

Man

I FEEL the misery grow inside me like some malignant disease grasping and enveloping the pain. "Go away! Go away!" I whisper and shake my tortured brain to rid its thoughts. But each time, the misery returns, insidiously contaminating its surroundings.

He stands there in old and much-patched clothes, my fellow man, and I am his brother. Dejection and disillusionment emerge from his older eyes and more-patched mind. Although his world is small, his mind has run the gauntlet of humanity — crippled, diseased, dead. He is much wiser than I. Yet I weep for him.

His are the eyes of wisdom, the brain of knowledge. He tries and tries and tries, but without success. And each time he is defeated by those of little wisdom and courage. And still he tries again, and again I weep for him.

What is this force that drives him so but gives him the knowledge that he will never succeed? Surely, if it is life, it is a cruel, heartless gift. I wonder at the nature of this old man who strives with but the slightest trace of hope. I compare him with one who feeds and is bitten in return or one who gathers a broken child to his breast to heal him and is kicked by the one remaining whole limb. I weep for him.

I am this man!

— *Judy Loveless, Sc. Jr.*