

# *The Red Chiffon*

J. T. LEDBETTER

Sleep wouldn't come, and the valium did nothing,  
so he looked through the window at the man next door watching television,  
his wife gone to bed after changing him.  
Then he closed his eyes and listened to cars racing on Market  
come back slower, looking for girls.

The red and green blink of traffic lights on the curtains  
reminded him of Christmas on the farm when his mother cried  
and said he should have been a girl, and years later, woke him  
in the night to say his father was dying, and wanted his shotgun  
to go to a nephew, who knew how to handle a gun,—  
and that now she was leaving that hell-hole of a farm  
and would never come back.

So she never heard that his house sold at auction,  
along with the furniture and all the family pictures;  
but the photograph of him hanging in the red chiffon  
caught the attention of his Cousin Rose in Cincinnati  
who pulled her glasses down off her head and the paper closer.