

dead in his hand, not in the way of a phone when the other party has hung up, but in the completely lifeless way of a telephone that is connected to nothing any more and is just hanging on a wall without even wires leading away to the outside now.

Nearly all the rest of the night Carl Denigmann sat up thinking of all the farm had been to him, and Billy Amling, and many others, including Denigmanns who were dead long before he'd been born. And this spring Carl is out plowing it again and he expects to keep farming for at least a few more years. By then, he told me, he'll have figured out what to do; he thinks maybe Galesburg might accept the old farm as a sort of park or preserve, with picnic tables, maybe, but mostly leaving it pretty much as is for kids to hunt through with their twenty-tuos, and swim in the creek, and prowl around the old mounds, and pretend, at least, that they're Indian graves. Carl doesn't know, exactly, what he'll do about the farm; he just knows he's not going to let them subdivide it.

I'm glad about that; just as I'm glad the old Pollard place was saved, and that there won't be a great big factory right out at the end of Broad Street, and about a lot of other things I haven't got time to tell. I'm glad because here in Galesburg, and everywhere else, of course, they're trying—endlessly—to destroy the beauty we inherit from the past. They keep trying, and when they succeed, they replace it—not always, but all too often—with drabness and worse. With a sterile sun-baked parking lot where decrepit, characterful, old Boone's Alley once ran; rechristening the asphalt-paved nothingness (as though even the memory of old Boone's

Alley must be blotted from mind) with the characterless title Park Plaza. And with anonymous apartment buildings where fine old houses once stood. With concrete-block ugliness sprawling along what were charming country roads. With—but you know what they're doing; wherever you live, you see it all around you. They even want to level Galesburg's ancient Public Square into—well, a parking lot, of course, as though there were nothing more important.

And who are "they?" Why, "they" are us, of course; who else? We're doing these things to ourselves as though we were powerless to stop; or as though any feeling for beauty or grace or a sense of the past were a kind of sentimental weakness to be jeered down. So what has been happening in Galesburg? Why, it's simple enough.

Galesburg's past is fighting back. It's *resisting* us, for the past isn't so easily destroyed; it's not simply gone with yesterday's newspaper. No, it is not, for it has been far too much—we are all products of it—to ever be completely gone. And so, somehow, in Galesburg, Illinois, when it's been necessary as it sometimes has, the past has fought against the present. When the need becomes desperate enough, then the old yellow streetcars, or horse-drawn fire engines, or abandoned wall phones can and do flicker into momentary existence again, struggling to keep what I and so many others—Carl Sandburg, for one, who was born here—love about Galesburg, Illinois.

It's hard to say whether it's succeeding; they did, after all, chop down a lot of fine old Galesburg elms to widen Losey Street; Boone's Alley is gone; and last year the library burned down and the townspeople voted against rebuilding