

Our Readers Write Us

Well, it's almost that time again when everyone
has to register his purpose in existence
at the Central Bureau, after all,
others are waiting to replace us
when we can no longer justify our lives,
and it's a nuisance form at best,
but, if you let the deadline slip by,
it's suicide, at least with suicide
it's cleaner than the kind of accident
you're apt to have when the Central Signal
starts beeping in your direction,
I remember my friend Cissy
who tried to make it as Love Object
(just one chance in a hundred the machine
would woof up her form for the Check)
and the investigators found
that her lover has finished himself
two years previous, poor girl
had nothing else to fall back on,
so the Final Notice arrived,
and Cissy, featherbrain to the end,
decided to beat the rap by pretending
the letter got lost in the mails,
well, she did fine for six days,
but on the seventh she cut her finger
while peeling a pomegranate at the kitchen sink,
gangrene set in, of course,
and no doctor could treat her now that her name
was struck off the List of the Living,
so we went through the fever
and smell and pain with her,
nothing but a little blackmarket morphine
to ease her out, and that cost us
an arm and a leg, well anyway,
what I am thinking is,
now that my youngest is fifteen
I can't keep qualifying as Mother,
so I might switch to Poet, a difficult category,
but, once you get into it, you're set for life,
maybe subversive stuff to keep spirits up
in the colleges and don't the police
need a chance to try out
their new crowd control methods,
or I could go for grandeur,
a brave heart for the changes we must all endure,
the thing is it's my old age I'm worried about
losing out on if I don't find something secure.

-- Dolores Stewart

Pembroke, Mass.