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Desert-Born

Richard Ryan Jr.

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(Not really, of course. It was a knife I used on "Banker" Bertoni. I never got too proud to use my hands. Mostly over Jenny the Wop, it was. I wonder what my old man, whoever he is, will think of the front page next Thursday? Me, I keep thinking things might of been different. Success? Not really, brother . . . the chair . . . at twenty-three.)

Desert-Born

By RICHARD RYAN, JR.

I was never born
To live on your green-washboard plains;
They stifle me,
Make me feel as if I were walking on sponge-rubber,
Unable to get out of the hollow I form as I walk;
Surrounded by a monotonous green.

I must have deserts and mesas, stretching away to tall
mountains
That let me feel the space
Around me:

Deserts and mesas full of colors
Changing colors
Reds, bright yellows, hazy blues and grays;
Never the same
Bound together by the heat-haze
As if melted together by the sun.

Deserts and mesas
With warm cloud-shadows floating on them
Deep wine-purple
Shifting in shade, and texture, and value
From moment to moment.

I must have change.