

Autobiography of the Late J. Harrison Peabody

Richard H. Jowett

WHY I am walking today I do not know and the sun bleached rain stained stones are rough against my feet but I am calling on a friend he sits in a tower and to him come men with questions come the people yes to ask him what he says what he can tell them why the people come with the questions because the people say he can tell them nothing because he sits in a tower without the world and yet the men come and ask him questions the last time I saw him there were five people with him I remember so well the last time I saw him and how the little boy with the dirty face and the corduroy jacket with a bridge in his hand asked my friend why is the bell in the church why is the bell in the steeple ringing last week and my friend told him simply "everyone is you plural" and the little boy went out and told it to the crowd gathered about the fire fed with green diamonds and they with the red feathers

in their hair repeated the marvelous incantation and did a snake dance under the window around the fire and told their children it was in the folkways but there was a gleam in the tow-head's eye and he only watched them dance and then there was the very short fat man with the red mustache and was smoking a corn-cob pipe and was eating a cake of yeast and when the fat man heard my friend tell the little boy he went out and had seventeen children by his second wife and is today the president of the anti birth control league of greater long island and the woman who was with him at the time was his first wife of the red moustache had on cigarettes and babushkas and a room full of smoke and faces that could not be discerned in the haze she divorced her husband and mixed five kinds of baking powder together invented a new dentifrice her chihuahau's picture was in the roto last sunday I am almost knocking the door down he must be out to lunch.

—and they built it quickly,
and quickly did it fall.
So with all who move too fast and sure.
For man is but a builder;
it is for the strength of time to shape
that which will endure.

Carol St. Clair