

unusual in the fact that the driver of the car was the old man who lived in the house around the turn—the girl's father. He had been returning home and failed to see the figure dart in front of him.

Before the police got there, I noticed that Wheeler had something clutched in his hand. I opened his fingers gently: between them was a scrap of lavender material.

## The Sag

Keith Shields

**T**HE SMALL man with the dark goatee and the bald lines cutting into his hair above either temple sat alone at the round-topped table with only a lighted candle to see by.

On a piece of unlined and crumpled paper he wrote:

"Wherein lies the joy of life?

That I should hurt so?

That sunsets say more to color-blind alleycats than they do to the great bearded me?

That the guitar and the horn should win while the human voice does nothing, man, nothing?

That the flaming red billows of hair in the golden sunlight should mean less than the hard red knot of ashes sucked at the opposite end in the darkness of a damp-walled lair?

That the smell of pot should grapple with my guts while I miss the grey-river dawn scent coming in my waterfront window as cool as an angel?

But what are angels to the saintly Us? They are superfluous. They are a dime a greasy dozen.

Yet, wherein lies the joy of life?

O Headless Heaven! Lead me far and wider in my wanderings! Extinguish my sorrows in the stench of side-streets, the garbage of gurgling gutters."

The little man got up to leave the cafe, and he hung the sheet of paper with writing on it on a hook labeled "POETRY." His vacation would be over tomorrow. He would shave off the beard and say good morning everymorning to everyone he met everyday for the next fifty weeks.

Bank telling wasn't such a terrible occupation. He could always look forward to the next vacation and its two-week bender.