

THE HARD WAY

Listen to the beat they play
What's the music say?
All night drinking, fighting, running;
On the beaches, naked, sunning;
Each one seeking ego's throne,
Loving self alone.
All night long the liquor flowing;
Every day the number growing
Of the innocent made tough
When they've sinned enough.
Oh, that road is rough!

This man helped the rights to grow.
Watch! His pace is slow. . .
He was on the big committee
Crying out against the city:
"Censorship is out of date!"
Now he knows, too late.
For his daughter's name was Kitty,
In the coffin. What a pity!
Murdered after being raped.
Might she have escaped?
In his hands, as he walks slowly
With a match, are books unholy
That his son had in his room:
Bars will now consume
The years before the tomb.

Hear the rhythm beating wild.
Watch! Another child. . .
Take him, put him with the others
From the mob of un-wed mothers,
While his father's taking trips,
Kissing other lips.
All this time the music smothers
Every moral in these brothers,
Brothers on their way to Hell.
There will they rebel?
Or only scream and yell. . . .

This young girl is shedding tears—
Suicide brings fears.
Mom and Dad were always bitter.
She was just “the baby-sitter.”
Then she cursed and ran away
To a life of play!
But how soon it lost its glitter.
He who promised much had quit her,
When she told him what had come. . .
Now her world grows numb:
She passes from the slum.

This man has to tell his wife
“Sonny” lost his life.
Drunk with whiskey, he was speeding
Whirled and crashed and died of bleeding.
What is this man weeping for?
‘Cause he owns the store. . . .
Many spoke against his liquor.
“I just sell it,” he would snicker.
Past and future both too late,
Present is the date.
Is it only Fate?

— *David L. Hatton, 1970*