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Raking Leaves

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The citations burned well and the matter was reported to the police chief as it happened. Fat Louie was reprimanded and laid off for a week, sans pay. That's exactly what he needed, wanted, and deserved. He took the opportunity to visit his sister in Chicago.

Note to reader: So you're probably wondering what happened to Nigel and the pallets. Since it is Christmas Eve and this is a sort of fairy tale anyway, the author has decided to let him off with only a slap on the hands and his promise to not increase his BTU reserves. Excuse me, there's a clatter out on the lawn. I'd better get up and see. It's either Santa Claus or the author's typist.

Just as I suspected. He's got a red nose but it isn't Saint Nick. "So, what are you doing back so soon? I thought you were off to see the world?"

"I was. But I saw enough by the time I hit Cleveland. How's the *Pallet King* doing?"

"Real fine without you around."

"Well let me at that typing machine. I got an idea when the bus stopped in Joliet. Let's see now: a thousand dollar fine, Moons of Saturn gets expelled from school for corrupting the youth, Felicity gets arrested for practicing witchcraft without a license, and the Collins City officials decide to build a tourist lake on Nigel's property . . .

As the author's typist slumps to the floor beneath the Underwood, truth and good karma again prevail.

And if you believe that . . . ■

MOTHERS' DAY IN THE DISTRICT

Here where the piss-warm bourbon tastes its temperature
Where thighs grow thick with pork skins and rib tips
Young John Gacy makes his way

To that splendid crossing of Charles and Manson
Dreaming of young boys with big knees
Baseball cards polyester shirts runaway fathers

Litter clutters these chuck-holed streets
Where the first of every month is Mothers' day
And the Waterloo sun is falling falling
— Craig Vala

RAKING LEAVES

How good of you
To be out raking leaves old friend.
Perhaps I would have hesitated
To bring my anxiety across the threshold
Into your house.
But in the autumn air
With piles of leaves around
I could lay this burden down
And watch it disappear in smoke.
— Ann Ellsworth

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