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Evasion

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Evasion

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Some eleven minutes after the lunch period began, there were enough third graders out on the grounds to be organized into volleyball teams. Unnoticed, a boy strode to the cement back steps and, feet together, jumped down one step to another and allowed the momentum to carry him across the sidewalk to the other side of the street. He skipped over the blacktop of the garage area and darted into the neat, narrow alley between two ten-car garages. Running its thirty feet, he let his legs stiffen as he stomped into the quiet sun and onto a tar driveway that padded the entrance to two more ten-car garages. Legs and arms held stiff, he changed himself into a walking mechanical man till the drive began to rise. He walked up it, across the road and out onto the plain of unconverted land."

Cover Page Footnote

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Some eleven minutes after the lunch period began, there were enough third graders out on the grounds to be organized into volleyball teams. Unnoticed, a boy strode to the cement back steps and, feet together, jumped down one step to another and allowed the momentum to carry him across the sidewalk to the other side of the street. He skipped over the blacktop of the garage area and darted into the neat, narrow alley between two ten-car garages. Running its thirty feet, he let his legs stiffen as he stomped into the quiet sun and onto a tar driveway that padded the entrance to two more ten-car garages. Legs and arms held stiff, he changed himself into a walking mechanical man till the drive began to rise. He walked up it, across the road and out onto the plain of unconverted land.

Two minutes brought him to the left of a steep mound — when the housing development was finished, it too would become a tar surfaced level. His gaze darted warily around, then he smiled to find himself quite alone. Pebbles glittered quietly as he made his way. Keeping to uncut ground as much as possible, he did not

descend to the broad road till he was nearly up to the wire fence that cut the wild land of the housing development off from the brown government ground of the Camp. He braked with his feet till he was onto the road. He dashed across, though there were no cars.

There the heavy rope stood, relaxed but straight between the sand brown hill and the black, high flung tree branch. He ran at it from the road and grabbed. The old thrill of freely swinging force spread through him. He caught his breath at the term of the flight; as he fell back, all the strength but what was in his hands was sucked out from his feet. Landed, he felt the great magnet that attacked him in the air pulling his body against the ground. His breathing came almost in little coughs.

He sat down and looked across the pointed, descending house-tops down to the Pacific. It was very blue. A water spout chanced to whirl a dozen feet into the spring sky. It startled the boy and the image of a whale swam through his mind. He watched for another spout but the whale had gone to lunch. Soon he arose, one leg feeling as though it were being pushed into him with every other step.

Just before the descent levelled he stopped to look down at the school. The noise from the playground was all the trees let through. He started very slowly toward the road that ran around the hill. Then he stopped again and turned back. He sat down on a foot-high slate boarder that fenced a small rock garden. The garden enclosed the sloped front yard of the house on the corner. The thick, little, green leaves on the plants looked heavy. The blossoms were a rich whirl of pink. He waited sitting.

The bell in the invisible school yard rang. He sprang up and kitty-cornered the streets in a dash. He sped down the clattering boards of the path, across the road, onto the cement yard. Turning right he darted by the outdoor lunch tables to the side yard asphalt. A boy named Ernest said something that he heard; a few of the others laughed as they got into line. The boy found his place and the line filed in. As he reached the doorway, the school official called out his number. With small steps he passed through the door and murmured, "Present."

Dick O'Connor, C.S.B.