

The Red Coat
John Patrick Shanley

Night time on a side street. A street light shines down on some steps through a green tree. Moonlight mixes in the shadows. A seventeen year-old boy sits on the steps in a white shirt with a loosened skinny tie, black dress pants, and black shoes. He is staring off. His eyes are shinning. A sixteen year-old girl enters, in neighborhood party clothes: short skirt, blouse, penny loafers.

John: Hi, Mary.

Mary: Oh! I didn't see you there. You're hiding.

John: Not from you Mary.

Mary: Who from?

John: Oh, nobody. I was up at Susan's party.

Mary: That's where I'm going.

John: Oh.

Mary: Why did you leave?

John: No reason.

Mary: You just gonna sit here?

John: For a while.

Mary: Well, I'm going in.

John: Oh. Okay...Oh! I'm not going in... I mean I came out because... Oh go in!

Mary: What's wrong with you John?

John: I left the party because you weren't there. That's why I left the party.

Mary: Why'd ya leave the party 'cause I wasn't there?

John: I dunno

Mary: I'm going in.

John: I left the party 'cause I felt like everything I wanted was outside the party... out here. There's a breeze out here, and the moon... look at the way the moon is... and I knew you were outside somewhere, too! So I came out and sat on the steps here and I thought that maybe you'd come and I would be here... outside the party, on the steps, in the moonlight... and those other people... the ones at the party... wouldn't be here... but the night would be here... and you and me would be talking on the steps in the night in the moonlight and I could tell you...

Mary: Tell me what?

John: How I feel!

Mary: How do you feel about what?

John: I don't know. I was looking out the window at the party... and I drank some wine... and I was looking out the window at the moon and I thought of you... and I could feel my heart... breaking.

Mary: John...

John: I felt that that wine and the moon and your face all pushing in my heart and I left the party and I came out here.

Mary: Your eyes are all shiny.

John: I know. And I came out here looking for the moon and I saw that street light shining down through the leaves of that tree.

Mary: Hey yeah! It does look pretty.

John: It's beautiful. I didn't know a street light could be beautiful. I've always thought of them as being cold and blue, you know? But this one's yellow... and it comes down through the leaves and the leaves are so green! Mary, I love you!

Mary: Oh!

John: I shouldn't of said it. I shouldn't of said it.

Mary. No, no. That's all right.

John: My heart is breaking, You must think I'm stupid... but I can feel it breaking. I wish I could stop talking. I can't. I can't.

Mary: I never heard you talking like this before.

John: That's 'cause this is outside the party and it's night and there's a moon up there... and a street light that's more beautiful than the sun! My God, the sidewalks beautiful. Those bits of shiny stuff in the concrete... look how they're sparkling up the light!

Mary: You're crying! You're crying over the sidewalk!

John: I love you Mary!

Mary: That's all right. But don't cry over the sidewalk. You're usually so quiet.

John: Okay. Okay. *(A Pause. Then John grabs Mary and kisses her.)*

Mary: Oh... you used your tongue. *(He kisses her again)* You... should we go into the party?

John: No.

Mary: I got all dressed... I tasted the wine on your... mouth. You were waiting for me out here? I wasn't even going to come. I don't like Susan much. I was going to stay home and watch a movie. What would you have done?

John: I don't know. *(Kisses her again. She kisses him back.)*

Mary: You go to St. Nicholas of Tolentine, don't you?

John: Yeah.

Mary: I see you on the platform on a hundred and forty-ninth street sometimes.

John: I see you, too! Sometimes I just let the trains go by until the last minute, hoping to see you.

Mary: Really?

John: Yeah.

Mary: I take a look around for you but I always get on my train. What would you have done if I hadn't come?

John: I don't know. Walked around. I walk around a lot.

Mary: Walk around where?

John: I walk around your block a lot. Sometimes I run into you.

Mary: You mean that was *planned*? Wow! I always thought you were coming from somewhere.

John: I love you, Mary. I can't believe I'm saying it... to you... out loud. I love you.

Mary: Kiss me again. (*They kiss.*)

John: I've loved you for a long time

Mary: How long?

John: Months. Remember that big snowball fight?

Mary: In the park?

John: Yeah. That's when it was. That's when I fell in love with you. You were wearing a red coat.

Mary: Oh, that coat! I've had that for ages and ages. I've had it since the sixth grade.

John: Really?

Mary: I have really special feelings for that coat. I feel like it's part of me... like it stands for something... my childhood... something like that.

John: You look nice in that coat. I think I sensed something about it ... the coat... it's special to me, too. It's so good to be able to talk to you like this.

Mary: Yeah, this is nice. That's funny how you felt that about my coat. The red one. No one knows how I feel about that coat.

John: I think I do, Mary.

Mary: Do you? If you understood about my red coat... that red coat is like all the good things about when I was a kid... it's like I still have all the good kid things when I'm in that red coat... it's like being all grown up and having your childhood, too. You know what it's like? It's like being in one of those movies where you're safe, even when you're in an adventure. Do you know what I mean? Sometimes, in a movie the hero's doin' all this stuff that's dangerous, but you know, because the kind of movie it is, that he's not gonna get hurt. Bein' in that red coat is like that... like bein' safe in an adventure.

John: I do understand! I do!

Mary: I don't know. I don't know. I don't know about tomorrow, but... right this minute I... love you!

John: Oh, Mary!

Mary: Oh, kiss me, John. Please!

John: You're crying!

Mary: I didn't know. I didn't know two people could understand some things... share some things. *(They kiss.)*

John: It must be terrible not to.

Mary: What?

John: Be able to share things.

Mary: It is! It is! But don't you remember? Only a few minutes ago we were alone. I feel like I could tell you anything. Isn't that crazy?

John: Do you want to go for a walk?

Mary: No, no. Let's stay right here. Between the streetlight and the moon. Under the tree. Tell me that you love me.

John: I love you.

Mary: I love you, too! You're good-looking, did you know that? Does your mother tell you that?

John: Yeah she does.

Mary: Your eyes are shining.

John I know. I can feel them shining.

The Lights Go Down Slowly

Typed by: Jose Henriquez