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The ibis bookends  
Come from Tanzania  
To hold between their horns  
The maid Evangeline  
With Holmes and Homer,

The iridescent vase  
That plays contentedly  
With any kind of light  
Beside the maple rocker's  
Mute accommodations;

All the untongued tribes  
And clans of earth's inanimate.  
Each viridigenous race  
Of bush and plant and tree  
Speaks its silent eloquence.

In the ambition of moss,  
The forbearance of stone,  
The commodious grass  
That works with less and less;  
The root the petal sings—

There is a soul in things;  
In the cliff's scarred face  
Frozen in grimace.  
These nations of the soil,  
And all the hidden real  
That breathes invisible.

## A Summer Life

By W. F. BOLTON  
*Bridgewater*

He pumps awhile, then rakes.  
The water, golden brown,  
turns black with mud,  
and from the bottom come

the white, solid, living stones.  
He tells us "take some"—  
some of the few he's gathered  
in a morning's work.

Out here, clamming,  
he has one bare handhold  
on existence. A summer life.  
Like a climber clinging

to rock, who lugs himself  
aloft—up sheer stone—  
grinning at the sun,  
never looking down.



## Sugar Man

BY JOE BELLACERO  
*Tuckahoe, New York*



"Bronx Building  
Blows and Burns"  
— Headline, New  
York Daily News



I guess you wanna  
know the same stuff as them  
other reporter. Well, let me  
tell you, I don't have no idear how it  
began and, yes, I lost near ever'thing.  
S'that enough?

It ain't? Well, sonny, you must have  
nothin' but time to waste – comin' to  
the hospital ta lissen to a ol' lady like  
me.

Oh, go on wit' yourself! Well, thank  
you! I jest had m'hair done, always make  
me look younger.

So, what you wanna know? Oh. Okay.

It were about 2 a.m. like the papers  
say an' I was up. I ain't never been much  
for sleepin', an at 81 I figure I'll be get-  
ting' all the rest I need real soon, so I  
does with about four hour a night. Lon-  
nie was awake too, lyin' in his bed. But  
you can't hardly tell the difference with  
him. They tell me it's that Alzheimer  
disease. We usta jest call it "senile,"  
hmmm mm.

Most people in the building gots locks  
to keep them drug smokers out. I got  
'em, uh, had 'em, to keep Lonnie *in*. He  
really don't know nothin' 'bout where  
he is, but he always think he got a ap-  
pointment somewheres an' wander off  
an' get his clothes stole in the middle of  
nowheres, so I got 'im lock in now.

Poor Lonnie, my, my, my. He usta  
be...I don't know...he'uz like a god or  
somethin' to me when we first took up,  
big like he is an' strong as a bull. I usta  
think that just by touchin' 'im I could  
get me 'nough life to live forever and be  
laughin' all the way. You never seen such  
laughin' as me and him when we was  
young.

I sure miss that.

But anyways, I was up drinkin' some  
tea and waitin' for Lonnie's to cool be-  
fore I brung it to him. He always spillin'  
it, so I puts a ice cube in it an' waits 'til  
it don't burn no more.

Love his tea, Lonnie do. Like it black  
as his coffee and his woman. I gives 'im  
his tea bag and puts mine in the cup,  
too. Lotsa sugar, mm, hmm. I usta call  
'im my "Sugar Man" but...oh, you old

enough to know...I didn't jest mean the  
sugar in his tea. Lonnie...oooh...he usta  
love me 'til I was weak.

Oh well, what wrong with me? You  
don't wanna hear 'bout that.

Yeah? Well, you may be interested in  
anythin' I got ta say, but I ain't inner-  
ested in sayin' no more 'bout that.

First thing I do when the buildin'  
shook...I knew it was a explosion –  
thought it that old boiler, but they say  
it'uz a gas leak. How they know this  
stuff!?

'Scuse me, I gotta change my position  
a little. You mind liftin' that pilla a bit?  
Yeah, that jest fine. Thanks.

So, first thing I done was go for the  
keys so's I can unlock the door and I  
found 'em in the sugar jar where I keeps  
'em. But first thing Lonnie do is he jump  
up all naked in the day bed (we don't  
sleep together no more 'cause he wets)  
and he start to crowin' like a rooster.  
Crowin' an' laughin' loud as he can. An'  
I seen his, uh, "quipment" was, well, you  
know...like a man get when he excited. I  
ain't seen my Sugar Man like that since I  
don't know when.

Well, anyways, I had to get somethin'  
on him and get him outta there. I unlock  
the door an' open it a crack. They was  
smoke but no flames. I left it an' went  
back to 'im.

"Get down from there you ol' fool." I  
say. He just crow again like a rooster and  
laugh to beat Jesus.

"Come get some sugar, baby!" he yell,  
wiggling-outta his min' as usual.

I pull 'im down an' get his robe  
around 'im. Then he sorta notice the  
smoke an'...an' he begin to cry. An' he  
look me straight in the eye an'...an' he  
knew me, I swear he did! An' he say, "I  
ain't much good for nothin'. I sure ain't."

The smoke start really pourin' in an'  
the walls was like glowin' so I jest push  
'im through the door.

You could hear all sorta shoutin' and  
screamin' in the halls an' them Johnsons  
from upstairs come crawlin' by on they  
hands an' knees. Mr. Johnson up an' grab  
me an' yell in my ear, "Ya gotta get outta  
here, Mrs. K!"

He start pullin' me an' I sees Lonnie  
wanderin' the wrong way down the hall  
into the smoke an' fire like he takin' a  
stroll in the park, an', for a minute, I  
thinks it'd be a kindness to jest let him  
go, but then I yells, "Lonnie, you get over  
here. Lonnie!" and "Let me go," I say.  
"I gotta get Lonnie." But they's flames  
everywheres an' Mr. Johnson pick me

up (that's when I get these busted ribs, I  
guess) and carry me down the stairs an'  
out. An' Lonnie still in there.

Outside, they push us to a quiet  
spot and gives us oxygen and blankets  
an' someone see them bring Mrs. Vega  
down. The lady all unconscious but they  
ain't got her kids. Someone say, "You  
gotta get them kids!" but they say, "They  
ain't no kids there."

It like that all over the place. Some  
people ain't comin' out no more, people  
losin' everythin' they ever have, an' it  
don't seem like it gonna be any good  
anymore bein' alive. We all real quiet as  
we watchin' the flames an' smoke. The  
firemen keep pourin' water into it but  
it don't seem to make no difference. I  
ain't thinkin' 'bout nothin', jest watchin'  
them flames an' not thinkin'.

Then the roof start to break up an'  
it gettin' too hot to be so close, but  
everybody start yellin'. They shoutin',  
"Look, look!" An' I look an' there he is  
in the door. Lonnie got them two kids  
in his big arms like nothin' and he come  
walkin' out the door like nothin' and he  
laughin' an' he crowin' an' that little girl  
an' boy laughin' an' crowin' with 'im  
like they havin' the best time ever.

You know, for a long time I been  
thinkin', "What the matter with that  
God? Ain't he been payin' attention?  
Makin' my man keep livin' when he  
ain't no good to hisself or nobody!" But,  
well, when I seen Sugar Man with them  
two kids...it become clear as day...I jest  
knew what it all about...

Sonny, they ain't no wasted people in  
this world.

## Souvenirs

BY PAULINE M. GROCKI  
*West Chatham*



He strode onward in  
spite of the relent-  
less drizzle that  
soaked his galoshes  
and dripped off the  
oil-skin covering his cap.  
His mackintosh swung  
behind him as he'd not  
tied the belt. He left the path and  
started to cross the field that lay  
between cospes of trees. Now he  
traveled downhill, walking sideways  
to the slope and ended at a run that

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