

the stairway.

The child watched each figure as it appeared—first, the feet; then the torso; and finally the head. Suddenly her features lighted.

“Daddy! It’s Daddy!” she shrieked.

“Yes, darling, it’s Daddy!” the woman whispered as she released the moist hand and watched the tiny figure scoot across

the tile floor and be scooped up in a massive khaki-clad arm. She stood there for an instant motionless. Then, as if she could stand still no longer, she sped forward and was enfolded in the safety of a strong, brown arm.

As I turned to leave, the high, sweet babble of “Daddy . . . Daddy . . .” drifted after me.

The Old Soldier

GEORGE FULLER

The old soldier asks very little from the world.

He fought and died

And asks only to be free

To choose his private drive,

To determine its length and breadth,

And to enforce his own speed.

And then he laughs at his own absurdity.

He fought and died and lived again

To be crucified on an antique cross of gold.

Merchants thump him playfully on the chest,

Cutting themselves where the knife came out.

He fought and died for a cloudy cause,

Preserving a merchant’s life no less than his own,

But with eager cups they take from him

His last drop, however thin, of saleable blood.

The old soldier asks very little from the world.

Nothing would seem less sane to him

Than an attempt to encompass it

With a white picket fence

Or a request to pretend to believe

That the world is enclosed by the fence and not himself.

He would rather barter in the open market

His inconsiderable power for a comfortable ivory tower.