

She is Going

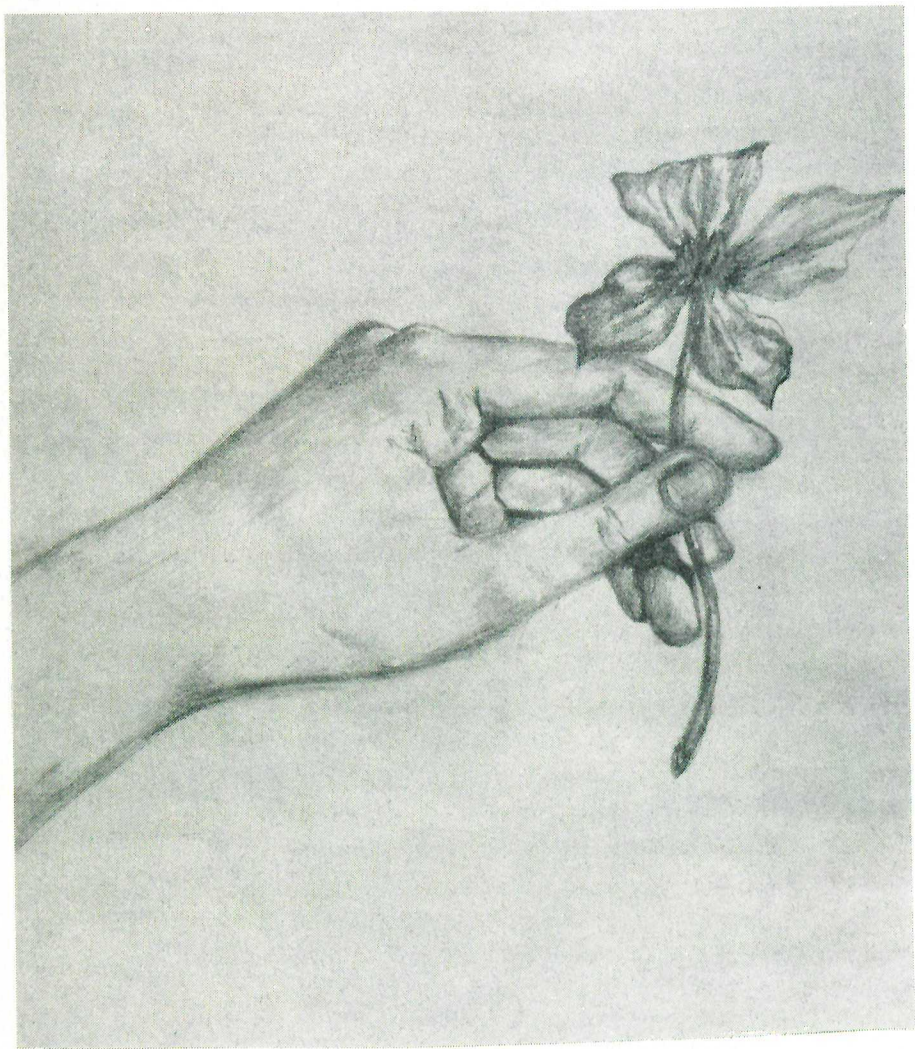
Her shrunken fingers  
cling to my steady hand as she  
stares up into my eyes  
and I wonder if she can read my mind.  
“Why not?” I think, since  
she always read my mother’s  
and my aunt’s and my uncle’s.  
Fads change with each new era but really  
every child thinks the same.  
And after all, I am only  
the tenth one to pass through her.

I wander through the years  
of biscuits and gravy, barbecue and  
homegrown corn and tomatoes to the  
catnaps and afternoon “stories” to  
all the nights of Johnny Carson. And  
I know all that has changed.  
Johnny is now Dave and I fear  
she thinks I no longer care—

I hear her reminder to “be good” and I  
am back in the sterile pre-op room where she lies  
in the tears that fell on the flowers of her surgical gown.  
She tells me she’d be ready to die  
if she only knew  
she’d lived righteously enough to make it  
through the pearly gates to the better land beyond....  
I wonder, if her perfect model and lesson to me of  
industriousness, piety, and love  
doesn’t gain God’s grace, then  
how will He judge me?  
Both Grandma and I know, though,  
I am young and have years left to live so  
*there’s no need for worry now.*

For a final moment I forget about *my* pain and focus  
on her watery, drowsy eyes. She sees my  
sympathetic, agonizing smile  
slowly frees my hand and  
slurs an “I love you”  
as I walk away.

Sarah Neal



*Fani Anagnostou*



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