

GENE. (*Starts to move out.*) Goodbye, Dad. I'll arrange for someone to come in.

TOM. (*Shouting.*) I don't want anyone to come in. I can take care of myself. I have always had to take care of myself. Who needs you? Out! . . . I have lived each day of my life so that I could look any man in the eye and tell him to GO TO HELL! (*This last, wildly at Gene. The lights dim out quickly, except for a lingering light on Gene. . . .*)

GENE. (*After a few moments.*) That night I left my Father's house forever . . . I took the first right and the second left . . . and this time I went as far as California. . . .

Peggy and I visited him once or twice . . . and then he came to California to visit us, and had a fever and swollen ankles, and we put him in a hospital, and he never left. . . . The reason we gave, and which he could accept, for not leaving . . . the swollen ankles. But the real reason . . . the arteries were hardening, and he gradually over several years slipped into complete and speechless senility . . . with all his life centered in his burning eyes. (*A Nurse wheels in Tom . . . dressed in a heavy, warm bathrobe . . . and wearing a white linen golf cap . . . to protect his head from drafts. . . . The Nurse withdraws into the shadows . . .*) When I would visit him, and we would sit and look at each other, his eyes would mist over and his nostrils would pinch with emotion. . . . But I never could learn what the emotion was . . . anger . . . or love . . . or regret. . . .

One day, sitting in his wheel chair and staring without comprehension at television . . . he died . . . alone . . . without even an orange in his hand. (*The light fades on Tom . . .*)

Death ends a life . . . but it does not end a relationship, which struggles on in the survivor's mind . . . towards some resolution, which it never finds.

Alice said I would not accept the sadness of the world . . . What did it matter if I never loved him, or if he never loved me? . . . Perhaps she was right. . . . But, still, when I hear the word Father . . . (*He cannot express it . . . there is still the longing, the emotion. . . . He looks around . . . out . . . as though he would finally be able to express it . . . but he can only say . . .*) It matters. (*He turns and walks slowly away, into the shadows . . . as the lights dim. . . .*)

THE END

