight
I ever heard over the radio.

Kid Expert — Y'know he's a scientific boxer — is in the ring with "Raw Hunk" the Killer
The ref is explaining the rules — and he isn't clowning, and he hasn't had one too many:

"Now boys, no gouging with the thumb, or biting — it isn't allowed —
unless of course you have to
No kicking — except where it's practical
Come out clear in the clinches, no hitting —
that is to say: where it don't bring in results."

the trillion-billion ROUND ONE
of the Perpetual Prize-Fight in the
World's Biggest Ring is on!
The-On-The-Spot-Announcer
is going wild:

“. this is a grudge fight
if ever there was one. It's a murder!
The Killer is mauling the Kid
forcing him against the ropes.
The Kid takes a left hook to the chin —
a left to the body — a straight right to the jaw!
Now the Killer's got him dazed
and buckling under. Blood's coming from
Kid Expert's mouth

Can you hear the crowds roaring
as the Kid comes back!

Fighting in close he pounds "Raw Hunk" the Killer
slamming him lefts and rights to the ribs —
The Killer is backing away from the onslaught
neatly blocking punches with his elbow —
The Kid's at him but swinging wild,
dropping his guard he tries to recover —
The Killer steps in and WHAM he delivers
a crushing blow to the Kid's solar plexus —
he's doubled over . . . DING°G° THERE'S THE BELL!"

THE COMMENTATOR SPEAKS RIGHT OUT:

Anyway you look at it this round belongs to "Raw Hunk." The kid took a beating
and, except for the rally a few minutes before the gong, was outpointed right along.
It seems the Expert couldn't make up his mind what he was after, or, what's just as bad —
he tries to pull every trick in the trade at once. As a scientific boxer he should know better.
To get in a punch just for its own sake is not only useless but dangerous as the Killer so well showed him
in this round. If the Expert's an expert he must never forget his fighting strategy or let down for a second
on his purpose. Doing it the hard way don't get you anywhere. Why doesn't the Kid take time out
to bounce around and feel out the Killer's style? Or does he think he's skipping and weaving around just to
be lively?

Well, to get back to "Raw Hunk" he's a killer alright, he's absolutely showing the Kid no consideration —
he has no idea of "fair play" or the rules of boxing and if he did he wouldn't care.

He's a good fighter though and just when you think you've got him all figured out
he sticks out his leg and trips you. That's one thing about the Killer, he makes you sit up AND notice him

. the minute is up and here goes the Second Round:

ROUND TWO:

“. the Kid steps into the Killer
with a left jab . . . he keeps it goin’
in the Killer’s face . . . the Killer counters
with a right cross that rocks the
Expert’s head — Moving in close
they’re in a mixup now — The Kid
tears himself away and is circling
to the left the Champ crouching and
weaving under punches as he tries
to get in again. But the Kid is
sparring now. The Challenger waits
for an opening!

leaping in behind a straight left
the Killer slashes a murderous right
to the ribs . . . they clinch. The ref
is shouting ‘Break’ ‘Break’
but it don’t do no good. The Kid’s
holding on breathing heavily. Suddenly
the “Raw Hunk” bites into the Kid’s cheek:
Blood gushes from under the cheekbone.

— the Kid’s furious now
and taking the lead. He sways
and bends as he tries to break
thru the Killer’s guard. It’s plain he
wants a showdown. Sidestepping a
killing right he swings and
misses but he’s at the Killer
again pushing him into a corner.
The Kid now has him. He butts him
with his head — all his might! and BOTH
GO DOWN.
The referee is counting One . . . One,
Two . . . Two, — first with his left hand

and then with his right — Three . . . Three,
(stay close everybody, this looks good, a
double knockout) Four . . . Four, Five . . . Five,
Six . . . (hold it) the Kid totters up
a bloody gash across his forehead.
The crowds goin’ wild!! Radio fans
can you hear the thunderous applause
and whistling and cheering as everyone
from the ringside seats up is relieved
to see their all-time favorite battered
BUT NEVER COUNTED OUT. — But wait
the referee has continued to slowly count
and at nine seconds “Raw Hunk” shows
the hard stuff he’s made of. He’s up. Stumbling,
but on his feet

- The Kid’s careful now. He snaps
a left jab at the Killer’s hunched-in head
. . . is met with a vicious right
that almost spins him off balance.
A sneer is on the Killer’s face.
There’s a few seconds remaining —
he rushes in trying to break thru
the Challenger’s guard — the Kid backs away,
he has the reach on him — the Killer connects
with a smashing left, right to
the body, drawing a sharp grunt of pain
from the Kid — The Kid’s mad now —
he feints a left jab to the face
and comes up with a ripping, damaging
blow just over the heart. The Champ’s
down groaning. HE’S USABLE NOW * * *
a sucker for a knockout smacko!
But he’s pulling himself up, holding on
to the ropes C°R°RASH
the Gong!”

Hello fans . . . Hello everybody . . . in this round

both of the fighters have proved they can take a lot of punishment and still keep coming for more.

The Champion is being worked over by his seconds who, if I can see right from my side of the ring, are frantically applying ice and smelling salts. One of them tries fanning a towel but it's not doing much good.

— It seems that way from here. The Champ's bleeding profusely from a split lip and his nose is broken.

Any other fighter who had kissed the canvas from that last punch-eroo

would have stayed down for the count, but not the Killer — he's a tough opponent. Even the Expert who's too much of a fighter himself not to take off his hat to another has often admitted it.

This brings me to the Kid who's sitting relaxed in his corner with his hands flung back on the ropes, as his head is bandaged. Ladies and Gentlemen of the radio audience in this exciting round

it was the Kid that laid down the law. He seems to have caught on to the Killer's style.

But what he hasn't learned yet is how to punch more by punching less — with good timing and proper judging of distance. What's the good of sending a right to the head that takes a harder right

in return, to the jaw? In exchanging blows why should he hit harder then ° ° ° WHANG-G THERE'S THE

BELL!

Don't go away folks stay tuned to this station anything can happen when these two bruisers get together — and usually does.

ROUND THREE:

“ — the husky Killer plunges from his corner —
and flops himself down his seat on the canvass.

'FOUL' he's booming as loud as he can holler —
claiming the Kid didn't treat him right —

that he went too far —

that he didn't go far enough.

He's mad now. He won't talk. He's holding up
his boxing gloves and getting the referee to unlace them.

One of his second jumps into the ring
carrying a black tiny case —

he's opening it up now

handing the Champ something: It's a tweezer!

With muscle-bulging right hand

the Killer is tweezing his eyebrows

while he calmly extends a husky left

as his second hurries around getting ready to give him —
a manicure!

Radio Audience — Look at those powerful lights playing
upon “Raw Hunk’s” massive figure
as the slightly built second bends over, nervously
giving him his manicure.

For a moment now there’s a dumbfound hush
over the watching jammed mass of fighting fans.

Boo! Boo-oo! BOOOO-OO
in waves people are rising from their seats —
their protest is deafening:
“Sock him!” “Kill him!” Kill the son of a b — !”
“Stick a needle into him! Ssssss! Ssssss!”
“Don’t care if he’s down — Give him the old One-Two!”
There’s a lot of other words being used
that your announcer is not permitted to say
over the radio — but they’re not complimentary.
Up to now the Kid’s stood in his corner —
just a minute folks, here’s a chance to hear
what the Kid himself has to say:
“What do you make of this, boy?”
“A — hh! He’s a sore loser. Just when
I got him softened up a bit
he starts in with his old tricks.”
“What are you gonna do about it, Kid?”
“This is what I’m gonna do — ”
The Kid’s growling as he rushes over to the sitting Killer.
He lets him have one straight between the eyes —
and he isn’t pulling punches:
“Get up! C’mon, Get up . . . Coward!
Get up and make a real fight
outta this!”

The Expert’s burning up. He’s gonna
take another poke BANG-G the bell!
That’s all — until we meet again
at Round 4.”

To all listeners of this network let me say right here that the actions of “Raw Hunk” didn’t surprise me in the least. This isn’t the first time that he barged down and refused to take what’s coming to him. The Kid makes a mistake in losing his head and becoming sarcastic . . . he would do much better taking ADVANTAGE of the way the Champ fights — playing along with him, as long as in the end he gains the title. In this game you can’t decide how you’re NOT going to fight! Sometimes a fighter wins because he stuck to all the rules and sometimes he wins because he laughed at them. But let’s not worry about the Expert he has a mind that’s clicking and I am sure radio listeners, his common sense will soon tell him: If a boxer can’t do what he should he must do what he can. Anyhow, the Killer is one person you can’t reason with. Look at him sprawled out satisfied with himself because he’s created a sensation. He’s leaning back in his corner munching peanuts; throwing them up every once in a while and catching them in his big mouth. What a — CLANG-G! — sorry folks, Round 4 is about to begin.

ROUND FOUR:

—“Raw Hunk” the Killer comes plunging out of his corner in a beautiful . . . elegant . . . fighting — I mean dancing stance! Holding his gloves crossed over his head he whirls and tip-toes about — stopping every once in awhile to sing:

Oh me! Oh me oh my!
Boom your way and don’t ask why
Oh gee! — Oh me!
Boom-a-loom and ups them high
Don’t be shy, show that thigh —
Or Papa gives one big black-eye!

The Kid’s wise to him, he’s
got his number now —
Playing the sissy the Challenger
rides out of his corner
harmonizing with the chump — er Champ.
My goodness! they’re both in fine form
a sweet and lovely sister-pair . . .
a handsome, if hairy, dancing couple!

Up go the four duddous red gloves
 to the right, as they go tripping
 along to the left — and down and
 up to the left as they toe it to the right.
 This is something worth seeing . . .
 as they dip their knees with every “Boom — ”
 and sway in their purple shorts.
 The Referee, not knowing what else to do,
 starts waving his arms up and down, and sideways
 The Crowd takes the hint the people are in good humor
 so they sing:
 We’ll all get together — Have a lot of fun
 Singing Loud and Dancing ‘til the day is done
 Now that the scrappers have made up again
 The Kid having found a way
 to handle his partner —
 he **TAKES THE LEAD IN THE DANCE**
 Kid Expert’s won out . . . the next Champ!

25. NEW WORKERS ON THE SHORES OF LABORLAND

a hot summer’s ride on the S.S. “Point Look Ahead”
 the people’s 5-cent excursion: the wide-hipped ferry
 bumping into the dirty ancient stump-piles as it slips away
 from its creaking wharf of dummy bodyguards
 this wooden duck squats on the water; the fat slowpoked ferry
 is walking in its sleep
 managing somehow to get there, and achingly waddle back.

just about as you’re getting nicely settled the ride is over
 the parents have been yelling and scolding and trying to get the kids to
 sit still
 but it’s no use! — there’s too much to see; and so the children are running
 the wide circles of the decks.
 But a fog-horn blast brings them on their knees kneeling on the benches . . .

for no one is ever too young — or too old — not to be transfixed
by a ship that's sliding by.
the sparkling glitter of the glassy water; the salty, fresh-air smell
MMmm . . . breathing it in!
the uplift expansion of the cloud-specked illuminated sky
extravagantly pouring from its radiant self
smooth drinks of restfulness for us all;
the whiteness! — the frank detailed look of the open day;
the cooling river-breezes; the whipped flapping trousers;
the — e, er But the ride, it's over, why aren't we docking?

Point Look Ahead, on the shore-edges of LABORLAND

I didn't say much about this before but EVERYbody aboard
was talking and asking about this place

Everybody

that young girl there sitting sideways who's married to that man
in the fifties;

that stout grandmother taking care of the kiddies;

that heavy-set Negro who stands off by himself, thinking;

that VERY young couple (they're just kids themselves) with two kids,
both boys;

and those people over there, looks like husband and wife, who can't stop arguing
even on the boat;

and that nice-looking middle-aged couple that you can see
were just married, it seems so;

and the boy meets girl lovee-doveeing each other, leaning their heads
together, both smiling self-consciously;

or the well-dressed young lady right opposite me who has such a good
opinion of herself, I think;
(how much she makes I don't know
but it's all on her back)

and that family even, some sitting some standing by the rail, the whole family
men and women grownups turning in upon themselves
discussing the coming marriage . . . And is he WORTH \$2000?

even that hard-checked worker in a white summer shirt, who's put in
a lifetime of heavy work
who spits in the river and slaps his knee, as he speaks in disgust:

“ehh! that place . . . THERE you don’t have to work?
it’s the same the same all over.
us poor suckers got to do the work.”

Everybody! — even that skinny little man (you saw him) who stuck his head in a newspaper
and wouldn’t take it away, the whole time
even he, and everybody else is listening — looking
in an unheard of excited silence.

OH the feelings of us people as we see the promised land
Oh the feelings of us people as we stare and wring our hands:
the rolling bursting popping splattering of water
escaping from under the boat
the rushing foam of breaking rioting soap-suds
concentrating their existence in a dynamited second! —
the great big bear of a ferry stamps its feet
thrashing up a horde of gurgling white insects —
like a flock of white-fuzzed chickadees they scamper and hop away
vanishing in the stirred up river vats; —
The lavish excitement of it all!

yes! the boat’s turning round without docking but most of the passengers
are still listening
to the “NEW WORKERS” Singing of Their Laborland
They have hurried down to the shores to greet us
and are CALLING and HURRAHing and cheering us on:

“Oh boy Oh boy Oh-h what fun
The Workers’ Land for me
Hard work Light work No work
What difference does it make to me
Hard work Light work No work
It could only make me glad —
Only when it’s shoved down your throat
Can a day’s work make you mad!”

“I’m a worker in a worker’s Land
and the only thing that’s good for me
is the good of the human band
And the only way I can advance myself
is to take the next man by the hand.”

“Hey! . . . Hey! can you hear what I say
We’re the shock-K rebuilders of the business-mean
and God-damn crooked world
Hello! Hel-ohoo! EVERYBODY here works for Everybody else
I swear I’m not giving you a line!
We DO things with things — not own them
beLIEVE ME what belongs to us is mine.”

“Get this — And get it straight
There’s a chance to work here at something
Besides the thing you hate.
There’s a chance you’ll bring it out
The talent-stuff that’s in you;
what IS THERE for anyone to be afraid
— Unless you’re a shirker
To ABOUT-FACE from a horse-like work-slave
To a thrilled, triumphant worker!”

“Come again . . . Come again . . . we
welcome you to our side
Three Cheers for you people
that got sense enough
To come down for the ride!”

But no one was allowed to land — Not yet, some other time.
We were so close to the Point at Laborland we could see
Rows of Planted Heavy-leaved trees bouncing and yielding
like good spring mattresses to the hot and sleepy wind.

Many of us workers are now, in the dumps
As we watch dotted-windowed buildings becoming smaller;
and the water-lace spinning from under us, like feathery kite-tails, becoming longer.
Many of us workers . . . see that, take a look at that strong-built man
in the mackinaw who’s turning his head away: are crying . . . Just plain crying.

It's true tears won't help, but the boat didn't dock, so they're weeping.
Can't help yourself — keep asking — HOW MUCH LONGER??
How much longer will we have to wait:

the unhappy hard-working thumping grumbling engine
tugging and tugging and pulling; stuck in a one dumn-dumn rut
groaning — that's all it knows is work.
The double-decker ferry sits with ease
A floating sea-going Society lady; —
The muffled engine, with an old blanket stuffed in its mouth,
Throbs and curses, curses, and curses.

VII. THE MOVIE SKIT: “LUNCH IN THE CAFETERIA”

26. JUST A COMPANY SERGEANT AT HEART

I tell you, Dave, it was one of the best things I ever saw
much better than the main picture, the usual Hollywood junk.
It was only a skit but it was real good. It starts off by showing
people going up stairs and in elevators to the 9th floor, the plant cafeteria

“C'mon, c'mon, we ain't got all day you know.”

“Aw, dry up! I can't move faster than the line, can I?”

— (slides the tray along passed the hot-steam pans
counterman quickly scooping the right portions) —

Murray: “Hey, Gus . . . here! sit here with us.”

Gus: “Did you see that, the way he was shoving me?”

Murray: “Forget it! Forget it! Maybe the guy didn't eat for a week.
How you makin' out in packin'?”

Gus: “Ask Howard . . . with that foreman of ours.”

Howard: “He's not so bad, get used to him.”

— (speaking sl-lowly, pouring sugar with the left hand,
mixing, slowly, with the right) —

Gus: — (giving Howard a mean look) — “You! . . . Nothing ever bothers you.”

Murray: "Hey! What's going on here? Let's eat!"
 — (Gus bends over eating so fast you'd think it was going to be taken away from him. Howard is munching at a sandwich. Murray is buttering a roll . . . with an eye on Gus) —

Gus: "These cockroach penny bosses — Alright, alright, eat . . . I won't get excited! Murray . . . you should have seen the way he jumped on me this morning. The way that guy orders you around you'd think he owned the place. I told him: You didn't BUY ME can snap your fingers expect me to come. Who"

Howard: "There's where you're makin' y'mistake, sonny boy. What are y'answerin' him"

Gus: "Because I'll tell you why! Here y'doing your BEST so they shouldn't have anything to say and still they'r kickin'."

Howard: "Listen, Gus, that Charlie likes to hear himself talk . . . so what, don't bother me none."

Gus: "I don't care! all he's got to do is to get me sore once more and I'll — er, I'll"

Murray: "Cut it out will yuh — Come on, let's get out for a smoke."

Tillie, Tillie (her husband tells about the movie) come here darling. What come after they had that argument over the — In the picture! In the picture! Oh yeah, yeah! . . . got to listen to this Dave it's really something. It shows women arguing and complaining about their foreman - this here same one. They're sitting at the next table and . . . and

Blanche: "Whatsa matter with her!"

Agnes: "Julie, dear, eat something. It's not good for you to be so sensitive.
 — (turning to Blanche, shrunken thin and passed middle-age)
 It's that Charlie again! One of these days that foreman of ours is gonna get me mad, I feel sorry for him."

Blanche: " 'f goodness sake! Only yesterday I told her not to pay no attention to him. Really! Julie, sometimes I think you're wackey."

Julie: (big-blue eyes and twenty something; has been nipping sandwich and swallowing her tears . . . now she first starts crying)

Blanche: "Alright, alright, I take it back . . . I said I take it back, didn't I? Tell me — what's it all about this time?"

Agnes: "He's crazy! that's what it's about . . . Jesuz! I never seen anything
 like it. YELLING YELLING all the time yelling. He's a son of a b.
 that's what it is. He's the God damnest — excuse my expression, you you . . ."

Blanche: "Shhh! Not so loud . . . y'got everybody lookin' at yuh. — Was he snappy
 to you, Honey?"

Julie: "Not one word — (sniffing) comes out of his mouth but it's nasty.
 I told him everything — (sniffing) everything, I was so mad."

Blanche: "Then what are you cryin' about? Good! You . . ."

Shirley: (carrying a tray) "Somebody sitting here?"

Agnes: "No! No! HELLO — HAVEN'T SEEN . . ."

Shirley: "OUCH, oooh these plates are hot."

Agnes: "Where you been?"

Shirley: "In polishing."

Agnes: "Like it there?"

Shirley: "Oh it's alright."

Agnes: "You know Blanche this is Julie, she had it out
 with Charlie today. You remember Charlie!"

Shirley: "That pest!"

Blanche: "Well, go ahead, Honey."

Julie: (wiping her eyes) "You go along day in and day out doing your work and
 doing it right; one day you miss up on something — some of the labels
 weren't straight — and you shoudda seen the way he started in to shout.
 Made me — (sniffing) look like a fool in front of everybody."

Shirley: "That's him . . . an awful crank. But when . . ."

Blanche: "Wait — go 'head Julie."

Julie: "When he shouts like that he mixes me all up and I
 don't know what I'm doin'."

Blanche: (waving a spoon, impatiently) "But what did you say!"

Julie: "I said, I said 'Nobody talks to me like that, and I
 don't have to take it from you. DON'T SHOUT . . . I'm not deaf.
 — Well I don't like the tone of your voice! And, and, eh'"

Agnes: ". . . and then she screamed GO TO HELL! GO TO HELL! and she picked
 up a bottle and hollered out: If you don't leave me alone
 I'll kill you! I'll kill you! Oh-h-h! it was some
 excitement today."

Blanche: (mouth open, spoon dripping mid-air)

Shirley: (surprised but tremendously pleased)

Julie: "The way I feel about it I'd get up and leave in a minute.
But you get used to"

Blanche: "I wouldn't give him the satisfaction! Julie! Honest! — I didn't
think you had it in you."

Shirley: "Well am I glad someone told him off. It's about time.
If it had been Helen at the lables"

Julie: "Oh! You know about her — picks herself the easiest work
everytime. And Charlie let's her get away with it.
Doesn't he SEE what's going on?"

Blanche: "Don't worry. He sees — He sees too much. But he purposely
let's her off easy . . . Y-You know why!"

Julie: "oh! . . . OH"

Agnes: "Forget that! Eat Julie, you didn't hardly eat anything."

Julie: "I know. I'm not hungry today."

. . . that's a foreman for you! — NO, I'm not saying ALL foremen
are like that. — Yeah yeah! that fat guy who was in charge up at
Rip-Ray's he was fair. I liked him. 'slong as you did your work
he left you alone. In fact, I'll go a step further. I remember once
how he stuck up for Archie — about some time that was coming to him
but I don't want to go into that now. Y'see, the point is, if these
guys didn't become such company stooges they'd be all right — Get me?

27. WORKINGPEOPLE BEATING THE NEXT FELLOW IN PLAYING RICH

— (the table over there by the water) —

Otto: ". . . for two months already I've been trying to collect 7.50 out of him he owes
me and y'see he makes out as if he don't know me. The crook. I hope he
breaks"

John: (round-shouldered stocky red-faced) "Don't let it get you, Otto. . . . finished with
the ketchup? thanks."

Otto: (wrinkled tiny eyes white hair) "Whatsa matter, don't I work for my money?"

John: (enjoying himself with meat and boiled potatoes) "Y'know what they say: You
can't take it with you."

Otto: "You don't get me! it's the principle the principle of the thing. Aww, the way people
are brought up nowadays they don't care who they take it from and-a

how they get it. For a good time and a show-off there ain't nothing they wouldn't do for money. And quick as they get it they spent it."

John: (tearing a roll in half and dipping in the gravy) "What's money for, if not to spend it? I don't believe in this pinchin' and denyin' yourself. My wife, f'instance, hah! ha-ha! you and my wife, Otto, what a pair — you'd be killing each other. — what . . . g'wan! Yours couldn't be worse than mine . . . No kiddin' — that's funny — I got the impression she's the kind hangs on to her dough."

Otto: (sighing) "I wish my Clara would get that impression. . . . So you were saying."

John: "Yeah 'bout my wife . . . Money don't mean nothing to her. She's always got an excuse to buy something. Everything she sees she wants . . . like a kid. You'd think . . ."

Otto: "Like mine . . . mine is worse."

John: ". . . . I was a millionaire, or somethin'. But I don't care — what the hell! she's a good looker. Best looking . . ."

Otto: "Y'got children, John?"

John: "Yes-sir-ee! Two — two boys."

Otto: "That so — Nice."

John: "Here I'll show you — (pulls out wallet) This one was taken while I was in the country. That's me, it didn't come out so good. That's my sister-in-law. 'n that's . . ."

Otto: "Ah-huh, the babies."

John: "Babies nothing! That one there, the oldest — he looks like me when I was his age, he's three and a half. And Billie's two, two years in December."

Otto: "Yeahp, yeahp, they take after you . . . the nose and the shape of the head. Tell me something, how old are you, John?"

John: "Twenty-nine."

Otto: "Mmm! You look young like a boy. — Me? I'm 61 already. I suppose you think now because I'm twice as old I'm twice as stupid — nhuh?"

John: "NO of course not, wh-what"

Otto: "Okeh Okeh I was only joking . . . Say, wait a minute! I think I'll go and get myself a cup o'coffee — it smells so good!"

— (left alone John sips coffee and busies himself figuring out something on a napkin)

Otto: ". . . . so as it happened I got one piece for you, too. Whatsa matter, don't you like apple pie?"

John: "I could eat ten o'these — easy. It's my favorite. But-er . . ."

Otto: "Then eat and enjoy yourself . . . Please! please put away that money."

John: "Alright. Thanks, thanks a lot."

Otto: "Say, the other day who should I bump into . . . Stanley — you know! he used to work here — Stanley Powers — Powders, something like that. Him, his wife, and his brother-in-law. Such a bunch of phonies you never saw."

John: "Oh yeah, — I remember the jerk now. Bit of a fourflusher wasn't he?"

Otto: "A bit! hnn, more than a bit. he handed me a good laugh the way he was puttin' on such airs. Why do people, like us, ordinary people, want to out bigshot each other, I will never"

John: (with a jawful) "Why not? Why not Otto? You're wrong there in that there last thing. When you see people have got something, and you want it too it gives you ambition. Which is good."

Otto: "Why should I want to knock the eyes out of the next feller. Make him feel bad. Show him how well off I am with my fancy apartment — my show-off car . . . What a pip! — my diamond ring . . . Big! like an egg . . . must a cost a fortune."

John: (cleaning his teeth with tongue and toothpick) "Well I don't mean — Don't get me wrong! I didn't mean puttin' on the Ritz. The trouble with you I think is you don't know how to live. You've got no style — Class. Take me f'example — (shows penciled figures on napkin) soon as I can add up enough I'm going to get me a Buick. You mean to say if I got the dough and want a Buick I shouldn't get it?"

Otto: "I didn't say that."

John: "WHAT THE HELL DID YOU SAY?"

Otto: (playing with some crumbs) "Is it good for a person to live the way he can't afford?"

John: "What do you do with your money — SHOVE IT IN A BANK."

Otto: "Now just a minute, please. . . . please, don't interrupt. Many times I've said you are a prejudiced person — But we won't go into that now. Don't forget I have a right to my opinion. I'm a little older"

John: "Hey . . . take it easy. I didn't — Honest to God I didn't mean . . ."

Otto: ". . . a little older than you are."

John: "Sure! Sure! Go 'head, Otto, say your piece."

Otto: "Well . . . that was foolish of me getting sore over nothing. Well eh . . . Twice in my life already I've lost all my life's savings when the bank went broke. So it ain't that. Y save and you ain't got nothing — and y'spend and you ain't got nothing. It makes no difference. One way or the

other — like my grandchild would say — they got us coming and going. — No thank you, I don't care for it. I heard it too gum is good for the digestion. Maybe— ha ha, I'm a little old-fashioned . . . So-a, what I mean to say, if y'got a few dollars, if you could manage it it comes in handy in a jam. Don't you think — D'you get it?"

John: "I dont know. I admit money's nice to have around when you're in a fix. It's nice to have around anytime, huh? But me — I'm different. When I see something I like I like to get it. What the heck! you only live once. Of course, I use my common sense . . . not like (his wife) Barbara."

Otto: "Of course! Of course!"

John: "What about Stanley? you were going to tell me something about Stauley."

Otto: "That's right, to get back to . . . Wait, wait 'til I see the time.

Aww, plenty plenty time! I don't know what I'm worried about . . .

We was walkin' along Tompkins Avenue, by 47th Street, and we passed an apartment house you know where I mean? it's a nice neighborhood — "

John: "Near the movies?"

Otto: "That's it that's it! Nice section, no?"

John: "Swell."

Otto: "And so-a, I remarked I wouldn't mind living there myself so his wife

says: 'I wouldn't be seen . . . in a DUMP like this!'

How do you like that! That's a good example of what I mean . . .

Persons like them who live way over their head they become so selfish —

They wouldn't help you out with 25 cents even if they could. Always thinking of themselves only . . . what they want — Nobody else counts."

John: "A person's got to look out for himself don't he? That's not"

Otto: "I don't care what you say: such people never make good friends. Fair-weather friends . . . urrh! That's different."

John: "I don't know. Maybe you're right. . . . What time did you say it was? Quarter to? think I'll step out and find out how the Dodgers made out today; be seeing yuh s'long."

28. SIX WOMEN

Evelyn: (at a two-seater table close to the entrance — where the spoons and knives are kept —
"Whatsa matter, Fanny! Something you ate?"

Fanny: two elderly women bend their heads together)

"My head! My head! I think I'm going nutty with it I don't know

all of a sudden it got hold of me. I can't bend down —
 If I do I'll die!"

Evelyn: "But you were feeling so GOOD this morning!"

Fanny: "Yeah if only the morning could'a lasted. Oh — I'm not myself today. I ache all over."

Evelyn: "Maybe it's the flu. — (touches forehead) Y'haven't got a temperature — I don't think."

Fanny: "I was out four days last week"

Evelyn: "I know."

Fanny: ". . . with a awful chest cold. It was awful. Maybe I should've stayed home Friday, too."

Evelyn: "Why didn't you! It was a crazy thing to do. You might have gotten pneumonia."

Fanny: "Oh! — do you think"

Evelyn: "Now don't go gettin' ideas I only meant next time . . ."

Fanny: "Next time, this time, how can a person be home in peace? You think you're alright — you're feeling better — And you know how it is you hate to stay out and lose a couple o'more dollars. And even when they pay you for it the job's on your mind . . . it worries you. So like a . . . Oh Oh! — (hand before mouth) I shouldn't be upsetting you so. Oh I'm sorry! HOW IS your heart — I mean — You know . . . Evelyn darling."

Evelyn: "Ticking"

Fanny: "Oh stop joking."

Evelyn: "I feel fine — what do you want from me. Besides . . ."

Fanny: "Shh — Shh! — (listens. Attracted by voices of women sitting across the aisle)

 — (all four at next table are dressed in blue uniforms with wide yellow collars) —

 Dottie: (a girl with a figure. — has just returned from the window — for the third time)

 "Tsk . . . ugh! Isn't that just like it . . . I got my new coat on and it's startin' in to rain."

 Mabel: (Negro. — softly round sad pleasant) "You steppin' out, tonight?"

 Dottie: "Am I!"

 Mabel: "What kind coat you got . . . Muskrat! I never seen you in it."

 Dottie: "My boy-friend give it to me . . . This too!" — (shows wristwatch)

 Rosalie: (tiny; very thin; and sixteen almost) "Are those real — Really! all o'them?"

 Dottie: "Ah-huh."

 Rosalie: "Diamonds!"

Fanny: "Diamonds, hmn! Which girl wouldn't get 'PRESENTS' the way SHE gets them."

Evelyn: "Fanny . . . please."

Fanny: "It's true: And you . . ."

Evelyn: "Not so LOUD! They liable to hear you."

Peggy: (sleepy, but interested) "He must be rich, your boy-friend."

Dottie: "I'm not complaining."

Rosalie: "It's beautiful STUNNING like the new earrings my mother bought me."

Peggy: "Those y'got on?"

Rosalie: "No — I got 'em home. They're long ones with a ball and chain, and full of diamonds! not like these Of course! but they sparkle so. It cost me — I mean mamma paid \$2.87 WITHOUT THE TAX. Mamma says — Mother says I should only wear the best."

Mabel: "It must be lovely child. Wear it in sometime so all of us can see it. — (as Rosalie jumps up to leave) Bless me! — Is that all y'going to have? You eat like a sparrow."

Rosalie: "I gotta watch my diet."

Mabel: "YOU you so thin I never know what you sit on. Don't you like them there . . ." (points to string beans left over)

Rosalie: "No. But I eat 'em. They're f-f-filled with vitamins!" (giggling)

Mabel: "Go 'way, go 'way, Hon — ee Pie! —all right! I'll meet you upstairs."

Rosalie: (approaching) "Hello Mrs. Browne. You been here all the time? that so! — I'd 'a known I'd 'a come over."

Fanny: "How's your mother?"

Rosalie: "She's alright, 'cept she had a tooth out."

Fanny: "And your father?"

Rosalie: "Pop's fine. Papa's always feelin' good."

Fanny: "Knock wood; your little sister . . ."

Rosalie: "Cryin' Cryin'."

Fanny: "Teething, poor thing."

Rosalie: "I guess so . . . Well, I gotta go. I gotta buy something across the street 5 & 10. 'bye."

Fanny: "She's Mary's — the oldest."

Evelyn: "Is that so. I've seen her around. What . . ."

Fanny: "Shh! — (listens disturbed by rattling noises) — oh!! I'll never again sit where people get their cutlery."

Dottie: “. such a SWELL time in ALL my life. After it was over the party the house was a wreck! Beer bottles and cans and dishes all over the place. And another thing that happened — After everybody had already gone home including him HE CALLS ME UP . . . 2 O’Clock in the morning . . . mind you. ‘Hello Toots! I’ve got a bottle and I’m comin’ up.’ just like that.”

Peggy: “Well I never! What didja answer him!”

Dottie: “I answered him alright: I answered him proper: ‘IF YOU DO I’LL BREAK IT OVER YOUR HEAD.’ But I like ‘Chuck’ he could be so nice when he wants to.”

Mabel: “That man don’t mean no harm. He jus’ happy — that, that what I mean, he have one too many. But Dottie you didn’t tell us what you were wearing.”

Dottie: “Nothing fancy . . . I bought it at a sale at Farrington’s. A two-piece cotton.”

Mabel: “The blue one you bought last Christmas?”

Dottie: “Oh no! How can you wear a thing like that two seasons!”

Fanny: “Tyip! Tyip! A princess!”

Evelyn: “Eat. It’s not your business.”

Fanny: “What does she have to work here for if she dresses like that!”

Mabel: “Nobody have such fine clothes like you. I . . . I”

Dottie: “Thank you.”

Mabel: “. wish sure wish I could have fine clothes. Las’ night I dream somebody steal in my house take all my things leave new. — (to Peggy) ‘bout your husband he buy you nice things?”

Peggy: (now leaning on her hands holding up her head as if it were something heavy. jumps) “Huh! . . . HIM neah! Everytime it comes to buy me something he says NO. I’m not speaking to him no more — since Saturday. We had an awful fight! He wants me to give him my WHOLE PAY — Honest to Gawd!”

Dottie: “You’re not going to . . . Are you?”

Peggy: “Should say not! After all, it’s not like I have to work. He”

Evelyn: "I don't envy that woman. Her husband drinks, y'know."

Fanny: "From what I hear, she's no better than him."

Evelyn: "Don't be so picky . . . for heaven's sake!" (sits back. bread
in one hand fork in other. a six-foot stout in anger)

Fanny: "Alright, have it your way. You think she's your friend
tells everybody your b-b . . ."

Fanny: "About that let me be the judge."

Fanny: "Anyways, I don't talk to her much. I say hello that's enough."

Peggy: ". so he gives me an excuse everything is costing high.
But I know what's going on. Who does he think he's
fooling? – me. 'If you think' I says, I says to
him, 'I . . . am going to go out to work . . . and you,
are going to go out with fancy women, – y'got another
guess coming.' Why I'd"

Mabel: "You got children?"

Peggy: "Two. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't put up with it, f'even
a minute."

Dottie: "The trouble is . . . (waving piece of fried potato at end of fork) The
trouble is you should stay at home."

Peggy: "You're single, Dottie. You don't . . . er-r . . ." (tiredly rubs eyes)

Mabel: "Mos' women only too glad don't have to come to their husbands f'every
penny."

Dottie: "But Mabel! . . . tsk, you SEE she's falling off her feet. And I bet
– (to Peggy) soon as you say goodbye to THIS job you say Hello . .
she – She's sleeping."

(peacefully sleeping elbows on table)

Mabel: "Leave her be. Poor soul."

Dottie: "But why – (lowers to a whisper) can't she stay home!"

Mabel: "When you work you somebody."

– (decide not to wake her leaving it to the bell. as they get up to go
Dottie picks up a napkin – uses it, then places it extra gingerly in empty
cup avoiding any noise)

Fanny: "She sick?"

Evelyn: "Naw! I heard them say she's sleeping. . . . Still in all
you never can tell. to go off like that. she
should see a doctor!"

Fanny: "Doctors! Oh dee-ar! don't remind me o'them.
Every one you go to says you got something else,
so who y'gonna believe. Evelyn — mark my word — if
everytime two o'those pill, pill — doctors didn't agree
you could bang their heads together — (sharp crack as
knife and fork are struck) — then maybe we'd get somewhere."

Evelyn: "Heh! Heh! oh-h! nnnHeyHey!"

Fanny: "No — honest. They take . . ."

Evelyn: "You're feeling better, Fanny, huh."

Fanny: "A little . . . this helps. — (tilts head drinking coffee) So —
that's how I come to go to the clinic."

Evelyn: "The City Clinic?"

Fanny: "THAT Clinic . . . I wouldn't send my DOG THERE, the way they
treat you. No, the big hospital on Ryder Avenue
corner 88 street."

Evelyn: "What was the matter with you?"

Fanny: "I don't know exactly — I think it was a touch of kidney trouble.
What an examination they gave me! . . . they looked and touched
everywhere. I'm ashamed to tell you. and it
was only fifty cents!"

Evelyn: "But, — what did they call it?"

Fanny: "I don't care what names they give me NAMES —
the pain is there let them get rid of it.
What good is their names to me?"

Evelyn: (sits back, both hands on edge of table, looking straight at Fanny)

Fanny: "Well I don't know. Look, he gave me these for it. — (opens handbag)
You take two every three hours — see, — (shows bottle) it says here
3 hours. DOPE . . . THAT'S WHAT IT IS. — No-o! it helps for
a while then it comes back."

Evelyn: "Mnnn . . . I thought you had a cold."

Fanny: "I have — This is something different! I was so sick I was
dying."

Evelyn: "Yeah-h."

Fanny: "Sur-re-ah!"

Evelyn: "When??"

Fanny: "Last October. I was four weeks in the hospital. The doctors said
they NEV-er seen anything like it. Honest — (places hand on

heart) if I was a rich man's daughter they would have made a 2000 dollar case out of me, easy."

Evelyn: "Were you private?"

Fanny: "Semi-private. — What . . . I don't think so. No! How could it come back? Gee, you're awful the way you worry a person."

Evelyn: "I was only . . ."

Fanny: "You don't understand. — (almost in tears) I'm sick of being sick. It bothers and bothers the life out of you. It nags you so. — (opens handbag and takes out handkerchief) Every little thing you have to do is like a mountain. Every step you take — (crying) is like three."

Evelyn: "Fanny, Fanny, control yourself. I understand —"

Fanny: (wipes eyes with handkerchief crumpled in hand. has pushed aside dishes — now empties contents of handbag on table)

Evelyn: "You're listening, Fanny . . . What's a matter? did you lose something?"

Fanny: "A pin for here." (pinches blouse)

Evelyn: (looking down on floor) "Maybe you . . . Is that it?"
(picks up butterfly pin)

Fanny: "Ahh-h I thought I lost it!"

Evelyn: "It's pretty. Beautiful."

Fanny: "You like it — take it — keep it — it's yours."

Evelyn: "I didn't MEAN it that way. — Well, alright, I can hardly refuse." (hooks it on dress)

Fanny: "It looks nice on you."

Evelyn: (fingering pin while talking) "Yes, it does. Now Fanny dear if — it is kinda nice isn't it? — uh — if I haven't told you about him my doctor, ten times I haven't told you once. Why don't you give him a chance — They call him the Miracle Man!"

Fanny: "He's liable to charge me a fortune."

Evelyn: "Three dollars!"

Fanny: "But the clinic . . ."

Evelyn: "The Clinic! it'll end up that much anyhow. almost. 50c if they give you a pill, 50c if they tickle your back, 50c if they take your water, 50c, 50c, by the time they're

thru your pocketbook's empty. And all the time they're doing you a big favor — That's what gets you! I hate the idea of charity when we're paying good money for it. — Just a minute, Fanny, please . . . darling, don't interrupt me in the middle. It's gotten to the point where because a person doesn't come in looking sloppy they think he doesn't belong in the clinic. And don't forget — YOU LOSE A WHOLE DAY'S PAY BESIDES what it cost you!"

Fanny: "What are you gettin' so excited about SO I'll go see him. It's a bad sickness you got heart trouble you shouldn't . . ."

Evelyn: "What sickness is good?"

Fanny: "Alright — who can argue with you. Think I'll go up to the Ladies' Room and rest for a couple of minutes."

Evelyn: "Yes. Why don't you — They got a nice couch up there. Wait! — (picks up spoon) I'll go with you." (sweeps a couple of last peas off her plate)

29. THERE OUGHT TO BE A UNION HERE

(passed the rows of tables to the left in the corner. "Red" Sammy — short, barrel-chested, with a head of thinned pale red hair — sits reading the jokes. Hank — lanky tall, long fingers, with delicately rimmed glasses set from an expansively bald head — is listening intently to Pete — a frail man who sits erect — explain to him what's wrong with the machine. Sally — moon-faced, tiny, plumpish — is listening in.)

Pete: " — it's always broken — They're always fixin' it — And it never works. What do they expect from a broken down old jalopy?"

Hank: "Whatsa matter with it exactly?"

Pete: "It ain't been hittin' right. It goes for a few minutes and then, gr-r-r it jams. What kind of a crazy machine do you call that?"

Hank: "What does Charlie — (the foreman) say?"

Pete: "Blames me for it! Let them get a new machine they can afford it."

Sally: (CALMLY buttering bread) "Not until someone's hurt . . . I'm surprised at you, Pete."

Hank: "Y'hear Pete — (pulling Pete's sleeve) — she's not kiddin'. There isn't

ANY-thing they won't pull without a union to back yer. There a feller working here — when was it — Ohh, about two years ago — knew him, Red.”

“Red” Sammy: “Yeah, yeah, yeah.” — (back to his newspaper jokes)

Hank: “ — this here feller was killed in an accident — Right here, this place. . . .”

Pete: “Where'd it happen?”

Hank: “Your floor. I was talkin' to him and an hour later they told me he was dead. . . . So we took up a collection and I was sent”

(the widow in her lonely home)

“That he was — a foine man — hivin rest his soul. 'tis m'slf that was after makin' oop his lunch that v'ry mornin'. . . . Kitty, me gar'il, oi'll be taken youse oot t'night.' . . . but niver he did fer his shtar was bloinded. . . . Och, he was a foine man — me 'oosband Timothy.

. YIS, Misther T'oompson be noime a loiyer fr'm the Coompany. Faith! an' I wuz that bur-rnd oop, th' loyin' cratur . . .

Soiyn! . . . Soiyn here.

Indade! Me signiture is it? Yiz wouldn't be daeievin' th' poor widder, would yiz now? O'm doomb . . . O'm sinsless . . . soiyn n git shtuck wid it.

It's my OHP-PINION Mrs. O'Hara your 'oosband was k'rless.

I hurd difrintly. (shamin' the shpotless ministry of the dead . . . an' him with that book larnin') . . . 'Tis yer dahmn tongue knows th' brithless SHIPEEDUP it thripped and kilt him. . . . Loiyirs! . . . bad luck to the lot of yiz! Now git oot! . . . laeve this 'ouse — an' laeve me crooshed heart ter me sacrit r'mimbrance.”

“Red” Sammy: “What's that lawyer doin' there?”

Pete: “They wanna her t'sign she don't wanna sign.”

“Red”: “So!”

Pete: “Ooh yuh dope!”

“Red”: “Shut up — Where do you come off talking to me like that!”

Hank: “Hey . . . cut that out . . . Can't you two get along?”

“Red”: “I'll break his head in one o'these — ”

Pete: “Whatsa matter, can't I say somethin' without you gettin' sore? — (turning to Sally) Gets insulted over nothing. . . . A nice girl like you, what a yuh see in a guy like that?”

“Red”: (grabbing Pete by the shirt) “One more crack outta yuh I'll . . .” — (backsweeps hand upsetting glass of milk)

Sally: (hopping up) "Gee! you scared the life outta me."
 "Red": I'm sorry, kid, honest — (hands her handkerchief) this jerk . . ."
 Hank: "Sit down!"
 "Red": (turns chair with back to Pete)
 Hank: "About what we're talkin' the accident . . ."
 "Red": "Ain't there a law for things like that!"
 Hank: "There are more laws than people walking the street but, but . . .
 You see — when it comes to something there's nobody home, no justice."
 — ("Red" caresses his chin, frowning. Hank, knife and fork in hand, takes
 advantage of the moment vigorously cutting up his meat.)
 Sally: "If there was a union here — Would they love a case like that."
 "Red": "Startin' that in again!"
 Hank: "I AGREE WITH HER."
 "Red": "Hank — You're a nice guy, but you're all hopped up on this union stuff."
 Pete: "His age 'n' talks like that. What . . ."
 Hank: (choking. shaking hand in air cautioning Pete) "It . . . it — (swallows)
 went down the wrong way."
 Sally: "Eat it slow."
 Hank: (shoving plate before him) "This meat's stringy!"
 Pete: "Lot o' people in this place kidding themselves. I could name . . ."
 Hank: "Hey"
 Pete: "Alright — I'll give you an example in my own life for instance. I spoke to them
 three time 'bout my raise never got no satisfaction. All you get around
 here is promises. JEEZUS if you work all week long haven't you a right
 to a nice check — not according to them you ain't. **THIS PLACE**
 . . . what a lousy management!"
 "Red": "Damnit!" — (twisting round to Pete) "Who the hell are you — (waving arm)
 tell the firm how to run their business?"
 Sally: "Sammy . . . f'God's sake! must you . . ."
 "Red": "Don't like it here why don't he quit?"
 Sally: "Why -- Because you're a damn fool, that's why."
 "Red": "Now don't get me wrong, Sally — (folding her hands in his) I'm only
 tryin' to — well, er, er — You see kid I got a theory. — (Sally
 withdraws her hands) I got a theory — if you work hard you don't
 make money. I'm looking for something EASY so's you can make big
 dough without . . . Anyways, that's my idea since before I can remember."

— (Sally looks disgusted. Pete's amused as he turns and turns his spoon in the coffee. Hank has picked off his glasses and is cleaning and peering thru them)

Hank: "Uh huh, uh huh — Well! go 'head. Don't mind me I'm listening."

"Red": "Y'think I'm gonna rot in a place like this. I'm gettin' out — quick, too."

Pete: "Talks like my sister — only she's nineteen."

Sally: "Speaking of your sister, do you see who's sitting there — there, Josephine y'sister! — she's got a whole table by herself."

Pete: "Hum! — wait 'til you hear what I had to say to her . . . no, wait, let "Red" finish."

"Red": "Thanks"

Hank: "Everybody's fairy-tale The Rainbow-Job! Without a union what-wh — "

"Red": "Unions! Unions! That's all I've been hearing for the last couple of months. What the hell's the matter with you people can't you speak of something else? I told you before 'n' I'm tellin' you again, they're rackets, all o'them. All they want's your money."

Hank: "Don't you think they've got expenses?"

"Red": "Don't give me that!"

Hank: "It's not much of an investment — 1.75 a month."

"Red": "I've gotta see something before I lay out my dough." — (tapping table)

Hank: (bites his lips. puts on his glasses only to take them off again — exasperated!)
"I've seen you throw 70 cents away at the bar . . . one gll-hup, finished . . . never bothered you. Seen you do it again same night — God-d DAMN IT! No where else do you expect something for nothing so why should you want it from the union — I'll be God-damned."

"Red": "Okay! Okay! — (stands up and pats Hank on the shoulder. Then, as he walks away —)
Watch my chair, Sally, I'll be right back."

Pete: "What I been tellin' yuh, Hank, y'stick your neck out f'people 'll knife you in the back."

Sally: "Don't say that! not about Sammy. You were going to say something about your sister why don't you"

(a tenement stoop with two steps widely spaced. iron railings extend in L — shape from both sides of the entrance. to the right on a step sits, Pete — on the other side leaning against the fence, his sister, Josephine. rocking a baby carriage couple of feet away, Mrs. Terraci . . . a neighborhood grandma)

Josephine: "Yeah-h! what's wrong a person like me who works in an office."

Pete: "If only you'd get the idea OUTTA your head y'got brains and you're . . ."

Josephine: "You're A PAIN."

Pete: "If Sally — (shaking thumb drawn together with fingers) can . . ."

Josephine: "That's her business. If she wants to become a union member, let her — but leave me out, please!"

Pete: "My God! — (tapping forehead) Must you be a dumbell ALL YOUR LIFE!"

Josephine: "I feel like I oughta slap your face, just for that."

Mrs. Terraci: (with palms pressed together) "MOM-ma-meeal Whassa matt' you eeza er-razy? brud' sis' fighta all da time. eez bad!"

Pete: "Mrs. Terraci — (beggingly) didn't you tell me last time y'husband when he was living . . ."

Mrs. Terraci: "Sil! Sil! heem union shop-a. — Na! Notta for Joosephine! Na! Na! Na!"

Pete: "Why!"

Mrs. Terraci: "I tol'a you lassa time, sure. Union she'sa no good for wimmens. No forget — HEY (to two youngsters noisily emerging from entrance bickering over 3-wheel bike) SHHH! — Dassa troub' ALWAYS'A you forgetta da love . . . She'sa come . . . youbetchamalifea. Don' hav' belongt' union gitta marree an' hav'a 'appy familieeah. (thumbs carriage) Ha-ha, Pet'a, eeza right eh!"

Pete: (lowers head flustered)

Josephine: "I don't intend to keep on working — Not after I'm married, anyhow."

Pete: "You hope."

Josephine: "Listen — you! Don't think because you're my brother you can rule my life. If I don't want to join a union I DON'T SEE WHYY I HAFTA. Besides, there's always . . . (instantly changes voice as hatless young man swinging an Evening News reaches stoop) Hello Walter . . . where you been?"

Walter: "Been around."

Josephine: "Heard you're working."

Walter: "Yeah." (walks tiredly up stoop)

Josephine: "Well, don't be such a stranger. — (loudly, to Walter down the hallway) YOUR MOTHER JUST WENT UP."

Mrs. Terraci: "Sh! Sh! Sh! Joosephine! . . . Aah, da bab' she'sa waka up!"

Josephine: "Sorry."

Mrs. Terraci: (shuffling blankets) "I lika for you to sleep. shoul't'a sleep. mak' nica fatta bab' jussa lik'a pop. What you tink — (poking baby

with finger) she's a badda boy? . . . she's a gooda boy!
eeza a'ONE-a fine bab'. — (to others) ahwhatsa-use-a
funny leetle keed. Me I tink I take a walk. 'seusa!

Pete: (entering hallway) "S'long 'Sis' . . . I don't know what to think in
answering you no more."

Josephine: "That so— Well don't wear out your brains for me, those you haven't
got."

Pete: ". . . 'and furthermore' she hollers after me, 'I don't want you
to BOTHIER ME NO MORE. I don't see why we SHOULD
have a union Company don't want it -- Pest!'"
(Sally's face one lighted smile. Hank bounces fists rolling head side to
side gasping but amused)

Sally: "Oh — ohh! that's the best . . ."

"Red": (butting right in as he comes back mad) "God damn jerk! I asked for vanilla
gives me this."

Sally: "What kind — well give it to me. I like strawberry."

"Red": (as Sally opens pocketbook) "Put it away Put it away."

Sally: "I'm not PAYING you for anything. Here — (handing over bag sugar-peanuts)
take it."

"Red": "Them are my favorites — How did you know, Sally?"

Sally: "I know a lot of things about you."

"Red": "Nice things?"

Sally: "Perhaps. They could be a lot nicer if you'd sign up with the union."

Hank: (grabbing his chance) "Listen Sammy, first . . . (on elbows boney finger
holding down pinky) I got you figured out as the kind of a guy
hates to be taken advantage of. Second — wait a minute lemme
do the talkin' Second . . . (bending next finger) I'm gonna ask
you something. Don't you think you are worth more than you are
being — WAIT A MINUTE understand me right before . . . I don't
care what she told you. I'm . . . Well, if you're not going to
give me a chance to talk, it's no use . . ."

Pete: "First findin' out?"

"Red": (shoving Pete's shoulder) "Who's talking to you!"

Pete: "Don't do that, or or —"

"Red": "Or what!"

Pete: "Don't do it again."

Hank: (ignoring them) "What she, Sally, meant that time — (one upturned palm is striking the other) — was simply . . ."

"Red": "What the hell we need a union for beats me!"

Hank: . . . that you can not expect big raises right away, but that unions pay off if you stick by them. The main thing is — sh sh! ease off 'Red' — the point is without a union — I mean WITH A UNION you can talk back. What I'm trying — (fingers locked) to tell you . . .

Pete: "You can't tell this guy — (yawns) anything." (stretches and yawns tipping chair)

"Red": (with the back of his hand strikes Pete in the chest. Pete tumbles backwards chair rattling from under him. a scream from a girl!)

Pete: (gets up slowly holding the back of his head. Hank rushes around picking up chair and brushing Pete's clothing. With a furious: "You God damn bastard!" Pete runs over to "Red" and is slapping his face back and forth)

"Red": (flings his peanuts on the floor and with a good wallop catches his opponent on the mouth)

Pete: (grabs edge of table as he stumbles down bringing it after him with a frightening crash!! broken dishes tinkle and scatter around him)

————— (a broad-shouldered heavyweight of a man is seen puffing along and winding in between the tables. it's the Manager)

The Manager: "Hey! What goes on here? — (a quick look, and he knows) **WHAT THE HELLAYUH GUYS THINK THIS IS — YOU WANNA FIGHT, GITRADDRHERE.**"

"Red": (to Pete) "Y' try that again I'll learn you where you get off at — jerk!"

Hank: "He, he . . ."

Pete: "You keep out of it!" (walks away)

The Manager: "Here — (to assistant who has come up with mop) get this wet up before someone steps in it . . . I got a good mind to make you birds pay for this!"

Sally: (eyes follow "Red" as she remarks to Pete) "You go too far I'll tell you that, much."

Pete: "I don't let nobody step on me! That's one thing — I don't let . . ."

Sally: "That's no reason you should act like that. (stretches head to see where "Red" is disappearing) It was an accident." (hurries after him)

— (Hank has brought over a couple of glasses of water and is pushing one to Pete. they sit in silence)

Josephine: (coming over) "What HAPPened!"

Pete: "Nothing! Nothing! Understand? (rapping knuckles of open hand on table) Nothing!! We had an argument."

Josephine: "Al-l-right. (to Hank) Look the way he talks this brother of mine."
 Pete: "... 'n' don't go telling everybody at home making a fuss over it Y'HEAR."
 Josephine: "I won't if that's . . . LOOK (fingers to her lips) BLOOD'S COMING FROM YOUR MOUTH."
 Pete: "Go 'way, go 'way."
 Josephine: "Let me wipe it first." (uses her handkerchief)
 Pete: "Now will you leave me alone, Sis."
 Josephine: "Yeah, alright, sure but . . . but . . . I uh, I . . ."
 Pete: (sighs and takes out wallet)
 Josephine: "I can't help it. I bought myself a blouse this week had to pay an unusual lot for it."
 Pete: (holding out two bills) "Enough?"
 Josephine: "I guess so."
 Pete: "It's a wonder you never think of paying me back no more."
 Josephine: "SO (playing with his hair) you're stuck with it." (laughing loud as Pete slaps her thigh. walks away still laughing)
 – (another minute of silence, Pete wiping a blood smear from the side of his mouth, and Hank tapping a tune on his glass with a pencil)
 Pete: (catching tune) "Heard that somewhere."
 Hank: "You remember it – goes like this: (tapping and singing low)
 The local union is my home-town team
 It keeps us gals and fellers on the
 str-raight line beam
 So-o! PASS THE WORD AROUND
 this is gonna be A UNION TOWN
 THEY 'll be thinking twice Boys and Girls
 before pushin' us aroun'.
 So-o! PUT ON THAT BUTTON
 You – you'll
 uhhh! (snapping fingers) I forgot how the rest goes. (rubbing forehead) tsk! tsk!
 You know the words sang it at the meeting."
 Pete: "Sounds familiar."
 Hank: (sinking long skinny fingers in one pocket after another) "Hah!! here it is!
 I knew it was printed in last month's issue. (spreads copy of "The Union Worker" sideways so that both can read it) Now! . . .
 So-o! PUT ON THAT BUTTON

'Two-t'one you'll feel like sometin' not like nuttin'

What's th

Hol-eee Smoke (clapping his hands) I'm Harry's relief man and IT'S TEN TO.

Here! (slipping Pete paper) it's yours — and don't forget you owe me 15c."

Pete: "I thought this was free — to union members."

Hank: "It is (gets up chuckling) this is to pay for FREE COPIES to non-union members!" (beats it in a hurry)

VIII. MACHINE-MADE AND MOTHERED

30. THE WORKTABLES ON THE MOVE

The Assembly Line and her mass-production kitties
the half-finished dears. like little brothers and sisters
well brought up (too well) in even rows side by side
and one behind the other, they slip along — in turn
Waiting for their next.

Ten thousand parts and one . . . sections and frames and jobs of work
gathering themselves up in the making. complete yet part of something bigger
complete yet half-made and a quarter-finished — To leave them like this
would be to cripple them for life!

Will half-made machines break out with half-made goods??

Will half-made things do — or won't they do? then don't argue with me

these Freaks of Missing Parts disjointed hulks toothless useless

with all their innards and private parts still exposed

lopsided looking silly helpless . . . IS THERE ANY DOUBT how much

they need us!

Something tells me somebody's played a trick on us —

It can't be . . . These "sections" look like bombed wrecks

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE and an explosion twistage??

(But the parts don't they belong?)

Maybe it was a fire or an accident — more like an earthquake
bent and buckled and torn apart cracked out of its fit and combination?
(But the shapes haven't they plan and purpose!)

Strung along their sliding gangways each frame and section IS DIFFERENT NOW
than it was before
and because of that each can again now be SOMETHING MORE.

C'mon hop to it keep going don't hold back the line
If there's a hitch PUSH IT ON ASIDE but one way or the other Keep It Moving!
The Slow-Walk of a belt-line — don't let it fool you, kid,
There's X-operations a minute or the Superintendent's gonna blow his lid.

The conveyor is the same at ten, and three and five
But brother, at the end of the day, you'll be glad you're just alive.
The tax-collector Boss Belt is driving solemnly, haughtily by
not even noticing anybody: But he's seen you
And it don't make no difference to him if you're Irish, Protestant, Negro or Jew
He's dropped his claws into your pockets of health, and scratched and yanked
his graft of blood, and youth, and years.

In house, and truck, and airplane sizes immature structures crawl down the line
Bulky shapes and odd sized chunks enwrap the ponderous unoccupied spaces!
Have they been robbed! or dismantled? don't be fooled by appearances.
Can't you see those gloved and overalled beings pouncing upon the frameworked hides?
They're the crew-men tackling their routines: Drilling . . . hammering . . . piecing together
Twisting their wrenches. working high on ladders, or lying underneath and inside
cramped and overheated,
working on their knees, or with both hands raised helping to lower into position
a section where it is needed, climbing, lifting — reaching for something — turning
it around — shoving it in place — All working round the same unfinished body
bringing it to life.

But only for a minute! because each gang has only its own small fabrication to attend to
And the blur and the whir and clanking noise and dust of the speed of making things
drives on

And already the next assignment is being passed to you, and already the hiss of the
Flaming torch of the marriage-brokers is welding in holy melting matrimony
the seams and edges of metals, showering them with sparks of live confetti.

“Step closer,” he says, “so we can gage your dimensions. . . .

Now balance yourself on this scale of low cost with both feet . . . Now, my dear boy, walk this plank of too, too soon and altogether late.”

This Specialist — he’s very particular . . . about the Product and its work

He stares touches weighs and measures

Every once in awhile plucking out a poor fellow from the line

on SUSPICION OF BEING DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS.

For here there can be only two sensible ways about it:

Either what’s being done is exactly exact;

Or it’s good enough so it passes.

From doctor to doctor, from one test-room to another, these young THINGS have been shifted

Tired now and not so sure of themselves they have quieted down and are studying out

the difficult writings of the M D’s on their Health Check-Up Charts

The chances of getting into service for so many look pretty slim now

Who would have thought there are so many improper goings on in a Material System! —

Here’s a poor fellow with a screw missing

(who knows what else should have been put in and was left out)

Here’s a man who tried to cut a corner — instead he cut a side

(that’s life for you)

This handsome looking article slips — Something’s broken

(I wonder, could he have hurt himself without knowing?)

And the next case is so sad: after the question when walloped over

the head DO YOU DENT there’s a single word YES

“Give it to me straight, Doc, have I got a chance?”

But the Inspector doesn’t answer. He’s thinking, scratching his nose with a micrometer

. . . . oh-o-o . . . what a mess: if I tell him to do this he’ll be taller but thinner —

and if I tell him to do that he’ll be shorter but fatter. oh-oo, what a spot for a man

to be in (even for a Specialist)

Too much of one thing and not enough of another, and so Old Doc turns to his Closet of
Instruments

First, there’s the Trick-a-scope which will help him decide if the Product has this — Good,
or that — Bad

And now the white-faced Moon-meters with the pointed tip —

And now the X-ray phantom pictures taken in the dark with the Ghost Eye —

And now the stick-tickle . . . A good shot in the arm —

ALL NECESSARY because if something's wrong it's important to know
what's gone on before and after.

But it was nothing serious — a little bulge
Still, as every woman knows, a bulge is a bulge in the wrong places
So Old Doc being the good-natured guy he is fixed it up with a massage and
simple adjustment

And everybody's happy. Because that's one thing about a manufactured product they're
very sensitive about being bought and sold. And to be RETURNED . . . After being sold . . .
is to wear a badge of shame: The label marked "IMPERFECT refund the purchase price."

Since in the end all the Factory Growths and Flowers have to think with the brains
of their users

The Intelligence Tests at these army centers are quick and quickly gotten over

"Have you any bad habits that might lead you to rust and rot?"

"Are you easy to use?"

"Your complexion — is it sales conscious?"

"Can you do what you're supposed to do for Two Cents what any dope could do for
Five — or doesn't it matter to you?"

"Does it bother you when you are treated rough? — Do you go to pieces?"

(but that last isn't left for you to answer . . . they have ways of finding out)

The young factory-fellows who have come so far think this is the end, but they have
another guess coming

You see, The Specialists, they want to know all they can about these stocks and things

So they're giving the prospective soldier-boys the test-tortures and the works!

"TALK . . . how much can you stand without buckling under?"

How long do you take — do it faster!

How long can you last a month, a year, where's the spot that's passing out!"

The test-specialists are getting a real kick out of this getting the boys to do more
than they were ever supposed to do

And watching them get mad — just to try their temper.

But how else could it be . . . Unless of course you don't care about what you want
Turning out The Opposite! —

THE OPPOSITE . . . in a world where down is up and up is down . . .
and ice-cream's served piping hot!

Let's make a lot of things that simply cannot work

A wheel that will not turn . . . An engine that will not whirr . . .
A pot that will not hold its soup . . . A saw that will not saw.
The main point is: to find the quickest way to get the worst results.
Why do it better if you can do it worse?
Why make it easier for yourself when you can make it harder?
Two times is twice as much so why not make it longer?
The idea is to get very little for your money. If the more we did
the less was done you must admit we'd have more fun!
In short, there are SO MANY WAYS OF DOING IT WRONG
Why make a Jackass out of yourself trying to do it right?

As a matter of courtesy and caution every REJECT is given a chance to square himself
with the Laboratory Psychiatrist Technician.
With us ORDINARY human beings if you're not good in one thing you're surely good in another
but with manufactured goods and things there's a single use and purpose, or you're just some tangled
bones in a mess on the junkyard heap.

No wonder these men with REJECTION stamped on their forehead sit bent over wondering what
their fate will be. This is their last chance . . . so the L. P. T. puts it to them flat:

“What's the complaint! Why don't you boys behave?”

but they won't answer because they're sour and disgruntled.

“Speak, man, speak! What makes you act the way you do?”

and one of them, a moody chromium piece, speaks . . . Wouldn't you like to know?

“What's eating you, buddy?” the Psychiatrist pleads. “I got to know. It might be
catching. Aren't they treating you right? What's stuck — what's broken! You
don't have to keep anything from me?”

. . . the secrets I hide are my own.

The poor psychiatrist HE'S the one who's stuck. Now, he's asking himself questions:

“Am I cracked? What is it makes this young stock walk
on the wrong side of the street! Where — When — How?? WHO could have
let them down?”

Tiredly the L. P. Technician turns to Case Histories 1 to 1,705

The records are carefully kept in the Factory Production Files — (the nimble-minded files

It reminds you of what you forgot and jumps to call your attention to the things you never knew)

Under M — the psychiatrist is looking something up — MATERIALS

. . . . wood smelling wood rough and smooth in its yellowness

knotted and designed with inborn wavy lines.

rustless steel and boneless rubber
coarse sand and hair and hides.

Under C – for SECONDS and CANCELLATIONS.

Under I – for INFERIORITY PETE – “Mmm! an interesting case!”
(What looked like the very BEST thing to do so often enjoys itself
at our expense – it was the worst we could have done)

“Gentlemen,” and the Psychiatrist is speaking in a hushed and gentle way, “I have
bad news. You are definitely a mistake. From this moment on you are nothing
but a piece of scrap.”

“What’s wrong with me?” a would-be soldier snuffles.

“Psycho-dippy!”

“I think that’s very, very – uncomplimentary.”

but what can you do, of what use are they to us if you cannot use them?

But by far most of the Products are accepted for service and sworn in.

Cheerfully, noisely, they are lining up to receive their Certificate of Health “OK”
from the Board of Tests and Measurements

What a physical! – but now they’re poised and rarin’ to go.

The Captain of the Wholesale Barracks marches to the head of the column
to administer AT LAST the Oath of Business Allegiance:

“I, a piece of merchandise, do solemnly swear that I will bring profit
to my house of manufacture; that I will serve them and them only
disregarding the needs of my (real) makers; that I do, here, on my
sacred word of honor promise not to last too long keeping ever
in mind the Law of Repeated Sales. Amen! Amen! AMEN!”

32. THE FASHION SHOW IN THE WORLD’S DEPARTMENT STORE

They’ve landed!— from factories around the world the Mass Production Products HAVE LANDED
Beaching the world’s department stores they’ve swarmed the departments and taken counter and
showcase possession

In rush-hour hordes of countless colors styles and sizes they’ve been infiltrating in,
And having reached their objective: – A palace-village for every kind and line of goods! – A football
gallery and grounds!

the mass rank and myriads of the products of production . . . of alluring display and
easy sales.

Emerging from the elevator on the 51st side walking Lady-like thru the aisles the customer-crowds making way for her: Miss Outstanding Values!!

Hands on hips, or a hand lightly caressing her shoulder head sideways she shows her exclusive profile!
Proudly she speaks: I'M no rummage sale.

From a clod of raw material to a fashion plate! —
boosting with dignity the sales.

But the salesclerks are not too impressed altho some well-dressed customers are saying lightly: "Charge it to my account."

Other customers can be heard saying "I'd give ANYTHING to own it!" and it's sad to think how often that's exactly what they do.

Still others are giving up and leaving for they know AT THESE PRICES it will never do
but the salespeople are running to hold them back with the cash down Easy Payment Plan.

It's a good buy — if you can afford it. But nothing's free — nothing . . .

Altho you can keep the advertising throw-away sheet as a lovely souvenir.

"WE WANT SUSIE." "WE WANT SUSIE."

Clap hands everybody — THREE CHEERS — she's movin' down the escalator
she's struttin' thru the aisles

She's dancing on the counters throwing everyone her smiles

She's a 50,000-watt . . . Is SHE HOT . . . Miss Susie Bargain Sales!

I'm a Low . . . Price . . . Tag-g

I'm first-class goods — not a rag-g

Oh when you'll take me home you'll be

Like the High Societi-ee

And all the time you'll save money

What an opportunitie! Opportunitie . . . BUY ME

She's not much of a singer but, brother! look at her "Reduced for Clearance" shape!

Whatever it is Susie — You've got it

"You can have it" — she winks — "for a tax-included price!"

Customers are howling men are throwing their money wildly in the air

Women are opening their pocketbooks upside down

the frenzied clerks are waving their salespads hoping to cool off the buying heat —

but Susie rubs it in — (she's certainly got a knack)

as she stops to pose beneath the sign: 50% saved OR YOUR MONEY BACK.

IX. THAT BUS ON THE WAY HOME AT NIGHT

33. THAT BUS ON THE WAY HOME AT NIGHT

That bus at 5:15! Everybody's in a hurry to get home, and that bus takes its time. People are beginning to collect near that lollypop sign: BUS STOP no parking. Strangers are grumbling to each other — it's no joke waiting for that bus on a cold and rainy night. "I read it in the paper where it was gonna be 'sunshine' today."

"Yeah . . . it looks it."

She KNEW it was going to rain so why didn't she use her common sense and take that umbrella.
— That bus!

"You'll see they'll come three together. Yesterday I was waitin' twenty minutes before — Alice!
There's Alice and her friend Beatrice, — Hello how are yuh, girls?"

"Oh don't ask I don't like it down there too much there's too much noise from the motor. What a place,
it's stuffy. Y'open the window there's a draft — y'close it it's stuffy."

"Try to stick it out! I'll be down there MYSELF next week. It PAYS SO . . ."

"I guess so."

(Two men in half-jackets waiting off the sidewalk. One has a faded "U.S. Navy" stamped on his back)

"What's he kickin' I got seniority over him."

"Matt knows he's been given a dirty deal he knows it damn well but he's fifty-four now."

"Whataya blamin' me for: It ain't my fault."

"I mean that other fellow — he's a f snot!"

. . . . This uptown?

No! You gotta cross the street, lady, take the bus there by the corner.

"That new guy? the one who comes from . . ."

"Who else — Where the hell's that bus! I'm all in . . . Will I be glad it's Friday."

(a woman in her forties, greying hair, dressed in a gotten together manner . . . speaking to a bus acquaintance. The acquaintance, a small lady, is trying to hold an umbrella high over both of their heads)

"It wouldn't be so bad but the seasons. Like I told you last time, I'm an operator by ladies' blouses. I don't mind the work so much but I hate lookin' for it, and it pays all right. You believe a woman should work, 'n' she's married? . . . With mine, it isn't how much he makes — it's how much he gives me after he drinks most of it up. What time is it? . . . Already! 'n' I have to get home today, early. As soon as

I come home the supper we have is eatin', because I have a lot to do — Ain't it comin' yct? I simply have got to get home today early. . . . Don't tell me about children — I know. They're a lot of work and aggravation. I tell my husband: 'Do you have to give in to EV'rything they want — you're only spoiling them! — Don't think you're doing them a favor, they'll only dance on your head when they get older!' The big one she's not so good in school. She could if only she wanted to but she doesn't listen to the teacher and her mind thinks of something else. Muriel, that one is different. She's wonderful and so smart! . . . But don't get the wrong impression all my children are the same to — **LOOK AT THE WAY IT'S comin' down IT'S POURIN'!** Let's step on aside somewhere"

With a wall-shivering thud a colossal thumping the blustering
storm of the Rain announces itself: Who's BOSS?
the rolling rocks of thunder!!
Ancient timbers of the black forest clouds bombed and crashing
splintering and colliding down the vaporous mountain sides.
The hoarse, croaking thunder — heaving the barrels of rain-water to the edge
and dumping them over.

The pipe's bust — It's not only raining it's spurting teeming gushing out!
the ssss-shsh of the multitudes of raindrops noise-scared
and chilled to the bone
The sandy downpour of the slanting needle rain — cooling and freshening up the air
a procession of rain spears massed and descending!
Overcoming by pressure of numbers the corrupt and dusty-dirty city air.

Listen to the change! — the hush and simmering of the rain
the rustling fall of the pouring rain
beckoning the workers to come out in the open.
But the minute anyone makes a move — that instant
the rip of the darting lightning, a flickering crackling streak,
gives warning
and the prowling, growling sky-beast Thunder
(What a violent temper!)
gnashes his teeth, and in a few stunned seconds
stabs a shaking blast down the empty streets —

and another!! and the broken air rolls and rumbles
and rolls away
frightening city-workers into halls and hiding in doorways.

Many a returning worker will be caught tonight loitering under a dome-bug umbrella
cold in a raincoat, or cold and uncomfortable without one.

It makes all the difference in the world listening to the swarm of raindrops nibbling at the window panes
at home, and waiting outside in the wet and waiting for that bus.

But it's beginning to let up. The wind-angry scratching of the sweeping rain is now
a sickly patter . . . an exhausted trickle . . . the last straggling droplets
dabbling and dribbling with all the strength gone out of them.

The flattened roads are water-stained and glistening; and trapped in the watery reflections
the blurred blaze of the Glory and the Radiance of the (((NIGHT OF THE ELECTRIC LIGHTS)))

“. . . when you don't play 'em they run good. Son of a bitch!”
“When are you going to break yourself outta that habit —
a sucker's game.”

“It looks horrible. It's my husband's choice for my birthday
so I didn't say anything but honest ISN'T IT AWFUL!”
“It's all right! Looks wonderful on you considering your
figure.”

“Where the hell is this bus!”

the (((CITY-NIGHT))) a tangled shock of dripping hair bejeweled and be-diamonded
water slithering down the walls of its neck in a wild haste to join the sewer-feeding rivulets.
Switch on the noisy business-booming glimmering dazzlement of electric signs and lights***
startling us with their jittery fervor***LIGHT out LIGHT out LIGHT out
****GARAGE ***BAR ***DRUGS AND SODA
J**O**Y**L**A**N**D** punching it out with light,
with a finger-touch the charge is set off to blast the rock of night!

Other ((lights)) have also laid down the fee for the License to Luminous Practice:

The store light splash and overflow spilling over its cans of mixed paints

Merrymaking and livening up its merchandise spraying the sidewalks and slanting across
the rivers of wet-black roads —

The street-lamps strung out wide-spaced on receding ropes —

The double-spot glare of the headlights in a flameless depth of glow;

the bloody trails of the taillights rain-glazed and varnished —

The fixed stare and blinking of STOP-and-GO with the cinder of an aching minute in his eye;

no matter where you stand or turn his dagger-red or watered green runs straight at you

tinkling glass shattering itself at your feet . . .

Not even this, ALL OF THIS, dares with the ***SIGNS*** to compete!

Popping in-and-out, climbing, rolling, twitching — drawing in the heavy people-crowds —

Was there one of us who didn't step back in horror . . . remaining silent, as the lights one day

for the first time — went out! That frightening blackout

that taught us a lesson. Never again can we take the signs and lights for granted

That spectacle . . . The animated brilliancy, the lure of the streets in TECH! * * NI! * * COLOR! * *

(a hatless man head hunched in upturned coat collar is standing backed against a building. drenched and gloomy he's thinking . . .) Wednesday already two more days to this grind . . . you get so DAMN uncomfortable sitting in one place . . . try try what difference does it make — if I could ONLY be in charge I'D SHOW THEM! no advancement no way out it's discouraging . . . hang on to this look for something else take a chance nobody to help you to hell with it all! think I'll take a civil service . . .)

(back to the woman still talking about her children, and the small lady still holding the umbrella high as if it were something holy)

“. both of my two children the girls had it at the same time so you can imagine what I went thru. I tell yuh, if it wasn't for my friend Anna I don't know what I would have done. That's what to me means a friend when they are loyal. My sister-in-law

(Oh friendship is an easy thing
when friendship doesn't matter
But it reveals its priceless self
when so called friends
begin to scatter.

Will your hand be close in mine
Will your arm be round my shoulder
Will your presence whisper without words
 “What — afraid —
 what is there to fear?
As long as I am by your side
 and remaining here”)

..... my sister-in-law, she's different, — only time she knows me is when she needs something. She's mad at me now — and what for, I didn't let her know when my father went to the hospital. What for! — and what I did for that woman. All right, she's mad — she'll get glad again. After all, what DID I DO TO HER. Nothing. She'll get glad again. OH-H-H! (claps her hands together) the plumber!! I was supposed to be home already and y'see — AIN'T ONE COMIN' . . . huh . . . uh you can't tell. You can catch PNEUMONIA waiting for that bus! Oh well serves him right. You shoulda heard the way I gave him a good piece of my mind last time. 'It's you!' I says 's'about time. Where were you? Why didn't you come here before I left you three notes. Now he comes! I've gotta go somewhere what do you think I got nuttin' to do. Can't you come tomorrow? — Oh you plumbers you make me sick! Now he's gonna give it to me . . . as if it's my fault his bag's heavy 'n' I live on the top floor. Ain't it awful, I mean the rain. Stay up here under this the awning so you won't get so wet the way it looks it'll never come tonight.”

(Two small men, one fat with a stomach. The fat man is talking, tiredly)

“Way I feel I'd quit right now.”

“Why don't you?”

“I hate the idea of looking for work. — sure it's a union shop! yes, yes,
but they call it a cheap line and settle on the basis as they call it
grade D. 'n'yours?”

“Better don't ask. Ask Jimmie — Jimmie Bensonhurst — And it's so hard to get there
from where”

“He's there too!”

“He got me it.”

“So what's the matter, not enough work?”

“There's plenty work but the same darn story, — no pay. About enough to support myself,
and the wife and children send them away to some relatives. I got so . . .”

“Wait a minute! think it's comin' stoppin' for the lights . . . naw, it's a truck.”

“What's the use a'waitin' . . . Come on, Morris, we'll take the 8th Ave. If he's full up
he'll go right by us anyways.”

“Aahh! those drivers!”

“What are yuh blamin’ them they don’t put enough cars on this line . . . C’mon, 8th Ave.”

(Two young women; neat and well-dressed)

“You’re breaking your enGAGEment! What for? I thought he was rich.”

“What’s the good of his money — He won’t spend it . . . he’s so cheap.”

“Even so.”

“What I’ll get from him he can have. The limit! . . . takes a girl out for a good time complains about”

“The trouble with you is you don’t know when you’re well off.”

“He only caused me a lot of unhappiness. Look! in all the time we went together he only gave me this. (shows diamond) It’s all over between us, a bust-up. I don’t want nothing offa him except he should leave me alone.”

“You ought to see him once more. In my estimation he’s”

“I won’t . . . except it’s something exceptional. After having insulted me, he has the gall to call me up last night and I don’t care if I never see him again.

I’m telling you the God’s honest truth I wouldn’t”

“What’s the use, you make up your mind to something nothing’ll change it This rain won’t let up let’s get a taxi!”

“Try ’n get one.”

(a few minutes later umbrellas are swished down; a mother grabs her sonnie two-year-old by the waist legs dangling as she strains over the high step; a man throws his cigarette away; someone yells, “Wait a minute — there’s one right up behind it” THE BUS HAS ARRIVED)

X. HOME AFTER A DAY’S WORK

34. EXPECTING PAPA ANY MINUTE

(when you walked into this house nobody could say it wasn’t immaculate. From the curtains white starched to the linoleum on the floor, just washed, everything was as I say poor but spotless! Mother (Lillian) is sitting at a white porcelain table peeling a cucumber and talking to Uncle Arthur — a heavy, bent, quiet-spoken, clean-shaven man close to seventy. Uncle has a few shining gold teeth top and bottom, and is

wearing a long-sleeved sweater. Papa (Frank) is expected any minute so the meat is already on the gas plate, sputtering and spattering, and the soup is on the window sill cooling. Harriet, their twenty-one year old, has just finished doing her nails on the washtub)

Mamma: "Tick the buzzer back! — yes-s it rang. (to Uncle) This must be him."

Harriet: (presses button and hops out to head of stairs fingers stiff and separated) "Who is it? Who!"

Deliveryman: "LAUNDRY!"

Harriet: "It's the wet wash."

Mamma: (a moment later) "Come in, Come in, I don't know what I'll do with it today — such weather. How much do I owe you . . . here, and this is for you."

Uncle Arthur: (as Mamma sits down picking up the cucumber) "You keep a nice house, Lillian."

Mamma: "Thank you. I try, I try my best. Harriet! do you HAVE TO LET THE WATER RUN LIKE THAT it splashes all the way here. In a hurry, in a hurry, every night this week."

Harriet: (brushing hair) "A girl's got to have some fun. Oh darn it (wetting brush) since I washed my hair I can't do a thing with it."

Mamma: "With these houses, Arthur, I try DAY AND NIGHT you got to keep at it, all the time . . . the dust — so high! (arm straight out knife in fist) These jalopy houses, they should have been torn down before, b-before . . ."

Uncle Arthur: "Before I was born."

Mamma: "You can laugh all you want but a woman can work from THE MINUTE SHE GETS UP to make breakfast in the morning, . . . 'til she falls off her feet at night — it don't HARRIET I'm not going to tell you again the water. That's better. — (Harriet is getting all dolled up for that Dance Tonight! Her feet can't keep still: Tee-tee Ta Ta! Ta-Ta Tum Tum) — Being a woman is no picnic."

Uncle: "I know."

Mamma: "Being a woman is WORSE than being in a small business because it hasn't the satisfactions. Stuck in the house between . . ."

Uncle: (bending closer lifting eyes to Harriet who has just stepped into the next room) "Something doing?"

Mamma: "N-naw! she jumps from one feller to the other. Nothing will come of it mark my words."

Uncle: "They've been keeping steady?"

Mamma: "Two months it's time already. She's particular! She'll be so long particular until"

Uncle: "She's young . . . whataya rushing —" (both hands out)

Mamma: "She's gone on 21 and that's all she thinks about — good times and clothes! and boys, boys . . ."

Harriet: (from bedroom) "Ma — ma! MAMMA where are my new stockings the sheer ones?"

Mamma: "Didja look in the top drawer?"

Harriet: "They're not there!"

Mamma: "I don't know. I had them in my hands ask me where I put 'em I don't know. (to Uncle)
She was going with a nice feller he makes out very good he's an automobile mechanic."

Uncle: "Sol"

Mamma: "So — so so, like I was telling you. She'll . . ."

Harriet: "Mam-ma!"

Mamma: "WHAT IS IT THIS TIME?"

Harriet: "The electric flashed out."

Mamma: "Take a bulb from another room. Do I have to tell you . . . You aren't old enough? — So, Arthur OUCH (drops pan cover she picked up. Turns off flame) I always burn myself with this. (sucking finger) So — y'hear . . ."

Uncle: "Ahuh."

Mamma: "They broke up."

Uncle: "Maybe it's for the best!"

Mamma: "I don't . . . Did you find them?"

Harriet: (comes in beaming) "Here they are! they were in the top drawer all the time. ooh I just love them . . . their kind looks nicest. You can hardly see you've got them on. — (sensing a silence) What have you two been talking about?"

Mamma: "Nothing concerns you."

Harriet: "I'd like to believe that!"

Mamma: "Well if you must know it was about the way you didn't treat Willie right."

Harriet: "Whenever she gets the chance she throws it up to me. Besides! I don't like you to discuss my private affairs."

Uncle: (gently) "Harriet, darling . . . I remember when (makes a movement of rocking baby in arms) and-er (crosses a leg swinging it) I gave you a ride so what's personal if Mamma talks with me about your future?"

Harriet: "Well, friends like him — (Willie) there a dime a dozen. I'll never step my foot into his house again, never, the weakling. He lives with his married sister and SHE RUNS HIS LIFE for him. I never saw the like . . ."

Uncle: "It's all right, it's all right, my little Harriet (to mother) Leave her be — Tell me, darling, you still with that radio concern?"

Harriet: "I surely am, but I been changed to the Supply Section."

Uncle: "You like it there?"

Harriet: "I like meetin' different people, and it's interesting."

Mamma: (suddenly, from sink where she's thumb-screw-can-opening some apple-sauce) "Whatsa matter with Papa he shoulda been here already? I hope nothin' — YOU DIDN'T TELL ME ABOUT THE SUPPLY DEPARTMENT!"

Harriet: "Stop worryin' (a hand flipped back then forward) it's rainin' ain't it? Stick your hand out the window see it's still rainin'."

Mamma: (stretches over sink lifting window) "It feels like snow outside. It stopped. One day it's hot one day — Someone knocking? who's it!"

Papa: "ME open the door." (Harriet, who's been taking a spot out of her dress by rubbing between two fists, flings the gown on a chair and rushes to the door —)

Harriet: "PAPAI!"

Papa: (looks as if he fell into the river) "Whew! came down like this heavy 'til I reached — ART'UR where are you been hiding yourself! It seems good to . . ."

Mamma: "Shut the door! You're letting all the cold in."

Papa: ". . . to see you again." (shakes hands heartily)

Uncle: "The train runs both ways . . . the same distance yours to mine."

Papa: "Always with a good answer. I've been busy! How are you? How's Florence?" (Uncle's wife)

Uncle: "She's home with a cold."

Papa: "Where were you — You promised to come for New Years?"

Uncle: "Did I? — the way I keep forgettin' things you'd think I was growing old."

Mamma: (to Papa who's slipping his things off) "Step on the papers, the papers, I just got thru washing the floor."

Papa: (small, wiry, quick-moving — uses hands a great deal) "Guess who I met lunch hour today — Art'r, you hear, Art'r — Mrs. Brodin. Comes over and says 'Can I sit down with you' I felt like saying No but I said Yes can she talk a mile a minute."

Uncle: (sits at ease hands lightly interlocked) "What did she have to say?"

Papa: "Ask me!"

Mamma: "Her daughter did she marry finally?"

Papa: "Not only is she married but she's got three kids!"

Mamma: "No-o-o."

Papa: "And say Lillian, Charlie's wife . . ."

Mamma: (to Uncle) "That's his foreman he should break a leg."

Papa: ". . . is in a family way. And what'a you know, Irish Mary's quittin' SHE'S ALSO GONNA HAVE A BABY."

Mamma: "Nice — nice, she's a fine woman (to Uncle) — I met her once . . . But g'me a chance to put this stuff away." (leaves bundled with coat, hat, rubbers, and muffler.

. . . Lingers for a minute in the middle room where Harriet has set up an ironing board and is sponging out spots from her dress with a damp cloth and hot iron)

35. HER SON'S LETTER

(Harriet, having slipped the dress over the end of ironing board, is testing the iron by wetting her finger — and a flick. The radio is on and she sways with the music)

MA: (as she carries the pot of soup into the kitchen) “Mmm-nh, the minute you eat it you get such a lift!”

PA: “Please, Lillian . . . afterwards. I told you I had a liverwurst sandwich and there was somtin’ in it.”

MA: “Dummic! You had your foolishness mixed up in it. You KNOW liverwurst never agrees with you and yet you always . . .”

PA: “Please . . . Lillian.”

MA: “If you think I’m going to stand over the stove and cook and LEAVE IT THERE you — you — Alright, alright, don’t come home for supper, but when YOU DO COME HOME you don’t eat — not in this house.”

PA: “Maybe Arthur ’ll have some.”

UNCLE: “I already ate before with Harriet . . . It’s good!”

MA: (beggingly) “A little . . . (holding pot near husband’s nose) LOOK HOW SKINNY YOU are — tell me, is that the way a man should”

PA: “My God! the fuss she makes you’d think it was roast duck.”

MA: (hurt) “Uhm — Look at him! a rich man’s appetite with a poor man’s pocketbook.”
(angrily returns soup to window sill middle room)

PA: (apologetically) “What does she want from me, can I stuff it down.” (vigorously waving hand before mouth)

UNCLE: (smilingly quiet)

MA: (comes in holding letter before her) “Fra — ANK, this fell out.”

PA: “How many times have I asked you not to go thru my pockets?”

MA: (feeling silly; tittering) “I’m not allowed to hang up your wet clothes?”

PA: “I was going to show it to you anyhow! It’s Martin. (their only son) The only time you hear from him is when he needs something, y’hear, Arthur?”

UNCLE: “Uh-huh . . .”

PA: “Well open it up — Open it up and read it.”

MA: (sits down slow-like and prepares to enjoy herself. Reaches for handbag and takes out eye-glass case. With one hand puts on glasses. Then — surprised)
 “You didn’t open it!”

PA: “What for? Don’t I know what’s in it? Read, we’ll see how much it’s this time.”

MA: (picks hairpin from head slits envelope)

PA: “And Lillian — do me a favor — You should learn how to get along with your relatives. I don’t want no more”

MA: (off go the glasses) “I can’t get along with my relations! . . . it’s MY fault she’s so picky?”
 (of daughter-in-law)

PA: “I don’t care who’s fault it is (raising arms and jerking them down) I don’t want no more arguments.”

UNCLE: “Shh Shh what’s this-is?”

MA: “I warned him — (her son) I told him — Mark my words Martin she’s not for you!
 What kind of girl is she I used to say”

PA: “Don’t bring up the past!”

MA: “. . . lets him spend all his money on her. So! — he’s got his Tessy now . . . only she doesn’t want me to call her Tessy — it’s Te-ree-sal!”

UNCLE: (hushing Papa with lifted finger)

MA: “I didn’t use to mind . . . so much (biting lips, — weeping) I thought it would all straighten itself out . . . but it’s getting worse (louder weeping). I just can’t bear it the way she makes him miserable. He comes home after a day’s work and she nags him, over nothing. What does she want, she spends every penny so what does she want?”

PA: “Martin’s better?”

MA: “At least he’s like me (controlling herself wiping tears) I don’t like bills hanging over my head and (swallowing) neither does my boy (pulling Uncle’s sleeve) Martin. We’re not the kind likes t’be always putting up a front and always broke.”

PA: (disgusted) “When did ‘our boy’ save a penny?”

MA: “I got after him, (twisting corner of letter) I got after him last time . . . Martin — put something away, don’t spend it all like as if you were a child. And-er- oohoo that reminds me I didn’t pay the electric this month I owe them for two months. I really should”

UNCLE: “So, so, about Martin?”

MA: “She hasn’t paid for one thing and already she has eyes for something else. Martin had 75 dollars in — He did, he did Frank! he showed me the book.”

PA: (arms straight out) “They should write him up in the papers!”

MA: “ — and she’s thinking of Persian Lamb. She uses her going to work as an excuse to get anything she wants.”

UNCLE: “Oh . . . she’s working?”

MA: “Afternoons in a bakery behind the counter. So-a, that was before, they was having an argument she wants him to buy a car, an automobile — that’s all he needs on top of everything else!” (whimpering again)

UNCLE: “When a couple has an argument they should have it out themselves.”

MA: “But an automobile! keeps you”

UNCLE: “Just the same.”

MA: “. . . broke! (biting nails, crying terribly) I have to be the unlucky one!”

UNCLE: “Each has their own ways — Lillian, and you can’t blame the young people nowadays. You save a 100 dollars and TOMORROW it’s worth 85, and the NEXT YEAR it’s dropped to 45 — y’understand, y’understand what I’m talking about, Lillian, — and next Ahhh! what’s the use a’talking . . . You put it away and they take it away one way or the other. So it goes When a worker HAS a few hundred dollars he’s worrying about how to spend it . . . And if he’s the kind wants to KEEP IT he’s worried about it being taken away from him. It’s a funny life. You really got to be born rich to get along nowadays.”

MA: “Ar’tur . . . listen . . . (wipes nose sniffing) I don’t care what you say . . . Two dollars when you need it is STILL BETTER then a hundred when you don’t. — (sighing from way in) Excuse me, the way I’m actin’.”

UNCLE: “Ev’rybody cries, some a little louder than others.”

PA: “Y’gonna read the letter . . . Yes-s-no?”

MA: “WHHERE’S the fire? CANT I SAY A WORD without you you — SHUT THAT RADIO!! a person can’t hear himself think, my God my God . . . Frank, she listens to you.”

PA: “Harriet — the radio!”

HARRIET: (turns off radio but takes up song with gusto and liveliness)

I’m just an ANIMAL at heart —
 So please don’t keep your LIPS
 a-way-y
 I’m not a bit precocious just,
 somewhat ferocious . . .
 So please be KIND to me — e — e
 Don’t keep those lips A-wway — ay.

- PA: "That's my daughter."
- UNCLE: "I know. (noting shining eyes and the proud look) It's not every man's luck to have such a FINE LOOKING GIRL."
- PA: "SHE IS if I say so . . ."
- MA: "Have some!" (setting bowl of nuts on table)
- UNCLE: "No — thanks, thanks." (plays with the nutcracker)
- MA: "Mind you last time er — NO the time before — she leaves me a note in the letterbox BACK SOON so I wait one hour . . . two hours . . . no TESSY, so I fixed her, I can also write . . . I took out her paper and put in my own: BACK, NOT SO SOON. — You can say anything you want Frank but I'm not going to get glad with her EVEN IF she gets glad with me."
- PA: "Uggh! I give up."
- MA: "Arthur, I leave it to you, in front o'me she says to Martin: AREn't you EVER going to get a raise? Mrs. Mitchel's husband got TWO alREADY. mind you, but with me it's one-two-three: IF YOU MANAGED YOUR MONEY BETTER — I says, . . . I'm afraid of her? — YOU WOULDN'T MAKE SUCH A NOISE OVER A COUPLE DOLLARS RAISE: Mind y'bus'ness! (imitates contemptuously) Look my dear girl — I had trouble bringing him into the world, and what trouble I had bringing him up nobody knows, so when I got something to say NO! YOU'A NOT SHUTTING ME UP when I got something to say, I'll say it! — (catches breath) Even an insurance policy she wouldn't even let him take out."
- UNCLE: "MMM! (using strength to crack a Brazil nut) Insurance? it's a good thing to have when you in trouble . . . No, Frank?" (dropping shells on growing pile)
- PA: "nYes . . . and no! Once you sign up you're stung with it! (humping shoulders snapping hands down) Ties up your money . . . And when you need it gotta pay 6% that's what they charge you. But I suppose it's good, — something. Lillian, what did you open the letter for just so it should be in your hand?"
- MA: (smiling) "I know without looking already how he starts off: Mom darling, or Darling Mom and Pop . . . (looks at letter) I knew it I knew it! (reads)

Darling Mom and Pop,

I have wanted to write for a long time but have been so busy, and there are other things. We are fine and hope the same from you. How are you feeling, Mamma, and how's Papa's leg the one he hurt around Christmas? I hope better.

Did you have a nice holiday, and I hope the apartment is already painted. We're thinking of moving if only we can find the rooms because you'll never guess why Mamma it's a big surprise, Teresa is . . .

(Mamma) . . . AHHOooo! (letter to breast) oh-ah, ohhh!"

PA: "God – God – Lillian ar-are-you . . . (grabs letter, reads)

. . . is in a family way. It's going to be

UNCLE: (folding arms on stomach) "Whataya know!"

a boy, I know,

but it's a lot of fun hoping to get what you want and loving what you get. Gee! I'm so excited and I will let you know more in my next letter and when the time comes. Wish us luck I know you do.

Tell 'Sis' I'm sorry for what I said last time I . . .

(Papa) . . . er, er, Can you make this out – (shows Uncle letter) – didn't – DIDN'T REALLY

MA: "I don't understand when he was small he had such a nice handwriting, like mine."

. . . I didn't really mean it. I take it back, and I'm sorry.

Well so much for that and now Mom and Pop me and Teresa would like to ask a favor off you, can you let us have 30 (thirty) dollars until next month? – (Papa: IF HE THINKS HE CAN THROW HIS MONEY AWAY AND THEN COME TO ME WHEN HE NEEDS IT HE'S MISTAKEN) – I know I didn't pay you back for last time but I'll pay you back altogether. Don't be mad on me, Dad, I wouldn't need it I wouldn't ask for it.

Well that's about all I can think of so I'll say s'long for now. Don't forget to come over suppose you can't drop me a line. Regards to everybody and I love you both and I think I am lucky to have the best Pop and Mom in the world so take care of yourself, both of you.

Your Loving Son,
Marty

(Papa) . . . He didn't mention about his eyes."

UNCLE: "Congratulations! Congratulations! (shakes hands one of Papa's one of Mamma's) Ahhh! Will I have something to talk about when I get home to Florence tonight – Ahhh-ha . . . About the thirty dollars I'll give twenty and with my

best wishes. — 'salright! 'salright! I can afford it. I OWE IT TO 'EM FOR A WEDDING PRESENT. — What . . . I feel sorry for myself if I had to live on social security what they pay you now. I make a couple o'bucks now and then. Yeah! they allow me if it isn't more than a certain amount. — (Suddenly Uncle stops short his body swaying back and forth, meditating. his hands are clasped) Life, life, how it comes and goes. Today tomorrow before you know it it's passed you by. Such is the life . . . n'What can you do?"

(Mamma is pleased with the good news, but unable to speak a word. She walks heavily into the next room — hands Harriet the letter — turns away to the bedroom)

36. PAPA AND UNCLE TALK THINGS OVER

(Uncle and Papa are alone in the kitchen. Papa is soaking his feet in a deep basin of water his pants rolled to the knee. hssss-shsh-eeEE, a teakettle is humming a little song to itself thru its stuffed and steamy nose. Uncle is still cracking nuts)

PA: "He's not acting the way a child should."

UNCLE: "Do you have to be told . . . they're short in the rent. er, large rooms?"

PA: "Two-by-two, but they were lucky t'get anything. . . . Why don't you take your sweater off it's warm here you'll . . ."

UNCLE: "Not for me."

PA: "How about a little more this — (pushes plate and open can of apple sauce closer) Take a little more — that's what she opened it up for!"

UNCLE: "I don't think I should."

PA: "Here, with a piece of bread — it's very good, apple sauce and bread."

UNCLE: (holding spoon and shaking head from side to side) "The rent! The rent! — before you know it it's here! Everything else can suffer but the rent must be paid. He isn't bashful — my landlord — (jerking spoon with emphasis) — to knock on the door ON THE DOT, ON THE FIRST and say: How do you do! I thought you'd like to get the rent off your mind. and so in a second it's off my mind and and in his pocket."

PA: (passes hand over face giggling)

UNCLE: "I would have moved a long time ago (takes a bite of bread spoonful applesauce) but it's such a bother. We have nothing . . . But when you get ready to move there's so much junk you don't know where it all comes from. And Florence is the kind, she wouldn't throw out a . . . Wait a minute Frank — I'll get

it for you! (stands up and lifts kettle from gas plate, pours in basin)
Me I don't like such a fuss made over nothing . . . this, that . . . aahh!
understand?"

PA: "I'm the same way. When Lillian — ooh, ooh AHHH! No No you didn't burn me I like it hot. The heat . . . It goes right thru you."

UNCLE: (noticing black and blue spot under knee) "Is that where you hurt yourself?"

PA: "Where didn't I hurt myself?"

UNCLE: "How'd it happen?"

PA: "I bumped myself. I'm always . . ."

HARRIET: (appearing suddenly) "Which clock is right — quarter to eight, thanks! 'scuse me Uncle I'm in a hurry to get ready Quick as I can!" (disappears)

UNCLE: (refilling the kettle) "No hot water?? — I see I see, I understand — landlord tricks, monkey business. So-a (sits down helps himself to another dish applesauce) so-a what about your work you don't say."

PA: (soaking feet has calmed him. a bit gloomy now) "Work is work . . . (lifts hands from knees and sighs) still, what's the use o'kickin' don't get you nowheres. I don't know why (appealing, fingers spread out) people hold on to life so. You eat sleep and work, and the same thing happens. Maybe it's because . . ."

UNCLE: "Did you have a busy day?"

PA: "Yeah, but I don't mind. It's better it's busy makes the time go faster. Like a lotta things in life you get used to it without knowing what it's doing to you."

UNCLE: "What then??"

PA: "It's NOT ENOUGH. They expect you to KILL YOURSELF, and for what they pay . . . and you're never doing enough. And heads — all over the place buttin' in to everything they know nuttin' about. What can you do . . . (picking callous off palm of hand) everyone has a different trouble in his work — so what! you got to take the bad with the worse. YEAAHiss . . . that's the way it goes."

UNCLE: "Frank — (admonishing with finger) I told you this years ago and I'll — wait, wait — and I'll — you don't give me a chance! You can't, you can NOT, expect to get the breaks without you make up your mind EVERYbody else is gettin' theirs too. There's no . . ."

PA: "Please, Arthur! (legs moving up and down in water) You'll never get a union in a place like this account'a they're so dumb. They won't . . ."

UNCLE: "It's been done before . . . but, all right."

PA: (searches with thumbs in vest pockets, fumbles thru jacket flung over another chair, bites nails)

UNCLE: "Cigarette? — here's a piece o'chewing gum. I stopped smoking when the doctor told me to — Six months already."

PA: "No kidding! you must have a lotta self-control."

UNCLE: "I use this package of gum. He tells me this doctor of mine (Uncle's relaxed and smiling, one hand folded on the other rising and falling with his stomach) you got to cut out things if you want to go on living. Such as what, Doctor — he's a young fellah 'n' I have fun with him — coffee? all right! Tea also . . . well if you say so. Now, hah hah, he leans over and talks to me like he was my father and he says — looking me straight in the eyes er — er — serious! Not too much with the ladies not too much you understand? **THAT'S GOIN' TOO FAR — EVEN WITH MY AGE — Doctor!**"

PA: (swinging shoulders in laughter) "What — What did he say?"

UNCLE: "He was laughing."

PA: (wiping tears)

UNCLE: "Then he says you have trouble falling asleep at night I fall asleep fine! It's getting up that's the problem. You — you —"

PA: (pulling jacket over lap looking for the cigarettes) "Gum's OK with me but I only take the sweets out. Where the . . . OHH tsk, — and it's a new suit! (tip of sleeve fell in water) Say Arthur (hands jacket over while holding sleeve wringing it) what do you say — Think I threw my money out?"

UNCLE: (feeling between fingers) "Not bad. mmmNo."

PA: "They ask anything now they don't care. I know it's a piece a'junk. Prices are so high you're **BROKE** when you eat right — it keeps you broke."

UNCLE: ". . . right . . . right . . . for every penny the bosses give they want two back."

PA: "And with prices like that they got the gall to add on a tax yet!"

UNCLE: (playfully) "You don't believe in taxes?"

PA: "Arthur that's not the point! Sure — I dont' mind laying it across when there's somtin' to begin with, but this business of taking off when something should be . . . Harriet **HARRIET** how much do they take off from your pay before you come home with it? You heard, as much as that. **HOW MUCH DOES A PERSON MAKE** that they take off **THAT MUCH!** Taxes — yes — but not everytime, you should excuse me, you go to the bathroom. Rich people can afford everything else (tapping palm of one hand with back of other) **LET THEM PAY TH'TAXES!**"

UNCLE: (carefully unwrapping gum) "Don't you know, it hurts them when they think we have a piece o' bread in the mouth."

PA: "All of a sudden we've become TAXPAYERS with the millions we've got — No, No, Art'ur, thanks, I'll leave my feet on the edge here you soak 'em too long they itch you. Maybe later I'll take some hot water — such big money deals ONCE A YEAR YOU BECOME AN ACCOUNTANT. You could spend 6 months figuring out what your tax is — should be, and 6 months EASILY trying to find out WHY IT WAS TAKEN AWAY FROM YOU. That's the kind of a racket it's turned into nowadays."

UNCLE: (cheerfully) "Ps'chology, my boy, (tapping forehead) they make it so complicated and winding around PURPOSELY with an if — and a but — a suppose, making you so cloudy in the head you're only too glad to give them what they want so only they leave you alone. By that time you actually think you getting something for nothing, for your money."

PA: (one hand slaps the table, Papa's shaking gleefully) "Haw! Haw Haw! that's rich! (in the hilarity tipping over the basin of water) OOH — MY MY Lillian'll have a fit. THE MOP! — HARRIET THE MOP!"

HARRIET: (takes one look, dashes and returns with the mop) "Mamma 'll kill you for this. She just . . ."

PA: "Don't stand there DO SOMETHING DO SOMETHING" (in bare feet Papa hops around picking up newspapers from freshly-washed floor dampening spots)

HARRIET: (swishing back and forth) "Lucky for you Pop the floor isn't waxed yet!"

37. HARRIET'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT

(Papa has put on his shoes and is resting his feet on a hassock. Uncle has been "persuaded" by Mamma to have another plate of soup. Placing her chair in the middle of the room under the hanging light, she is now sewing the corner of a ripped pocket in Papa's overcoat while relating what happened to her this very morning)

MA: "You should have heard the way she carried on today."

PA: "Who — who?"

MA: "The woman beneath us!"

PA: "I don't like it! I DON'T LIKE IT you should fight with neighbors."

MA: "She'll be sorry she started up with me. HOW WAS I TO KNOW she had her bedding out on the windder? She has . . ."

PA: "If I didn't tell you a hundred times I didn't tell you once IT AIN'T RIGHT TO SHAKE THE MOP OUT THE WINDOW! (the edge of one palm striking the other) Before you start — I know exactly what you're going to say 'Where am I

going to do it then?' I don't know, . . . in the toilet, . . . on a piece'a newspaper — I don't know, that's up to you."

MA: "Anyhow, she has the nerve to holler up: I'll com-plain-n to the landlord!"

PA: "She's right."

MA: "LOOK the way he sides with a stranger!"

UNCLE: (for the sake of peace) "You make a good soup, Lillian (smacking lips) wonderful."

MA: "Have some more! At least"

UNCLE: "A taste."

MA: ". . . . SOMEbody enjoys my meals around here."

(drops coat on chair, picks up pot from washtub cover, gives Uncle another helping, returns to her sewing looking sad, and sighing)

PA: "Whatsa matter, can't I express my opinion in my own house?"

MA: "It's not that, Frank . . . it's Martin."

PA: (tenderly) "Lillian . . . Lillian, you been crying enough. You won't be one day older just because you're gonna be a grandma."

MA: "It isn't that. He can hardly get along now so what's he gonna do then?"

PA: "Maybe now he'll get a little sense in his head — Maybe that's what he needs a little responsibility! Arthur (touches Uncle's knee) as true as I'm . . ."

MA: "What do you want from him Martin he's only . . ."

PA: "I want him to grow up t'be a man."

UNCLE: (quietly) "I might as well come out and say it — You baby him too much. (waving finger) I don't know but what Frank is right . . . after all, he's not a kid no more."

PA: "I try to do the right thing by my children. I done all I could for him. I brought him up school — camp — everything! nobody can say anything against me. I was always a good provider — NO?"

MA: "Who said anything!"

PA: "I remember to this day, so help me"

(FIVE YEARS BACK)

Papa: "Smart guy . . . what'll you get along on?"

Martin: (reading sports' section) "Trouble wi'me Pop I can't sit down and finish a book."

Papa: "Maybe you should learn a trade don't wanna go to school."

Martin: (sparkling) "Know any way I can make a lotta dough 'out working hard?"

Papa: "No — do you?"

Martin: "I oughta get myself into a racket . . . Easy money . . . Ha Ha Ha!"

"That's all we need, you should become a crook a gangster. DON'T LET

Papa: ME EVER HEAR YOU SAY THAT AGAIN!"

Martin: "Gee whiz, Pop, I was only joking — What do you take me for?"
 (a few silent minutes while Martin reads his newspaper)

Papa: "Martin — (passes hand over son's head) Martin, I'm speaking to you . . . Don't you want to make something of yourself? Do you want to be like me have to work like a horse all the time for a dollar? You go t'school get educated learn — Don't mix me in that wasn't so funny. I had to get out and put bread and butter on the table. All right — I haven't got the education but I can speak to anybody. But in your . . ."

Martin: "Don't worry 'bout me, I can take care myself. I got a good sense o'humor and I can take it."

Papa: (placing hand gently on Martin's shoulder) "You got to make a dollar to spend a dollar you know that. I want you to be independent, just so you make enough and you don't have to come to nobody and you don't have to be ashamed to tell your friends what you're doing. When you're broke nobody wants to know you — when you're in the chips EVERYBODY'S YOUR BEST FRIEND — Hello Hello Hello . . . you know what I am talking about?"

Martin: "You want me to seek a career and — and my future."

Papa: "Well?"

Martin: "Uncle Willie's been saying — you heard him — anybody going into television can make a fortune!"

Papa: "Is — is that what you want? If that's what you want you can take the course, I have no objection. How do you . . ."

Martin: "I don't wanta take it up."

Papa: (a heavy sigh) "I'd like to know something: Don't you know your own mind! And something else, why did you quit you had a nice part-time job in wholesale you could have learned the business, hardware, he left it. — I don't like it! (imitating with ridicule) I meet very few people in my life who are working at what they like. You got to let it come to something."

Martin: (trying to read newspaper, annoyed)

Papa: "You're not a kid no more don't know what it's all about. Why don't you go out and meet people? I DON'T WANT YOU TO READ WHEN I'M TALKIN' TO YOU! (tears paper from son's hand) AND WHIAT HAPPENED TO THE MONEY I GAVE

YOU for a haircut, isn't ashamed to go around like a Bowery person."

Martin: "Aww geel pa, leave me alone."

Papa: "Whatsa matter bigshot, you got other things on your mind? Like bumming. It's time already soon you'll be gettin' married."

Martin: "Haw haw, not me, that's a long ways off! I ain't ever gonna get married least until I make 80 – 90 dollars, least."

Papa: "It's no use to talk to you my boy, you don't want to know from nothing."

. . . . so you see, Arthur, the first girl he met – I'm not saying anything against her don't misunderstand she's a very fine little girl – but . . ."

MA: "He could have done better." (muttering as she wets end of cotton threading needle – knots with one hand)

PA: "I wanted my kids to have the things in life I never had, but – (both hands swing out) If I had my life to live over again I wouldn't make such mistakes."

UNCLE: "So . . . you'd make others."

PA: "What I raise him up for – to be a shoe store clerk? I want . . ."

UNCLE: "And what's wrong with that? you learn how –"

MA: "He ACTS as if it's beneath him."

UNCLE: " – how to handle yourself with the public."

PA: (lamenting) "I shoulda forced him to go to school."

UNCLE: "Who can say? Education and making something at it they don't seem to go together anymore. People become educated for nothing. I don't know what they learn in school nowadays."

MA: (straightening up) "HOW could you tear a pocket sol?"

PA: "It caught on to somethin'."

MA: "Y'so nervous you don't know what's happening to you. I'm always afraid . . ."

HARRIET: (entering room, all spiffed up eyes shining) "Mamma look! You like it?" (twirling around to show dress just ironed)

MA: "It came out good-d."

UNCLE: "Mmm – mm! You look like a picture."

HARRIET: "Uncle Arthur – you're flattering me!"

UNCLE: "NO! NO! The other day I even dreamnt of you."

HARRIET: "G'wan!"

UNCLE: "I with my gold teeth and six – FIFTY YEARS saw you with a long white dress . . . I'm not kiddin' – You were like an angel!"

HARRIET: (teasing) "I'll bet you never think of me, not even once."

UNCLE: "No? — well look under my coat, on the couch over there on the couch — that's it the package with the little string on . . . Open it up! it's for you. This is for in case I don't see you for your birthday I wish . . ."

HARRIET: Uncle Arthur . . . You remembered me!"
(picks up present, a lacy blouse, by pinching at both shoulders and runs to mirror)
ISN'T IT wonderful!"

UNCLE: On you it's becoming."

HARRIET: "How did you know my size?"

UNCLE: "Mamma told me the measurements."

HARRIET: Uncle, you're a DARLING."

UNCLE: (immensely pleased) "First finding out."

HARRIET: Ooh I love this reddish brown (daintily letting lace slip thru fingers) and my bag 'll go nice with it. Mamma now I — MUST — get a new brown skirt to . . ."

UNCLE: And shoes to match."

HARRIET: "Aww, now you're making fun o'me."

MA: What's the matter with the striped one in the trunk?"

HARRIET: "I wouldn't be seen wearing it!"

MA: "All it needs is to be washed . . ."

HARRIET: "It shrinks."

MA: ". . . then give it to the cleaners!"

HARRIET: "Mamma you don't understand . . . it's all right to wear, around the house."

MA: (her eye catching a rip in a seam of Harriet's dress; motions her over) "Hold still — I got a needle in my hand. (with an experienced stitch or two the seam is tightened. To uncle —) Nowadays they don't care — They don't want to know. They're not interested in wearing it more than twice then throwing it away."

HARRIET: (quarreling) "It lasted me for almost a year what — Besides! I don't see why I can't have . . ."

MA: "What do you think I am made from money? (back of hands on sides) It's all right, you can wear the grey skirt it wouldn't hurt. — How can I? Where am I going to get the money? f'this — that, explain that to me."

PA: "That's enough — (banging slap on table) — I work hard all day and when I come home at night I want a little peace and quiet."

MA: (picks up a dish rag and wipes the crumbs off the table)

HARRIET: (patting perfume under ears) "Mamma . . . did you know Mr. Fields he was taken to the hospital."

MA: "Mr. Fields below us?"

HARRIET: "Yes, yes, they say he's quite bad."

MA: "How do . . ."

HARRIET: "I met Elsie (this neighbor's 5-year-old) she was standin' on the corner so I took her across — he got an attack appendicitis."

MA: "Hhhahhh . . . I met him in the stairs yesterday SAID HE WASN'T FEELIN' TOO GOOD but I never attached no importance to it. His poor wife — such a young person — Everyone has their troubles."

PA: "I thought you were mad on her."

MA: "SHUT UP! I'll positively go in to see her tomorrow. God in heaven (hands clasped) poor thing . . . from morning to night her boys, with Elsie, keep her on the go she says, only at night when they're all sleepin' does she get some rest."

UNCLE: "That's the way it is with . . ."

HARRIET: "Darn it!" (drops perfume bottle in sink, bottle breaking)

MA: "Dopey — Why don't you watch what you're doin'! mm-Phew-w! it smells up the whole place."

HARRIET: "I'm sorry Mom — Well, I guess I'm going."

PA: (waving arm to glass in sink, and ironing board still standing in next room. Papa's displeased)

HARRIET: "I'm a half-a-hour late already!"

MA: "Go! Go! whose stopping you. I'm only the mother — the old mother! Let her do the work . . . the cleaning up . . . the straightening out —"

HARRIET: "I'll make it up to you, Mamma." (kisses mother)

MA: "Maybe you forgot you were supposed to stay home tonight help me with the curtains. A girl shouldn't stay . . ."

HARRIET: "I will — I will Saturday."

MA: ". . . home one night a week? Look how skinny she's becoming — (to father) her dresses used t'be too short for her and Now they're so long. — Don't you think it's time you stood home one night and got acquainted with your family?"

PA: "Goodbye darling, take care of yourself, and-err, — not too late."

UNCLE: "Come up some time when you're in the neighborhood . . . Enjoy yourself — Goodbye, goodbye!" (Harriet closes door)

MA: "Ohh, I forgot to ask her to take the garbage down."

PA: "The dumbwaiter's broke?"

MA: "Filled up."

UNCLE: "Leave it leave it I'll take it down with me when I go."

MA: (bends to look at wet papers beside pail) "That's funny — I coulda sworn I left them there on the floor."

PA: "I picked them up — Isn't very nice in company."
MA: "Well all right . . . and Arthur if you don't mind you can leave the empty can behind the steps."

XI. ALIVE IN LABORLAND

38. ALIVE IN LABORLAND

From every worker's home — recruits for Laborland
And none are too old, and none are too young,
to join this world-wide band.
Getting along — Along — ALONG
Getting Along in the Homeland of the People Righting Wrong.
Oh joyous joy! Oh greatness of it all!
Oh grandness of the struggling people when at last —
The bastard Billionaires shall fall!

oh happiness-s is linked
with sorrow
we dance today and weep
tomorrow
the two are ONE like laughing
thru one's tears
the two are one like strength
thru struggling years.
oh happiness, for workers
what is the thing
except to strain and sweat
for what's coming
a life lost, if lost, is thereby
found
if to the world's upswelling future
it is forever bound.

Preparin' for the future
It's a favorite with me
Rippin' out the happy notes
For the days that gonna be!

In every village, town, and habitation
The landlords, bosses, politicians
are our ruination

So why — why wouldn't it be nice
To crunch them out of existence
like blood-sucking lice!

When you have a complaint to make,
do you ever get any satisfaction
Without you have to make a fuss, — and
create a scene, — and fall into a
convulsion?

What kind of a world is this, BECAUSE
WE'RE WORKERS we're not entitled
to respect and consideration —
BECAUSE We're Workers we don't DARE
expect what's wrong will be righted?
And if we do we're a "threat . . . a
disgrace to the nation"!

What kind of an IDIOT must one be to believe
Such a phony accusation?

The whole world will be Laborland
— just you wait and see
From the tip of South America to the
stretch of Arctic Sea
From Hong Kong to Budapest, St. Paul
to Bombay . . .
Did you really think we workers
wouldn't have the final say?

When a workingman complains, when a
workingman grumbles and growls,
When a thousand thousand people for the
SAME REASON grouch and howl
'tis a holy serenade. A thunderous
though yet pin-locked, explosive
hand-grenade.

Everybody's complaint is everybody's business
In Laborland's tomorrow
And one man's troubles the concern of all
And one woman's heartache the common sorrow.
Our troubles are more or less,
sooner or later the same;
And it doesn't make a difference who you are,
Or how you spell your name —
In Laborland's tomorrow

When trouble comes nowadays
it comes to every door
And helping each other out — no
matter how good that is —
it isn't enough anymore.

each sorrow . . . each suffering . . . each failure
let it teach and transform us.
each agony of someone nearest to us dying,
each horror . . . each insult
In the Fury of our bitterest indignation
Let it stir up the people's vengeance around us!

in the future, in the future, in the near and happy future
heaven on earth there won't be of this you may be certain
BUT — can you imagine poor people IN NEED OUTSIDE the gates of plenty
in OUR OWN our Laborland??

All kinds of things that we could never dream of having
we'll have! — in the days after the days of tomorrow.
All the things that money can buy — and that peace of mind
and inside satisfaction that all the money in the world
couldn't pay and buy: A brand new experience! will be ours
in the days after the days of Tomorrow.

You don't know one day from another what's going to happen
 . . . that's how shakey things are.
In a worker's unsettled existence every step is a battle
 . . . with THINGS AS THEY ARE.
Never a day but your mind is worried about tomorrow.
Our whole self, hustling and coming, doing and running about —
 just to make a living . . . and still we're not sure of it.
Nothing else counts so taken up are we altogether with getting by
 . . . and still we're not sure of it!
And the stinging bees of Other Troubles are buzzing around
 . . . a hungry pack
So we miss out: the things we'd like to do, the things we'd like to be
 — held back from bringing out the best in us!
But put this down . . . As things are they don't have to be.
Half our troubles are BECAUSE we're poor, and the other half
Wouldn't be HALF AS BAD if there weren't any rich OR any poor
 . . . but then, this world is hardly yours and mine
 As Things Stand.

Get up! Get going! there's lots to do today
This way — Hey! Hey!
anybody can see we're here to stay.
The billion-dollar tommy cats
 think THEY'LL have their way
But for us plain folks tomorrow Won't
 be just another day.
THE OLD PEOPLE will become young again
 seeing the young ones at their play
Say! Say! OUT OF OUR WAY! This
 world belongs to me and you!

. . . When? When's the future?

a deep breadth and a sweet kiss to our exultant future
but that doesn't mean things will get done by themselves
or right away and all at once, or that we won't have to
put up with a lot especially at the beginning: F'heaven's sake
Use your common sense . . . **WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?**

We'll sit around and do no work;
The more we'll want the more we'll shirk?
Bananas will grow on apple trees;
The moon will supply us w' cottage cheese?
Right away we'll live on air
With a hundred servants — like a millionaire!

Let me tell you something: I am not talking of the candied
melted butter every-thing-will-be-all-right heavy syrup future.
I can't promise a week's vacation will follow EVERY week of work;
I NEVER said we'll all have each for himself a private yacht —
a castle-home — a country mansion!

It's simply that, in the future we'll take the future by the hand
And take charge of things **FOR OUR OWN BENEFIT** in our OWN
our Happy Land.

brown earth and green grass the world over
just like us workingpeople
amazing the nooks in which we manage
just to keep alive.

Say I know . . . our land will be
a rank and file Democracy!
Not Paradise on the good old earth
Waitin' to anoint us right from birth
but a place
where **NO MAN** will live off another
And take his luck from
the hard luck of his brother.
Where no man — no matter what —
will worry about a living, and the things
he needs, and the things he hasn't got.

Where at
last! at last! At . . . last
the World's great laws will be
lifted off the shelf:

“Bear Ye One Another's Burdens” —
“Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself!”

in the past — in the present — in the
future
How quick twice hardens into the
old defended way
AGAIN we'll have to bang out the
lesson:
Nothing is here to stay!

Happy New Birthday . . . to you
Happy New Birthday TO-O you
Happy New BIRTHDAY, friends and workers
Happy New Birthday to you.

XII. SLEEP-DREAMS

39. LET'S GO TO BED

The willing spring and mattress yielding and anxious to please
the fluffed cushions and the white pillow cases
living with but one purpose in their minds
to ease us . . . to carry us . . . to help us away to
dreamy nooks and places.

Two lives we live and sleep is the second one.
Sleep the other side of our double existence.
The world as it is: With its demands and regulations,
And the One-Night World of Trance and easy mastery!

— Her Man —

“Honey, did you set the clock it should ring? I think I’ll go lie down — you comin’ too? Gee, I wish I didn’t have to go in tomorrow — Darling! I’m tired. I want to go to bed. We’ll talk of it some other time. I could stay in bed for a year I’m so knocked out. — Shut that thing off, it’s bad enough I have to hear it in the morning. Well, you comin’?”

an empty bed
so movementless and empty
inhuman — so smoothened out
yet soft and calling
cooing as it unfolds
with love-time’s sweetest
memories.

— His Pet —

“Put out the light . . . Get closer to me and warm me up my feet are — Oooch! Get yourself warmed up first. Your feet are like ICEbergs!”

the cold splash when you first jump in
pulling the covers closer and around your back
But before you know it you’re wrapped up in a
huddled zone of warmth
a safety-zone of human-body warmth
a spot thawed out of the night-cold and
herded underneath the enveloping quilt and blankets
a fenced in temperature, an artificial summer
an easy comfortable luxuriating heated state of
pleasant being
ah-ah-ah-h! the bed is like a woman’s arms so inviting
the bed a comforting mother to us all
lean back . . . Ah-hh-h snuggle in as you pleasurably
yawningly indulgently pillow your head in sleep.

HUNGER IS OUR INHERITANCE

– To Sidney –

STEADFAST

Thru A Lifetime

HUNGER IS OUR INHERITANCE

HUNGER IS OUR INHERITANCE

1. A LOT THEY CARE

the least we can live on, even less
even that — they take away from us
us the working people; they the hiring people.
working, looking for work, eating up the best in us.
working itself — hard, forced, hateful
doing the same things over and over again . . . rushing
ruining our health
never knowing when you'll be told "GET OUT — YOU'RE FIRED"
what don't we have to do to make a living!

2. IT'S NO USE TRYING

mixed up for a minute not knowing what to do — the shock of unemployment
working hard looking for work, needing it, each door slammed in your face
"We'll let you know
"We'll keep your name on file
"Sorry, you must have experience
"Sorry, can't use you
"Sorry . . . sorry
it makes you so sore, it boils you! filling every minute of the day with worry.
trying the same places we've tried before; trying others
trying the agencies; going back again to where we used to work
IT'S NO USE!! THERE JUST AREN'T ANY JOBS that's all there's to it.

3. STILL YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING

so carefully answering an ad in the papers writing the letter a few times.
with soured-hopes trying again: smiling, bowing, flattering
sometimes acting confident and careless as if you didn't need the job
sometimes licking and begging for it, for any little bit of work
— US, do you really get the meaning of this, **US THE WORKERS** who did every
stitch of work that was ever done in the world
bending and bowing for an hour's work.

4. ONE AMONG SO MANY

you old lady, standing with me looking on the agency's scribbled bits of paper
you Mr. my own age; you girl self-conscious; you kid who never
had a chance to work in your life
come here — don't go away — it's only me, also going crazy looking for work
(in the middle of the unemployed, listening to their talk,
feeling their feelings, knowing their
desperate needs, recognizing their suffering
listening to them voice myself, their
longings mine, their heartaches mine, their
terror and torment, their anguish, mine)
again sitting doing nothing hunched on the bench in the agency
all the questions answered and the spaces on the paper filled out
talking to the people next to me . . . some sighing: If I had the money now
I'd go into business
which means a day-and-night headache, a long-houred candy store, a grocery
store, peddling in the streets, anything to make a dollar on.
Waiting to be interviewed until it's too late to go any other place
a job this looking for work without getting paid for it
waiting . . . your hair gets gray hanging around . . .
these agencies! blood out of a stone during Hard Times and depression
so you got to know somebody who knows somebody to get along
or you can wish you never was born.

without a penny to our name,
without a penny in the house
seeing winter coming on, seeing nothing but a black shadow – the future, blind
and uncertain. asking themselves
 what are we going to do?
 what's going to happen to us?
 how are we going to live?
the little brown bag of groceries, the money for the rent, the price of
 clothes . . . where is all this coming from?

9. THE FIRST SURE SIGNS

doing everything yourself washing, sewing, cleaning, cooking giving nothing out
cutting down on breakfasts, lunches, movies, sweets and smokes
the little things you never took notice of how swiftly they wear out
 soap, matches, toothpaste, powder
 shaving cream and blades
 even a needle, a shoe lace,
 how quickly used up now!
reasoning oneself into eating less
still, a little something to stuff between the teeth
stirring the oatmeal – in me stirring anger and revolt
grumbling, growling, losing self-respect – confidence slipping
 Trapped! . . .
 Beaten! . . . helplessly beaten
 Alone and by yourself

10. FEARFUL NIGHTS

in the night, in the darkened room, the hunted look
rolling around creaking the bedspring
how impossible to fall asleep
thinking. thinking. what can we do?
beating in his mind – I've got to find some work!
any work, any job, anything
never falling asleep without bitterness in his heart
hatred in his biting lips.

11. A FRIGHTFUL DREAM

eviction notices. the outrageous
power to evict!
. the creeping beast low on his heavy stomach, panting
closing in terrifying
ready to tear-away some workers from their simple homes
rip out the furniture disembowel it on the streets
claw and pull apart heartbroken families
sinking long teeth into their troubled lives.

12. WAKING UP THINKING OF THEM

the children of the unemployed – what about them?
the older ones leaving school and out to look for work
some leaving home for good, leaving a note – “Don’t worry, Pa and Ma,
I’ll take care and write.”
the younger ones needing things, always needing shoes and clothes
spending money too
unable to give even the tinier kids what they need and want,
and they don’t want to know
– It’s **WRONG** I tell you, and I mean it! **WRONG**
And So Unnecessary!
(the marriages avoided; the marriages destroyed; the childless couples
the broken families; the children shuttled from aunts to uncles,
from cousins to Granny
the homeless people; the youngsters on the road – **SO UNNECESSARY**)

13. ALL DAY LONG IT BURNS YOU

all this happening (think this over, please!) in Times
overstuffed with the world’s goods
packed-in, filled-up – all it can hold!
enough for each and every one of us, and more left over
PILES OF UNUSED THINGS which we so badly need and which
they keep away from us
answer, you big-money guys, answer this!
– How is it when we’re so in need
so much of what we need **EXISTS!!**

every tiny peanut squirming in those sloppy burlap bags
even a speck of salt
IS US, IS PART OF US, YEARS OF OUR LIVES WORN
INTO IT, SORE MUSCLES, SORE EYES, CRAMPED ACHES
AND PAINS, LIVES LOST AND CRIPPLED – STAMPED INTO
THESE THINGS SHOWING, PROVING THEY BELONG TO US
AND DEMANDING TO BE TAKEN BACK BY US
ALL THAT WE SPOKE OF

15. THE UNEMPLOYED MAN'S FAMILY

What a beautiful day! warming and satisfying
the sun's heat softly clinging to the chill in the air
. . . . this is the worker's family approaching
the mother looking back to see if everything's all right
the oldest one lingering to play with something
the next holding on to the carriage
the baby kicking up its feet playing with a shopping bag
the father – out looking for work
the Ghost of Unemployment sneaking around them.

16. THINGS ARE GETTING WORSE

First it was the Unemployment Insurance – a great help while it lasted
then it was their saving bit by bit thrown to the phantom
using it up slowly – but using it up – finally the book stamped CANCELLED
asking themselves a simple question, “What was the use of saving . . .
carefully putting away a dollar or two . . . just to see it go?”
next, giving up their life insurance getting what they can on it.
next, owing everybody, including neighbors and relatives storekeepers and friends
the wife excusing herself (they owe so much already) “My husband expects work soon
next week most likely.”
again the landlord knocking at the door: it's 4 months now since they paid the rent
thinking of moving in with their parents; staying with a friend
maybe living together with the people in the front
should they take in somebody – should they move to cheaper rooms
couldn't they do with TWO ROOMS when what they need is FIVE?

17. A LAST STRAW

standing in the pawnshop doorway, between those overstuffed windows, hesitating
— then standing there again, stunned and so unhappy, a slip of paper in one hand
an open pocketbook in the other
a dollar and a quarter — hocked . . . HER WEDDING RING
many times before something's been wrapped up well (it's nobody's business)
piece by piece; the suit, the overcoat, the watch her husband's mother gave him for a present
the engagement ring, the fur piece but never — this
slipping it off gay and careless-like, smiling
making believe it really didn't matter
just another ticket added to the pile behind the picture on the shelf.

18. A WAY OUT

Step! Step! Step! I hear the jobless DEMONSTRATING
For their demands . . . Signs raised high
Not for nothing has experience shown them
It's of no use to beg or cry!

Step! Step! Step! I hear our people SHOUTING
MARCH TOGETHER! . . . those working and the unemployed
Nor can they stop our numbers from increasing
Once we've learned — How stupid to sit alone and sigh!

19. DESPERATE AS MONTHS GO BY

yesterday the man came and turned off the electric
now they're going to shut the gas
. . . it's kerosene or candles now, or going to bed.

after paying for 17 months, and sometimes it was hard to pay
they came and took the furniture back
. . . and it was almost paid.
the second-hand furniture man coming up to look at what's left over
bargaining with him
the couch, the dresser, — would he take that chest of drawers
and how much for that bed in the middle room
3 dollars . . . when it cost you 29?

this — the family living off themselves; wanting so
to get along without coming to anybody; selling
selling anything that can be sold
. . . sitting in the kitchen, thinking
how will our kitchen look without a table and those chairs?!

20. GOT TO KEEP GOING

getting along without working; somehow, staying off Relief
looking around the house. things worn out. used too much
. . . take a look at those curtains!

ashamed to be seen in such clothes. wearing
what other people throw away
gifts from friends and relatives
always the winter! gloves coats heavy underwear;
and always, shirts shoes socks and ties
and dresses, — and stockings, — and skirts
winter, it's here again
. . . already we owe them 14.50 for the coal.

buying what lasts the longest, fills you up the most
the cheapest and stuffiest
buying only that which eats itself up slowly
knowing every time you eat you're eating money
how hard it is — to sit down to a meal when
you're not sure
where the next is coming from
. . . always in the shadow of the empty ice-box.

21. READY TO GIVE UP

giving up not saying a word tired of talking things over
hating to wake up in the morning nothing to look forward to no plans no hopes
with a face that says the way I feel now I don't care what happens
feeling so sorry for yourself, to tell the truth, feeling defeated
or else — kidding yourself: what's the use of kicking; that's the way it goes
some people just haven't got the luck
besides it might be worse

24. LITTLE EXPENSES

walking up the steps so tired with himself
opening the door the wife already knowing
cheering him up telling him not to be so downhearted
 something's sure to turn up wait and see
or (not knowing better) hinting, or just plain saying
"My God! you should have found SOMETHING by this time!"
downstairs in the morning waiting for the letter carrier
waiting and thinking things over: who'd ever believe
searching for a job takes so much money
 carfare
 calling up
 eating out
 stamps
 newspapers
 looking nice —
 keeping up your appearance
yes . . . looking for work costs plenty as every unemployed person knows
so troubled. it's getting on his nerves

25. THE UNEMPLOYED GUY GETS A BREAK

(so many of us working and not working; making a couple of dollars here, a dribblet there
now and then. part-time. temporary
someone forever promising us steady work: but who can live
 on promised work!)

Once bringing in a full week's wages planning to do a hundred things with it
Not knowing what to spend for first and not wanting to spend a penny of it
How he has longed for this moment . . . rushing on the way home feeling good inside
Now they'll pay back what they owe, buy new furniture, buy new clothes
Even save a little each week starting all over again
Stopping only for a minute to buy something, a present, some treats — to surprise them
 (the family)
 splurging on a four and a half pound chocolate layer cake.
(it's crazy spending for it! . . . foolish . . . impractical)

it's EXTRAVAGANT!!

he knows it so what

it's so long since he could let himself go and it's so hard to keep yourself back)

LOOK AT HIS EYES light up as he struggles with all those packages and bundles

Already he sees his wife, his children, his boys, girls

Dancing and jumping around him

Tumbling things from his hands hurrying to open them up;

His wife shaking her head saying "Oh, Tom, you shouldn't have done it"

So happy now she's beginning to cry.

Already he sees himself breaking into the house yelling loud for everybody to hear

"We're celebrating! To-night, we're celebrating!"

And a minute later waving money in the air . . . dollar bills

Still shouting . . . we're celebrating To-night! Celebrating!

(but for how long?

a couple of weeks – a couple of months – a year

the same thing all over again

laid-off)

26. WORKING WIVES AND MOTIERS

just when they're beginning to get along . . . this had to happen

pregnant . . .two months

not that it wouldn't make them happy if they could afford it; but this time

the wife putting her foot down, complaining

having a child is one thing; bringing it up another.

she remembers having to look for work, leaving the kids with anybody

or with no one to look after them

warning them: "Be careful, do you hear me, be careful crossing the street"

worried all the time hoping nothing's happened to them.

she remembers what a time she had keeping the children looking nice yet

seeing them so neglected

doing her best to manage – to keep things going

washing a few things, ironing, cleaning up the house

getting breakfasts ready, hurrying with the lunches, coming home to cook the supper:

just the family cook . . . seven days a week!

only the housewife . . . so many things to do, never the time to do it!

only the mother . . . needed in her own home every minute!

forced to get out and look for work.
she remembers once coming home finding her boy
hackling and coughing . . . and with a temperature
with her children like with herself, getting sick and getting worse
the whole family self-curing themselves.
(to see those who mean so much to us, sick and in trouble
we unable to help them
sudden . . . hurt laughter
what is so bitter as bitter laughter!)
wanting her children to have the best of everything
wanting them to have the chance in life she and her husband didn't have
giving them what she can even if they (the parents) have to do without:
the woman working and looking for work
the woman whose husband is out of a job
the woman whose husband never makes enough
these people — who can't afford to have another baby . . . figuring out ^{how} much time left
struggling to make up their minds: to have it
or have it done away with?

27. THERE'LL BE AN AN END TO THIS

from enormous millions of working-women's loins
working sons and daughters . . .
hard working people swarming the earth, taking possession
claiming all that exists as their own
growing in strength— unbeatable in power!

28. FOR CERTAIN

short, short a worker's life;
but long and resistless the workers' destiny.

THE END

OTHER STEPS ALONG THE WAY

(some smaller poems)

STRUGGLING PEOPLE

For what has your heart cried most! —
It is my religion for me . . .
For when the people's tears are falling
They're falling warm on me.

For what have you anguished yourself with yearning:
It is my belief thru and thru!
For only in the life of the hard-worked people
Can my own aims strike it true.

For what have your hands clung in bitterest need!
For what have your eyes looked in dread and sorrow . . .
For what have you wished and prayed for —
 hoping for salvation
Can only be yours if yours is a people's nation.

ONE BIG FAMILY

Neighbors . . . friends . . . friends let us be
ONE for all and ALL for one
in Labor's Wide Humanity.

Say Hello-o . . . what'a you know . . .
 He's a good man too
He's NOT like us and we're DIFFERENT than him
But he's still a man and a workingm'n.

Neighbors . . . friends . . . friends let us be
EACH for all and ALL FOR EACH
That LOFTY GOAL WE'LL SOMEDAY REACH.

To All What Must Be

He Dares To Learn

With hands tied, I watched death
pick up the dead leaves, and
Dying men. He was as silent as an
unuttered grief, and I
Was as calm as those who pass away
in sleep. I stood up, and
death laid me low
And vanished. I can not help complain.
I do not know from where I
come, and I go
Outbound to a nowhere.

cold winter, two in the morning.

a cloud of gloom a dark, dark night
hides all in terrible sorrow
the winds, hear the somber sighing
never ceasing, — weeping, — crying
tearful wooing in the darkness.
by the window peering outward — How
the solemn hours disarm me,
dismal and brooding in their quietness.

Now — with each scarred moment
an effort
Now — with condition's weight-knee
hard
dug
in me
Now with a lash of
sunk
despair
cut and beaten
Now!
Even now —

Unexplained things
Of the world
About me
I take on your challenges!
What if
in the wake of years I'm
flung
torn
and gasping
a fluttering wing crushed
an anguished worker silenced
I'll strut my steps
thru any gait
of curse
or benediction.

A NEIGHBOR'S HOME

Every Home I enter
Every door I cross
Fears and hardships greet me
Disappointments, bitter loss.

How Little one can do
For a troubled, heart-sick brother
Yet JUST THAT MUCH may be enough
To uphold a soul entrapped in horror.

Too often you've heard it said:
Difficulties?? they make the home
Oilcloth on the floors, cooking range
Are as nothing taken alone.

That an ironing board, curtains, dishes
And nights slept in a bed
Will never by themselves build up a home
Until Lives are here stabbed and crushed and bled

Have no fear
Despite what anyone can do
The painted papered walls below every roof
Are Made to echo back the heartaches old and new.

Rooms HAUNT when long lived in
Holding dear our private pains or cherished glories
So Close a part of our life
Reverberates in all their long-remembered stories.

The shelter of a home — any home —
Hides broken lives, loneliness, disaster
From all sides problems paw the ground snorting
Ride now, or we'll trod you under that much fast

Quietly then approach
Cross gently thru a neighbor's door
For this may be the last time
He extends his hand, and then no more.

WHISKERS

The beginnings of my whiskers upprickling themselves —
already . . . and I just finished shaving
Profusive hairy grassy growth Spring-budding all year round
Darkening the sides of my face and the boney hills and sunken valleys.
Bristling from ear to ear and around the mouth
Absolutely indifferent to human affairs!
For otherwise — wouldn't it switch to the top of my knobby head and
assist the few befringing hairs?
All right, I give up, no more to have the smooth-face babie-touch softy
irresistance
But it won't work! not really, for a beard has its time and place
So enough of that grumping, He-goats, lather up today and razor-blade
that scratchy sprouting whiskered face.

GOT T'TAKE IT AND LIKE IT

When I was a boy — when I was a boy —
Tough times they played around me.
Now I'm a man— hell, god damn
Troubles got me in a jamn.
When I am old it will be told:
The Good Old Times they just ain't here!
— Not for me this faking tear. Hard Knocks
Let them be my good time cheer.

THE PEOPLE'S OLDEST LESSON

Above all else. . . stand by
each other . . .
Closer to ourselves than
to a father or mother.
And no matter how many times
we've heard this said before:
The old familiar lesson — Unity!
No decent person dares ignore.

THE EMPTY CANVAS

Come, break this space
That glares so ghastly
 into one's face!
Come, pregnant paint,
 design! create!
New forms — new life —
 satiatel —
The awed . . . the inspired . . .
The enraged . . . the aroused;
The sweet-scented feelings
And all the enravished
 unfoldings of a
Seething true-born artist!

THOSE CHANGING SKIES

New skies! I claim you unrepeated.
The morning suns crash night-sky
The evenings bulk-colored, vehement
Watch night drain the tinted day
And leave a soothed fabric
Where regain the skies I've seen?
Clouds swelled to lift the unframed canopy
What reckless shapes! How transcribe! Retain
Wild extravagance of smoldering colors
On fire across skies without name!

STRIVING

More than ever
 more than
 ever
Plain as it will ever be
 since my visions
 must
 rise
 high
higher still myself
 must be

THE RULES OF THE GAME

There are laws in this pirate-jungle —
And as laws they must be obeyed:
 If you're finding it hard to carry on
 Ten times hard for you it's made!

If you're naturally honest, and generous too —
And human beings count with you:
 A cloud of suspicion is sprayed at your face
 By those who have accepted the Money-Grubbing pace.

The Big Boys have faked — double-crossed — and lied
Because you can only tell the TRUTH when the Truth is on your side.

WHAT IS IT ALL THIS UNIVERSE?

loud within me forever rumbling how this abode and all its doings?
 the laws and tones that bind our home how baffling to my musings
 in every age — in every clime — men drove their thoughts expounding
 and found the world's endowed profusion slow-revealing to their findings

among the schemes that brim with learning
 among millions bound with need and
 ominously yearning, I peer and strain and try hard
 for sum-volume understanding

CHILDREN, YELL IT OUT!

WE ARE, the daring pioneers
WE ARE, the kids with punch and fight
We mean to get a children's Paradise
Right here! where we can get our rights.

No more, to school without our breakfasts
No more, to school without our lunch
We want our bellies filled with good food
Right now! or we will start to punch.

— Chorus —

We're going to fight, hurrah!
We're going to fight, hurrah!
Boys and girls of every state
This is one time we'll be late
Let the school bells ring their heads off
Hah! Hah! Hah!

We're tired, of wearing next to nothing
We're tired, of wearing rags for clothes
We want our bodies dressed completely
All times! or we will come to blows.

We know, that in the Land of Riches
The children don't get the best there is
We know, we'll make the big-shots give us
All things! if everyone does this:

— Chorus —

We're going to fight, hurrah! . . . etc.

SWEETHEARTS ALL THESE YEARS

When HEARTaches with SADNESS
fills-my-eyes with oVERflow
That's when I know that I can place
my head along yours in lovingkindness so.

Or down At the Knees of an
over, powering love
Lose myself Sweetheart at those
glances above . . .

And-with-my-face ALIGHT with
eyes that a-A-dore
Hide all the Fear-for-you in a world
so fear, fully sore.

LovING YOU EXTENDS its arms around
to one and ALL . . .
And so DRAWS FROM MY HEART
all bitterness and gall

Stay close to me dearEST never —
leave-me-Now
EnFOLDED in my arms let this, Consuming
kiss
Once more be our lifelong vow!

ALL THE SORROWS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

MOAN ALL the laborers' sighs together; human grief
a song, surrounds us
look how in the mournful singing kinship is renewed around us.
Strewn along the earth cling groups of habitations; need one be told wounds abound within their
toiling members?
from the womb unto the tomb in weariness and agitation.
One must know that mutual sorrows comrades thru the world will make us.

ME AND THE WIFE SURROUNDED BY A WORLD

I reiterate what knocks (insistent) within. wife, me anchored to no particular. our hobby: to encroach
throughout! everywhere.
Given to inquiry, here is our technique: sniff, knit brow, connect, talk things over, extract. — in the mean-
time enjoying the carnival immensely.
Very, very much to apprehend! Two organisms thrust into a warehouse stowed with marvels we seek
world (lifewide) understanding, explanation.

GERT AND ME AT TWENTY-ONE

Me and Gert, suddenly aware we live, having many years to front, warbling tribute to the power and
growth of the days we're hardening in.
Me and Gert discoursing: 1. war 2. the union plans 3. the marriage-craft 4. job, re-
muneration 5. much more.
Me. Gert, voyaging! cruising around a bit. cushioning and bumping our lot as one, together.
unused to the tricks of bosses. (seedlings) juvenile!
Me. Gert, acclaiming (rewooing) our unbeatable love
which makes less harsh the procedure of living. taking all life as our child and unable to give it a name.
stimulating each other. enlarging. inter-
changing whatever us two underwent. ourselves two workers wronged with every worker's troubles.
disowned. denied.
Nevertheless
Gert and me, rejoicing! equipped with ripening mechanisms functioning accurately.
sitting down to eat, each separate meal picnic. our minds (a sausage) crammed with all meats.
enthralled fulfilled in Youth Time Matrimony!

THEY'LL GET AROUND TO IT

no job join the army! War's their last cure for us unemployed.
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE they seem to say if you're dead AND UNEMPLOYED
They who were so loud about balancing budgets
suddenly pulling out HIDDEN BILLIONS to kill and get us killed.
To which, there's only one thing we can say
IF WE'RE GOOD ENOUGH TO FIGHT WE'RE GOOD ENOUGH TO BE GIVEN JOBS
if there's SO MUCH for wars there's PLENTY FOR THE UNEMPLOYED.
. . . and in the end, this: How soon before the armies of soldiers
reenlist in the Army of the Unemployed?

IT'S BOUND TO BE

ONE humanity in all its splits and variety
No poor! no rich! no slums! no "society."
One empire — The Earth — a boundless nation
With all the living people mothering its creation.

One world: the welcome mats at every country's doors
No hatred feelings whipped for Super-atom wars.
One peace — unbroken — for countless ages
And mass-killings only the horrors of by-gone pages.

To each his purpose — Fulfill it! and to me an ideal was given
That each for the Good of All be privileged to be driven.
Born to live — and born to die
And born to the sacrifices demanded of you and I.

II.

Oh! when summer marries the ever-young earth what a
trousseau it brings to the world,
Even So inspiring are the people striking back beneath
banners of Justice and Liberty unfurled!
Remember — they've put us in our place — eat, sleep
work and pray
Submit cheerfully, While they use violence against any
who won't let them have it all their way.

A thousand times to the breaking point but unbroken!
enduring the test . . .
For Freedom's Cause ridiculed — beaten — tortured and tormented
. . . but holding out inspiring the rest!
Oh, when is courage so manly as in a despairing position?
When is loyalty so genuine as in the face of a ruthless opposition?

Never — never! — persecuted worker think you're forsaken and alone
Your scorching hatred and defiance has made its mark among those with
lesser tasks at home!
And whenever I falter, stop, hesitate, afraid
Restore me by your stalwartness and by the sacrifices you
so firmly made!

III.

Up, the average people, helping to right what's wrong!
the Fight's begun
For the greatest good Of the greatest number In the longest run.
Hold out! — If you can't be outspoken be sly —

Stand firm even if sometimes you ask yourself: Is it worth it?
and Why should it be I?

Enough — enough people are ground-under to make it worth your while
Stand like one together!
True to ourselves and True to our aims in the Hope of humankind forever!
To live is to take your turn — at your post, resolved to play a part
For how would it be while others fall you do nothing thru fear and
trembling in your heart?

Th'right to fight back, Th'right to speak up, to assemble if we so agree
Are the rights that centuries have handed down to me
And I WILL NOT have my head put in wooden locks
Everytime a new Ship of Ideas steams alongside
old schooners in the docks.

My what the human race has come up from — the ignorance
and the savagery —
Look wide and far then to be convinced of Man's perfectibility.
Step up higher when you take a view!
There are many other qualities in people (I should say so) besides
those clear to you!

Now step in closer — take this tip from me —
We humans aren't always what we seem to be
Underneath the difference Lifting up the mask
It's Only what the people need that All the People Ask.

Up with what is best for us, and down with the worst! —
The laying of the Tracks of Human Progress in our lives come first
The impassable can be conquered — the false routes again surveyed —
And the blocked trains of the finest of human possibilities flagged
thru as steel and ties are laid!

The End

