

to the rest of the world. He is almost happy. He thinks maybe he can hold on longer this time. But no. At five o'clock she leaves. The old man cries. She will not be back.

In the television room, a group of old people reminisce. That is all that is left for them.

"Old friends,  
Memory brushes the same years.  
Silently sharing the same fear . . ."†

. . . . .

Sean feels himself crying inside. Something is wrong. He sees his grandmother at a window—her window now. He sees her smiling, but it looks like she is sad. Sean climbs into the car and looks back once more. His grandmother is waving.

"Good-bye."

† Paul Simon, "Old Friends" (New York: Columbia Records, 1967).

### The Beads

Mario Vian

Former lives are lost,  
Always in fleeting pursuit  
Of tomorrow's goal,  
The theme which they slide upon.