1974

Lines

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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.