

## **Title of Writing:** On Re-reading the Heart is a Lonely Hunter

### **On Re-reading 'The Heart is a Lonely Hunter'**

Often, these days, I cannot read a story where the characters are suffering, until I have looked at the end.

I am so alarmed that bad things will happen that anxiety overtakes me:  
will Mickey ever learn to play the piano?  
or Singer be re-united with his Greek friend?  
or Doctor Copeland learn how to speak to his daughter?

1930s Georgia; it's the hot nights  
and hotter days with violence simmering,  
ever ready to boil over,  
that fuel my disquiet, dread even.  
I care too much now for these people.

So, I can only be content to dawdle at McCullers' pace,  
when I know that Singer puts a bullet through his head on page one-five-four.  
Now I can breathe, although I know for certain, this having happened,  
there will be much pain to be endured in the interim.

On RE-reading the Heart is a Lonely Hunter

### **Womb History**

The day your eyes developed  
was the day I saw the new beech leaves  
uncurl against the sky.

The day you became a boy  
was the the day I was left by your father.

The day you first kicked  
was the day I ate cream cakes with Maggie  
and was sick after.

The day you listened to Mozart  
was the day I listened to Mozart.

The day before you were born  
was the day I saw a sparrow-hawk  
carry off a duckling to feed its young.

The day we met I felt I knew you:  
you seemed to look at me  
as if we had travelled far together.

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BUS.

The bus came along and nobody got on it.  
Or off it.  
People just stood at the bus-stop staring into the distance.

The driver took off again angrily grinding the gears,  
went through a red light and past the next three stops.

At the first missed stop, Jackie said to her friend, Nita,  
'That *was* a dirty bus and I didn't like the look of the driver.'

Nita nodded. 'Anyway' she said, 'I wanted a 77A not a 77.  
Mother's sick and the 77 doesn't go anywhere near her street.'

At the second missed stop Peggy,  
now wishing she'd never promised her pal Marge  
she would go to the bingo, shifted from one arthritic foot to the other;  
there was room to sit down but she found the fat steel rail too cold.  
She wished she had tried to flag down the 77.

'How is your mother?' asked Jackie still waiting.  
'Don't know. Haven't seen her,' Nita replied. Then she said,  
'Did you notice there was a white cat on *that* bus?  
It was sitting on the front seat all by itself.'

After the third missed stop, the dirty bus broke down  
on the long hill to the depot. The bus driver leapt out of his cab  
and started kicking the tyres methodically.  
It was his fortieth birthday and he felt entitled to do what he liked.