

# Minnie Remembers

GOD,  
my hands are old.  
I've never said that out loud before, but they are.  
I was so proud of them once.  
They were soft, like the velvet softness of a firm, ripe peach.  
Now the softness is like worn-out sheets or withered leaves.  
When did these slender, graceful hands become gnarled and  
shrunken?  
When, God?  
They lie here in my lap, naked reminders of the rest of this  
old body that has served me too well.  
How long has it been since someone touched me?  
Twenty years?  
Twenty years I have been a widow.  
Respected; smiled at; but never touched.  
Never held close to another body.  
Never held so close and warm that loneliness was blotted out.  
I remember how my mother used to hold me, God.  
When I was hurt in spirit or flesh she would gather me close,  
stroke my silky hair and caress my back,  
with her warm hand.  
O God, I'm so lonely!  
I remember the first boy who ever kissed me.  
We were both so new at that.  
The taste of young lips and popcorn, the feeling deep inside  
of mysteries yet to come.  
I remember Hank and the babies.  
How can I remember them but together?  
Out of the fumbling, awkward attempt of new lovers  
came the babies.  
As they grew, so did our love.  
And God, Hank didn't seem to care if my body thickened  
and faded a little.  
He still loved it and touched it.  
And we didn't mind if we were no longer beautiful.  
And the children hugged me, a lot.  
Oh God, I'm lonely.  
Why didn't we raise the kids to be silly and affectionate as  
well as dignified and proper?  
You see, they do their duty.  
They drive up in their fine cars, they chatter brightly and  
reminisce.  
But they don't touch me.  
They call me Mom or Mother or Grandma . . . never Minnie.  
My mother called me Minnie, and my friends too,  
Hank called me Minnie.  
But they're gone,  
And so is Minnie.  
Only Grandma is here and God, she is so lonely!

Reprinted from Monthly Messenger,  
Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Brooklyn