

## THE DWARF

*Editor's Note:* The author of this poem has stated that when she wrote it law was "the last thing I had in mind". Nevertheless, she has graciously consented to our reprinting the poem, together with the comment that our readers may find its imagery appropriate to the perennially controversial problem of defining the role of law in "a changing world".

The dwarf keeps the maiden  
In a glass coffin  
On his dining room table  
Sealed shut with her half apple  
To make her stay dead.

Here she is secure  
A stiff wax blossom under  
A cut-glass bell  
In this house where all is still  
As mahogany and stuffed leather  
Except the dwarf, who moves his chair  
Nearer, to sit and stare

For he rightly fears  
If he looks away, she will stand up  
(The coffin shattered like a chandelier)  
And walk out through his panelled halls  
(A dwindling bluebeard stowed inside  
Every fastened cupboard)

Then he will have to follow her  
Into the menace of a changing world  
Until she disappears up branching stairs  
He never will be tall enough to climb.

MARGARET ATWOOD\*

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\*Miss Atwood is a Toronto poet. This poem originally appeared in the spring, 1963, issue of *The Tamarack Review*, and has subsequently been reprinted in *Poetry 64*, an anthology of contemporary Canadian poetry, edited by Jacques Godbout and John Robert Colombo. (Les Editions du Jour and The Ryerson Press, 1963).