

3.

There is an empty house on Ghazeepore Road. It hides behind a decaying windbreak of cypresses. The wind is cold, there, especially in winter. The glass is broken in one window, the rosetree has sprawled and then died. There are no other houses. Why does Karl drive past here again and again? Johanna is snug in their own cottage, so well maintained, close to shops and the public transport. What is it she really wants? Karl drives fast. His brother Frederick, Frederick should buy this house.

A sudden image of Johanna, looking up from her pointwork, small eyes gleaming behind the wire rims. Johanna and Frederick here, in this garden, crammed with flowers from the sagging rosebush. Is she nearly smiling again? Karl driving back towards town, hands pitted and rough. Hands pitted.

ROBERT HANDICOTT

DANCE BANDS

I have ten years' poems on the books, my semi-professional dance bands. Acts of all kinds: old time, boogie woogie, rock and roll, 60/40 — almost everything, and all good value. They may not be the Beatles — but who wants the Beatles? They love to make music. If seldom surprising, it's live.

My job is to get them odd bookings. They're grateful: a social, a New Year's party, they'll rock the old weatherboard walls of a hall till dawn, if the crowd's on its feet. — The drummers play all open work, but in time. The singers, no doubt, imitate; but are on the improve.