

rain beat outside and the man and the woman came close. His arm encircled her waist; she laid her head on his shoulder. They stood so. He patted her shoulder blades. His lips articulated, but no word came. Then he said, "Gotta begin again — fight — you and me, Tessie."

"Yes." She stroked his arm like the hair of a child. "Yes," she half crooned, "yes, yes."

Then he straightened. He looked into her eyes. He said, "No, Tessie, leave me. You go too, Tessie."

"No," she said, "No, no, Conrad. I ain't gonna leave you." Her hands sought his. He clasped them till they ached. He stood breathing hard. Her heart ached too, swelling with something like joy. He needed her. For the first time in her life. Her children were gone. His body touched her breast, close. He was her children.

For a minute they stood so. Then he dropped her hands and went back to the table, put his pipe in his mouth, sat down and watched as the slices of bacon fell.

She turned to the yellow crock and reached for the eggs. The pan stood ready. Conrad leaned forward.

"Here!" he called, "I ain't got no appetite. I want somethin' hot, but I don't want all that food. Gimme the soup and put that stuff away. No use a-wastin' all that grub."

GREEN COAT

THIS green coat flung across the chair
Tells me this much of you —
Warm veins, quick hands, all youth to spare,
And reckless things to do.

The aged smooth their clothes and spread
Them gently, one by one,
Fold them away quite spent and dead,
Or hang them in the sun.

These empty sleeves that twist and strive,
Lines that deny repose,
Are warmer and as much alive
As some men in their clothes.

— *Hortense Flexner*

POEMS ABOUT PETER

• LYBETH BOYD BORIE •

SCISSOR-CUTS BY LIL HUMMEL

ONCE UPON A TIME

The words I like to hear the most
Are "Once Upon A Time,"
It doesn't matter what comes after
"Once Upon A Time."

I don't care if it's just that silly
"Fe, Fi, Fo, and Fum,"
Or if it ends up scoldy — "Only
Babies suck their thumb!"



I don't care if it's just about
That big old father bear
And how he said, so growly,
"Who's been sitting on my chair?"

The words I like to hear the most
Are "Once Upon A Time."
It doesn't matter what comes after
"Once Upon A Time."

And so I say it sort of slow
And sort of make it rhyme,
Just, "Once-upona-once-upona-
Once — upona — time!"