

SECOND GENERATION: NEW YORK

LANGSTON HUGHES

Mama
Remembers the four-leaf clover
And the bright blue Irish sky.

I
Remember the East River Parkway
And the tug boats passing by.

I
Remember Third Avenue
And the el trains overhead,
And our one window sill geranium
Blooming red.

Mama
Remembers Ireland.
All I remember is here—
And it's dear!

Papa
Remembers Poland,
Sleighs in the wintertime,
Tall snow-covered fir trees,
And faces frosty with rime.

Papa
Remembers pogroms
And the ghetto's ugly days.
I remember Vocational High,
Park concerts,
Theatre Guild plays.

Papa
Remembers Poland.
All I remember is here—
 This house,
 This street,
 This city—
And they're dear!

THE THING IN THEIR HEARTS

ELIZABETH WOLFE

OUTSIDE on the window ledge, a gray and brown bird hopped back and forth, looking for crumbs. Minnie unwrapped her lunch. The office atmosphere at noon was one of hushed expectancy. Everything looked ready to burst into activity at the stroke of the clock. The bookkeeping machines sat poised, with Gaylord's pale blue billheads sticking up from the rollers. Mr. Beamish's pen lay waiting in the deep seam of the ledger. Minnie looked at the columnar sheets on her own desk. This was the day for the Advertising Department trial balance. She was doing it alone for the first time, and the feeling of suspense in her chest gave her the queer sensation that she would float up from her chair if her feet were not firmly planted on the floor.

She bit into her sandwich and chewed slowly, trying to subdue this lighter-than-air feeling. The bird still hopped back and forth on the ledge, and, crumbling a piece of bread, Minnie reached carefully over the slanting glass of the ventilator and scattered the crumbs in one corner. The bird, perched on the far edge, cocked its head and with cautious hops came closer.

"Eat up all the crumbs," she said. "Don't leave a scrap."

Mr. Levine did not like her to feed the birds. One time, shortly after she had started on this job, he saw her scatter crumbs on the ledge, and later, when she went to his office with checks to be signed, he said, "Better to not feed the sparrows."

"I don't think they're sparrows, Mr. Levine."

He turned his head sharply toward her. His thick lenses, catching light in a sunburst of rays, sparkled like cut glass.

"To me all birds are sparrows, Miss Feigenbaum."

She laid the checks on his desk.

"Yes, Mr. Levine."

"Don't mistake me, Miss Feigenbaum. I'm not stopping you from kindness to animals." He tapped his fingers against the desk blotter. She noticed that his nails were trimmed square. They looked scrubbed and had a natural gloss.

"In my father's province, Miss Feigenbaum, the villagers had a saying, 'Gde Zhidi, tam vorobyi.'" He paused, and the tapping stopped. "That means, 'Where the Jews, there the sparrows.'"

She could not see his eyes through the light-struck lenses, but she could tell he was looking at her.

"Do we understand ourselves, Miss Feigenbaum?"

She nodded, and he waved in dismissal.

They did understand each other. Funny how you could tell about people, right from the beginning. She had known about Mr. Levine right away. And she felt he knew, too.

"Do you want a place to stay?" he had asked her, when he read her application blank. "A long time maybe?"

"Yes," she replied. "I'm looking for a house where I can work for years maybe. I'm getting too old to shift around. I need security now, not change. I'll do a