

## **What I Am Now**

I went by the lodge this afternoon to pull the fish out of the freezer for our meeting next week. Brother Jimmy Horne was there, as usual, blowing the oak leaves out of the yard. Brother Horne is a thirty-year member of my lodge here in Bradford's Neck, and although he was relatively inactive for years, he's made up for lost time after retirement. He's always there to help out, and his donation of time has made a big difference in the way our lodge looks.

"Brother Horne," I said, interrupting his work. He killed the blower and we sat on the steps and talked a while. Saturday traffic sped by as we exchanged pleasantries.

"You know, Buzz, I never thought I would ever be a member of this lodge," said Brother Horne. "There was a time in my life when I spent most of the day drunk. I used to sit against the wall at Carson's across the street, and watch the finest men in our community walk up these steps on meeting nights. I knew I could never become a Mason."

He said, "After some really tough times, I joined AA and began to attend Church. I met my wife to be, and the rest is history. We married, raised two children, and I held a good job with the county as an inspector until I retired."

"A few years ago, I petitioned Acacia 357, and was accepted to receive the Degrees. I'm so fortunate that the members of this lodge were willing to see me as I was then, and not as I was a few years before petitioning."

I left Brother Horne to finish his leaf blowing, and I drove toward home. I keep remembering what he said about being considered for what he was rather than what he had been. I'm lucky too. I looked at my ring as I turned the steering wheel. I think I still have a ways to go to live up to the teachings of our Fraternity. I'm going to try harder.