

wind, blind and baffled, too ancient
to change her ways, still will be ruffling
the highway's beautiful shoulder-length
thatch of blond weeds.

Magic / Brian Swann

His relatives visited him once. That time, he had entertained them by holding an old coin between thumb and middle finger. When he snapped thumb and finger the coin disappeared. He did this with three coins until his relatives got bored. It's just a matter of terminology, said his father, not even looking at him. The structure of the unconscious is revealed in such tricks, and that's all. Time and space consist of nothing. They are hypostatized concepts born of the discriminating activity of the conscious mind. This *trick* is therefore essentially psychic in origin, and as such should not startle or even interest us. But, said the son, all the mathematical odds are against such an explanation. I don't know how I do it myself. If I'd done it once, then maybe. But three times—and I can do it more—is objective and palpable. Nonsense boy, said his father. A secret mutual connivance exists between those coins and your psychic state. Let us say no more on the matter. But, said his son, watch. I can make coins *appear* in the same way. And that's no trick. That's real. They're real coins. They're gold. Come as close as you want. There's no chicanery, psychic or otherwise. But the family had already moved off down the gravel driveway and out of the gates, which swung to behind them.

That evening, he finished dinner early and left the dininghall. On the way out to the exercise yard he overheard the Chief Warden talking to an older man. He stopped and listened to her, and recognized the name of the judge who had sentenced him to thirty days for a minor traffic offense. The warden was releasing the man at the recommendation of the judge for clemency. He went over and stated his own case to the Chief Warden. He too asked for mercy on the basis of familiarity with the same judge. The Chief Warden sat down at her typewriter and began to type on official notepaper. Then she looked up and said he was to be at the Barracks by five that afternoon. Outside, he told all this to a couple of women who had waited for him, and he explained that he didn't know where the Barracks were. They volunteered to help him and take him there just before five. All at once, however, he realized that during the short time he'd been there he'd grown closer to more

people than in the outside world, and he began to change his mind about leaving. But he had to know a few more details before he could make up his mind definitely.

Later that evening, he was walking with the women on either side to the Barracks. "Just one thing," he said. "How do you make love here?" The woman with long yellow hair on his right said that she'd have to know him better before she could tell him, but the woman on his left said that you just have to do it with more subtlety and originality to take advantage of certain situations. "There are plenty of good women here who know more than you'd imagine," she said. He remembered the world beyond the gates. His steps became slower and slower as he approached the Barracks. He reached into the air and drew out a gold coin. "Do you believe in magic?" he asked. Their answer made up his mind.

A Green Pass / Michael Hogan

You are standing in line with a pass
wet and wrinkled in your hand.
The temperature is a hundred and fifteen
and the sun burns the whole sky steel-white
above the quadrangle.
The four walls shimmer with heat
like a reflector oven.
And you are waiting with a green pass which means
you are here to see the warden.
He spoke to you once when your father died,
he questioned you shortly after the strike
in prison industries.
Bad news or interrogations,
you see the warden.
You could return to your cell.
If it's important
you'll be called again.
Yet you wait like an auto victim in traction
anxious for the six o'clock news
to see if his accident is covered.
In the cell there are swamp coolers
straining like sludge pumps after a flood.