THE SEASON FOR APPLES

One snowy afternoon I was in this

taxi going downtown when the driver

turned, asked if I'd mind picking up on

the way a lady at the Resurrection Home.

I said no, I didn't. It turned out she

was a regular call, the drivers knew her;

twice a day they'd pick her up a block

from the Home, then drive her to the Stag's Leap

and pick her up again for the uphill

run an hour or two later. So we stopped

and this wrinkled lady gets in. She's shaking

a little, because all she's wearing is

a summer dress, not even a sweater.

She's friendly with the driver, asks him in

for a drink. He says no, so she asks me.

I've got some time to waste, we go on in.

The bartender, he knows her too, gives her

a shot. She buys me one. I ask her where's

her coat, and she says she has one, but they

sometimes take it away in the winter

to keep her from going to the bar. She

has a good laugh, like a horse, except I

hear it breaking up a little. I buy her

one, then I've got to go. She says: Sonny,

getting old is like shaking a plastic

bag of apples. One comes out, the others

get stuck. And you don't want them to come out.