

Ellwanger's only hope was to get to his cage. Felix was much quicker and he cut Ellwanger off en route to it. This time the chase was for real and not playing as always before. Now Felix had trapped his prey in a corner. Blinded by instinct and a chance for survival, Felix attacked his once loved friend. Following the traumatic event, Felix would never be the same.

## IN PUERO

Frank Werner

I lie on the rug face down, hugging the rug with my outstretched arms. It is rough and warm against my face. Mommy walks into the room. I look at her, and she looks at me for a long time. Her face is sad, and I can see tears in her eyes. Then her face turns angry—she says something, but I can't understand what she is saying. She turns around and walks back into the kitchen.

Over at the window by the door, my sister, Carol, sits in the old armchair. She sits without moving, staring out the window, watching between the blinds. Her feet are tucked under her, and her chin rests on her knees. Her long blonde hair hangs down around her shoulders and legs. The way she is sitting makes her lean so far forward, it seems she will roll out of the chair onto the floor. I turn on my back and watch her. It is funny to watch her sit so still upside down. After a while, it is hard to tell whether she is upside down, or I'm upside down, or whether the whole room is turning over and over. The sunlight from outside comes through the blinds, making shiny bright stripes across Carol's face and hair. I follow the stripes away from her face, out into the air.

The stripes seem to hang in the air above me. I can see little bits of dust whirling about, sparkling in the light. I reach my hands up to grab them, but the little bits of dust go every direction until they have disappeared. Slowly they start to sparkle again. I wait until the stripe seems full of them, then I shake my hands again and watch them scatter once more.

Mommy comes into the room again, and sits down on the sofa. I look at her face; it is sad again. She hugs her chest with her arms. Her

hands are tucked up under her arms so tightly it looks as if she has no hands. She keeps saying things. I can't hear what she is saying, but everytime she talks her lower lip moves. She sits there on the sofa and watches me play with the stripes in the air. Sitting and talking, and not making a sound.

"Daddy's home," Carol says as she jumps up from the chair and opens the door.

Mommy reaches down and picks me up. She hugs me close to her, so close that I want to get away. She looks at me as if I have hurt her. So I stand still in front of the sofa with her arms wrapped around me. Through the open door I can see Carol and Daddy as they come up the steps.

He stops in the doorway. His face seems so tired. His thin body seems to fade into the bright blue light beyond the door. Just as it seems he will disappear into that light, he steps inside.

Mommy stares at him for a long time. Then in a hard voice she says, "I hope you know, what you've done isn't legal. I wasn't there."

"Louise, you could have come downtown this morning."

"Oh yes, that's just what you would have liked for me to do, isn't it?" Daddy closes the door then asks my sister, "Where are your brothers?"

"They left," Carol says as she crawls back into the armchair.

He walks over to the chair and looks out the window, then down at her, smoothing her hair with his hand. She looks up at him and smiles. Slowly Daddy walks into the kitchen. From in there I can hear a cupboard door open, then the water splashing in the sink.

Mommy stands up and moves around the room, picking things up and putting them back down again. Her lower lip is moving, but I can't hear anything. She just keeps moving around the room. I want to move away from the sofa, but I can't. I stand and watch my mother's lip move. Her face isn't angry now, nor is it sad.

"Someone's here," my sister says.

I run over to the window to see. Out by the curb a big, white station wagon is parked. On its door is a large, round picture, but it is too far away to see the picture. It glitters of gold and silver.

A big woman steps out of the car. She looks like a policeman because she wears a dark jacket and a long, dark shirt. On her head she has a funny little cap, but I don't think she is a policeman because she doesn't have a badge or a gun.



A skinny man walks up next to the woman from in front of the car. His long, white shirt sleeves are rolled up on his arms. Together they walk up toward the house.

Daddy walks outside and the three of them stand talking on the porch. The skinny man is holding a strange jacket draped over his arm. It has long sleeves, and lots of belts that swing back and forth below his arm when he moves. He has a big pointy bump on his neck that bounces everytime he talks. The skin on his neck tightens and sags and the bump moves up and down, up and down.

I walk from the window over to Mommy, but she moves away, backing further into the room. The big woman and the skinny man step through the doorway. Daddy stays outside facing the street. The big woman smiles, her thin lips parting to show tiny white teeth as she says, "Come on now Louise, it's time to leave." Her voice makes me hate her.

"Don't call me Louise—I don't know you," Mommy shouts. Her anger makes her mouth an ugly thing.

"I hope we're not going to have any trouble," the woman says, still smiling.

The skinny man steps up beside the woman holding out the jacket with all the belts, "Are we going to need the restraint?"

"No, I don't think that will be necessary, do you Louise?" She is still smiling as she pulls a pair of handcuffs from under her jacket.

"Nooo," Mommy begins to moan, "no please, not here in front of them." Tears are running down her cheeks so fast Mommy has to shake her head to see.

"Okay Louise, let's go outside," the smile says.

The two of them each take one of my mother's arms and lead her out on the porch. Her body sags between them. Outside Mommy starts crying to Daddy. "No, Paul, please don't let them do this. Please, Paul, I'll be better, I promise." He stands looking out at the street, saying nothing. The big woman starts to put the handcuffs on my mother's wrists. I run out on the porch screaming, "Why are they arresting Mommy, why are they taking her?" Daddy grabs me as I swing and kick at them. He stops me, kneeling and holding me tight in his arms. I stand breathing hard, tears running down my face, and my jaw aching as I try to stop crying. My mother bends down to me, pressing her wet cheek on mine, "It'll be alright, don't cry." Then looking into my father's face, she says with so much hatred that my tears stop, "I hope you're pleased with yourself, that these two babies have witnessed

this." He says nothing, but stands up, resting his hands on my shoulders. Mommy stands and turns to the woman, "Okay, I'm ready—I don't care if I ever come back again."

The three of them walk out to the station wagon. The skinny man and big woman help Mommy into the back seat. Then they get into the car, start the motor, and drive away.

I stand watching down the street long after the car is out of sight. Behind me, Daddy tells me to get my things together, that I will be staying with aunt Martha for a while. But I don't move. I stand looking down the street. I can still hear the little tapping noises of the engine as it moved away from the curb.

Daddy comes out on the porch and leads me into the house—back into the bedroom that I share with my brothers and sister. He begins to take things from my drawer and puts them into a big, brown grocery sack. I stand in the middle of the room. I know I'm in my room, but I can still hear the engine as it moves from street to street, and joins other cars.

All I can think of are those last words, "I don't care if I ever come back again."