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Juniper Tree

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Juniper Tree

Ervin Krause

Abstract

High above, where the earth has cease to be earth And is only rock and snow, High up on the mountain where the cold wind Queries and cross-examines and dooms...

"It wasn't my idea to quit school — believe me. Dad is sick, even though he's not in bed."

"I believe you, Sally. You know, it's funny. We used to be such good friends. And now — look at us."

"I guess we've grown up."

"I guess so. It's too bad."

"Well, I'll see you around, Annie."

Yesterday, I crossed the street and pretended to look the other way when I saw Sally coming. Today, we met unavoidably for a few minutes.

"Oh, hello, Sally," I barely breathed. "How are you? Did you know Dad got a new car? One of the big Chryslers."

"Oh, stop talking like a sorority girl," she spat. "You're a snob if I ever saw one."

"What's wrong with that?"

"I'll see you around, Annie."

As I watched her walk off down the street, her long dark hair whipping against the cold wind, I felt a faint sadness and a mistiness behind the eyes. All I could see were a gawky, long-legged kid of eleven and a little snub-nosed Renoir innocent walking arm and arm down a country road.

Sad it is, to have known such good days, and sad to know them gone.



Juniper tree

High above, where the earth has ceased to be earth
And is only rock and snow,

High up on the mountain where the cold wind

Queries and cross-examines and dooms,

The Juniper crouches, slender limbs tormented and bent

Till they flow with the wind,

Stands like a frail spinster

With new-washed hair dripping down her face.

What do you seek here, old hag of the mountaintop?

If you wished to break rocks

You could have gone to some less strenuous place,

Or do you lure gray eagles from the smoke-canyons

For a test of the heart?

Some have swung higher on floating, still wings,

But they have always come down again.