

TWO POEMS

St. Joseph with the clean toenails
 And the child
 And the fake orchids.
 And we looked down and saw the ashes
 And we laughed,
 While we heard beep, beep, beep, beep.
 How long, How long?
 He's free. Can't they release her?
 And yet they give this last demon-
 stration of devotion—gently.
 They don't know what to say.
 Do you want to go down the hall?
 No, I'll turn my back.
 That's to make it easier for them.

It's the last door on the right.
 Flowers on the window sill.
 Is everything in this case?
 Everything?
 It wasn't much,
 But what about the hat?
 It folds.
 Let's put it in too, and now we can go
 And we won't be coming back
 morning, afternoon or night.
 It's the last door on the right.
 He's there.
 But he's not.

 It's all so mechanical now.
 Down the hall,
 Down the elevator,
 Down the hall,
 Wait.

Out the door,
 In the car,
 Those few short blocks,
 Knowing her pain.
 He's free at last
 But she walks slowly
 And gets dirt in her sandals.
 Fumbles for the key.
 The oppressive one to six of the
 elevator,
 Another hall,
 Two locks,
 The door is open,
 And he'll never walk through it again.

Where?

Where?

Where?

Where?

Where?

Wherever he went, a breath of fresh air
 In a world that's polluted
 With Vanity, Status, and Pride.
 An ambassador of equality to the world.
 Equality? Where, Where, Where?
 At peace and with dignity
 Slower and slower came the breaths
 Until at least he breathed no more.
 No more the breath of fresh air
 For a polluted society.
 He breathed no more, and then
 No pulse.
 And he was free at last.

—W. L. PEW, M.D.