

Tom T. Hall

"Letters"

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One night in the West Virginia mountains
I got stranded in the deepening snow
I found important house and took a small room
No TV magazines or radio

I've stood and watched the snow fall past the window
And as a traveling man would sometimes do
I've picked up the Bible and looked through it
I found the stock of letters tied in blue

The letters had been left there by a young girl
There were ten and as I read the first
I found that they were from a boy in Detroit
Who'd sent for her as soon as he got work

The first one mentioned her expected baby
The one and two and three were much the same
The fourth and fifth said that he might send to get her
The sixth and seventh offered her his name

The eighth and ninth were weeks apart in postmark
They were short and asked about her help
The tenth one was a tear stained on the pages
Said that he had married someone else

Next morning I felt guilty when I checked out
As the highway people cleared away the snow
I asked about the girl who used to live there
They said she passed away three weeks ago

Well I kept the letters but I never read them
Oh but somewhere up in Detroit, there's a man
Who heard what happened down in West Virginia
And we're the only two who understand

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