

Epitaph

(overheard on a train from Boston to New York)

I remember Garritty, Big Mack and Poor Mary,
they all came to sorry ends.

Poor Mary died in a mental hospital,
drank like a fish.

Went up to see her once.

Aw, she was a sorry sight.

Guess she couldn't help it, though

Tough life, with that heel

of a husband Garritty,

used to beat her,

you know.

I went over to Uncle Tom's one Sunday.

Mother had asked me to deliver something.

Everything decorated up nicely,

lace tablecloth and all the trimmins.

Nora had a big roast.

Uncle Tom didn't carve it, though.

I think she had it cut at the butcher's.

Father Noran was there,

you remember him, don't you?

"I'm glad to see you boys," he said,

"but not when you're gamblin."

I went to Poor Gracie's mass.

I liked Poor Gracie.

She was a humorous lass

and could she make dresses!

She'd get a bundle of cloth,

spread it out on the living room floor,

cut two or three in one evening.

Could have made a bundle of money, you know,

but Big Mack'ud go and blow it

at the racetrack.

He was a fool for luck.
Yes, I liked Poor Gracie,
too bad luck didn't like her;
she died so young.

I remember Garritty, Big Mack and Poor Mary
They all came to sorry ends.

--Sheila D. Collins