

"Couldn't you make it a game?"

"How?"

"Oh, see how nice you can behave, still keeping your distance and yet not being saccharine."

"Maybe."

"Just be natural, Honey. Let things ride for awhile."

"Sort of work things out as they come?"

"That's it!"

"And the dance?"

"We'll talk to that brother of yours. How about it?"

"Oh, Dad!" My arms were about his neck and I was squeezing him hard, like a child waking from a bad dream.



## Never To Go

Lorraine Midlang

The light is a wet yellow pattern  
 Constructed on dark gray stone  
 And slants softly downward  
 Until a timid wind  
 Ruffles the rain.

My room is maple wood  
 And rose-splashed flounces  
 In carbon-copied primness  
 Like careful satisfied people  
 Who are never foolish.

I could join the lighted rain  
 And feel its impersonal coolness  
 Against bare feet and arms. . .

No . . .

I can make only smug compromise  
 In touching the windowpane,  
 Telling myself the trees show  
 The silver sides of their leaves  
 And the rain is caught on the screen  
 In a cross-stitch pattern.