

Merry-Go-Round

by Jack Swenson

I was at the bottom of a hole. It was a deep hole with rough sides. There was a circle of light far above my head.

They came and got me and put me in a room. There were four beds in the room. I could tell by the personal belongings scattered about that three were taken. I put my bag down next to the bed that was free. I sat down and put my head in my hands. Good God, I thought. It was the same room I was in my first visit ten years before.

Ten years, and I'm right back where I started from! I heard the wind shriek and the shutters flap with laughter against the side of the house. I opened my eyes and looked around. The room spun like a merry-go-round. Ghosts of the past and goblins of the future danced to the tune of a calliope.

"Stop!" I shouted. "I want to get off!" The toothy horses showed me the whites of their crazy eyes. "No, no"! they chorused as they whirled around and around and around.

I awoke in a sweat. The next day I told one of the counselors about my dream. She smiled. "Good," she said. "Maybe you're ready. Do you remember what the only requirement is?"

"Yes," I said. "You have to have the desire."

She nodded. "That's it," she said. "That's all it takes. That's what is required to make a beginning."

