

1968

## It is 5:30.

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**Abstract**

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"It is 5:30."

**Cover Page Footnote**

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The baker yawned when he handed me the change. I had bought a loaf of Italian and a brown, round loaf of light rye. It looked like a worn, old-fashioned sofa cushion.

He was friendly, and I remarked at his yawn. Running a bakery in Weedsport. I had asked for French bread; he replied, "No. Got Italian. Same thing." Then he yawned and gave me my 16 cents.

The lady in the liquor store across the street. Gray-haired, wearing a drab grey sweater, slacks, and was watching TV in the back room when I came in. No Portugese rosé. I bought a quart of concord and a fifth of Lake Country Red and left, having asked directions onto 81. Headed East with bread and wine. Twilight.

On the road at sunset, the sky was swirled in orange cirrus. On the horizon a wall of gray cloud sat, soaking up the light. I pulled onto the shoulder and got out, headed up the bank of earth toward the brush on my right. Having stepped into the tangled, dead undergrowth I pissed comfortably. The road was empty. I didn't know I had taken the wrong turn some miles back.

When night comes trees show themselves. All the delicate netting of their twigs stands black and etched against the last brightness. Like a woman standing undressed and waiting, they are most honest, most peaceful at this time. They do not care that they are austere; nor do they know. When I arrived in the city I didn't think of them any more.

RAY PAVELSKI

It is 5:30.

You walk along the sidewalks that are half-lit and drying in the wind of morning. Small branches cast lines that look like cracks in the dark cement. You smoke a pipe into the fresh, wet air, and your face is awash in the time of early morning.

Lights are on here and there in the houses where you live. People rising to brush teeth in blue taffeta robes and gray, worn wool. Scratching heads and feet that shuffle on the predawn floors, a yawn behind each of the lit windows.

On the streets you pass at perpendicular they are rectangles of light, thinner as they move on down the street, punchholes in an old computer card programmed: morning.

You go home and do the work you have to do before the day.

RAY PAVELSKI

MIKE GOODWIN Faces of direction