

The Days of The Olde Burying Yard

by Doug Bond

On the short walk from school we scuffed our shoes through dry leaves. I kicked a pumpkin in the gutter down a hill. At the graveyard, Mrs. Denson showed us how to hold the paper against the stones and rub from the center out using the long side of the crayon, not the pointed tip.

I'd been held back to do 5th grade again, so I knew how it worked and showed some kids. The place had been holding dead bodies for over 300 years. I said to Cindy to follow me, I'd show her the best one.

At the far corner, almost off in the woods, I found it, the one that had the poem. There were black chestnuts lying rotted all around.

"Phennias Jessup is his name. That's his death's head scroll, an hourglass, bats, spirals and angel's wings on either side of the top part of the stone. That's called the tympanum."

Cindy had short blond braids and black buckle shoes. I told her to rub the stone so we could read the words.

*From youth and vigor soon he fled
And here he rests among ye dead
Uncertain here we draw our breath
How soon we pass from life to death.*

"Cindy, Phennias Jessup was only 9 years old, and here we are standing on top of his head!"

She screamed at me and stomped up the hill to tell Mrs. Denson.
When they headed back down I ran away flapping my arms with the
wind.

