

know; he wasn't sure. But he needed to tell someone how heroic he'd been. How well he'd fought for so long. "I left home over a week ago," he began.

"Well, so what? I've been away from home twenty-four years. I never had a home. I'm not weeping on your shoulder."

That was different, John thought. He'd had a real home. A real mother. If it wasn't for his dad . . . "Dad . . ." he stopped.

The girl wrenched from his grasp. "What do I care about your dad? Did you put me to all this trouble just to come out here and weep all over me?"

It hurt John that she should talk like that. "She can't mean it. She doesn't know what I am. Someday she'll wish . . ."

"Of all the people I've known! You damn kid . . ." She stepped into the room, kicked off a shoe. John was standing dumbly in the doorway. "Christ, go home to momma!" She slammed the door.

John turned away slowly—thought of the bridge. He'd jump off. He'd show her. Write a note to make her sorry for what she'd done. He could imagine himself drowning—but he wouldn't do it. He had a headache. "This hole she's living in, who does she think she is?" He turned. He was going to walk past home, not go in. Just look at the house, and he wanted to walk. A long walk. Then Mom. "I better go home; she probably needs me. Maybe it's my duty . . . I should put up with Dad for Mom. Look at all she's done for me . . ."

He was walking fast, almost running . . .



AND WHY NOT

love . . . which needs some outward physical form of pain in which to express itself . . .



leering, loose-lipped laugh which left a slight smudged film on whatever it touched . . .



in the field the cornstalks stand and draw their paper shrouds around their broken necks . . .



the numbing-out, the sieving back of life in sleep . . .



theory is a cold bed-mate, particularly when it bears someone else's laundry mark.