**Chapter Eight**

**Allusion**

“Out, Out—“

She should have died hereafter

In Just-

On His Blindness

Miniver Cheevy

Leda and the Swan

Leda’s Sister and the Geese

Abraham to kill him

Life with Father

A monkey sprang down from a tree

Two brothers devised what at sight

**“Out, Out—“**

**Robert Frost**

**1874-1963**

The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard

And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,

Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.

And from there those that lifted eyes could count

Five mountain ranges one behind the other

Under the sunset far into Vermont.

And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled,

As it ran light, or had to bear a load.

And nothing happened: day was all but done.

Call it a day, I wish they might have said

To please the boy by giving him the half hour

That a boy counts so much when saved from work.

His sister stood beside him in her apron

To tell them ‘Supper.’ At the word, the saw,

As if to prove saws knew what supper meant,

Leaped out at the boy’s hand, or seemed to leap—

He must have given the hand. However it was,

Neither refused the meeting. But the hand!

The boy’s first outcry was a rueful laugh,

As he swung toward them holding up the hand

Half in appeal, but half as if to keep

The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all—

Since he was old enough to know, big boy

Doing a man’s work, though a child at heart—

He saw all spoiled. ‘Don’t let him cut my hand off—

The doctor, when he comes. Don’t let him, sister!’

So. But the hand was gone already.

The doctor put him in the dark of ether.

He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.

And then—the watcher at his pulse took fright.

No one believed. They listened at his heart.

Little—less—nothing!—and that ended it.

No more to build on there. And they, since they

Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.

**She should have died hereafter**

**William Shakespeare from *Macbeth***

**1564-1616**

She should have died hereafter;

There would have been a time for such a word.

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day

To the last syllable of recorded time,

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more: it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing

**In Just-**

**e. e. Cummings**

**1894-1962**

in Just-

spring when the world is mud-

luscious the little

lame balloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come

running from marbles and

piracies and it's

spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer

old balloonman whistles

far and wee

and bettyandisbel come dancing

from hop-scotch and jump-rope and

it's

spring

and

the

goat-footed

balloonMan whistles

far

and

wee

**On His Blindness**

**John Milton**

**1608-1674**

When I consider how my light is spent

Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,

And that one talent which is death to hide

Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present

My true account, lest he returning chide,

"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"

I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent

That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not need

Either man's work or his own gifts: who best

Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state

Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed

And post o'er land and ocean without rest:

They also serve who only stand and wait."

**Miniver Cheevy**

**Edwin Arlington Robinson**

**1869-1935**

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,

Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;

He wept that he was ever born,

And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old

When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;

The vision of a warrior bold

Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,

And dreamed, and rested from his labors;

He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,

And Priam’s neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown

That made so many a name so fragrant;

He mourned Romance, now on the town,

And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,

Albeit he had never seen one;

He would have sinned incessantly

Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace

And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;

He missed the mediæval grace

Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,

But sore annoyed was he without it;

Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,

And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,

Scratched his head and kept on thinking;

Miniver coughed, and called it fate,

And kept on drinking.

**Leda and the Swan**

**William Butler Yeats**

**1865-1939**

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still

Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed

By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,

He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push

The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?

And how can body, laid in that white rush,

But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there

The broken wall, the burning roof and tower

And Agamemnon dead.

Being so caught up,

So mastered by the brute blood of the air,

Did she put on his knowledge with his power

Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

**Leda’s Sister and the Geese**

**Katharyn Howd Machan**

**b. 1952**

All the boys always wanted her, so

it was no surprise about the swan-

man, god, whatever he was. That day

I was stuck at home, as usual, while

she got to moon around the lake

supposedly picking lilies for dye. Think I

would have let some pair of wings catch me,

bury me under the weight of the sky?

She came home whimpering, whined out

the whole story, said she was "sore afraid"

she'd got pregnant. Hunhm "Sore"

I'll bet, the size she described, and

pregnant figures: no guess who'll get

to help her with the kid, or, Hera forbid,

more than one (twins run in our damned

family). "Never you mind, dear," Mother said.

"Your sister will take on your chores."

Sure. As though I wasn't already doing

twice as many of my own. So now

I clean, I spin, I weave, I bake,

fling crusts to feed these birds I wish

to Hades every day; while she sits smug

in a wicker chair, and eats sweetmeats,

and combs and combs that ratty golden hair.

**Abraham to kill him**

**Emily Dickinson**

**1830-1886**

Abraham to kill him

Was distinctly told—

Isaac was an Urchin—

Abraham was old—

Not a hesitation—

Abraham complied—

Flattered by Obeisance

Tyranny demurred—

Isaac—to his children

Lived to tell the tale—

Moral—with a mastiff

Manners may prevail.

**Life with Father**

**Walter McDonald**

**b. 1934**

Sunday meant sleeping in,

time to pull another quilt

and hide from whiskey

in our daddy’s snoring.

Only the Sunday funnies saved us

after last night’s raving,

proof there was a demon.

under covers we traded peeks

at Maggie giving Jiggs

the devil, Dagwood

bumbling about insanely sober,

tiny Wash Tubbs with twins

he doted over. At Dawn

we folded the quilts

and funnies, crept softly

through our chores

as if in church,

soothing the fi-foe-fum

of his slumber, fearing the thrum of his boots

descending the heavy

stalk of his stupor,

fierce when he found

his dreamed gold gone

**A monkey sprang down from a tree**

**Laurence Perrine**

**1915-1995**

A monkey sprang down from a tree

And angrily cursed Charles D.

“I hold with the Bible,”

He cried. “It’s a libel

That man is descended from me!”

**Two brothers devised what at sight**

**Laurence Perrine**

**1915-1995**

Two brother devised what at sight by Laurence Perrine

Two brothers devised what at sight

Seemed a bicycle crossed with a kite

They predicted – rash pair!

It would fly through the air!

And what do you know? They were Wright!