The Angle

Volume 1974 | Issue 1 Article 8

1974

Lines

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Recommended Citation
Liddle, John H. (1974) "Lines," *The Angle*: Vol. 1974: Iss. 1, Article 8.
Available at: https://fisherpub.sjf.edu/angle/vol1974/iss1/8

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Cover Page Footnote
Appeared in the issue: 1974.

This poem is available in The Angle: https://fisherpub.sjf.edu/angle/vol1974/iss1/8

refused to believe that; she couldn't love him the way he was now. Nevertheless, letter after letter came, saying that she still loved him as much as she did before. But Gianni knew that the life he had dreamed of living with Karen could never come into being; he could not and would not commit her to a life with a cripple. He loved her too much to do that to her.

After three months of hospital they sent him back to the States and then after several months more he was released and told he could go home. But now he wanted to stay in the hospital forever. How could he face Karen half a man? The letters had stopped after he had deliberately neglected to answer them.

The train made its final turn nearing the tunnel which led to the station. He hoped and prayed that Karen would not be there to see him. Then he thought of his mother. She had written him several letters in Italian, but he had never answered. Would she be there? Or had she abandoned him too?

Outside the snow was falling lightly and he remembered the Christmas Eve of two years before, so sad, yet so happy.

There were men who like him were going home permanently disabled. They all felt lucky to have escaped death, but Gianni did not. The real lucky ones were the men in the refrigerator cars at the back of the train. At least they were relieved of the problems that he and the other men wounded would have to cope with.

The train finally stopped at the station. An attendant flung the door open, then walked toward his chair. Slowly he pushed it down the ramp, Gianni was the first one out. Crowds watched silently, as he sat waiting for someone to step forward. Then he heard someone scream and a commotion, a woman came rushing toward him, crying, shouting his name, "Gianni! Gianni!"

Gianni held out his arms and called "Mamma! Mamma!"

MYSELF

It is of myself
    the stranger
that I am
    of whom
I write these lines

And of the cryptic
    life
that lies behind
    whose impress
structures my
    very quick

And gives me
    such wearisome
puzzlement.

LINES

For him
    at one time
Even the horizon
    borrowed its line.

And the sky's
    blue bowl
Was numbly lifted
    from minds apart.

So that what he knew,
    he knew
    by other eyes.

And yet upon his life
    there lies
    the stamp of
Other quite different lines.



By John H. Liddle