

Reading of His Poem on Local TV Station Thrills S-M Native, Now Successful Author



Vincent Foale

George Vukelich, a native of South Milwaukee, and now a professional writer, with material published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Colliers*, *The Best Short Stories of 1955*, the *Martha Foley Anthology*, and for the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., and Ford Theater on television, has written a poem about — and dedicated to — his grandfather, Vincent Foale.

Vukelich, born in S-M in 1927, lived his early life in a home on 10th ave., about where the gate lodge for Bucyrus-Erie Co. now stands. He is now a resident of Madison, Wis. His latest work, a novel, "Fisherman's Beach," has been optioned by Atlantic-Little, Brown, Boston publishing firm.

The poem, which is reprinted below, was recently read on a Milwaukee television station. Vukelich subsequently wrote to *The*

VoiceJournal, enclosing the poem and the picture of his grandfather, saying how thrilled he was to have his work read so close to home. It was "a little bit like old home week for me . . ." he said, noting that South Milwaukee was his birthplace 30 years ago.

THE OLD COUNTRY MAN:
My Grandfather in Translation
by George Vukelich

We were Rumanians from the Old Country
In Transylvania: Tata Nostru was Our Father
We came to this country and brought our crosses
We looked for Luck and Bread in this Christly Land

Our backyard without a fence:
Only the barbedwire of the Bucyrus-Erie plant

Pigiron: and the men who no-speak-English
We made the power shovels for Panama
And the big jobs of digging
Around this world:

The foreman from Ireland: he called us foreign.
What the hell his father dead
He could not remember
And he forgot the rest

I liked my kimmel and there was always the homebrew
Sundays I walked the grandchildren through the gardenplot
We went poking in the crawly cucumber vines
The kids chewing on carrots
The sun coming West and the Limited train
Going for Chicago

You never watched us closely in the cornfield, Old Man

Sneaking the cornsilk for our cigarets

That was the summer we finally went to the store

and bought the Twenty Grands and told the man Schulz

*They were for you: your hands were bad with the rheumatism and you could not roll your own
We lied:*

America has the body and the mind of a Young Man
And there is no fear of Anything that walks or crawls
Or carries a gun or a club or a stiletto in the seaboot:

America is that quiet tough One who just got off the boat
And was heading for the steelmills around Gary and South Chicago
And Sandusky, Conneaut and Lorain, Ohio

I got muscle, Mister. You got Money?
Time and a half for overtime and you own me
From Monday to Saturday and you can buy me on Sunday too
Only that comes extra

I dig your ore I make your steel
I bring my woman and my old saints
Here: USA
She say our kids all coming one day big: Very Big
We going buy house: and please
We going to stay a little bit.

And this was my father's saying

also:

Pray

Like you are going to die tomorrow

and Work

Like you never going to die at all.