

"Datie"

He ~~looked~~ ^{swaggered across} ~~turned~~ around as he ~~crossed~~ the road, seeing Eulalie smile for the first time since the ~~front~~ porch ~~had~~ roof of the ~~shanty~~ had ~~collapsed~~ ^{collapsed} caved in, collapsed.

Not that she ^{had} smiled much before, or had reason to smile. ~~He thought he heard~~ He thought he heard her laugh. But it could have been Pappy's new wife, fanning regularly with her palmetto fan ~~with the~~ clipped type.

Pappy reared back on the heels of the white metal chair, ~~on the morning sun~~ allowing the morning sun to bathe his black face. ~~His beard & hair were as silver as a new dome.~~ ^{A dead corn stretched at his brogan toes for the flies to buzz over.} Pappy's nose was as flat as a ^{quarter} placed on the rail road track running east to west through Seymour. ~~Instead, corn lay at his brogan toes for the flies to buzz over.~~

Shirley's ~~body~~ ^{possum} ~~shimmied~~ ^{prime} up the umbrella pole, like a monkey up a palm; Eulalie spanked her smartly on her sagging drawers & she scampered off the table to the edge of the porch, dropping to the ~~ground~~ dirt in a squat.

Paa Baa black sheeps!

How you any wool?

Yawsuh, Yawsuh,

Four bag full.

One for the master
one for the dame
and one for the ole lady to
what lives ~~from~~ the lane

2

Shirley's other ^{perhaps} child, a wormy-looking
~~little boy~~, rode past on the ^{man's} back of the ~~man's~~
visiting dog. The little boy's ~~knobby~~ ^{knobby} knees
popped up & down as ~~if~~ ^{though} he peddled a tricycle,
while the dog patiently struggled on, ^{with}
Groter headed for the ~~low~~ ^{low} spot.

~~The~~ Summer
Grass, ~~with~~ ^{with} forked seed heads,
switched Groter's ^{speech} ~~speech~~ ^{stippling} ~~stippling~~ ^{turquoise} ~~turquoise~~ ^{green} ~~green~~ ^{tufts} ~~tufts~~ at
the knees as he gaunted ~~on~~ ^{on} towards the
intersection. With a heedless left-right snaps of
his head, he crossed ~~over~~ ^{over} to the ~~dirt road~~ ^{dirt road} ~~leaving~~
Betty ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~her~~ ^{her} ~~saddle~~ ^{saddle} ~~near~~ ^{near} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~alley~~ ^{alley} ~~as~~
car hissing up the ~~over~~ ^{over} ~~pass~~ ^{pass}.

Best ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~he~~ ^{he} ~~ever~~ ^{ever} ~~made~~ ^{made} ~~and~~ ^{and} he thought - thinking
slower than he talked; his speech ~~rolled~~ ^{sounded} ~~like~~ ^{like} ~~water~~
rolling together in a croaker bag.

"Salie ~~got~~ ^{got} ~~her~~ ^{her} ~~head~~ ^{head} ~~shed~~ ^{shed}, and it ain't
out've nothing but ~~some~~ ^{some} a little pocket change."
He stopped, looking back again at the ~~odd~~ ^{odd} ~~looking~~
~~short~~ ^{short} maimed shack where the ~~grass~~ ^{grass} ~~swayed~~
red umbrella swayed.

Eulalie's gold tooth flashed in her wringed
face.

For a fact, he'd been tormented by her
ever since the March wind had robbed her of
her porch. She had sat there twenty odd years of
evenings in the dusk of fried fatback & hoccake
waiting for him to mope home. And she had
complained. Oh, her sad, wall eyes had ^{ROVED} ~~rolled~~
~~rolled~~ from shack to shack edging the road, up
to the ~~turquoise~~ ^{turquoise} ~~doorway~~ ^{doorway} bordering the rail road tracks, down
to the road that led from the ~~low~~ ^{low} ~~spot~~ ^{spot} - ~~knowing~~

~~She~~ ~~was~~ expecting him to happen up from one direction or the other. Her ~~hands~~ tough hands would ~~have~~ simply to the side of the straight chair rocked back to the wall ^{where her feet lay.} Her long legs stretched toes to the floor, ^{twitching} on the splintery plank. Modestly, her flourpack apron covered her knees, like ^{child's} oversized ~~shorts~~ ~~and~~ ~~at~~ ~~skill~~.

Shirley would scamper ~~periously~~ ~~perilously~~ around the legs of the chair, tweaking Culali's ^{calloused} toes, looking up with a gleeful expression. Culali's swollen lips ~~parted~~ would part, half stuck, ^{softly} saying, "Leave my ~~feet~~ be, ~~the~~ Baby Honey Chile." Wouldn't smile for nothing! But at least she wasn't one to mess around ^{at the low spot} ~~in the hell~~ ~~like~~ ~~the~~ ~~hell~~ ~~like~~ ~~the~~ ~~hell~~ as some had from the now-departed shanties ~~connecting~~ connecting them.

Procter's shanty had survived the bulldozing ^{by the} out of the goodness of the ~~heart~~ ^{eyes} of the ~~defunct~~ ^{defunct} ~~Seafur~~ ^{Seafur} ~~Company~~ ^{Company}. Pleading with doleful eyes of ~~Procter~~ ^{Procter} had exaggerated ^{pressed} palms, Procter had convinced the ^{billdozer} ^{operator} to allow him to stay while the others were routed out to the ^{low spot} ~~hell~~.

"Ain't botherin' nothing where it is; Aint messin' in nobody's business; ain't got ^{now} ^{no} ^{place} ^{to} ^{go}; Shirley June's ~~whole~~ ^{whole} ^{your} ^{pat} ^{and} ^{under} ^{the} ^{ceiling}

wind up drinkin shine & showing they selves, like
 them folks up there, if it ~~was~~ has to
 move out. And Salie be pluss mad &
 up set if her house got pushed down. She ain't
 the kind to be messy, ~~round down~~ ~~around~~ ~~the~~ ~~hill~~, il
 say. ~~pleasin~~ pleasir, pleasin don't push down
 my house! Sook yonder at them lil de babies
 playin with they Senty (Claus) under that old
 chingberry tree, right along. And my old lady,
 propped up on the front porch, she liable
~~to jump up a fightin & you have to~~
 to set right there in her chair & make
 you have to push her off with
 your bull dozer. Ain't never had no
 place to call home but right here.
 See, she ain't makin no sign of gettin
 herself up, and your big tractor runned
 right up to her door steps. ~~est~~ ~~this~~
 Wanna thae yonder if in the big house if
 my old lady ain't as fine ahead to 'orn as
 she ever seed. Go ast Mr. Bo, yonder at
 the commissary, if he don't mean for you to
~~push down~~ ~~pass~~ on by. Yonder he be, a setting
 on the stop porch. See him giving you the mean eye.
 He aimed for you to go on. ~~Will~~ ~~tell~~ ~~you~~,
 lady, a old lady like Salie ain't got no business
~~down yonder~~. That's for folk's likes to
 have a good time. Salie don't set no star

in carrying on. Some luck come up ^{amessing} ~~abosting~~ with her, ^{he} ~~she~~ ^{obliged} to stob him. Then what 'd it be? She'f come and look me up. What is them chikken gonna do for supper then?

"~~Get~~ ^{Get} down offn the porch, Lalie! He ~~is~~ gonna push it down!

"I say, she ain't the kindie woman ~~to~~ to make it ^{down} ~~down~~ ^{on the} ~~on the~~ ^{Older} ~~Older~~ ^{Master}. She too ~~to~~ ^{washful}. I ain't just jealous, neither; ain't never beat up on her but ~~not~~ ^{once}, and that be an accident.

~~Hold you~~
"pick your feet up, Lalie! He coming on!

"Yawsuh, she ain't nothing to look at, but she all I got. Shirley June got herself stobbed ~~down~~ ^{down} ~~back~~ ^{back} ~~on the~~ ^{on the} ~~Older~~ ^{Older} ~~Master~~ ^{Master} I left my old lady to look out for the chikken. Now, do you blame me for not taking no liking to packing up & moving ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~hitt~~ ^{hitt}? I goes there, my ownself, to juke, but I ain't no place to take ~~my~~ ^{my} woman. Ever luck he coming along 'd be trying to mess her up. And her just happy as can be settin' up yonder on that porch. She liable to get over yonder & get to hevin' herself a ^{big} ~~big~~ ^{time} ~~time~~ ^{of} ~~of~~ ^{then} ~~then~~ ^{what} ~~what~~ ^{'d} ~~'d~~ ^{il} ~~il~~ ^{do} ~~do~~?

~~Yawsuh~~
"Yawsuh, I sho' be 'bliged if you ~~spare~~ spare my house. Sho' would now."

"I be going on now, Lalie Lalie!"

~~Seeing the way things were, the first stob of stob~~
~~Chikken looked toward a headed home.~~

Satisfied, seeing the sun glinting off the tin roof of his house, Grooter ambled on, hearing ahead the faint creaky party moving toward him ^{in large, silent} ~~the~~ dirt road.

Like ~~the~~ ~~babbling~~ ~~crow~~ ~~in~~ ~~a~~ ~~pecan~~ ~~tree~~ the party came, ~~and~~ ~~sporadically~~ ~~belting~~ ~~songs~~, ^{intermittently}.

Don't men with my tute
If you men with my woman,
We'll sooner break your face.

The Grooter clomped ^{to} ~~and~~ toward ~~them~~ ^{as} as they came around the curve at the ~~corner~~ ^{corner} cemetery ^{he} darted out behind a bringed mimosa tree to observe. Feeling the dampness at his back, the ~~shadows~~ ^{grove} of ~~graves~~ ^{graves} at his back, he watched them pass, growing weak with ~~the~~ realization: Red Umbrella, Eddie, the safe rook of his home ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~rearing~~ ^{rearing} bawdy with song. ~~The~~ ^{few} ~~week~~ ^{weeks} ~~quits~~ ^{quits} the realization of Salie's ~~realization~~ ^{awakening} to his other life - the ~~pure~~ ^{pure} joy of it.

She would know now; they would know, going there to the red umbrella ^{the} ~~most~~ ^{most} expected to keep her in place. What if she followed them back? ~~the~~ ^{the} hoard with the hearty boy bearing a wet ^{new} watermelon on his ~~head~~ ^{head} glistening down shoulder? The protracted song

In lines ~~stretched~~ three deep from ditch to ditch,
they ~~swarmed~~ ^{swept} around the curve, eyes st peeled
ahead with ~~firm~~ ^{force} determination.

Buckeye, who could chip 20 turpentine boxes to Scroote's
one, cradled a ~~heavy~~ ^{heavy} block of ^{heavy} fuel to his braun chest,
his white teeth ~~exposed~~ ^{gritted} ferociously.

Ducky out from between the lines a chain of
children whipped ahead, whipping back around two
~~feminine~~ men embracing near the rear.

Ring around the roses
pocket full of posies
up stairs, down stairs
Sunny, sunny squat.

As they chanted, their ^{liquid} eyes focussed on the mute ashy faces
of the men. Their drooping to a squat, they ~~had~~ ^{sniggered}
without joy. They stood, ~~waiting~~ ^{skipping} on as they continued
circling the two men.

A jay of blue-white ~~shining~~ moonshine passed from hand
to hand, line to line, to the end, then ~~started~~ ^{reversed}.

Six young girls, with chests ~~the~~ plump as duck breasts, sniggered
their fingers ~~to swept~~ ^{to} hips to the rhythm of their song,
scattering to laugh as a juvenile boy, ^{beaming} pitch black, dashed
to pinch one on the backside.

Don't men with my tute
if you men with my woman,
I'm gonna bust your face.

