

If You See God, Don't Tell Him

by Jerry Ratch

A wrinkled old woman sat at the table next to me. "Are you a writer?" she asked.

"Yes, I am."

"Are you Jewish?"

"No, I'm not," I replied.

"Where do you come from?" she asked in her broken English.

"Chicago," I said. "The Bohemian ghetto there, on the South side. That's where all my relatives come from."

"Are you Czech?"

"Yes."

"That is good," she said. "The Czechs were good people to us, to the Jews. They would help us. I am from Budapest."

"When did you come over?" I asked.

"1947. I don't speak still too good."

"You do fine."

"Aren't you Jewish?" she asked. "You look Jewish."

"I don't know for sure," I said. "My girlfriend is. I'm not so sure about me."

"I don't pray anymore," the old woman said. "Because when we were in the concentration camps, where was He?" She looked directly at me, whispering behind her hand, "If you see God, don't tell Him."

