

THE OLD MAN

An old Italian man
about 65
wearing a shabby, small brimmed,
grey fedora
hovers at the door on a hot day
in North Beach.
He gazes longingly
at the cool white Panama hats.
I invite him in. He tries on
a short brimmed Panama.
He is remembering his youth
on the Mediterranean
the white beaches, hot sun
and dark bodies.
He asks the price.
I tell him, "\$25".
The sides of his mouth drop
as he realizes
he can't afford a new cool,
pure, white straw hat.
His youth slowly fades
from his mind.
He whispers, "I'm sorry,"
and returns to Grant avenue.

