1964

Translucence

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Recommended Citation

Anonymous, Anonymous (1964) "Translucence," Calliope: Vol. 11 : Iss. 1 , Article 17.
Available at: http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/calliope/vol11/iss1/17

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aged "Street Car Named Desire" Marlon Brando. The food-stained work pants, the shirtless, overly hairy chest, the dead, chewed cigar butt, and odor of beer were all there. The only remark I remember from the man was "I've had it, take him to court. His Ma and me don't want him here anymore, he just don't behave himself." But, Bob was left at home, the incident forgotten, summer ended, the children started school, and I came back to Western.

During our Thanksgiving vacation last year I was reading the local Lawrence News Herald. The headlines were "BOY STRANGLES TEACHER." Sixteen year old Bob McCauly had murdered his homeroom teacher. He had been previously sent to a juvenile house of correction for a variety of offenses . . . gang fight, property damages, petty theft . . . but was shipped back on a bus due to a shortage of room. Miss Brace, his instructor, had befriended Bob at school. He went to her house one night, asked to borrow her car—she refused. Miss Brace was found the next day with her hands bound and a rope around her neck.

Bob had gone beyond the scarring point.

Translucence

Crumpling steel trumpets
Announce another day for me—
Alive I smile through tears
of tinkling glass
and clutching at the straw
that needles me, ask
if innocence could
know the truth:
Bitterness, the fruit
of one bright lie,
Screaming to believe
a sunlit sky.