

for her. In time Ethel had accepted the security of her mother's home.

Setting the groceries down on the kitchen table, she carried the trash to the wire basket at the end of the path and stood back against the brick wall to watch the paper burn. Down the street she could see young John playing along his way home from school with his chums. Nothing would happen; she didn't have to worry about him on the side street of a small country town with people watching from their gardens and porches along the way. Nothing could happen; small towns were like that.

She leaned back against the wall with the pear blossoms frothing about her head and stretched her arms along the pattern of the limbs. The warm sun gave her a feeling of wistful laziness, and she thought of the house again and how it could be

sold. "Money these days goes so fast, though," she thought. "I really don't know where I'd go or really want to go now. Ten years ago it would have been so different. Funny, I thought it would mean so much."

The child came bounding into the garden and into her thoughts again.

"What're you doin', mom?"

"Watching the papers burn; just watching them burn."

She straightened her shoulders, stepped forward, and tossed the letter into the swirling flames, watching it curl crisp shimmering black as it burned. She pushed back a wisp of hair that curled forward around her throat, took the child by the hand and said, "Come along, son. We'll go to the shed and get the rake and shears. The place is so untidy that people will think we don't intend to stay."

INSIDE

EDNA HINTON

Outside my bedroom window there is rain
That weeps as though its heart were rent,
As though its anger broke upon the pane.

Outside, the siren of the wind, intent
Upon its dismal course, shrieks its alarm
At being bound, and dies down, spent.

Outside, the garden, that affords such charm
In brighter hours, is crushed into a broken bed
Of rot and devastation from the storm.

Inside, I stare as motionless and dead
As though the storm had been inside instead.