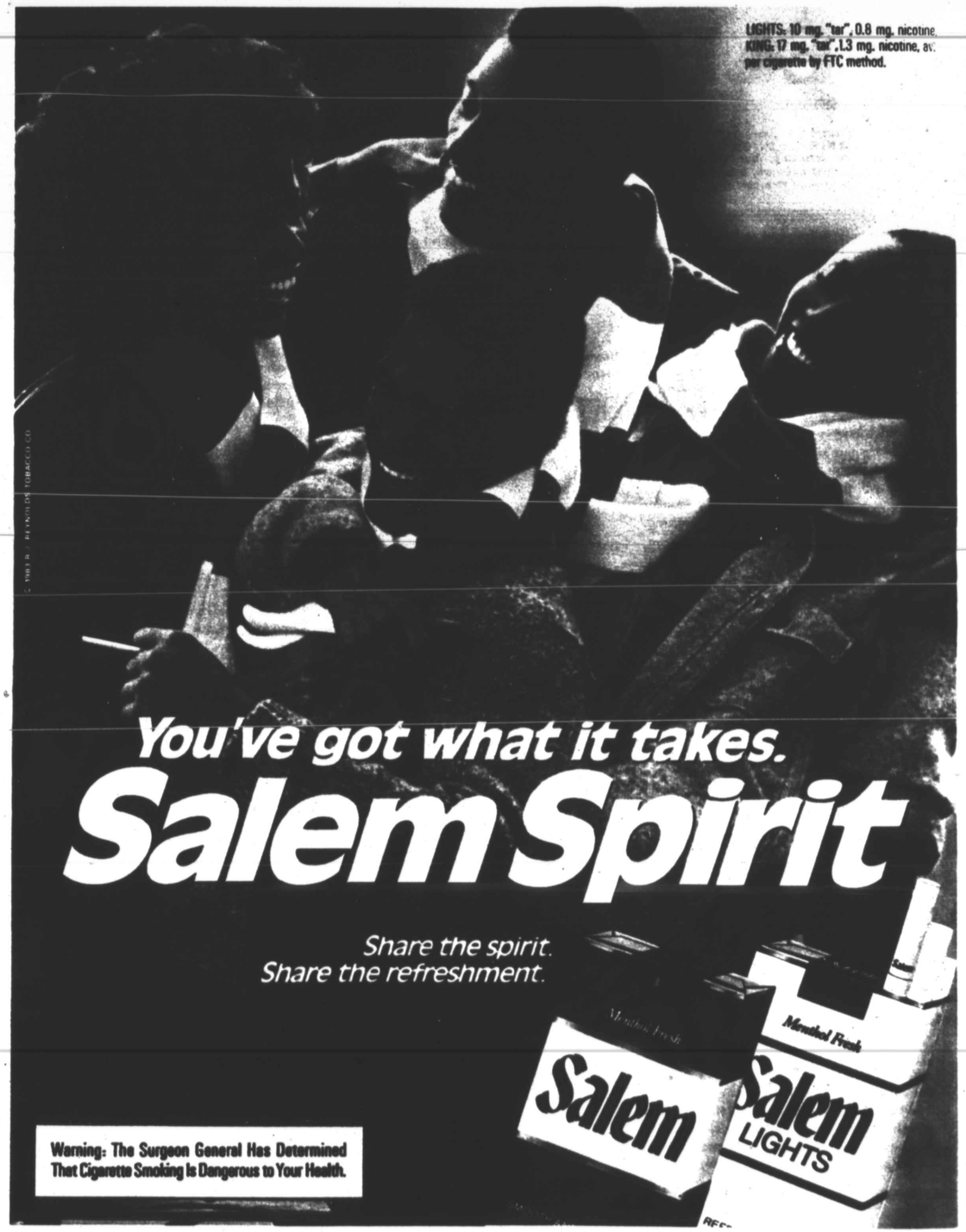

THE POETRIE GALLERIE

THE BOSS MAN

He looked up at me from behind his desk, then back up in a quick double-take. As if to be sure I was really black and contemplate who'd made the mistake.

He spoke slowly, as though he did not trust his voice to disguise his feeling about me standing there in his office by some flunky slip or double dealing.

He forced himself to smile as he talked but the whole time I could still detect the bright-red of his natural attitude creeping slowly up the back of his neck.

He spoke highly of his company's position as a leading, equal-opportunity employer though the dark cloud surrounding him gave an impression of the great destroyer.

He said he hoped our working relationship would be one that we could both enjoy. He said, "I really respect you people, and we're glad to have you with us, boy."

JOHN C. GILMORE
Gallipolis, OH

"WHEN THE DOWN TIMES GET UP"

Out on a porch stoop sat a man and a woman, aged and retired, just two ordinary people.

But old and worn out like a weather beaten church steeple.

"Yes sir," said the old man who's name is Pete; who's pants are so ragged there is almost no seat.

"There was times when all that was out and down, usta would sometime, somehow get back off the groun'."

"Well the lawd sho nuff see's em, yes he does I know's he does," bellowed the old woman called Ma Pat.

"Them folks in govament," she says with a start; "ain't nothin like Martin, they'll neva be that smart."

Up strides Tim, a friendly sort, who's an adopted child to all the elders and a real great sport.

"I hear what your saying, and most people are thinking, let me say this, my faith in the place is not like yours, steadily shrinking."

"You see," said Tim with warmth and sincerity in his smile, and more pep than a runner taking on a mile;

"I feel in my heart that just like a new born pup, some day old folks, THE DOWN TIMES WILL BE UP."

"When the sun shines bright to the very core and no one sets out just to even a score;

Then all the world will hail heartier than ever before."

"You wait," said Tim, anxiety ridden, I've few fears and those are very well hidden."

"You'll see what I mean if your days aren't outnumbered. The young folks are here and we won't be caught slumbered."

"Why, we're an intelligent lot," he says with an insidious grin and affluent air, "we have what it takes, a good education and a sensitive spot."

"Guts, yes and style, something you elders forgot somewhere down the line, but we're here to say, today we're holding a new and different sign; one that reads: Wake up world here's your coffee and a cup, Open your eyes cause THE DOWN TIMES ARE UP!

Old man Pete looked at Tim with a gleam of hope in his eyes; "You know son," he said, "maybe you is right, but these dusky grey skies ain't gon' turn blue overnite."

"Leave the boy be," chided Ma Pat, who's fondness for Tim was like the love of her rocker or knitting or maybe more than that.

"Least he's tryin, that's bettern' I kin say for most. He's got a dream, somethin' of which he kin boast."

Then with more subtlety than she'd shown in years, Ma Pat spoke slowly and was very near to tears.

"Peace of mind for every mankind is not, Tim sees, too hard to find, Glory be to the boy, I'm in his corner, ruther be wit him than wit some foreigner."

Tim looked on at both Ma and Pete, convincing the world was his greatest feat.

He shook his head at an amazing thought, one thing about these elders they couldn't be bought.

Then he tilted his head at an amazing thought, one thing about these elders they couldn't be bought.

Then he tilted his head up towards the sky, looked away in the distance at all the birds that fly;

"You know," he said in a loud and steady voice, "Believe it or not we do have a choice."

"Because when the UP times come tumbling DOWN, sooner or later DOWN times will get back UP and AROUND."

ALICE PEAVY
Cleveland, OH

AGELESS WISDOM

She weakly reached her hand out toward mine,
Hoping some of youth's strength there to find.
I had just sat down on the porch swing that day,
After noticing this dear old lady rocking the time away.
At first we were silent but then began to share,
Some of our memories, thoughts and cares.
As she talked of all the folks and years gone by,
I gained insights about the past as well as things I might try.
She enjoyed listening to me tell of all the ways,
Some different things had been in recent days.
By the end of our talk, she was sitting straighter in her chair.
I believe she'd gained strength by feeling needed there.
So, we should remember whether folks are old or new,
They need to be loved and given something to do.

DARLENE L. HOUSE
Detroit, MI

SPARKS

I scan my mind
For some abstract design
taste the bitter wine
of futility.
Ahead I see,
a vision
concrete, yet discrete
old, but not obsolete.
Started, but not complete
yet
It shall one day
trickle down my spine
through my arms,
down from my mind.
Motivate my hand
to write again, for
this wine I sip
will make fire fly
from my fingertips.
Sparks — sizzling like a
wet, black, live wire,,
Come, take my hand,
taste of the fire.

ROY D. WILLIAMS
Atlanta, GA

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