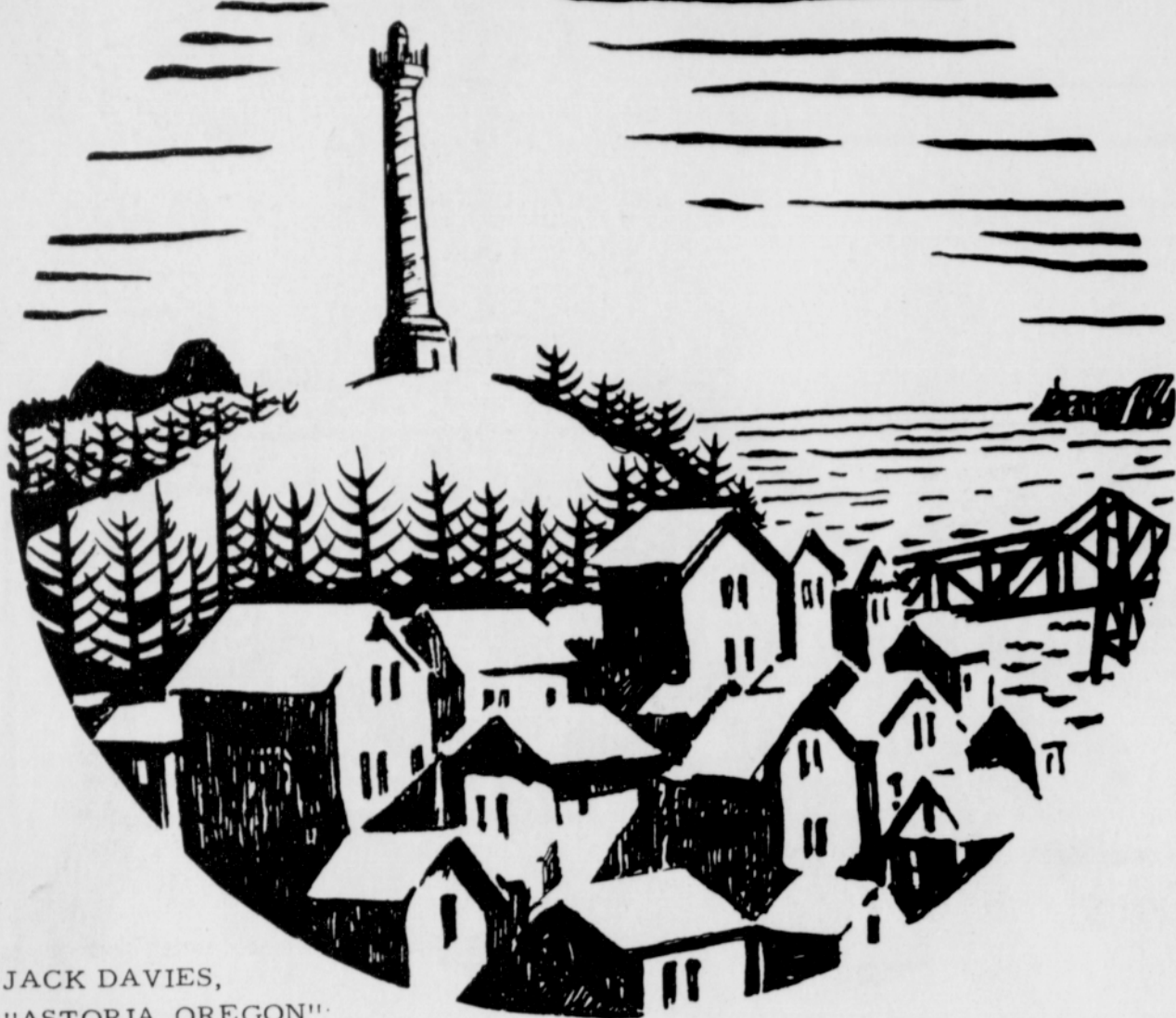




JACK DAVIES,
"ASTORIA, OREGON"

POETRY

THE BURIED GRAVES

From the pier, at dusk, the dim
Billowing arms of kelp
Seem the tops of trees, as though
Not long ago
A summer wood stood here, before a dam
Was built, a valley flooded.

Such a forest would release
Its color only slowly,
And the leafy branches sway, as they'd
More lightly swayed
Under a less distant sun and far less
Even weather. Now, deeper down,

Those glimmers of coral might
Be the lots of some hard-luck
Town, or — depositing on the dead
A second bed —
A submerged cemetery. . . . To this mute,
Envisioned, birdless wood would

Come a kind of autumn, a tame
Sea-season, with foliage tumbling
Through a weighty, trancelike fall;
And come, as well,
Soon in the emptying fullness of time,
A mild but an endless winter.

BRAD LEITHAUSER

CHILDREN: FOURTH OF JULY

They play ferociously to beat the rain —
my youngest neighbors shrieking in the yard.
"Can you do this?" And Randolph drops
into the dirt. His friend goes wild.
"Can you do this? Can you do this?"
she sings, dragging her bony knees along the dust.

Some wise child's chalked in green on the Giant wall,
Don't Eat Stuff Off The Sidewalk.
A music box battle hymn floats out
beyond the bells of the ice-cream truck, where
a black man sits, crestfallen in the street.
He shifts and rises, music hissing from his phones;
on one baroque and twisting skate he glides through dusk.

The ambulance wobbles on its hysterical flute
down Main, past Mickey's Blue Heaven
where customers line up for the display.
One man leans out, his eager hands
outstretched. A woman tilts to his embrace,
her kerchief sloppy over one shut eye.

In the frame of this blissful honeymoon begins this
first extended breath, as the white vein pulses,
cracks and flowers in the deep, overhanging sky.
The lovers watch the war of lights, believing each other completely
happy as now, between the lunatic blasts, they are.

LIZ ROSENBERG

ASTORIA

Under the sun
sway huge ships
preparing escape.
Everything else rooted,
old, grey brick, grey
board, grey.

This antique shop —
window's spidersweb
is dusty.
Dust-filtered rust
coats white windows
browned the day they were born.

All the filthy metal boxes
south on 101.
Down the beach,
under the sand,
a ship:
While the photos
are snapping
it's slipping inches
of tons
out of sight.
The rusted feeble
masts seeking
the bulk under
all that sand.

I don't want to live
here; a useful harbor
for the age-old load
of commerce, but no place
for an optimistic young man
such as myself.

Huge ships break the bar.
I watch them lumber under the sun.

MICHAEL MARINO

PORTUGUESE

Maria climbs to the upper floor,
her lithe body a quiet shadow turning
the dark corners of the three-decker.
She is home here high above
the storefronts and bilingual signs
in a doll room squeezed against the heavens.
Thirteen summers she has rested elbows
on its worn windowsills
waiting for a sea breeze to sweep
across the ocean and tousle her hair.
Now as the mills around her
swallow brothers, sisters, cousins,
she opens a book and searches
for the equation that will let her balance
the dolls and dresses with her dark-eyed dreams.

NEIL C. FITZGERALD

'TREES FROM MAINE TO ALABAMA ARE SHOWING A DECLINE IN GROWTH'

—TIME MAGAZINE

A rumor is flashing
Treetop to treetop.
Yellow pines in South Carolina
Are growing more slowly,
Responding to
Pitch pines in New Jersey
That have altogether
Stopped.
The trees are onto something.
Messages are going out through leaves
With the oxygen,
And sugar maples in Vermont
Shut down.
Root systems are sending runners,
And spruce on White Face Mountain
Drop needles
And die.

Listen,
You think that is the wind
Brushing through branches?
It is the trees themselves

VIRGINIA CORRIE