Pammel Court

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Abstract

A baby cries, a door slams and children shout on the next street. A distant lawnmower is interrupted by the clamor of a nearer garbage can...
“Hear 'bout the rape last night in this buildin’?”
“Yeah, guess the guy walked right into her room—
damn landlord — won’t even give ya locks fer yer doors.”
“Don’t, Mama.”
“Mama, why are you ———”
That's enough of this. Let's go back to upper Tenth and see the parade with the neat white convertibles. Just think, sixty —
No! Wait!
You crazy or something?
Through all that roar did you hear a different sound? Did you hear someone crying in the next room?
Quick, run stuff cotton in your ears.
(I did)
but I can still hear
someone

crying . . .
— Lorena Duncan, S. Jr.

Pammel Court

A BABY cries, a door slams and children shout on the next street. A distant lawnmower is interrupted by the clamor of a nearer garbage can. The mower moves again — it hesitates, stops completely, then resumes its clatter, punctuated by a few seconds silence at the end of each run.

You cannot hear the turnaround but imagine it as being a time of quick rest, the pusher wiping sweat from his face and surveying his surroundings before the next effort. The mower moves again. Now a smell of cooking moves with the late afternoon breeze and a man laughs somewhere.

A woman calls and the mower stops. The other human noises gradually die out. It’s getting dark, the school day is over, and it’s suppertime in Pammel Court.

— William Kershner, S. Jr.