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# In Palermo: Laundry; Hats; Station

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DAVID KEPLINGER

*In Palermo*

LAUNDRY

Between the tenements the flowery housedresses and giant panties flutter. The place is narrow—two arm lengths, best—where lines got fashioned across this alley, twenty stories high. Twenty laundry lines. Today the wind is light and spring has come. The passing cars in traffic, traffic, traffic, only get a glimpse. Way up I saw a pair of hands passing cake towards another pair of hands. Their garments touched each other lavishly.

HATS

Life on earth is pulled down hard on a man's head. This life was made by hatters. A busy street is only coffee, bread, and hats. The smell of a man's hat—an old man's hat—is like the nostril of a horse. You are breathing in what something beautiful and ancient has breathed out. The heat and life contained in it, the silk interior. An old man's hat is necessary: You see that when he takes it off, his hair and skin abruptly float away.

STATION

I've been to this station, but I'll never go back. A beautiful woman in a green gown was clasping a shoe to her ankle. The stiletto on that shoe was the length of my pointer finger. Her other foot was bare. The woman stood up, threw her purse on the crook of her shoulder. *Tik-tump, Tik-tump*, and away she went. The train pulled out. Tell me, what do I do with that image? The woman's still there. She walks on the stilt of my finger.