

## **Robby Ivy**

The summer I worked for him, Tuesday afternoons were special because the public radio station would play an opera. Nick knew all of the plots and carefully explained them in great detail, and then would happily sing along. He conned me into many bonsai collecting trips, using me to carry heavy items and act as a lookout while he worked on uprooting his quarry. He liked windblown trees from rocky lakeshores, and on those trips I'd watch for the sheriff's patrol boat while fishing. If someone came near, he'd hide his saws, sit back and light a cigarette while I chatted with the interloper till they left. One morning, we climbed a steep pathless Adirondack hill whose exposed summit had several promising trees. Nick decided they weren't ready to be taken, so he pruned the roots and tops intending to come back. He never did, but I like to think of those trees still on their hilltop.

Did you ever go on a ghost walk with your dad? He went through a spell when donning bed sheets and walking out to some rock in the pasture after dark amused him. This little memory and a thousand others of him have been floating through my mind, especially on the long drive down here. The ghost walks seemed a bit silly to me. I was much more interested in sitting around after dinner smoking home grown from a pipe he lit with a Zippo lighter. The weed had a nice petroleum kick he must have liked.