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Shaker Chair, Christmas 1963

Joseph A. Enzweiler

Prairie Schooner, Volume 77, Number 1, Spring 2003, pp. 118-120 (Article)

Published by University of Nebraska Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/psg.2003.0010>



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Could it have been when the teacher
 began dispensing grades

 and her frowns and smiles with them?
 Poor Keats, with his lust

 for his books in a row, spines stamped
 in gold. Poor little Emilie,

 abused by Higginson. Poor little Sylvia,
 vowing she'd be happy if

 she could just get one poem in *The Atlantic*.
 Poor little me, vowing to get on

 with the work when naysayers command
 the mails and sonic booms

 shake the yard, reminding us who owns the sky,
 sadly not my fossilized trilobite.

Joseph Enzweiler

Shaker Chair

Love is cut away, of starlight
 For its own sake, and the sweet
 Gold barley in a rising moon,
 Falling in thin white curls
 Beneath his lathe. That branch

Of the ash that is woman
 Is cast aside, how she kissed him
 By the bright canal years ago.
 Where the limbs join in swirls
 Complex and dark, wife and children,
 The tender joys of meat and fruit
 On the tongue for the moment alone,
 And murder, whiskey, the old life
 Like a knot, a weakness,
 All planed off and burned for warmth.
 What remains is hard and clear,
 Four acts of faith to sit upon.
 One must look a long time,
 Across grain tightened in the sun,
 Run a hand on the fitted back,
 The stern joined seat to find
 The flaw, hidden somewhere
 By the maker, the price of being human.
 And then shadows come, and evening,
 The barley fields drunk on the wide
 Cool rain, while the chair hangs
 Silent on the wall, for the Lord
 To come and sweep the earth.

Christmas 1963

Because we wanted much that year
 And had little, because the winter phone
 For days stayed silent that would call
 Our father back to work, and he
 Kept silent too with our mother,
 Fearfully proud before us,

Because I was young that morning
 In gray light untouched on the rug
 And our gifts were so few, propped
 Along the furniture, for a second
 My heart fell, then saw how large
 They'd made the spaces between them

To take the place of less. Because
 The curtained sun rose brightly
 On our discarded paper and the things
 Themselves, these forty years,
 Have grown too small to see, the emptiness
 Measured out remains the gift,

Fills the whole room now, that whole year
 Out across the snowy lawn. Because
 A drop of shame burned quietly
 In the province of love. Because
 We had little that year and were given much.

Paul Zarzyski

Light

for Fred Lighter

He cherished the chunk of burled apple
 bucked from the trunk
 of his grandfather's oldest tree – cured,
 stored, packed, and moved it with Audubon art,
 alongside Victorian rococo, from home