

# Joseph and Son

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“And I will fasten him as a nail  
in a sure place . . . .”

Isaiah 22:23

The shop smelled of wood’s death-scent  
released, by the carpenter’s skill,  
in the spring breeze: nature  
spread across the afternoon  
squeezed bright through open windows,  
as scent lapsed into memory: his son  
among the small shop clutter,  
wading ankle-deep in wood chips;  
hair flaked with sawdust —  
smelling of new creation  
in arms held to see a chair taking form.

“Joseph & Son” hung,  
pre-neon over the new shop,  
                                (a different city),  
nostalgic conjunction  
of a son stepping out with destiny.

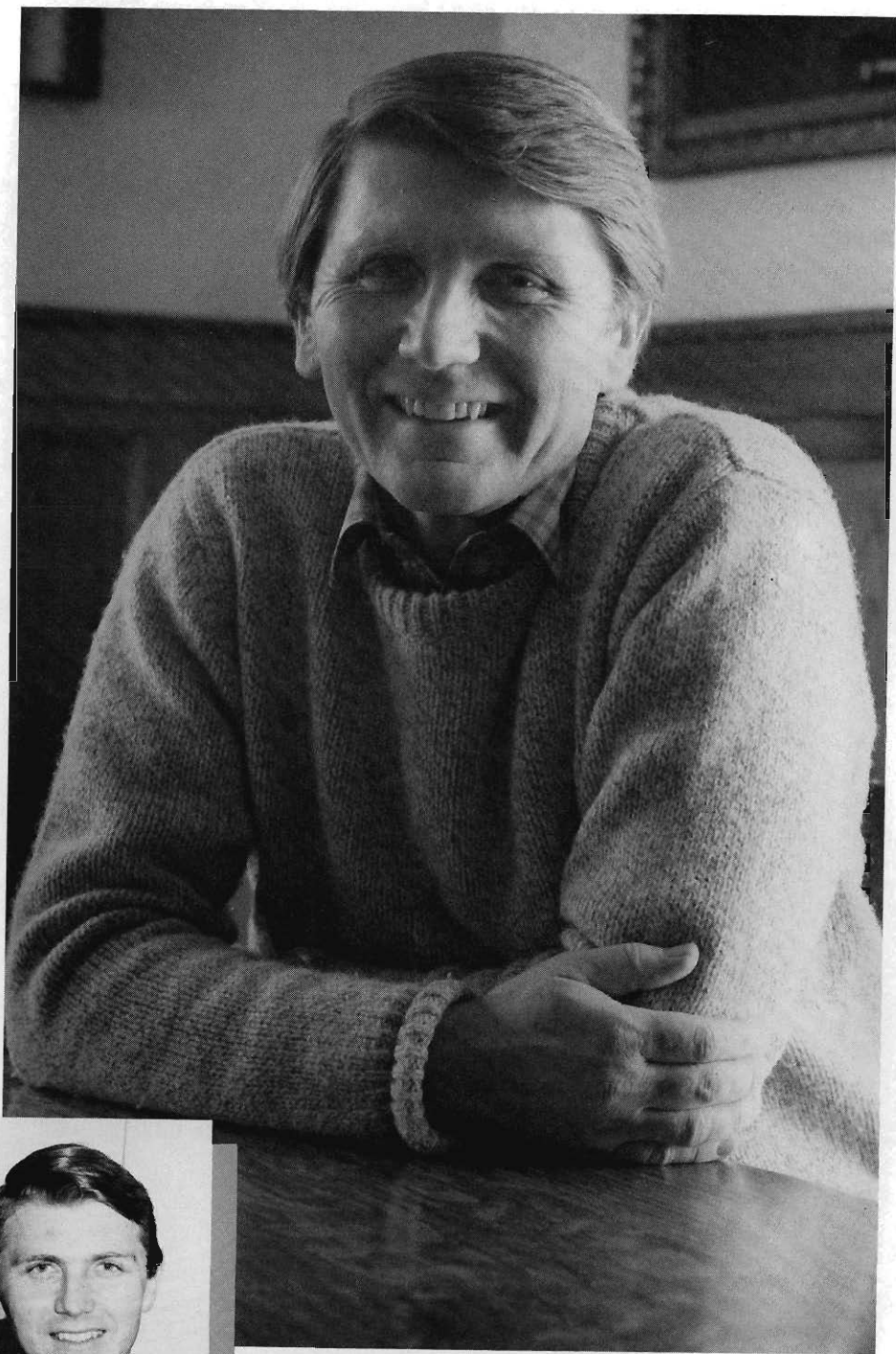
So, lonely, he worked the long shaft of wood,  
stroking in some last detail  
as light rushed the opened door:  
a large silhouette of a man,  
forward, with arm and hand extended.  
“I’ve come . . .”

“I know,” the carpenter said, cutting him off,  
taking the parchment as he moved down the table  
to kiss the cross bar.

(The light, impatient:  
arms pulled to attention; expression, firm.)

“It’s finished.”

Through the doorway,  
Joseph watched the soldier move slowly down the street,  
stone-footed under the heavy wooden cross.



*Eugene England in 1966 and 1986.*