

*Jane Doe*

another one gone

a vagrant  
to you  
maybe

a street  
dweller  
hanged

suicide  
but not like  
Hemingway

no genius  
left behind

maybe  
a few children's  
books

but nothing  
else

She came to stay with us  
13 years ago  
when she was  
down and out

my father's  
biological sister

we had  
thanks-  
giving  
and  
christ-  
mas  
together

and then

she went back  
to Canada

the place  
where she  
would live  
and breed  
and die

her husband  
left out on her  
to Europe

what reason?  
who knows?  
book sales are  
always better in  
Europe

she could not feed  
her baby girl  
or her  
growing boy

and they  
took them  
away from  
her

not because  
she was a bad mother  
or because  
she had anonymous  
sex with black sailors  
or  
she let them  
cry themselves  
into oblivion  
until their  
tiny lungs  
finally gave in  
and they fell  
asleep

on  
pillows  
soaked  
in tears

but because  
she could  
not afford them

and  
then  
she couldn't  
afford herself

She called my father up

“I need money.”

\$500 bucks  
in the mail

a month goes  
and another one  
is born

she needs  
another \$500

but no dice

it's either a plane ticket  
to stay with my father  
or nothing

she chose nothing

and as  
she found herself  
on the street

away from her kids

husband

away drinking up  
that European sun

she decided  
to end it

at age 33  
and after 15 years off  
the needle  
she took one big hit  
of heroin  
and hanged herself

her sister  
filed a missing persons  
and they found her  
in the morgue  
as a Jane Doe

an unknown

a piece of work  
to an undertaker  
as a pair of pants is  
to a tailor

insignificant

a mannequin dress  
in the front window  
of Sears, Roebuck and Co.

and she looked  
so cold there  
all alone

and my father sat down  
and he cried...

no genius left behind

Oh well,  
after *Death in the Afternoon*

Hemingway  
didn't write  
anything worth  
a shit