**The Cop and the Anthem**

**By Robert Brome**

"The Cop and the Anthem" covers one night and one morning in the life of Soapy, a homeless man living in New York City in the early 1900s. When it's warm, Soapy lives in Madison Square Park. Now that winter is coming, the park will be too cold. So, Soapy decides to do what he's done for several winters: get himself arrested so he can spend the winter in jail.

Soapy decides to fill his belly and get arrested at the same time by eating in a fancy restaurant and then not being able to pay for the meal. But the waiter figures out what he's up to just by looking at his clothes—Soapy doesn't make it through the door. Next, Soapy breaks a shop window. Since he doesn't run away, the policeman doesn't believe Soapy is responsible. After that, Soapy finds a cheaper restaurant to try his initial plan on. He gets in and eats a yummy meal. When Soapy reveals he can't pay for the meal, the waiters refuse to call the cops, and toss Soapy out on his ear instead.

From there, Soapy pretends to hit up on a lady, right in front of a cop. Well, the lady is game and says she'll go home with Soapy if he buys her some beers. Soapy runs away from her and tries to get arrested by yelling and dancing like a maniac on the street in front of a policeman. This policeman thinks Soapy is a drunk college guy, and he leaves Soapy alone. Finally, Soapy steals a man's umbrella, claiming it's his. The man confesses that he actually found the umbrella and that it could well be Soapy's. So, he doesn't call over the policeman watching them.

Soapy gives up trying to get arrested for the night, and heads back to his park bench. On the way, he comes to a quiet street with a church on it. He hears a beautiful anthem (religious hymn, in this case) being played on an organ coming from the church. Soapy knows the anthem and it reminds him of past days when he had family and friends and church.

The anthem creates a huge change in Soapy's "soul" (42). He realizes that he can have a better life than this. Inspired and feeling empowered, Soapy begins making plans for the future. First thing he needs? A job. Lucky for him, he even knows where he can probably get one. Tomorrow, he'll go and get that job and work toward the dreams and goals he used to have.

Soapy's thoughts are interrupted by the long arm of the law.

That long arm is attached to the sixth policeman we see in the story. He arrests Soapy for loitering, or vagrancy (not having a place to live or a way to support yourself). The next morning, a judge sentences Soapy to three months in jail.