

NORMAN. Listen to this: "Elderly gentleman wanted for companionship and conversation, for convalescing invalid. Three afternoons a week." Now, doesn't that sound perfect?

ETHEL. Perfect for you. I wouldn't have much hope for the invalid.

NORMAN. There's another one here: "Retired people sought for handbill delivery. Mornings or evenings. Some walking involved." I should call; I can walk.

ETHEL. Yes, I can just see you walking out there with those mosquitoes. You'd be eaten alive.

NORMAN. I could carry my screen door with me.

ETHEL. Is that why you came rushing back here? To read those silly ads?

NORMAN. Could be. Maybe I should have asked Charlie if he needs another man on the boat. I could balance out there on the deck, and do a belly flop at every dock we came to. Could be a source of amusement all around the lake. Be a tremendous boon to the Postal Department. Get more people writing letters. What do you suppose Charlie would pay me?

ETHEL. Whatever is the matter with you? Why do you need a job? You've always loved being here on Golden Pond with nothing to do. Why is this summer any different?

NORMAN. I'm in the market for a last hurrah.

ETHEL. Lord. Why can't you just pick berries and catch fish and read books, and enjoy this sweet, sweet time?

NORMAN. Do you want to know why I came back so fast with my little bucket? I got to the end of our lane, and I...couldn't remember where the old town road was. I went a little way into the woods, and nothing looked familiar, not one tree. And it scared me half to

death. So I came running back here, to you, to see your pretty face, and to feel that I was safe. That I was still me.

*He puts his face in his hands. Ethel is stunned, but rallies quickly. She sits by him.*

ETHEL. Well, you're safe, you old poop. And you're definitely still you. Still picking on poor Charlie. After lunch, after we gobble up all the strawberries, I'll *take* you down to the old town road. You'll remember it all, my darling; we've walked it a thousand thousand times. And we'll pick us another batch of those little tiny berries. And I'll do the bending. You just talk away the mosquitoes.

*She rubs his back and smiles down at him sadly.*