

Consolation

by George Albert Leddy

I was tending the bar in a cheap café, my spirits were light, and my heart was gay;
I had a job and I knew I could eat, and a bed to lie on when I wanted to sleep.
When a guy shuffled in, he looked like a bum, and he threw down a quarter, and ordered a rum.
Well I'd been a bum, so it's easy to see, why I gave him a smile, and a welcome "How-dee!"

Then he looked at me with a sort-o' a grin, that showed me the place where his teeth had been.
Then his eyes seemed to fill with a luminous light, like a man who is seeing a ghost in the night.
Then he looked at me, and he called me "Lou," and my heart stood still, for at once I knew:
'Twas the lad who once I had called "my Pal"—the lad who had stolen my "Little Sall."

Then I thought of the years since I'd left my home, with a broken-heart, and to roam alone;
Cursing the traitor who'd wrecked my life—stolen my Sweetheart, to make her his Wife.
Well, the days were dark and the nights were long; the hate in my heart had become a song.
Singing to music to deaden my brain, singing to music to sharpen the pain.

I've traveled the mountains, the desert, the plain; fought through the cold, the heat, and the rain;
Slept in my bed-roll on hard frozen ground, with Coyotes and Wolverines sniffing around.
I've list'd to the Whip-poor-will calling at night, gazed at the stars as they twinkled so bright;
Listened to thunder rending the sky; but not for a moment, forget them, could I.

Then my Pal sort-o' whimpered, and dropped to the floor, as a three-hundred-pound cyclone
barged through the door.
She was rugged, and burly, her face it was red, and her hair like a haystack, stood on her head.
Well, he ducked to the corner, but she was too quick, and soon she was dragging him
out by the neck.

Though, I've found my pals, I'll continue to roam, for I am convinced:
"There's no place like home!"
