

~~I got less bashful and you got more so. What happened, Biff? (Sits  
down, puts arm around him.) What about the old humor, the old  
confidence?  
(Biff rises, crosses himself, puts cigarette out in small can on  
floor above chest.)  
What's the matter?~~

Start →

BIFF. Why does Dad mock me all the time?

HAPPY. He's not mocking you, he...

BIFF/  
HAPPY

BIFF. Everything I say there's a twist of mockery on his face. I can't get near him.

HAPPY. He just wants you to make good, that's all. I wanted to talk to you about Dad for a long time, Biff. Something's happening to him. He...talks to himself.

BIFF. I noticed that this morning. But he always mumbled.

HAPPY. But not so noticeable. It got so embarrassing. I sent him to Florida. And you know something? Most of the time he's talking to you.

BIFF. What's he say about me?

HAPPY. I can't make it out.

BIFF. What's he say about me?

HAPPY. (Crosses, kneels on Biff's bed.) I think the fact that you're not settled, that you're still kind of up in the air...

BIFF. There's one or two other things depressing him, Happy.

HAPPY. What do you mean?

BIFF. Never mind. Just don't lay it all to me.

HAPPY. But I think if you just got started... I mean...is there any future for you out there?

BIFF. I tell ya, Hap... I don't know what the future is; I don't know... what I'm supposed to want.

HAPPY. (Sits chair.) What do you mean?

BIFF. (With frustration.) Well, I spent six or seven years after high school trying to work myself up. Shipping clerk, salesman, business of one kind or another...and it's a measly manner of existence. To get on that subway on the hot mornings in summer; to devote your whole life to keeping stock, or making phone calls, or selling or buying... To suffer fifty weeks of the year for the sake of a two-week vacation, when all you really desire is to be outdoors, with your shirt off. And always to have to get ahead of the next fella... And still...that's how you build a future.

HAPPY. Well, you really enjoy it on a farm? Are you content out there?

(Biff is kneeling above chest and looking at athletic equipment in it. Finally finds old deflated football, puts other things back.)

BIFF. *(With rising agitation.)* Hap, I've had twenty or thirty different kinds of jobs since I left home before the war, and it always turns out the same. I just realized it lately. In Nebraska when I herded cattle, and the Dakotas, and Arizona, and now in Texas. It's why I came home now, I guess, because I realized it—this farm I work on, it's spring there now, see. And they've got about fifteen new colts. There's nothing more inspiring or...beautiful, than the sight of a mare and a new colt. And it's cool there now, see? Texas is cool now, and it's spring. *(Crosses U.)* And whenever spring comes to where I am, I suddenly get the feeling—My God *(Crosses D.)*, I'm not gettin' anywhere! *(Crosses U.)* What the hell am I doing, playing around with horses, twenty-eight dollars a week! *(Crosses D., to himself.)* I'm thirty-four years old, I oughta be makin' my future. That's when I come running home. And now—I get here, and I don't know what to do with myself. *(Pause.)* I've always made a point of not wasting my life, and every time I come back here I know that all I've done is to waste my life. *(Throws football into chest.)*

HAPPY. *(Awed.)* You're a poet, you know that, Biff? You're a... you're an idealist!

BIFF. No, I'm mixed up very bad. *(Closes chest cover.)* Maybe I oughta get married. Maybe I oughta get stuck into something. Maybe that's my trouble. I'm like a boy... I'm not married, I'm not in business, I just... I'm like a boy. Are you content, Hap? *(Sits on chest.)* You're a success, aren't you? Are you content?

HAPPY. Hell, no!

BIFF. Why? You're making money, aren't you?

HAPPY. All I can do now is wait for the merchandise manager to die... And suppose I get to be merchandise manager? He's a good friend of mine, and he just built a terrific estate on Long Island. And he lived there about two months and sold it, and now he's building another one. He can't enjoy it once it's finished. And I know that's just what I would do. I don't know what the hell I'm workin' for. Sometimes I sit in my apartment...all alone. And I think of the rent I'm paying. And it's crazy. But then...it's what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car and plenty of women. And still, goddammit, I'm lonely.

**ENO**