

HAYWARD'S GRAVE

Did I know him?
Mr. Rules,
Mr. Perfection
Mr. No Tolerance For Unsanitation?

He was just an old man
With a plainness in his eyes and face
I can't remember him ever hurting anybody
Oh he was so out of place.

After all those lectures he gave
My favorite put-downs I'd save
Until it was all clear
And I was free to tear.

I was so funny
At his expense.
Just a foolish college kid
A friend in pretense.

He was old
But not quite boss material.
The bosses trusted his squint
His experience, his deferral.

The bosses gave Hayward
Much privilege and clout
Part scientist, part tinkerer
Always present, never out.

Hayward if I could ever say I'm sorry
I'd say it
But there's no sense uttering words
When only this stone can hear it.

That's what you were to me
A figure like stone.
A hard man uncorrupted
No joy in his bones.

I never thought to think,
Just why that was.

Or who you were.

Or why so drawn.

There were hardly two seconds
When you weren't an adversary.
How could I put one past you
Were the thoughts in my day.

Now I'm standing here alone
Wondering what kind of soul you are.
How did you skate past the snickering?
Absorb all our tar?

What kind of man were you?
What kind, what mark?
Well if you were here at the cemetery
You have me a waiting car.

You'd be the one
Who'd step out in the rain.
To open a door
For the one who'd mock you soon.

I wonder if I hurt you very much.
And if that pain you carried with you
Encumbers the space
You now travel to.

You were so perfect
So perfect that I was scared
I'd never be in as much control
As you were here.

Someday, someplace, please understand Hayward.
I was stupid and afraid.
But I am not quite as cold
As you knew me yesterday.



Ara Hagopian