

disappointment, when the heavy sound of a man's footsteps caused his heart to leap. Somewhat ashamed of his previous doubt, Billy silently scolded himself. Why, he should have known that his father would never lie or break a promise or do anything wrong—never.

Being full of a nameless joy and pride, Billy strode manfully beside his father, taking two steps to his father's one in order to keep pace. Although he longed to take his father's hand, fear of being thought childish restrained him. Wasn't he a part of his father's world now—the world of men and of guns? The gun in his father's hand fascinated him; it seemed to symbolize all that he wanted to know and be. And Billy knew with exultant certainty that the essence of this world would be his with the first firing of the gun. Then he would share the secret with his father and all the other men.

With his eyes Billy followed the direction of his father's pointing finger. He could barely distinguish the small, brown, furry object that was perched upon a limb of the tree. The sharp crack of the gun sounded, and the squirrel fell. Without waiting for his father Billy ran to the place where he had seen the squirrel fall. He stopped short and knelt beside the bundle of fur that lay so still on the brittle, dead leaves. Was this the secret? Was this what made his father a man? Gently Billy lifted the squirrel from the cold ground and, holding it against himself, he wept.

SHE SLEEPS NOW

She sleeps now

Silent

With a soft smile on her mouth

Which never felt the touch of redness.

Her white skin and dark hair form

Beauty upon the sheets.

Nothing disturbs the gentle curves of her

Young body

Which knew only the innocent pleasures of

Life.

She stirs not though her

Silent soul shares this grave

With one who should have died.

A living grave is neither

Silent nor Beautiful.

Only emptiness would make it thus.

But with awareness the

Void becomes Wretchedness

Writhing within and without.

—BARB RUTHERFORD