

brought a girlfriend, just a child also, and they sat together on the lounge watching a video of Warren in Hollywood, then left early, going to a party with kids their own age.

The baby came, only three days late. It was a girl and looked just like Warren. He was delighted, and brought Julie three dozen roses. Vince sent a card.

The roses died.

Julie still has the card.

JEAN THORNTON

EARLY SUNDAY MORNING, OVER THE BRIDGE

Nothing to pay now, no toll
on the Westgate Bridge. Sentry
boxes have been set aside, ramps
smashed to take-away pieces;
traffic lanes merge into one
giving license to accelerate.

My car cuts through the shroud
of mist as of its own volition.
I am preoccupied with death.
Men died building this bridge:
thirty-five plummeted from the
snapped steel span. What did they
feel during that unexpected fall?
Free-flyers say that falling
moments stretch timelessly.

In the South-east suburbs the morning
shift has just begun. Nurses clatter
through wards of the living, slip

silently through rooms reserved
for the dying. In the room of my
friend curtains are drawn, flowers
freshened; the long wait is nearly over.

I falter in the role thrust upon me,
appalled by the diminished frame,
the lack of flesh, the weariness etched
into the lovely face. Where is the husband
whose place is here? Sister says he can't
take any more, has gone on a bender.

What can a divorced unbeliever find
to cheer a friend's last moments?
"Coming over the bridge was wonderful,"
I tell her. "The panorama spread below
was like a Streeton painting: sun sparkled
rooftops, water gleamed like blue silk,
and over all was a glorious golden haze.
There's no toll now," I add, in truth,
"Nothing to pay any more."

JEAN THORNTON

HOW BIG A HOLE DOES A MAN REQUIRE?

He came to the beach,
a great wind-braking barrel of a man,
and immediately began to dig in the sand
with a bright red spade brought for the purpose

The hole assumed enormous size, wide and deep
as he dug with systematic thoroughness
round and round, round and round and round