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①
It was one of those rare days when I had escaped the treadmill of my self-enslavement to regular jobs in industrial plants to expel the usual accumulation of dust and attack the disarray of my house. I was a working wife. My husband had been a semi-invalid all of our married life -- a matter of ten years or more. He was sixteen years older than I, and a veteran of the first world war.

I had read the signs correctly in the early years of our marriage: economically, this marriage was and never could be greater than my ability to endorse it with whatever worldly goods were required to make it.

I was of slight build and limited strength, but according to my philosophy, nothing was impossible and my ambition for my son knew no bounds! I had chosen what I had considered a favorable time to bring him into the world, and my judgment had been at its lowest ebb at that moment. My son was born right in the midst of the depression and all he had seen of this world since had been the gringing aftermath of depression.

The animals on this day, and there were many, had taken up comfortable positions in (they hoped) quiet and less frequently disturbed places. The salvage of these rejected and needy fellows had been my son's very first objective. "These things ARE my work," he very often said, "you must understand, Mother, that I was sent to earth to do many things that others do not wish to do -- or cannot do. That is why I must often offend the baby sitters by not being at home and even off hurt, now sometimes. You though, I love you very much and you have come nearest to understanding this and everything else about me than anyone else now living..."

There was young Jim's crib in the corner -- it was four foot in length and still large enough to hold him, but seldom was utilized by him these days -- so busy was he, dropping in on the ~~XXXXXX~~ lonely, and kinless and sick, taking wild flowers and enchanting odds and ends of things which he could not bear to see abandoned to a garbage heap because of their latent beauty... wherever beauty was in person or thing, obscured as it was often was by careless handling, it became its BEST under his touch.

Troubled people came and he talked long because with them he to take philosophical approaches to solutions. He did this in the privacy of "his church" in the 2nd story of the garage (a spacious, comfortable place with fresh flowers ALWAYS on the altar). Some time later and after their troubles had cleared up, many of these would seek me out to say (some would speak rather nastily or irately) as if I personally...resenting "something" about my attitude toward my son. These I assumed to be close associates of my husband's sisters-in-law, who held that one's character of a housewife was dwarfed by working outside the home especially if she

was so skillful, and if her services were as much in demand as were mine.

The sun topped the distant trees and cleared the intervening shadow, and in a swoop (burst) of glory washed through the big picture window where my husband sat observing the early morning passers-by as they gaped in and out of town along the main artery of travel easterly and westerly. Our village of Lynn, Indiana, provided but few means of making a living for the impoverished who were forced to seek employment in either Winchester, 17 miles to the North, or in Richmond, a somewhat larger city, 17 miles to the South. Our city was halved by Federal Highway #36 which ran from coast to coast through flat lands and hot winds. -

of Kansas, though I do not recall my outstanding job opportunities for committing heads of households either to east of _____ (?vest)...

This need of transportation to apply for and maintain jobs in such distant employment, and the extreme duress of the depression, making the price of gasoline and upkeep prohibitive, predicament got me bugged over such conditions and made me bent upon seeking alternatives, too it.

out of fear they'd be bent upon borrowing
Our bankers had looked askance at potential manufacturing interests: ^{but} bent upon borrowing. Like many small towns they wished to cleave to old ways, etc... ~~so being a woman of outstanding impatience and with marrow~~

that persisted in making the poor poorer and fostering new generations of them as in the past, I brought together these bankers and a so-called "deadbeat" from just across the line in Ohio who knew tomatoes and the processing of same from "a to izzart" and whom the depression had just driven into bankruptcy. ^{I was a woman of outstanding impatience with views and attitudes that were not designed to serve the needs of populations --} So I talked and advocated and stood into this 100% until a job

offer in another city again made a commuter of me. By this time, I was certain I had convinced the processor of tomatoes that ^{he} would tear into him like a rooster on a compile at the first thought that crossed his mind about "defrauding" even the least of these people who had trusted him ONLY because I had sworn that "risk though he be, he was RISK worth taking." ...even though...I knew he would defraud his own Grandma. ~~XXXXXX~~ "Remember," said I, when we reached agreement, "just remember -- in the event temptation starts dangling foolish ideas before your covetous mind's eye.. that nowhere on the face of this earth lives a human being who can so "expertly reduce RISK to zero."

I never saw the man again, but kept my finger on the pulse of his "impulses" as I had sworn to do. He ~~flaw~~ flew fight -- not only keeping faith with the folk in the town but "expanding" in response to increased need, holding strictly as he had agreed with me to our hiring of local residents on a first priority.

Bobby, the raccoon kitten was rolling and kicking amid the downiness of the crib arranging and rearranging his covers. An attention he insisted that I grant him at bed time is giving a plaintive whimper "whee" when he was ready to end his busy day. His waking up to a new day was quite a ritual as he conducted it -- so cunningly, appealing as to make one weep at remembering. It always inspired to grab him and shield him from all harm in some enchanted nook where "harm" could never come.

The village never-do-well strolled past the picture window over allled, plow shoes, outfitted for agricultural work which he had shunned

most of his life.

"Ugh," growled my spouse. "There goes a good for nothin. For all of the years I know him and I swear, he never tells the truth."

The truth is often too drab. In his case, it was so. He likes more color, more humorous events than every day happenings afford -- quite a philosophical man...

"Philosophical, hell.. he's downright ignorant," said he, with undue heat.

I continued, "Once he challenged his sister Beatrice about having kids faster than a cat can respectably have kittens.. Betty answered, "The Bible said populate the earth and I believe the bible.." said she smugly.

He replied, "But dear sister, it did not say you gotta do it all by yourself. Why doncha just relax this big heat of yours before all the kids start lookin' as if cut over the same pattern.. You, Betty, I love ye but I do not think

we have all that much to hand down or pass on... Ye know how Paw lit out and left maw, house full of kids and nothin else.. and showed up in this county on a dozen towns every election day to vote the republican ticket.. "cause his paw did. Why else? Paw didn't have enough solid sense to pour pea out of a book. How would ee know what's best to vote for?

A screen door hit the outside wall of the house with a bang and the young man, I called Jimba, my son, bounced into the room. Clad in sun suit slender, bronzed and full of zip, he gave the racoon kitten a gentle roughing. Bobby spat, hissed, blew and became a round ball to be stuffed in the bib of Jimba's sunsuit. I landed again, he hoisted himself up beside me where I sat on the ancient library table beside my typewriter.

"Remember that man who offered you that marvelous opportunity way back in that time you called depression, Mom, said he. I ~~xxx~~could sense my husband giving full rein to his morbid suspicions of vast, ill founded promiscuity.. Startled, I stammered a "Good Heaven's, No, child!" Whan man or woman either could have boasted such excellent turn of events or safely hustled(?) such strength of bargaining power at such an unfortunate time in our history when nations starved and all people sought sustenance from garbage dumps...

The child continued. "You needn't be so shocked, Mom. Perhaps you do not remember, but that does not mean there was no such man. He sat in that very chair right there. I stood beside his chair. My eyes came level with his ear and I was surprised and shocked when I saw a speck of dirt there...

"Why," thundered I, with more feeling than I'd dreamed possible to register -- especially over...nothing.

"Mother," said he with studied patience ... "here was a man well dressed, clean as a pin, who spoke remarkably well and who was concerned only with you, and you deliberately did not restrain Pete the groundhog, and he was bitten to the bone and one of his crimson socks rent in half so he had to stick both socks in his pocket and let his ankle bleed better, etc., but somehow he thought it funny and looked much happier when he left our house. You know I've wondered for years about what that remarkable opportunity was that he offered you.

"Oh, ~~xxxxxxx~~that!" tittered I, gustily, "I shall reveal it the very moment your father sets off for the pool hall this evening.

His father rose in high drudgeon and decamped the place, speedily and at once.

I clutched the bronzed shoulder in a weak hearted grip.. the racoon kitten rose to full height out of his sun suit bib and blew a warning blast in my face.

Always play acting with Jimba and our wee animal babes, I croaked hoarsely, "Alas! 'Twas a correspondence course he offered and with almost no installment terms, and though I could not have bought it if the charge _____ had been a bag of cinders, money was that tight, then -- non-existent. Perhaps you should reveal this to your Father, not later than tomorrow...

"Mom," said he, "I can urinate over our hen house since I was circumcized."

"Man!! ~~xxix~~exclaimed I, "I must say that is real free wheeling compared to the modest-- arc we had before.

Later in the day, when I was making some progress with my house cleaning, I was aware of voices out in front on the sidewalk and lifted the edge of a curtain to sneak a peek...

There was little Jim convoying a stranger (an adult female) straight for the front door and it was still the depth of depression years and without a doubt she had a cargo of something to sell, for he was saying, "Do not be troubled, Madam. You will feel better after we talk to my mother about it. She can think of ways to do most everything. Last week she made our Miss Mouse a pair of pj's and Miss Mouse on the very verge of having babies, to which she did almost immediately thereafter, and of all the things that might have messed up Miss Mouse's plans what with Mom meddling with her plans, NOTHING did as I shall show you.. Miss Mouse's plans worked very well, indeed, in spite of mom's meddling with 'em.. I shall show you her babies. It's like that with -- ~~any~~ but I will say Mom doesn't work at getting into people's business...though it never fails that she knows more about it and how to get 'em out of it than they KNOW about their own business. She says that is because these are depression years and nobody has lived through the likes of it before..

By now, he was pounding on the front door and I had darted into an upstairs bedroom ^{where} and crawled under the bed.. This lady had looked so correctly English throughout, that I hadn't the courage to confront her problem in present state of physical fatigue and dishevelment. Certainly I had never come up with such impolite solution, hitherto..

So he escorted the lady into the house and seated her comfortably with a tall glass of water at her elbow, then swung the stair door wide open to yell into the void, "Come out from under that bed, Mom! That's no way for a grown up lady to act! I know you are under there!! *This lady needs help, Mom! She has never been able to behave like this.*"

*Miss Mouse
& the party
English lady*

It was in the years immediately following the depression and before there had been any measurable indication of a leveling off, such as more work available at better pay... or reduction in the cost of living..

But Little Jim (my son) never seemed to lack for answers when the troubled approached him with their troubles and this they very often did.

Jim had entered this veil of tears at the very ^{crash} of the depression in the year 1931, and had allowed nothing to dim the sparkle in his beautiful brown eyes, since.

He had his little church on the second floor of the garage, and the animal quarters directly beneath it and any person who sacked up their domestic animals and flung them by the roadsides to thirst and starve to death.. had reached the last level of depravity and deserved to starve in company with all their blood line.. so this earth would be FREE of them, henceforth and forever, and KNOW them no more.

While I was in full accord with his findings (100%) most of the population had already resorted to the heathen rule of "self-preservation being the first law of nature," all... ~~that~~ that is, except the young ~~and~~ lad, Jimba, who went out every day before sunrise to ~~comb~~ ~~every~~ highway and ~~biway~~ ^{road} for kittens and puppies.. babies who may have been tightly ~~bed~~ ^{held} in gunny sacks to starve and thirst to death. It was a very hard task for the four year old to cycle these unfortunates home, not to speak of the ever present hazard of ~~the~~ highways where small bodies are often thrown and broken beyond "recognition," by those who worship speed. ..more and more speed, greater speed and ^{ever and always} ~~ever~~ greater speed.. but always there was that ever watchful higher power looking after the young Jimba -- maturing him to ^{adulthood} ~~maturity~~ in order that he might meet the need of those thousands of "troubled others" for whom there would be no other way to peace and well being in the turbulence of ~~these~~ ^{these} grievous times.

*begin to before
down to pick up
animals in
gunny sacks*

SKID ROW

The denizens of the asphalt jungle had not finished with me. They came to my work place, six strong, to announce that Bill Jones, the truant paternal uncle, owed them \$36.00 which he had barrowed, and so they had come to collect it off me. "Is this not a bit irregular?", said I, in very business-like tones, wondering a little about what my co-workers might be thinking about my being visited by these unkept gentry -- from south of the railroad tracks -- and knowing that something "smelly" would of necessity grow out of any deduction. ~~THEY MIGHT MAKE~~

"Something smelly and far wide of the truth", thought I. "Roses do not grow out of ^{unpromising} such unfavorable soil." I, summing up for future reference. Said the leader of this ^{UNSHAVORY} pack, saying, "It seems you are thinking we do not mean business. Or, maybe you do not care what happens to your husband's brother. . . or maybe you would chose what is commonly referred to as 'else'". After a long and reflective silence, I replied; "Else being the murder of young William Jones, I take it?" Therefore, be it said, this money you want could be termed ransom. No? Yes? Still how do I know you have William Jones captive? And if so why is your price not higher? And do I have any reason to believe this will not heppen every day? Maybe three times a day?" One of the hefties stepped forward to snarl in my face, "We are honorable men!" "Shucks", sniffed I, "you are not even men. You think like streetwalkers. I'm told they are women! I will talk to Jones. Bring him here!" There was heavy intake of breath and its slow explusion, like the slow drip of blood. Goose pimples rose somewhat as this thought crossed my mind, though I'm quite sure my exterior registered no sign of "quaking or faltering". The twirp in center of the back seat drew a gun. It looked like a cannon, I wondered if it was loaded with ^{LEAD} lead or dung. I jotted down the license number of their car. The remaining

Do not include Cannon and license, I wonder if words below spelling of them in (w) & he looked I will use 2 individual nos for "individual" words, I do not use them of any though, is

3.

2

^{five} five worthies-- downed the armed man. As they careened around the corner toward the tracks and out of town - the gun gave with a loud blast-off and the town folk gathered from everywhere, especially from the garage on that corner, where the loafers habitually held forth, and gave with such learned matters as who was seen ^Nsneaking out of town to meet whose husband.

The undertaker^{message} addressed me saying; "are you having trouble ^{V1/2 S,} Miz Jones?" and I replied, "Never! Not a placid creature like myself! What trouble could I possibly have? In a quiet God-fearing town like this?"

"Oh!" said he, "one never knows, I hear your husband, chair and all, fell through the pool room floor last night. Seems the rats are weakening the timbers." "Jeepers! ^{attracted} Is that a proper way to refer to potential customers?" said I, with ^Bfeigned severity. "^{W'at all go, sometimes, 7th row.} We all go, sometimes, 7th row."

"Tis ^{WHARF} rodents (4 legged) that I refer to, ^{MRS.} ~~Miz~~ Jones. Seems they are numerous lately, ^{WHARF} Warf/rats, they are, and bent upon the destruction of the pool room, I'm Told."

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INDERTAKE

"Seems a lot for a rodent to take" says I, "let alone to accomplish, by the beard of the prophets it had its origin in a strange manner -- uh, er . . . it borders on the miraculous . . ." "Ha!" said he, "It's going to be the death of Big Jim -- yet. You mean he did not tell you his back is skinned from his tail bone to his collar bone -- and red streaks running across it. Could be blood poison -- could be anything I reckon. You mean he didn't tell you?" persisted he -- "That's what I mean!" gulped I, establishing a precedent that would outlive us both. We never discuss his tail bone -- sh - er or mine. Fact is we do not sleep together, either." He blushed to the third button on his shirt, which was upon at the throat. In Indiana summers were hot and humid.

He continued, "I know he was or is sixteen years old, older than yourself, but I did not know of his impotency." ^{said he, nervously} My own nervousness matched his at this point, for I knew Big Jim would be thoroughly plucked if the townsfolk got a notion he had given that, also, to World War I, though he had long since conceded that the physical toll had been almost too much to bear.

As I have said, Skid Row did not forget me. In less than two hours they had returned, all six of them, and young ^{was} Bill Jones stuffed between the two stalwarts in the back seat of their well battered car.

"Get out of there Bill" said I. "Go into the house. Lock the doors. Go into your room and lock it also. Try to sleep off this wretched experience. You look very ill, I think" Tears trailed down his dirty face, leaving a clean trail against the surface grime. He answered, "I can not, Skinny." (that was his nick name for me). "They will kill me." I appeared to laugh low and loud. "These? Well, 'tis too bad I have not told them . . . how harmless a live person is compared to a ghost. Especially if it met its end by violence."

Bill did not obey me, so I figured something was restraining him. There was a look of ^{grievous} and pain in Bill's face. My housekeeper, Mrs. H., (a lady of eighty years and considerable poundage, was scrubbing my spacious front porch and training her very good ears upon this exchange of conversation.

Mrs. H., fortunately for me, was one to keep abreast of the trends of the winds. Once more I gave the order for Bill to dismount and enter the house. It was as if the whole group had been carved in rock. Nothing moved. Not even a nose twitched. Mrs. H. remarked ominously, "Let that boy loose." Not a muscle moved among the car occupants. Bill looked white and strained. His eyes looked frightened. My mind flew back to a time before I'd married into the family or hardly been born for that matter, when Bill was four and his mother at fifty-eight years lay a corpse. He'd refused to be moved from beneath her casket even after the remains were taken to the grave; he had lingered in that spot. Thereafter, he

"Jesus have mercy on God," leaned against an adjacent tree and allowed his asthma attack to have full sway with him while the garage loafers beat out the flame with coats, shirts and anything handy. But to my knowledge, his very productive strawberry patch never bore fruit again or even "flowered." It had produced a gratifying income for him in ~~the~~ its beginning days with berries larger than a man's thumb. It must be said of big Jim that he had a "green thumb." The culprits managed to reassemble. They mounted up and headed west. Ten minutes later I had a phone call from the owner of the local lumber yard.

"Eight big plug-uglies down here and another car with five or six men in it just joined them. They claim they are working for you and want about \$100 worth of lumber charged to you," said he.

"Tell 'em I'm a poor risk. Meantime, I'll call the ~~sheriff~~ sheriff and send him down to your place as if he just happened in to pass the time of day, etc." The man replied: "They appear mighty nervous. Doubt if the sheriff makes it before they leave."

I said "Meantime, watch it. These birds are ex-convicts for the most part. Methinks the charges were "murder." I think they are unarmed, now. I shall give the sheriff the nose count on them and the license number on the touring car. The eight are in a truck, you say?"

He verified that, and I said, I'd tell the sheriff to bring help along.

6

Wook some 'oing to release young Bill from his bindings. His wrists were tightly bound. His ankles also, and all so closely attached that to struggle in one direction would have shut off his breathing. He could not have stood if his life had depended upon it. This was the work of hate-mongers aided by malice aforethought. It was even more evil than I had thought. I urged the Joneses to press charges before they killed Bill Jones or me or both or maybe sought to punish me by making off with my child. I was about to make off to some strange place with my child.

Jill talked me out of it by saying, "He's safer and happier here. Those people are scared to death of you, really. They credit you with supernatural powers."

The Jones brothers wanted no part of rocking Skid Row's boat. Bill went to Skid Row. In a matter of hours he was dead. I've always thought that he knew this would happen and thought in this way he could save me from harm or Little Jim or both of us or all of us. I screamed for the Jones brothers and sisters to demand an investigation. They wanted no part of it for fear it would cast aspersions upon their family name. I investigated.

When I got close, the embattled ones up and decamped the country in the dark hours of the night, taking all their possessions with them. When

the high family leopards I figured that was all. 7

But to return to getting Bill out of his trussing
up, peeling potatoes for a leg rolling would have
been easier. They must have tied him with Skip's
hauser. We both, Mrs. H. and I, worked with sharp
long-knives, but it was the doings of Mrs. H.
that triggered my laughter to this good day.
At first I couldn't decipher her hi-jinks, but
she'd gathered every splinter of the broken cleaning
tools and patterned them like hieroglyphics. She
had bordered the strawberry patch with cross-bones,
hair, and feathers. It was obvious this God-
fearing woman was engaged in black magic, as
she muttered at intervals in a voice very unlike her
own: "Belzebub. If God ain't done it . . . maybe
you had better try it."

It was obvious that she was laying some sort of
curse on the Wild Breed down in Skid Row, and
highly unlikely that even the innocent could escape
it.

There was a tremendous barking and yelling in the
distance and young Jim was borne around the street
corner on the crest of a wave of dogs. In fact,
every dog in town. The raccoons' kitten rode on his
head voicing breathless "whcc"s as the gallop
quickenened. Mrs. Goat and her young twins brought
up the rear. Beholding this out of the corner of

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his eyes, Bill, who had recently been operated for
appendicitis screamed: "My God! Do something Skinny!"
Panicked, I flung my body across his soft middle
and wore the hoof marks (three sets,) fully three
months thereafter.

My mind had been so solidly made up for so many years that I would neither marry nor have a child, that it came as a shock to me when I realized that I had reversed this thinking completely. At the time it happened, I was unaware that it had. I could not say today what reasoning first made up my mind, or what part reasoning played, if any, in the final resolution to marry and also to have a child: a male child: one child, not more. But I can relate the incident that in due course terminated in both marriage and some five years later, the birth of the child.

My mother had passed away in 1925, of typhoid fever. My father had preceded her death some years before. I was sorely grieved for my mother and was very lonely without her. I returned to the home of my father's foster father who had reared him from the age of fourteen and in turn reared me from infancy. He was undoubtedly the most outstanding character I had ever met in my life. Nothing was ever too much for him to do to relieve poverty and need, trouble and unhappiness, wherever he found it, and however often he found it.

By this time he was alone and getting up in years. His fortune had been spent just for the necessities for himself and whatever the other fellow seemed to need who was in want. His fortune, once quite substantial, had been dissipated in the processing of what he figured each person owed to another. He had become wealthy in the timber business. Having mills all over southern Indiana. When the ~~tax~~ timber was cleared he even went into the business of buying and rolling grain. This was highly speculative and a person with his bigness of heart ~~and~~ had little chance against the sharks who profited by not caring about the underdogs of the land, though he was a man of outstanding intelligence.

My mind was made up a long while in advance that my child should be exactly like Lewis Parker even though he was no blood kin -- even to his brown eyes. My in-laws reminded me that it was scientifically said to be impossible that two blue eyed people should produce a brown eyed child. Impudently I replied to this: "I specialize in the ~~px~~ impossible, be it scientifically or otherwise proclaimed." I would lose my temper completely when anyone dared to voice a negation on this subject, though normally I was ~~not~~ very much in control of myself and whatever situation confronted me.

Then came the fateful day when I was destined to come down with typhoid fever: Before full break of day I was packing out for a swamp, now dry enough to travel through and where blackberries being unbelievably large and tasty to edify those who dared to enter the snake infested swamp. I had been rather fond of snakes since early childhood, and they of me, and did not grudge the snakes the sharing of the berries which they relished as much as I, especially before sunrise when the dew clung like the nectar of the Gods--and this was a very dry place in those seasons when the rivers were not pulsing with overflow and the sun was hot despite the shades of ground cover and the tall, tangled second growth of timber.

As I took a long drink of water from my jug before leaving my parked car, I

nor could I remember water ever tasting so satisfying. I came to the berry patch, paused to admire the beauty of the luscious clusters, almost decided it was a sin to pick such beauty even though I never failed to leave a great strip up high for the birds and a strip near the ground for the ground creatures.. it still ~~s&x~~ seemed a sin, but not for long.

Hours later, consciousness returned and found me tightly locked beneath the ground cover -- consisting of strong, heavy vines among other things. Why I was there I had no idea. I was eyeball to eyeball with snakes of all sizes, with some eggs just hatching. I put these in my pocket to afford greater comfort for the young and found the most active snake of all is a new hatch. So I tried to take the eggs out again and rest meanwhile, but somewhere along... unconsciousness overtook me again, and so it was for hours -- just in and out of "reality" and really enjoying the unreal quite as much, if not more, than the real. At last I woke up within sight of my car, crawled to it and started for home, but struck a sinkhole that swallowed a wheel to the hub cap and beyond. I spotted a length of down timber that normally would have required two strong men to lift. After a time, I walked over, picked it up and placed it in the sink hole ahead of the wheel and pulled the car out with the greatest of ease. It was not a light car: it was a Studebaker Special Six. Probably the best that they ever manufactured, to this day.

But one must remember it was a "witching" time when nothing could be explained by natural law... why was I not still imprisoned under the ground cover; how could I, a frail appearing person lift a log with the mind, perhaps, or more logical still, miracles were being wrought even then...

At last, between long sleeps, I made it home. I bathed, combed and polished up, and hired the neighbor across the street to fry me a chicken. Having eaten the major portion, I hemorrhaged from the bowel from then on. Medical service was almost impossible to get. The doctor that had brought me into the world came. Mr. Parkers, my foster father, was ill throughout my illness but would not take his bed: he was so troubled about my condition, knowing my mother had not survived the disease the year before.

The climax or crisis of my disease came about four weeks following its beginning at 3:30 a.m., it was thought by those in attendance. I had remained at home because of my anxiety about Lewis' condition, my little dog, Sontag, being so troubled about it all and the fact that there was no hospital nearer than ten miles.

During the crisis I seemed to go down to the Egyptian River of Death and look it over, carefully... there was an Egyptian burial box which could be used as a boat... I thought and a plank that could be used as a paddle. The river was narrow and one sensed great depth because of the blackness of the water.

My mother walked out on the other shore.. she was dressed in skins -- a primitive woman... her hair was matted. This was great contrast to her way of

life. She had been very stylish and always well groomed. What would she be doing in Hades? So the legends were false, and I said so... While briefly preparing to cross that river. Legends are always false," she said, "it is the way of humankind to seek to evade the truth of things. But you are not permitted to cross that river yet. There are two very important things you must do before you come here. Your world is so full of sorrow and sadness, and Lew needs you now that he is old more than ever before. He has no one else. Remember? "

I thought it over in the wink of an eye and sadly turned to retrace my steps. I came to the bed where the sick woman was and found I was the sick woman... I walked to the door of Lew's room... I walked to his bed and offered water and cold cloths for his head... I fluffed up his pillow and said: "I will not leave you, now. Do not worry. Just get well, Lew. There will be other rivers, other hardships, but I hope to be with you always -- now..." Then, one year later, I married the man I was engaged to and took Lew home with me, but he grieved for his own home I felt. Five years after that, my son was born with brown eyes, too, though both my husband and myself had blue eyes.

F EAST IN THE MIDST OF FAMINE or
Passtime of the Local Freight Agent

Regularly, the village kids were entertained by Jimba with banquets at my expense and without my knowledge until it was almost too late to launch an effective protest.

These events were held under the loading platform which was elevated to facilitate loading and unloading freight from the railroad cars, on the outskirts of town, about half-way along the path to the " 'Ol swimmin hole. . . "

The freight agent had established a listening post in his office above and kept well and approvingly abreast of Jimba's doings. He justified his stand when confronted with criticism by saying: "boys will be boys. . . and some are just more boy than others, and they grow up to be more man than others, I think, and I am a close observer of such matters. . . "

When I protested excessive grocery bills when I hadn't been near the store to make a purchase, and said to my friend, the grocer, "Now you know better than to extend credit when it has never been my habit to seek it. "

"But, " he would say, grinning. . . "must I become the town's bad guy? The guy who was NOT a boy, once? "

And I would respond: "By no means. . . 'Tis only that I respectfully suggest that I could refuse to honor these bills, oh, thou who regardeth not the heavy chains of my enslavement, or careth -- a fig about it! " . . .

The debt was always promptly paid and the incident as promptly forgotten, to be repeated: again and again. . .

The freight depot agent entertained his friends with the narratives of these forays : the 'ol swimmin hole and the feasting, the guest list of which also included the village dogs that habitually attended Jimba and the canine guests of his friends, as well. . .

And, quoting the agent. . . said he, "I would look down upon this spread of food and salivate at the sight. 'Twould not have been difficult to maneuver an invitation for myself, I'm sure, except that it would have revealed my invasion of their privacy and would have deprived me of enlightenment I never ceased to enjoy. . . not to speak of the opportunity to relive my own boyhood and experience the lifting of the intervening years. . . for a space. . of time. "

He would sigh at remembrance of those days and continue, "When the feast was over someone always remarked on the difficulty of carrying dirty dishes on the bikes and the more it was discussed, the more difficult it seemed to resolve it. Without entering the debate at any point, young Jim smashed the china, piece by piece against a huge rock, in all probability planted there during the great ice melt of thousands of years ago, and who knows but what it might have been arranged for this specific purpose.

Anyway, Mrs. Jones china became more unmatched as the years advanced, and the spoon handles took on strange patterns. It is said that second hand merchants have known her by her first name for quite a while now. "While Mrs. Jones does not have the appearance of the second-hand-store type, 'tis said the addiction grew until it has become her only passtime apart from writing, of course. It cannot be denied that value exists mostly in the eyes of the beholder. A shoddy, mediocre thing cast on a pile of discards has no value until someone bothers to salvage it and endow it with advantages. I understand Mrs. Jones has become quite intrigued by the mismatched handles of pewter spoons."

A listener spoke up: "Why are all the plates, utensils and stuff to serve the feast always taken from Jrs. Jones' household? I'd like to know, since the initial cash is borne by her?"

The narrator thought this over for a space, and then replied: "She is always away at work and 'tis likely has not yet paused to devise a cure for this particular practice on the part of the kids."

The town loafer spoke up: "She did yesterday -- and it was a killer-diller! She haunted her own house, I'm told, and little George Fudge said if anybody thinks THAT was Mrs. Jones chasing him, that person is nuts for sure, for whatever was chasing him was bleeding all over... and... had teeth a half a foot long."

This rocked the building with laughter for a spell, and I snuck out of the phone booth... making like 40 years older than I was. It is not easy to make like bleeding all over without considerable advance preparation, and considerable mess attached.

WORLD DESTROYED BY FIRE...

Little Jimba came rushing into the house with all the village dogs at heel. I was washing a goodly supply of dishes which had accumulated in the sink. There was a look of excitement in the eyes of every dog, but Jimba was behaving as routinely as was his normal stance when he said, "Since you did not believe me, even though I have told you many times, this world would come to an end by fire, as the bible says -- you best had come with me and see for yourself," said he smugly.

I snatched the dishpan, too heavy with grease to empty down the sink and took my position of end dog at his heels. Having emptied the dishpan, I swabbed it out with a clean, dry cloth before setting it on the front porch. 'Twas then I chanced to look at the sky and momentarily was started out of several years growth, " as the southern saying goes.

So there was the sky looking exactly like a huge southern wash kettle, wherein the old timers habitually boiled their linens (sheets and pillow cases in strong lye water-picking them, and hoisting them at intervals with an old, well work stove poker, by way of testing for the degree of whiteness and the proper components of the concoction they had mixed for the "bilin" of their whites.

Having seen, yet I could not have believed, except there was Jimba, flesh of my flesh setting knees absinibo? _____ in a dishpan that was at best (middlerized) a _____ band about his head to catch any moisture that he chanced to work up in the course of the work, he told me he was born to do. Like work nobody else would or could do. Jimba had a bandana around his mid-section of exactly matching color, and always a wee flower peeping out over his mid section or his head dress, or both. He was so handsome as to make one weep just looking at him, let alone being taken into his confidence about the things he was born to do -- like things nobody else could or would do.

"I think I shall dash over and see if Mrs. K. has been 'caught up yet.' If so, I shall KNOW this is in truth the end of the world," said the little one, sagely.

~~Mrs. K. was the good neighbor every struggling female bread winner should have kept her morale up. A staunch member of the Nazarene Church, Mrs. K believed with heart and soul that no child should be deprived of church and Sunday school, especially in the very early years, no matter how many churches he has on the second floor of the family garage or how fresh the flowers were on the altars. This task she boldly undertook in Jimba's behalf -- to see that he never missed out on church or Sunday school.~~

ABOUT MRS. KENNEDY...

"I think I shall dash across the street and see if Mrs. K has been "caught up yet" ... If so, I shall KNOW for sure this is the end of the world." Mrs. K (Kennedy) was the good neighbor every struggling female bread winner should have to keep her morale up. A staunch member of the Nazarene Church, Mrs. K believed with heart and soul that no child should be deprived of church and Sunday school, especially in the very early years, no matter how many churches he has on the second floor of the family garage or how fresh the flowers were on the altars. This task she boldly undertook in Jimba's behalf -- to see that he never missed out on church or Sunday school.

Although I frankly contended that "every one-hoss preacher is not inspired by God" and neither is God the author of "frenzy" and foolish cavortings. Mrs. K and I got along famously despite the difference or disparity of our convictions. I loved the woman dearly, even to this day, though I could not resist teasing her with such remarks as: "Myrtle, don't you think it would have been wiser if that old fool the bible says' howled in the wilderness had just settled ~~wxx~~ down and figured'how to cope with it?' "

Jimba and the dogs made 3 or 4 loops around the Kennedy holdings and he concluded he hadn't been "caught up, ~~xyet~~."

He finally bedded down with Bobby, the raccoon kitten, and they drifted into dreamland. The dogs and I bedded down on the front porch to watch the sky until dawn.

I did a lot of enquiry next day on the job, and elsewhere, and several days thereafter, but found no one who had seen the startling development in the heavens, but no one had.

~~Some days later~~

Borealis

But a small news item in a paper I picked up some days later reported that the Northern and Southern Borealis had "displayed" at the same time which happened only at long intervals apart, it was said...

My assumption of a "cold look" about the phenomena of the flames was not amiss. The runs reflecting off the northern and southern ice caps should give with a cold look, surely. I was certainly shaken by this phenomena until I became aware of the "cold look" which was sometime after I saw it first. Also, the failure of the dogs to display anxiety was reassuring. As for Jimba, he was not in the least shaken, though very young and certainly unfamiliar with such a startling sight.

And little Jimba came bounding into the house with all the village dogs at heel. It was between 12:30 and 3:00 am. I was putting the finishing touch on a goodly lot of dishes that had accumulated in the sink, while I was at my job. I had worked two jobs that day.

The clock hands had passed the "witching hour" of midnight. The village was wrapped in sleep. There was excitement in the eyes of every dog. Jimba was behaving as routinely as was his usual stance, just before some sort of havoc broke out in our lives, and havoc was not a stranger.

It sometimes shaped up subtly, and at other times like an explosion -- but never fragmented or traveling at a "slow" pace. Jimba was not one to do things -- by halves. Neither was I. Jimba smugly said: "you did not believe me when I told you the earth would be destroyed by fire in our lifetime, I think you had best come with me and see for yourself."

I snatched up the dishpan, too tick with residue by now to empty down the sink. I dashed into the garden and emptied it there, cleaned the pan well and dried it out. Then set it on the front porch. 'Twas then I chanced to look at the sky. If there should have been a moon, it would have paled into obscurity confronted by such startling phenomena.

The sky looked like a huge block wash kettle such as I'd often seen in the yards of southern families, and which was used to boil their linens out doors. Their sheets, pillow cases, towels, etc, which they always referred to as "bilin" their whites.. in strong lye water.

Having seen, I yet could not have believed except there sat Jimba like the Buddha, sitting in that dishpan which was not more than a middle sized one, folded legs akimbo, wearing a colorful headband and a square of cloth to match knotted around his ~~neck~~ middle. The motif was red and yellow. I leaned against a tree. The dogs formed a ring around us, quick and intent, listened to our exchange of conversation, and they ~~were~~ _____ as they awaited the action.

Great licking flames mounted from earth into the heavens. and met at the apex over the pot which was the earth. A remarkable display it was indeed -- less frightening to watch because it seemed not to advance as is the way of comflag (fire) -- nor did the flames give off the appearance of heat, having in fact a "cold" look, instead. This was not, however, immediately apparent and even so it lacked definitive conviction.

Note: The southern wash pot had a heavy stove poker close at hand, well used and clean as.. repeated bilings tend to make things.. Use in that description of the ~~XXX~~ pot. The whites were lifted at intervals with this to inspect the degree of whiteness and check the strength of the concoction.

Note: there was always a wee flower peeping out of Jimba's strange costumes. At the midriff or overhanging the headbands, behind an ear or ~~both~~. *Remark that in transcription. He was so handsome as to make one weep, especially when taken into his confidence about his having to come to earth to do what others could not or would not do. It made me feel he was "only loaned to me" for a time.. which

World on fire - second draft

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could be only a brief time.. too and my heart was sad, always.

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THE TINIEST DISCIPLE...

The church buses were on the long haul from San Francisco to Los Angeles to hold services in Rev. Jones large church down there. It was in the wee hours of night as it usually is before they finish services in San Francisco and take off for Los Angeles.

Those who were not fighting sleep, such as the drivers, were napping heavily in route. Johnny Stoen being the exception was neither fighting sleep, nor encouraging it... He had been in deep reflection for quite some time. John-John, as he is also called, is a law unto himself and capable of defying nature's laws with excellent success (about sleep) much to the perplexity of his mother who is apt to be chastized severely if she does not "watch out" how and when she essays or intervenes orders...

Johnny is stocky, bronzed and full of energy with black eyes, black hair and that air of independence that I had only seen twice before in my long life -- and, which is worn like a crown and quite unapologetically before God and everybody.

Having reflected at some length, young John walked up to the front of the bus, picked up the intercom and said, "All Peoples Temple buses, report please."

Startled, his driver did not remonstrate when the bus drivers reported quick and sharp like rifle fire. They had had trouble on the roads before and were quick to come to each other's aid.

"Wake up your people and tell them our Father loves them!" said John. "Then let them sleep again. Tell them not to worry. Father is with them, always, and will not let anything happen to any one of them at all. Over and out."

He thanked the driver for the use of the intercom, fell into a seat and was asleep almost immediately. John is well loved by all, especially the Father, and by Grace and Tim Stoen, his parents, who are very able young people who have served the membership long and well. Grace as secretary, Tim as attorney. He is assistant District Attorney of Mendocino County.

BEDTIME

... Jimba's story

I was finishing his story. He was sprawled on my lap and I was too exhausted to breathe. So I had failed to reconstruct the story and get rid of the sad ending as I was always required to do. So the old hunting dog was killed by the cougar she'd set out to track and the tears spilled over my face as I realized this.

He, Jimba, had leaped off my lap and was yelling to high heaven while tears rained down his face. "Read him out of it, Mom! Read him out of it! You KNOW better than to let them end like THAT and break both of our hearts that way."

"But the writer claims that's how it ended, son," said I defensively, KNOWING there was no defence for such stupidity as I had displayed.

"What does the writer know about it?" screeched Jimba. "He wrote what he wanted to believe. Never in this world would you have written it like that, now would you?"

Contrite, I confessed, "Ah... no! The dog would have returned at daybreak with never a mark to mar his lovely coat, and his gait would have been as jaunty as in the richness of his puppyhood."

"Go on, Go on..." gasped Jimba, with a firm grip on my juglar vein.. now I can see him alive and well, bouncing over the top of that hill back of his house..." His voice faded out on little gasps of exultation while I mentally cursed every writer who had ever written a story that ended wrong... and kept the dog running there in the dawn light bursting butterflies with his fresh little nose as they sipped the nectar out of the buttercups. That was a long time ago, although it seems as new as yesterday.

POTTY TIME...

There was the usual wailing and gnashing of teeth... Somehow that was always the most difficult abdication of the day for him.

"I am so embarrassed that that wee bug that lives under our rug must be subjected to this uproar every evening... Could be she has babies, too, and this would be bad for them," said I, rolling my eyes heavenward and gesticulating wildly.

"Control yourself," said Jimba. "I have never really believed there IS a bug or a bug's babies under this rug!"

"What?" shrieked I, "then I must show you... seems, in your mind, ..ah, er -- you have closed your mind to the realities."

"No bugs," said he, setting his lips firmly, and setting himself more firmly on the pot.

"Mrs. Bug," said I, in wheedling tones, "do you mind coming forth? We seem to have a non-believer in this household."

In a matter of seconds, Mrs. Bug emerged, stood up in front of little Jim and elevated her front feet.

There could be no doubt that he was thoroughly "surprised." As for me, I could have been pushed over with a feather.

He found his voice to say: "That IS a bug!"

I found my voice to reply, non-chalantly, "It is not just a make believe walking ... of that I assure you, son."

The proper ritual was performed on the potty. I do not recall there ever being other capers cut over it, thereafter, I took it that was in deference to Mrs. Bug and her new batch.

~~And then we began receiving complaints from all around the neighborhood because~~

MRS. GOAT'S TWINS...

And then we began receiving complaints from all around the neighborhood because Mrs. Goat's twins insisted upon drumming upon the roofs of the abandoned cars in the lot at the garage. This sounded like Indian War Drums so I resisted interfering with their fun even if it did start at dawn and last fully two hours. I figured nobody needed sleep more than I, who worked just about as many shifts as could be wedged into 12 hours. Most fold were very considerate about my unenviable plight, but others wanted to make such weight as they could boast -- well felt.

I was stymied about how to convince the twin goats and also reluctant to put an end to their fun, even if I knew how, which I didn't. They handled it themselves then they leaped through the picture window of the village's foremost gossip, sheared her house plant off neatly, laid a crust of pills and robbed her breadbox.

There was an outcry about their horns and this I had to have done because Jimba insisted on butting heads with them, and even though I put double thickness of diapers on him, they would hit him such clouts in the behind as to really alarm me, and he would not give up trying to out but them. However, when their cute little budding horns were removed, they took that out on the foremost village gossip also. They riddled her antique bed spread, devoured a quilt and a line full of her cloths, and broke her slop jar though it was crockery and an inch thick -- she spared the goats. She got the notion they "practiced" black magic... Though I must say I've never seen a black magician or a white one who could devour a bedspread the size and age of that one without leaving a trace or suffering some undesirable effect.

ANIMAL FRIENDS.....

I think the true picture of Jimba's growing up cannot be properly portrayed without describing the character and cunning antics of the animal fold who shared his home, his bed and his environment.

Jim and I have never been able to regard animals as "lower" forms of life... (and being less than ourselves) but rather as equals with all of our virtues and a few of the vices and many other beautiful attributes, and much more which nature gave them in attempt to equalize their lot since they can hardly make out in the present world evolution of things, depletion of their natural habitats, etc., independent of the love and help and tender care of human kind.

However, my husband, Jim's father, and his family did not share these tender sentiments of ours and little else that had to do with us, except in ~~times~~ time their reasons of trouble and adversity, when they were quick to seek my aid, and were not rebuffed though I had little in common with them or they with me, in fact. Some of them harbored a poorly concealed notion that being as fit and able as I was in the skills of survival was unbecoming a female of my size and stature and somehow detracted from the thing they called respectability.

And so it was concluded by the house of Jones that pigeons were messy things, none of which was good, and it was scarcely decent of me to have rigged a nurseries for ~~pigeons~~ "Pidge Widge" beside my back door. Time her droppings had to be cleaned frequently, but I had strung a bushel farm basket upon nails by the wire hand holds close under the roof of the back porch. kitchen and bedrooms were within sound of her voice as she crooned her babes to sleep while gentle winds in summer rocked their cradle. We adored going to sleep to the sound of her ~~crooning~~ crooning, little Jim and I...

It is unfortunate that one must fight to have and hold a paradise permanency and make wee creatures happy, but so it was with me in the course of marriage.

I had infrequently required the spouse and his younger brother to buff the back porch on a few occasions to remove ~~the~~ Pidge's droppings because I was so often working away from home and this was none to their liking since it required effort, and they began to plot to remove Pidge-Widge. Took me a while to catch on... Fact is, Bill, the brother-in-law had made two 200 mile runs before I learned of this. Pidge had beaten him home on both occasions. There was homing instinct in her genes for which I was very thankful and to reinforce this, I held long conversation with her like, "Don't let em put you in a car, girl, but if they do, be sure and watch direction carefully, sweetheart, because I have no way of tracing you. . yet. But don't you worry, sweet girl. I shall inform them that if once more they try it, they are in deep, dark trouble. I will band you, now, and put this little tinkle bell on. They can remove these, of course, so you must watch out carefully both for yourself, your mate and the babies. . etc. "

I passed these plotters taking the morning sun on the long front porch, as I lit out to work that A. M.

"Watch yourselves, me fine Buckaroos," challenged I. "Lay hands on Pidge and her family once more ~~xxxx~~ or any of the others, and you no longer sleep under this roof or dine at yonder talbe. . Geronimo had spoken! Whereupon I mounted the car which was incorporated in a workers car pool, and like Sir Gallahad, mounted his ~~stoox~~ white, gayly comparisoned charger -- and was off to my habitual daily slavery. The nation was at way, and I worked in a defense plant. . 17 miles away from our quiet town.

Two weeks later, these cohorts having repented their aggressions against Pidge ~~and~~ and her family, took off on a fishing trip, forgetfully of having Lady Bug our toy eskimo spitz along, they returned without her. It took me all night to locate the river and recover Lady Bug who was helpless, being of advanced years now would I hear their impassioned plea that this had been an accident. . .

I replied: "that's what I'm gonna tell God about what happens to you, too, if the likes of THIS ever happens again." It didn't happen again, but young William, (stolen car) the brother-in-~~law~~ law up and stole my car and headed for the asphalt jungle of an adjacent town where he'd had a long standing hubub of disappearing and being "ripped off" if he happened to have been working or recently had received a pay check. He was later murdered there, and it was a sorrowful things on the heels of what I called the wasted years of his life.

Loss of the car was too much! I headed for that town, stopped at the police department and they said: "ye can't go there! 'Tis as much as your life is worth. it could easily cost your life."

Replied I, "That car IS my livelihood. . so what? said I, "I came to suggest that you have a look if I do not return inside of 12 hours, and bring an ambulance along, if 'taint too much trouble."

I sniffed and departed as they yelled inunison: "You can't!" So I sought the bell- weathers of this flock both male and female and in the more dangerous and most likely byways. Really, wherever I spotted cars that appeared slated for stripping down for the parts for which there was a lively market at this point in time. I didn't get abusive or speak with less than firm convictions either.

I did not appear greatly upset, but merely said in all the right (or wrong) places: "I shall expect my car to be parked with all parts intact out on the main highway! before 8 am tomorrow where I shall stop and pick it up."

"Nay:" they all contended, "they had no knowledge of anything having to do with my car. Then quiz your grapevine, said I, "but get it done like I have said," said as if I was tougher than all skid row toughs put together, and I was a very good and convincing actress.

~~XXXXX~~ "I hold no soul in these parts innocent of this," said I, calmly, "and I have contracted to do another census for the Federals and do it I will, even if I have to "rip up these parts brick by brick, ~~first~~ first."

O Possum . The car was at the designated place at 8:00 AM and no part missing. I insisted the police start it, though, for I had no intent to be taken in by a booby trap and leave Jimba at the mercy of a cruel world. Jimba and all of the others we had befriended, especially our darling and so dependent animals. There was Madam O'Possum and her uncouth children who rode her back when we went for walks in the evening time. There was Miss Skunk who threatened me every time I fed her by ~~squix~~ squaring off and sighting over her shoulder, but restrained herself seeming to realize that I could not afford to take weeks off the job in effort to rid myself of such havoc as she was fully capable of delivering in less than ~~xxx~~ a wink of an eye. She was a beautiful thing with her white stripe against the sable blackness of her, and that mischievous twinkle in her eyes. There was Bobby, the raccoon. . .

Racoon

Missey Mouse and Missey Mouse who when she saw me putting a colorful border around my kitchen wall which I had painted light green fixed one for her cleverly designed house from bits of cotton.

Missey
Mouse

That was a night ~~no~~ no sleep was had. Missey's house had a hand hold for carrying her wherever I went -- to make up to her for my long absences which must have been very lonely for her. I was unable to catch her message for sometime, but when I finally did, I was too excited to continue border-building and for her sake, discontinued it until later. She discontinued only when I did. Then we got serious about the message she was attempting to convey.

"Missey," said I, "If you can forgive my weariness and fatigue, and give me your message. . . again, I think I can read you, now."

Missey made it so plain that only a fool could have erred therein. She dove into her snow white cotton tee pee and came out bearing a fatted, hairless object, but little larger than a healthy grub work and when this light of comprehension dawned upon me, belatedly, she was placing the 4th object for my inspection.

"Missey," breathed I, always more than somewhat overawed at the ~~miracle~~ miracle of birth. These are without doubt the most beautiful babes on the face of this earth -- but HOW? Oh, yes! Now all is clear. 'Twas the day I took you and Horatio down by the creek for a dip and an afternoon of freedom. There was soft winds, the odor of many flowers and the music of clear running water, and the birds sang -- and spring hung heavy with promise upon the air. . . Ah, I should have known. Horatio never does anything by halves, neither do you, my darling. I opened the door of her house and cradled her as usual, but her excitement was so great that I KNEW this was NOT the usual. I scooped up the hairless objects and Missey suckled them right there in the palm of my hand while I crooned and swayed them, gently, as the cradle rocks. Missey dozed. The babies unapologetically slept. All activity was suspended while nature had her way with them.

BOBBY RACCOON

And Bobby, the raccoon, had been run over ~~z~~ in the highway in front of the house. When a neighbor, Mr Kennedy, who together with his wonderful wife Myrtle, were the kind of neighbors every female breadwinner should have to keep their moral courage up, reported this to me. My grief knew no bounds -- Mr. K had asked if I could come and pull Bobby out of the street before he was "struck again" since he seemed to be dead or unconscious.

Said he would do it except he figured Bobby would bite him if he was ~~wasn't~~ dead. I was able to control my grief enough, and finally asked him to put on his winter coat and heavy work gloves to do it which he did, even though I was sobbing and saying "it is no use, he will not be ~~be~~ alive, and I love him so much I think I cannot live without him. ~~Mr. K.~~ Mr. K. came in with the little unconscious form in arms and I thought I heard a soft mewling ~~was~~ such as Bobby always gave when he wanted me to pull down the covers of my bed and lay his head on my pillow. This I did, and he pulled my face down to his and kissed me, salt tears and all. I put cold cloths on his head and massaged his body gently, and my household inclusive of the Kennedys was soon in excellent spirits, because no harm had come to Bobby, the raccoon.

That was the beautiful part of the Kennedys. They rejoiced with me in times of you, and cried with me when sorrows came. ~~They~~ They were the salt of the earth. Mrs. K. is still living, in Lynn, Indiana, my son visited her with his 13 church buses and numerous members of his congregation. The re-union was a great joy to all.

A very religious person, Mrs. K had always hoped my only son would be a minister, and her work at that time was tremendous and very side spread. Up and down the west ~~coast~~ coast of California with missions in the southern hemispher and in the Islands of the South Pacific, Mrs. K's only child had been a daughter. A very able and likeable girl with no yen for the ministry. I think, though, in after years, a very devout church member which gave her mother much happiness in the later years, following the death of Mr. K. Sr.s husband, her father.

THE PUPPY WHO CRIED....

Jim's going out on the highways at all hours (at age four) to save baby animals flung out on the roadside, often still tied in sacks, caused me great anxiety for his safety. He would go at most any hour of night or day, or any distance -- riding his little tricycle or on foot, prowling in the side ditches.

Once I had gone to pick him up and found him trying to push his tricycle through mud, water, briars and brambles, with his sack of animals across the handle bars. I loaded them all in my car and took them home...

Another time, the young doctor in town drove up in front of my house and unloaded Jim, his tricycle and the animals he had salvaged that night.. As the young doctor unloaded them... panicked, I half whispered..."I cannot take any more! Oh -- I swear, I cn not."

I take it that I was hysterical or half conscious to say that, but say it I did.

Little Jim snatched the puppy into his arms and promptly parked it in my arms. "Look for yourself," said he, scathingly, "you have grieved him. He needs someone so very much and he heard you say you do not want him."

This sent spears and daggers of remorse racing through me and bathed my eyes in silent tears.

"See, he is crying, Mom. He has little tears in his eyes. He feels so unwanted. Tell him you love him and will care for him always. Hold him close, Mom, and tell him he is your baby. Hurry...!"

The young doctor reached over and hoisted the brim of the old straw hat I had pulled low over my brow, regarded my tears awhile and announced to Jim: "It's just fine Jim, you have convinced her already. So I will get in my car and go home. I've been at the hospital all night."

The sack holding the kittens had been opened by then to give them more air and they were walking uncertainly about, being toddlers, still, with eyes barely open but not yet focussed. I rushed to warm some milk for them, with the puppy still in arms. Having told him he was loved and wanted and my very own for keeps, I gave him a bowl of warm milk for himself and scratched my head wondering where the next bottle of milk was coming from. But come it did.. when my brother-in-law who worked for the gas and electric company came by to inform my husband that there was a three dollar deposit

Puppy who cried...

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at that office, due us from a post transaction, and he'd taken the liberty of bringing it to us.

I was more pleased with my brother-in-law than I'd ever been before or ever had reason to be thereafter, as I remember. He was about my age and that was the only thing we had in common.

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BB-18-2-6

NIGHT TERRORS... (Pentecostal Minister)

1-28-74

Then little Jim was overtaken with night terrors, heavy sweating, frightening dreams... It troubled me greatly. I sought the aid of a local doctor. I also set out to trace the reason for this development, and learned that Mrs. M., who together with her sons, ministered the Pentecostal church, was taking him to her church regularly even when they held meetings in other towns, and that Jim was ministering during all or part of the service, and attracting a gratifying attendance at the meetings because of his tender years and excellent familiarity with the written word as well as his remarkable insight into unwritten matters.

Little Jim was not usually afraid of anything whatsoever or anybody, either, and when he complained of the horrible snake that invaded his dreams, my suspicions of the churchmen grew by leaps and bounds. Remembering that the devil was first said to have despoiled the Garden of Eden whilst traveling in the garb of a serpent and putting this "wild tale" for humankind almost brought the species (snakes) to extinction, in their ignorant animosity and nameless fears. I was not exactly in a mood to cultivate religionists but did accept an invitation from the ministers of the Pentecostal church to attend one of their meetings.

Midway of the service, when the musicians and the followers had reached the pinnacle of hysteria and the noise was getting at me to the point where I feared I'd never live through it, the lady minister grabbed me in an iron grip and yelled in my ear: "Praise God! This is how it's going to be in Heaven!"

...And I yelled back, "May God forbid that Heaven ever be my destiny if that is true!"

She fell away from me as if she'd been knee deep in a load of corruption.

I decided to question my good neighbor, Mrs. Kennedy and made tracks to her house to do so. It seemed that despite her disappointment at little Jim's preference for the pentecost over the Nazarenes (her church) she had not felt within her rights to question it, since she thought it had been arranged with my knowledge and consent.

Meantime, the finger of suspicion continued to point to the biblical narratives wherein Satan was endowed with stupefying powers, etc., and credited with inconceivable antics, all of which I defied and refused to let him go with Mrs. M. when she called to pick him up for services.

The closest encounter with Satan was when I looked into her eyes as she raved about my being devil-possessed, and that mine was a "dangerous" position. I explained to her that

Beelzabub would use more judgment than "earthlings" and not be so foolish as to mess with me when I was that mad.

Young James went into a caper and promptly became an agnostic, refusing to maintain his sunday service in his little church in the upper story of the garage, neglecting to place fresh flowers on his altar, and my spirits struck a new low -- but the night terrors let go of him and likewise the night sweats.

I felt vastly relieved when little Jim's agnosticism passed, and when I thanked the doctor for faithfully standing by, he said, "I have been tempted to tell you before now that the bible makes no sense, and neither does this stomping and jumping in the churches. In fact, it is very harmful to a sensitive child such as Jim."

I said, "but HE makes plenty of sense... and he will resolve 'the mess' so that it makes sense, also!"

The following sunday Jim held services and all of the village boys attended in a group. The girls came later, and I eavesdropped on the service.

Jim kept warning little George Fudge to stop disturbing the meeting with silly giggles for he would not permit him to disrespect Cod's house. On the third warning, he whaled little George! I fully expected little George's big brother to in turn whale young Jim... It was his custom to uphold his brother, right or wrong, but when little George sobbed out his story to his brother, he received no sympathy. The brother said, "He is right, and he warned you three times! Maybe sometime you will get some sense."

Addendum to NIGHT TERRORS.....

Lynetta said that the pentecostal woman was having little Jim preach the services and he was largely responsible for their getting large offerings -- it was because of this ability of his to get the large offerings, and do the healings that she was upset when Lynetta pulled little Jim from the services.

JIM BABE'S ADVENTURES ON 'THE LONG WALK'

I was deeply involved whaling the dust out of my house, hoping it would remain suspended until I found another interval from my jobs to "whale" it again.

Young Jim raced through the house, hurricane-fashion, relieved himself of a few inaudible words, and buzzed out, heading for the "Long Walk". Suddenly I realized that Ms. Samantha and Ms. Bear were not in Jim's big crib beside the front door, and figured that he must have taken them along with him.

I had created Ms. Bear and Ms. Samantha from whole cloth in rare idle moments. Samantha was made of golden brown cloth. Ms. Bear was made of darker brown stuff. They had been smooth and expertly stuffed with something soft and firm and tempting to the touch. They wore colorful and very becoming costumes - - well suited to their culture and the environment of their time. There was an enchantment and an aliveness about these remarkable toys that puzzles me to this day. They seemed to repudiate inanimacey and kinship with distant culture. They were definitely a part and parcel of the "now" generation.

I often discussed with them the vexations of our times and the trials and tribulations of my days. I missed them when they were absent from the big crib when dusk came,

just as I missed young Jim at that hour when he was overdue from his wanderings. A psychiatrist would dub such conduct on my part as a departure from the norm, no doubt just as I, on the other hand, have always entertained a deep conviction that the theory advanced by the doctors of psychiatry is merely the outward manifestation of deep-seated disturbance of the mind. There is no verification of the claim that psychiatry ever 'cured' anything or anybody..

Restless over the absence of young Jim and the dolls, I walked out on the front porch and was startled to find all the village dogs stretched at full length in deep sleep of exhaustion from the morning run with Jim. I had never known them to sleep through his departure before.

At that moment there was a frightful scream from the direction Jim had gone. All of the dogs leaped up at once, knocking me down on my knees as they charged away at break-neck speed in the direction of the sound. I leaped to my feet and took off behind the dogs. Tearing my way through green briars, tall weeds, and dead branches, there in the vacant lot I came to a high fence of chicken wire.

The dogs had torn the sturdy gate down so it was flat on the ground. The air was a fog of chicken feathers. Chickens were running madly about. Some, overcome with

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fear, huddled in fence corners and in the outbuilding which had been home to them. All were nude or semi-nude. Unfortunately, some had been killed. Pal Dog; a capable leader and an astute strategist, was indeed a formidable adversary when young Jim was being either embarrassed, harrassed, or harmed. He was a large snow white Eskimo Spitz.

Pal had taken a firm grip on the back of Jim's sunsuit and had dragged him out of the path of the dogs and the paniced chickens and was comforting him with his large wet tongue. Jim; who had been laying prostrate, but thrashing wildly about and yelling at the top of his lungs, became quiet. I restrained the dogs, bellowing loudly to recall them. They formed a circle around young Jim. As I tested his flesh for injuries, the dogs observed me closely. Had he let out a yell of protest, the dogs would have jumped me, in mass, as readily as they had rushed the chickens. Jim's flesh was pitted with triangular breaks. The fowls, in the desperation of hunger and thirst, had attacked him and bitten out small pieces of his flesh.

I hurried him to our house which was only a short distance away, where I disinfected his wounds. Jim Babe was pitching hissie fits over the disappearance of Ms. Bear and Ms. Samantha. I was also troubled about that and the plight of the surviving chickens. Hotly pursued by the dogs, the fowls had crossed the railroad tracks and headed for the

deep woods to the southwest.

I laid a trail of cracked corn from my chicken lot back to the scene of the conflict in hopes the surviving birds might return and follow it to the safety of my house. I also put food and water there, where they had lived so long and suffered so much. This place had not been visible from the Long Walk because of intervening weed growth. My inquiry established that no person had knowledge of the fowls being penned up there without food or water, or even a notion as to who might have done such a cruel thing or for what reason.

Little Jim and I searched the lot often, hoping to rescue some of the surviving chickens and find some clue to the disappearance of Ms. Bear and Ms. Samantha. This quest was unsuccessful. The fate of the dolls and the surviving chickens was never revealed. We have often wondered about it, over the years.

Remind Lynetta to write the story of the young doctor

The churchy woman who left an ill man rotting in his filth and would not bathe his privates because she thought it was sinfull...

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