

THE GO-BETWEEN

(Petrarchian Sonnet for the First J. N.)

Old Judson's wrinkles deepen with dull pain;
He stiffens as his eyes roll out of sight.
I tremble in his room's oblique half-light;
From corner crouch, I watch him go insane.
His body mimics death but not his brain,
For there a host of people will unite—
Great history stars, the famous erudite—
To tell him of the future, to explain.
He quotes it all to me and makes it clear.
Jud never read a book or grasped a plan,
Yet talks of wars and kingdoms like a peer,
Knows energy and space where time began.
He foretells too much truth for me to sneer
When prophets choose to speak through this old man.