

Magdalene's dress—there in his hands—and his face—”

Some of the neighbors had heard the scream and they had come to see what was wrong.

“She's dead all right. Better call the police.”

“He killed her.” Finally I realized that Magdalene was, indeed, dead and that I was being accused of killing her.

“No, it was an accident.”

But no one wanted to hear what really had happened. The police came and took me with them. As we were leaving, I looked back and the neighbors were taking Mr. and Mrs. Minty into the house.

They told me there was a provision for the state to hire me a lawyer. I didn't want a lawyer, particularly a state one. This time I was innocent and the judge would surely believe me. After all, why should I lie? Sure, I tried to kiss her but that didn't mean I pushed her off the porch. Why should I?

The cell door clanked open and I looked up.

“Mr. Glaze? I'm your lawyer, Bill Miller.” He held out his hand but I didn't take it.

“Look, I know I'm in a jam but when I tell the judge I didn't do it—”

“Do you realize, Mr. Glaze, the jam you are in? You're accused of murder. Now, from what I know of the case already, I believe you should plead guilty and—”

“Guilty? I didn't kill Magdalene. I won't plead guilty. Aren't you even going to listen to my side?”

“Yes, yes, but you see there is a mound of evidence against you and if you plead guilty and—”

“No, I won't do that and furthermore I don't need you.”

“What do you mean you don't need me? I'm your only hope. That's what I don't understand about you punks who think you can lead a pretty girl on—”

“I only tried to kiss her—”

“Kiss her. You with lipstick all over your handkerchief?”

“Find Jean. She'll know that we never—”

“No dice. There never was a Jean. You're it. I don't know why you fellows think you can go out into society and do anything—even murder. Well, this time it's double murder. Don't tell me you didn't know she was pregnant.”

Family Picture

Mary Johnson

WHEN I grow up, I'm gonna be a witch—just like my Aunt Jenny. She's all the time tellin' us kids what witches're like. Aunt Jenny's got an apartment house and some of her boarders even moved out 'cause they said she was practicin' bein' a witch on them. When Mommy told Daddy, he just laughed and said the only thing wrong with those boarders was they couldn't spell.

Daddy never did believe Aunt Jenny was a witch. But then, he don't believe in Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny or the Tooth Fairy neither. Maybe that's 'cause he never gets no toys or eggs. He ain't got no teeth, so the Tooth Fairy can't help him much there. Well, anyway, Daddy and Aunt Jenny got into a fight last week at Aunt Jenny's birthday dinner. We'd just finished the cake and gone to the front room to get the family picture took. Aunt Jenny was in her rocker with Toby (he's our baby) on her lap. Suzy and Eddie (they're twins) were on one side of Aunt Jenny, I was on the other and Mommy and Daddy were in back. Just as the man was about to take the picture, Daddy said,

"Put that rag doll over on the couch until after the picture is taken, Susan. Where did she ever get a piece of junk like that, Mother?"

"I believe she made it, herself, out of one of your socks, Dear." Then the man told us to smile and he took the picture.

Mommy said, "Jenny, this will be the first picture you've ever had taken, won't it? There is that old oil portrait, but it's so dark."

Then Eddie asked, "How come you never had your picture took, Aunt Jenny?"

Well, course, I told him that witches never show up in a picture cause they're magic and Daddy got mad.

"There she goes again," he bellowed. "Laurie, how many times have I told you that there are no witches?"

"But Aunt Jenny's a witch, Daddy."

"Jenny, I haven't said much about telling the children all this poppycock because I never thought they would take it seriously. It looks like I was wrong. Did you know that Laurie has a whole jar full of finger nail parings? But that's not the worst. Most little boys like Eddie ride hobbyhorses. I've watched him wear out three brooms in the last month. The last straw came yesterday when I was trying to teach Toby to say Daddy. Oh, he said it all right. He spread his fingers out at me and gurgled, 'Abbdycadaddy!' Suzy's the only sensible one left and it's probably just a matter of time until she starts too. I've spoken to them and they won't pay any attention. Now I have had it, Jenny. Either you tell these children that witches are make believe or you'll have to stay away from them."

"How dull the world must be for you, Howard. You only believe what you can see. I will say this: there are things in this world of which people have no conception."

"Well, if that's your answer, get Jenny's coat, Mother, and I'll take her home."

Daddy made Aunt Jenny go home. All I could do was cry. Suzy got her dolly off the couch and Eddie asked her what the dolly's name was today (Suzy's always changin' it).

Suzy said, "Daddy." Then she asked Mommy where the sewin' basket was.

We didn't see Aunt Jenny for a whole week. Daddy was home

sick yesterday and he opened the mail when it came.

"Mother, here's the family photograph." Daddy tore the brown envelope open and he and Mommy looked at the picture.

"Look how my tweed jacket shows up. Best picture I've taken in years."

"But look, Howard. Jenny's not in it; she must have gotten up just before it was snapped."

"Well, for goodness' sake! What did she think we had a family picture taken for? Funny . . . I don't remember her getting up."

"Oh Howard, look at Toby!"

"That's funny; for a minute I thought he was SITTING IN MID AIR! THAT KID ISN'T SITTING ON ANYTHING!"

While Daddy was dialin' Aunt Jenny's number, he kept sayin', "No, no . . . it's not possible. There's no such thing . . . not possible." Daddy said all Aunt Jenny would do was cackle at him.

This mornin' I asked Daddy if he still minded if I was a witch when I grew up. He just said, "Why wait?"

NEO-PANTHEISM

Somewhere underneath the sod
A worm is digging dirt to God,
And all the fishes which now swim
Are spraying water to praise Him.

The flying birds and buzzing bees
Add contrast to the standing trees.
Thus God is in the world so calm,
. . . But where goes God when drops a bomb!

PRISCILLA THOMAS