

We skim along the road, changing distance to time. A straight road ahead provides a chance to relax. Everything I am aware of feels like speed. The road rushes toward me, the things at the side of the road are a long blur. The wind sweeps past my head. The road vibrations feel like a high musical tone. My mind takes on the smoothness of the motor. The center of the road blinks at me. Black white — black white — black white — black white —

Sharp curve. My mind snaps to attention. Head to the outside. Follow around, coming closer to the blinking center. The back wheels start to slide out. My muscles interpret the message from the wheel and act of their own will. My mind examines the process for flaws. Straighten the wheel slightly. A slight movement of my right foot brings a surge of extra power. The car responds. The rear wheels stay out, biting firmly into the road. We boom out of the curve.

Perfect.

Black white — black white — black white — black white —

Richard Covert, Sc. & H. Jr.



Anxiety

I HAVE THE FEELING of being dragged back from an only partially completed dream. I lie still for a long moment, then open my eyes to see who it is that I feel is in my room. Even in the dark, I can make out the person of my mother bending over me.

She leans closer as if to be certain that my eyes are now open. She speaks: “Are you awake? . . . Are you awake, Janie?”

I withdraw my hand from its cozy fold under the covers and place it on her shoulder. “Sure, mom.” And then, though this has happened before, I ask: “What’s the matter?”

She pours out the reason for her restlessness: “It’s twenty minutes after four . . . and Joey’s not home yet!”

I try to reassure her: "He'll be okay, mom. He's almost twenty-four. He can take care of himself." She will not be comforted.

I try a second approach: "Go back to bed, mom! You know how mad he gets when you wait up for him!" . . . She looks at me . . . draws her fears closer around herself, and shuffles to look out the dining room window.

I lie in bed, not fully awake. I feel guilty for having acted so indifferently towards her fears. I throw back the covers and go to join her at the window. She looks very small standing there . . . alone . . . in the dull moonlight. I speak softly to her: "He's probably all right, mom. Don't let him find us waiting up. Crawl into bed with me, and we can hear him when he comes down the walk." She says nothing, but follows me back into the bedroom.

I feel the bed quiver as she lies beside me, and I know she is all caught-up inside. I try to assure her by talking: "The roads aren't icy . . . don't worry. He would have called if something had happened."

"What if he's hurt?"

"Then somebody else would have called."

She will not be comforted. "He's never stayed out this late before."

"Well, he's been out until three-thirty. He's old enough to take care of himself . . . He wouldn't want you to worry."

"I can't help it. It's a mother's nature."

I am out of words . . . The bed continues to quiver . . . Time has stopped to rest.

A shoe scrapes on the walk outside. Our bodies stiffen as we strain our ears to hear . . . The doorknob squeaks. The door sticks, and finally opens with a groan. My brother curses it softly.

Mother sighs: "Thank God!" And I feel her relax in bed beside me.

I raise myself on my elbow and speak to her: "Go to bed now, before he sees you. Didn't I tell you he'd be all right?"

"Well . . . you never know. Something could have happened . . . Jannie? . . . You will find out why he got in so late . . . Won't you? . . . He gets mad if I ask him. *You* talk to him." I nod in agreement.

She gets up and shuffles across the hall to her room. The bed creaks as she climbs in. I hear father groan as he turns over in his sleep.

Long after I hear mother's deep breathing blend with father's in sleep, I lie awake thinking . . . Something *could* have happened. . . . The thought sickens me so that I cannot sleep . . . As I lie there, disturbed with thoughts of what might have been, the gray dawn gently breaks.

Jan Kahn, Sci. & H. Jr.



The Autumn Shepherd

Brilliant autumn creeps across the land.
 The sheep are wandering through the hills
 Stalking grass; a placid summer occupation.
 Unrestrained, they grub along worn paths
 For new fare. Gaily dipping bald faces
 into swift streams,

They avoid still pools.
 Few seek protection amid the rock —
 The bell and bleat are comforting.

As scattering leaves rustle strangely
 in the wind,

Fear possesses the meek.
 Cold nights and chill days
 Announce the coming shepherd.

Now it's time for the processional,
 Time for descent into the lowlands,
 Time for dusty flocks to feed on a multitude
 of brown grass.

How obediently the flock returns before the snow.
 The crook and the rod are so comforting.

James Sage, Sc. & H. Sr.