

Charles Curry

Rose Weaver's Room

In this season of the year colors flared up grandly before they faded down to drab browns, lusterless greens. Only the water stayed bright, Shell Creek running through poorly harvested cropfields to where it embraced the Santiago River, shimmering in autumn light below Weaver's place.

Peggy Siemanski had driven there by the long road around water, and she parked the borrowed truck with its freight in the yard-corner where she could see both creek and river, and the goats picking their way along the banks where the last lush grass sprouted.

There was no old Studebaker in the yard, which meant that Kitty had probably gone off somewhere. Peggy was thinking fretfully about whether she should wrestle the truck all that way back when Rose Weaver shouted at her from an upstairs window. "Mommy's not home, but come on in." She disappeared before Peggy could make an answer or pull herself out of the clumsy Chevy truck.

The limping mongrel Buster shambled to greet her with his gruff bark that was really a squeak and he jumped up at her, jamming his forepaws into her belt buckle. Rose, younger than Buster, swung open the front door eagerly to let Peggy come in, but then blocked Buster's way. "No, Buster," she piped up loudly. "You stay out, baddog."

As they squeezed in through the front hall, Rose leered at Peggy. "He's worse than a pup, mommy says. Always peeing in the corners. "

A few paces into the living room Peggy remarked, "I brought that washing machine she wanted."

"She's down at Vejar's," Rose explained, "trading in that crappy Studebaker for a real car. About time too. She told me, if Peggy comes while I'm gone, you just knock her down and sit on her. So you better watch out. " There was music playing over their heads, but Peggy couldn't make out what the tune was. Meanwhile, she missed whatever Rose said next.

"Pardon me?"

"Why, did you fart?" Rose answered, and laughed at her own joke while she laced up her moccasin boots on the dusty sofa. "I said, do you want to come see my new room?"

"You have a new room?"

Rose nodded exuberantly. "Mommy says, now we got a crop to come in at last, we can afford a whole lot of new things. You want to come see it?"

“Sure, why not? Better than you sitting on me the whole time.”

Rose led the way for her, back through the hallway to the kitchen where cold grease hung in suspension of dust. The warped plank floor creaked and gave under Peggy’s weight, and the house itself had caught the early cold of the evening sky.

The back door window was hung with shades borrowed from the front windows, and those billowed in the slightness of the fragrant pasture breezes. “Billy Johnson did that,” Rose announced. “He pitched a baseball clear through from at the front door.”

Peggy gaped at the shadow of broken glass and wondered aloud, “Why’d he do that?”

Rose shrugged and said, “He did it on a bet.”

“What’d he win from you?”

“I told him we’d let Buster fuck his old Lucy and he could keep the pups.”

Peggy guffawed. “I think Buster is about fucked out.”

At the top of the plank stairs from the kitchen they emerged into the big skylit room that now was divided by a canvas curtain through its middle. The music here was more plain, coming from a radio behind the curtain and muffled by the thick material. Rose skipped over a bunched rug, leapfrogged a freestanding hamper, and dove to lift the canvas as high as her head.

There was a plywood partition underneath with a door skewed open in the wall. The “*Eve of Destruction*” flowed out through that door. “Come on through,” Rose said, “this is my room.” Rose danced through the opening to a fanfare of electric organ and Peggy followed her into

Wonderland.

A bed made of gauzy pink nets, with bed trimmings that swept the floor, and was piled with dolls as large as Rose.

Rose Shiva-danced across her roost, bumping wantonly into stuffed bears and ballerinas, and somersaulted onto her new bed.

Even the pillows and fringes shone frost-white in concentrated light, making plain to Peggy that Rose Weaver had found or made her own trip.

Charles Curry possesses two college Associate's degrees in History and Paralegal Studies. He is currently retired from a service-field position, and has a long record on the side of working at writing. He has been published twice in the *Helix Magazine* ("Trailing Home" and "About Elspeth") and online in the *Copperfield Review* ("Here Comes Billy Wrightman"). At present, his work is scheduled for publication of "Ragged Glories" in the Spring issue of the *Garbanzo Journal*.