

1974

And He Stopped

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Patrick Rode

AND HE STOPPED

leaning on a houseless mailbox
he slowly drew the fire
closer to the end of
his cigarette

it didn't bother him
that no one knew
he was there.

mercury lamps,
every farm had one
and somehow he
found it
particularly revolting
that someone lived here

the moon
formed a perfect antithesis
for that mercury lamp

it had just snowed the
first time that night
and all the dead, brown weeds
still projected through
the roof of snow

he inhaled
the cigarette and as
he watched the smoke
disappear, he realized
nothing really amounted
to very much

a mouse died under the
crush of the claws
of an owl
in the woods

he grinned, dropped his
cigarette

and he walked