

The Man with a Suitcase

by Quinn Bartling

There was a creepy man
on the corner of the road
watching the merry bright bawls
and the happy shining cheers
Of children and mothers
on a muddy grey field
of their talking and asking
and laughing and whispering
and shouting and screeching
and holding their ribs
as they leaned on their knees
and called "One quick second"
with a raise of their hand
As their friends turned around
with a roll of their eyes
and called for the others
"Jack's tired, hold on!"

No one noticed this man
with his darkclad attire
lacking simpers and joy
with a glare at a child
At a boy who stood far
His eyes wild and glowing
peering and snorting
and stomping his boots
and yapping and talking
with his friends running loose

So he, being he
Made his way through desire
and skimpered through mud
with the likes of a mire
That mused and mashed
through the tips of his tires
And wedged back his toes
so they grew dark and drab
And he, being he
tapped the boy on the shoulder

and asked, "See my suitcase?"
and smiled real big
The boy would turn round
and stare at the man
and look to his mother
who stood by her friends
a large knot of women
in cheerful-colored skirts
of roses and flowers
and the happiest of shirts
Maybe leggings or frocks
or anything else
That held the young children
in a well-invented pouch
"Suitcase, sir?"
"Come look inside it."
Why, candy and candy
so much things about it
of chocolate and taffy
and yogurt and sweets
So much his tongue watered
and he reached out quite quickly
but drew back quite quickly
and looked up quite quickly
At the man and his face
A pale, sickly face
With the sharpest of planes
and the most jagged of noses
and the most wildest of eyes

And he, being he
Was oh so terrible that
The child would scream
and point out and yell, "Mother!"
"What is it?"
"This man. Look!
This man!"
And the child would point
with a sob and a cry
and would then grip his mother
so his knuckles grew white
"What of this man?"

“He’s come to take me!”

The mother, being she
so superior and wise
Would hoist up the child
and scold his demise
“This man is your uncle!
He’s come from Detroit!
Try being caring, and kind,
oh, please, my dear brother,
may you forgive him?”
And the man would now smile
and the child would see
A bright twinkle and shiver
Inside his blue eyes
“Ah, yes. I do see.
I have no complaints of
mistaking me.”

The child would cry
for a different reason now
and hold out his hand
and give a harsh hug
And would look to his mother
and hold down his head:
“Oh sorry, dear uncle.”
And the uncle would laugh
And hold out his hand:
“No problem, young one.”