

# But It's Been a While

*by* David James

When I first met Luther he was sitting on the sidewalk, his back pushed up against a vacant storefront wall, thumbing through the “help wanted” section of a few-days-old copy of our local paper and I was moved to offer him a couple of dollars for which he said, “Thanks, I’m making do, but it’s hard”, said he’d lost his job a while ago but that he’d found ways to get by, living in a GMC school bus body deep in back of Fitzgerald’s Junk Yard and, smiling, said, “Don’t ask where I got my blankets or ask me how I get food” and though he was out at his sidewalk spot most days, and we talked, I never asked and when others would stop long enough to listen, Luther would always tell them, as he did me, that he lost his job—but he didn’t tell them he lost it when the hosiery mill closed — eleven years ago.

