

THE JUDGMENT

Last night I dreamed a vision as I tossed upon my bed,
And looking into heaven at the line of living dead,
I saw Saint Peter call them one by one up to the gate
To view their lives in detail to decide their final fate.

A certain man stepped forward as Saint Peter called his name.
He winked back at the others and stepped briskly as he came.
A giant Book was opened as the Saint began his task
Of gaining truthful answers to the questions he would ask.

“I see here you were regular at church while still a youth?”
“Indeed, and every time I brought an off’ring, that’s the truth.”
“Good grades in math and science and in wood shop at your school?”
“For sure, and just the best I could I kept the Golden Rule.”

This scene went on, and when I thought Saint Peter must be through,
His questions changed in form as he continued his review.
“There’s nothing that you did that you repent, that you regret?”
“Not much,” replied the fellow. “You know, some deeds we forget.”

Saint Peter turned a page and cleared his throat and raised his brow.
Then asked, “How many children did you have? Please, tell me now.”
He answered, “Two,” but Peter counting from the Book replied,
“It says here five still on the earth, eight others who have died.”

“Impossible!” the man cried out, but shivered at the sight
Of shining beings stepping through the gate in awesome light.
Another figure joined the group, an angel with a rod.
He pointed at their number, then out boomed the voice of God.

The man and those behind him trembled at the blaring roar:
“The first, Batrel, was sown and died in Mary Sue the whore.
The next, Simrel, saw light but shortly after met his death
In plastic in a dumpster where he took his final breath.”

“Vitrel, the boy in Viet Nam, died at his mother’s breast.
Pneumonia set in early and I laid him soon to rest.
Another mother in that land gave birth to Aphrael,
Both he and she were killed together by a blasting shell.”

“Elina was a perfect little baby in the womb.
A painful scraper ripped her to a vacuum-bottle tomb.
Her sister, Joelina, daughter of your girlfriend May,
Myself in love and pity by miscarriage took away.”

“Your first wife, Marguerita, who gave birth to two you raised,
Was glad to carry Trella, but your foolish mind was crazed
By drifting social bias, and you forced her to abort.
Your marriage after that was destined for its end in court.”

The angel held his rod out to the party’s youngest one.
The vocal thunder heightened as the Lord said, “Here’s your son.”
“Three years ago his mother was your typist, you recall?
She killed herself, thus him as well! Now come and greet them all!”

The man screamed out and turned more pale than on the day he died,
And several souls behind him, men and women, shrieked and cried.
Then he and many others bolted from the line and fell
To hide themselves forever in the pitch dark flames of hell.

Saint Peter took his list again and called out, “Mary Sue.”
A weeping figure left the line and slowly stepped in view.
“I am a sinner, Jesus knows. He said He’d heal my sin. . .”
Batrel approached, and hugged his mom. Together they marched in.

— *David L. Hatton, 10/13/1988*