

# LEONARD TRAWICK

## *The Small Mysterious Grave*

There was a small mysterious grave  
Behind Aunt Froney's garden — she's the one  
Whose parlor always smelled of apples  
Kept too long, and books on Jesus,  
Who had the travelling misery—  
*It travelled all around her, head to back to colon,*  
And she travelled all around the country for a cure:  
Hot baths, magnetic rods — all failed;  
So when some neuro-whippersnapper prescribed,  
With every meal, a six-ounce dose of beer  
—Than which, as she herself said, nothing is more evil,  
Excepting whiskey, and a lady had as soon  
Die of the travelling misery as be seen  
In Okeepoka within a block of Jesse's Beverage Store—  
It was a desperate time until  
An inspiration flashed upon her—  
An agent for a deed of darkness,  
Okeepoka's ultimate yardman,  
Mister Awfud, Prince of dirt,  
Subdued to the element he labored in,  
A vision in eternal off-black coat,  
String tie, and opera hat  
That for all Okeepoka knew,  
Grew from him like so much lichen.  
Discreetly sounded, tipped, and sworn to secrecy,  
Awfud obtained and privily delivered  
A case of the infernal brew.

The story does not end on this happy note.

That still small voice that never holds its tongue  
Even when blinds are drawn  
So plagued Aunt Froney, she couldn't down  
The first half glass, but rather chose to die  
(As she said years after).  
But then the quandary: how dispose  
Of twenty-three unopened vials of sin?  
Ah! Awfud brought—Awfud could take away!  
She gave the order firmly: "Bury it  
Behind the beans." So Awfud's eyes  
Were last to view the beer, offense to God and man.  
I saw the grave; the bottles must still be there.  
The rest of Okeepoka never knew.  
The opera hat maintained perfect discretion—  
Though it tilted for a week or two  
With ever so faint a rakish air.