

The ownership of cattle, the production of beef has leaped toward the glory of a steak browned over charcoal and the Sunday smoke, the reminder of approaching work.

All of the diners must sleep at last regardless of their appetites. They must forget their taste of the warm meat, remembering in their sleep the cold final bite, the grease hardened into white scum.

SUSPENSION

Accustomed to surprise, I did not speak when the shift occurred.

It was as though the creek was above the ground, levitated somehow. The bridge remained stationary, its ordinary posture now grotesque. Being intact was no longer sufficient.

A crowd appeared, of course. It grew quickly, filling the bridge. When it became obvious that nothing else would happen, a restlessness moved through the people. Someone threw stones upward, trying to see if they would splash. When the stones returned completely dry, the crowd decided the vision was a fraud, that the empty bed beneath them was the result of a hastily constructed dam upstream, that the water was someone's idea of a joke.

Nevertheless, it remains above me. No one has discovered the humorist.

THE SHALLOW CASE

Think of the shallow case. It can hold little that you cannot imagine.

Think of the smooth leather surface and the slight click as it opens. You will not be surprised by the sheaf of papers, the brief portfolio.

If removed, however, they leave behind a space you can step into, bringing a friend, finding room you cannot fill. This case is not meant for wading. A small misstep and you may sink rapidly, fading from sight, forgotten, closed and locked away in some musty closet.

-- Gary Fincke

Le Roy NY