Refusal to Mourn A Child’s Death As Reported In the Paper

Ervin Wolff*

*Iowa State University

Copyright ©1964 by the authors. Sketch is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress). http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/sketch
Refusal to Mourn A Child’s Death As Reported In the Paper

by Ervin Wolff

NEWARK, N. J.—“The stone fell on Alice, the stone fell on Alice,” Albert Talbot, Jr., 11, screamed.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Talbot of Cranford, planting roses Friday at the grave of the boy's grandfather in Mount Olivet cemetery, looked up confused, then horrified.

A nearby gravestone, a 500-pound rectangular block of marble topped by a byzantine cross, had tumbled over.

Frantically, Mr. Talbot and two bystanders tugged and lifted the huge stone. They recovered the crushed body of Alice Talbot, 8.

They tried to revive Alice, but police said her life apparently had been snuffed out instantly. She had not even cried out.

A family went to Mount Olivet Graveyard going, new grave seeking, and found
The grave they sought, as well as a grave more new.
They did not mind the shadow of the Cross,
Setting the roses by another cross.
Then,
(perhaps because of Easter's imminence)
The Cross once more became The Crucifix,
Fixing the child as sacrifice. The child,
Will she arise when someone moves the stone?
It happened once! But rising days are gone.
Girls, crushed in 1963, stay crushed.
It's orderly that way. One grave, one stone
Serve for two. It may even be a sign
Of days to come (the cross and stone and fall)
Of overpopulation everywhere.
Although, I hope it's done another way,
Rather than planting children where flowers ought To be.

I ask; what sound, what noise, is made
When a little child is crushed by a falling rock?