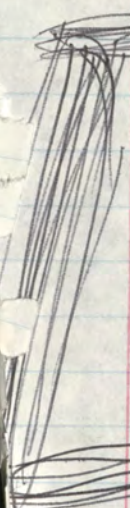


route of passage / H O C S | ~~have~~ Etta Mae relate.
Old Cubie's telling of hog business

* Wild boar (300 lbs.)

(female instinct with young will attack ferociously)
hog tying (cross legged & knotted above knuckle)

~~sneak~~ sneak up behind while rooting in earth
ear forward, cannot hear behind -



catch back legs, tire him out, he
moves two at a time, front then rear
unlike mule - can't kick much -
through leg over & ~~lay~~ lay him on the
side, tie legs, throw on truck, mark
& pen - (squeal, but impotent)

geese kite tail & geese flagging forming
a V (or falling into formation)

- SPRING field blushing with bitter weeds

"The Great Gulf"

Her ~~rough~~ pallid face included gray hair spilled over into three other window panes

She stood, pallid face pressed into the window pane with ~~gray~~ ^{white} hair spilling scalloping bordering three others like ~~a~~ scalloped ^{yellowing} face, watching for them: the scraggly youths who might appear in weird ~~attires~~ ^{attires} symbolic of the 50's or 60's or 70's in 1985. But ~~nevertheless~~ ^{regardless} she knew they would appear ~~straggly~~ ^{straggly} ~~through~~ the old oak ^{and} ~~and~~ ^{pairely evening shadow} ~~side~~ ^{side} walk that connected the side by side ~~side~~ colonial houses relinquished by time to ~~rental~~ ^{lending products} college students with ~~one~~ ^a truck and a dream.

And they came in pairs of twos and pods of three, black & white combined, masculine & feminine and combination thereof, lugging tote ^{patches} ~~books~~ wearing wigs and hippie head bands, and some in coats or buff and slick as oiled skin.

They came ^{on time} ~~as~~ if not to disappoint her, who but never glanced from their esoteric world at the nose pressed into the window like a ^{resembling} ~~smudge~~ of ~~rain~~ ^{canned} ~~canned~~ ^{Christmas} snow.

She stepped away and clucked ^{and} ~~scuttling~~ lamely to the front door to ~~set~~ check the lock, remaining peering ^{of moment} through the peephole to see them gather on the crescent shaped porch and scatter like pot plants along the edges.

The fair ^{little} blonde girl ^{in butterfly} performed an airy pirouette, ^{rose} ~~concluding~~ in a porcelain doll ^{Parabesque}. The ^{black} ~~black~~ joined her for a ^{sprightly} ~~littlé~~ ^{pas de deux} across the porch to a ~~secret~~ ^{orchestration} ~~soundless~~ ^{rendition} by Bach. ^{at the end} ~~with~~ ^{baton} ~~dangling~~ ^{on the} ~~finger~~ ^{of the} ~~sobole~~ ^{that} ~~had~~ ^{always} ~~appeared~~ ^{with} ~~spring~~ another girl in a head band and a ~~scarf~~ ^{an} sash inscribed with ^{Petalé}, recited ~~from~~ a book ^{dramatically} ~~held~~ ^{against} the evening sun, a Shakespearean soliloquy which a mocking bird ~~had~~ ^{mimicked}.

Two, whose gender was ^{undiscernible} even to them, and especially even to them whose identity was obscured ^{by the} youth, ~~sat~~ ^{sat} on a curve of the crescent porch in the shade of a ^{SP} ~~fully~~ ^{SP} ~~Crepe Myrtle~~ tree and shared a ~~cigarette~~ smoke, ~~sucking~~ ~~heads~~ ^{heads} ducking together for the exchange, and looking at the house across the street which contained the woman.

She stepped back and smoothed her white apron, exclaiming to herself as there was no one ~~else to~~ ~~claim to~~ to whom she could exclaim.

"It'll be dark soon. ~~But~~ And this time I'm calling up the po-tice. They ain't no sense in putting it off till they break in my house. They got dope in that house, shore as it's stangin' here ~~she~~ ~~said~~ and doing no telling a what," she said, as she rearranged the family picture on the crocheted doily of the Victorian table. The children were grown & gone. Her husband ~~dead~~ was in the cemetery two blocks away where she ^{had} walked 2 sunny ~~days~~ ^{mornings} a week for ~~the past 24 years~~ ^{the past 24 years} carrying roses clipped from her garden and wrapped in a copy newspaper. On rainy days she sewed at her treadle sewing machine & watched ~~the past two years~~ ^{television operas & game shows} ~~removed~~ ^{removed}.

She shuffled ~~to~~ ^{removed} the kitchen and ~~took~~ the bowl of noodle soup from the refrigerator, sloshing it with trembling hands to the stove, where it scraped & shattered ~~before~~ ^{up} it leaving ~~two~~ dark webbed streaks like the ~~veins~~ ^{veins} ^{up} on her hands. From the pot to the soup bowls ^{the soup was placed} on a tray she labored ~~her way~~ ^{her way} ~~to~~ ^{to} the living room ^{which} ~~she~~ ^{she} ~~reached~~ ^{reached} the ~~stair~~ ^{stair} final rays of sun set ^{cast} ~~cast~~ ^{cast} ~~east~~ ^{east} ~~stencil~~ ^{stencil} ~~patterns~~ ^{patterns} ~~on~~ ^{on} the floor ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~sheer~~ ^{sheer} curtains of the long windows.

like a ^{iron} ~~pressed~~ ~~flower~~ corsage compressed between the leaves
of a seldom opened book.

The curtainless window on the ~~other~~
first floor was aglow with candle light, pink
and ~~rusty haze~~ as a mist at sunset.

Nude bodies flitted past like moths, fluttering,
darting, halting. ~~Music pitched~~ to music which
rose and fell to the fluttering and darting and halting
it stopped. The nude bodies bounced to the
window, a step away. ^(Contorted) legs spread like scissors
and cut into the floor while the body above
forced ~~them~~ one down and then the other.
~~the scissorless~~ ~~the moaning~~ girl moaned and pleaded and
laughed in a lilting voice. 'I knew it! I knew it!' ^{exclaimed the woman.}

And above on the second floor, the
harsh ^{illumination} ~~and~~ of the dangle-bare bulb
strobed surrounded by swirling ~~light~~ ~~producing~~
~~strob effect~~ ^{revealed} a boy splay-kneed
effeminate, intent at ~~the~~ sewing machine. And there
was sound.

The sound of a powerful
drumming and ^{synthetic} drumbeat & wailing and
harpicord ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ^{second} grasshopper whir of the sewing
machine. He stood and ~~placed~~ the floral purple
skirt at his waist, held it away and examined it,
then slipped it on over his ^{navy} sweat shorts. He
spread the skirts & whirled to the music, grabbed
a partner for an exaggerated waltz as the ^{navy} boy
passed, and both laughed as they ~~slipped~~ ^{slipped} onto
the balcony ~~lit~~ ^{halped} by the white street light.

"Yes, since! Yes, since! I knowed at the first time I seen 'em," she said.

A girl entered the room, doused the light and a flare consumed the darkness waned, and the flicker of a candle replaced it, growing to a glow as she sat on the floor crosslegged with a book placed ~~before her~~ beneath the candle. She ~~stared at~~ the book ^{intently} raised her dark head to a noble & profound attitude ^{of concentration}. And there she became a statue ~~with~~ at peace in the bronze cast of the candle. "Devil worshipping. Ford, help me!"

~~The music began below again~~

Below, the music started again, on the upswing, and the leaping and bounding of the nude bodies began, fast and wild and proliferate, from wall to wall, into the center, swirling & ~~spinning~~ ^{spinning} faster & faster at an exhilarating pace until they were spent. And they collapsed on the floor like ~~unwound dolls~~ ^{unwound dolls} with ~~rubbery legs~~ ^{rubbery legs} ~~cries crossed~~ ^{cries crossed} and ~~faces with dark cavities for eyes~~ ^{faces with dark cavities for eyes}.

"I am putting it off another minute. I am waiting til they get doped up and jump me break in and jump me," the woman said, dropping the shade which ~~was pulled~~ ^{rattled} & lay behind the billowing curtain.

She made the call and ~~lowered the volume on the television~~ ^{lowered the volume on the television} ~~waited~~ ^{waited} ~~for~~ ^{for} the television set ~~not to sound~~ ^{not to sound} because she might miss ~~him~~ ^{him} ~~at~~ ^{at} work. Then she returned to her ~~bed~~ ^{bed} spying place to wait.

Soon she saw the black & white ~~car~~ ^{car}

pull up in front of the house. Two officers emerged, frowning at their caps and ~~sauntered~~ ~~sauntered~~ ~~to~~ the front door.

They knocked. They knocked again, harder, but no one came to the ^{door}. They ~~exchanged looks~~ ~~which said~~ They shrugged their shoulders in harmony and entered ~~the door~~.

She watched them enter the door ~~pass~~ enter the ~~room~~ the candle lit room downstairs, standing before the ~~the~~ across from the two nude youths ~~in~~ in the absence of music. The youths' ~~the~~ sheets were rising & falling to the beat upstairs. They shrugged their shoulders at the ~~the~~ crossarmed officer, ~~motioning~~ making ^{circular} motions with their hands and resumed their contortions as the police ~~passed~~ ~~to~~ the stairs.

"Well, it'll be," said the woman, looking up.

She saw ^{with} the officers ~~into~~ ^{lightly} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~top~~ ^{the} ~~froze~~ ^{shoulder of the meditative} ^{She} looked up and strained for comprehension, then ~~she~~ ^{she} ~~wondered~~ ^{calmly} ~~wondered~~ ^{clearly} ~~to~~ the ~~room~~ ~~strove~~ to lower the volume.

She returned to the candle and the two boys waltzed through and ~~halted~~ halted before the officers, ~~one~~ ^{one} ~~chained~~ ^{chained} the other giggling and gesturing with her hands. The officer wrapped ~~them~~ ~~around~~

in their arms again, ~~At last~~ pursued the
room at a rotation of their heads, and
~~nodded affirmatively to the three~~
~~as they approached the~~
stairs.

"Well, it never," said the woman, still watching
as they left the house and walked across the
street.

She had the door open before they could
knock. The front porch light shed a ~~gold~~
glow on their uniforms & faces.

"You didn't do nothing to that bunch of
heathen. I seen you," she said, shaking a
finger in their faces.

"Man. They wady? no call to do nothing.
Them's just ^{performing arts} theatre majors from the college over yonder.
They was studying."

The Day After: April 15, 1986

On the back ground the television blared, not because of concern with keeping abreast of the latest media coverage of the Libyan crisis, but because it always blared, perhaps because one of the fifteen or so family members ^{depends upon flight or plenty,} ~~thought~~ ^{pass} and stop to view whatever happened to be happening at the moment in the other world, but probably only because it blared out of habit and to ^{SP} disconnect the sound would be to ^{SP} disconnect the outside world.

On the foreground the immediate world was in the throes of a baby shower, Betty Jean's first, a prime occasion, self-administered, as she waddled ^{SP} ~~to~~ ^{to} bursting in her ~~bits~~ navy blue maternity dress and ~~very slide~~ ^{refined} the justifiable pampering ~~around the first guests~~. She blew at ~~her~~ a dark lock which ~~was~~ separated from her hairpray matted coil and glued to her forehead ~~glistening with~~ ^{dampened by} the first sweat of spring.

The bounded past the television with the focus on the furrowed face of a commentator ^{boastful} ^{brilliant} ~~in~~ ^{support} of the President's military ~~decision~~ action, bypassing the two children who had been spiffed like the barn abode imitating ^{the} current country craze, but had failed with the ~~myriad~~ ^{myriad} ~~number~~ ^{number} ways and wonders whose ~~myriad~~ ^{myriad} ~~number~~ ^{number} tastes ranged from dime store contemporary to lackluster lost art like the ~~red, black & gold~~ ^{gold} ~~helmet~~ picture hanging above the set of a pictorial representation of peace in the form of a gold dove

~~was~~ ^{plucked pile} ~~spared~~ in the ~~front~~ ~~door~~

"Sister, you and Frieda run to the ~~front~~ ^{front} door and let 'em in," said Betty Jean's mother-in-law, arranging a ^{blue} fruit jar of ^{chopping pile} field flocks in the center of the long plank table flanked by benches & covered with yellow oilcloth.

She was compact and practical and growing stout for the first time. Her dark curly hair was cut & poufed for the occasion of her youngest son's ^{celebration} ~~celebration~~. Her ^{eggs} ~~eggs~~ ^{were} ~~were ^{at} ~~at ^{it} ~~it~~ appeared to be the first occasion of new birth but it was not; the number of births in the family had ceased to be counted, so numerous were they, and each special, each in ^{spring} ~~spring~~ time for the spring re-orientation.~~~~

"Come on in, Studie, Mooney," she said to the girl who entered, a girl hesitant with youth & ignorance but blissfully so.

"Mama said to tell y'all she wadn't able to get y'all nothing yet."

"The latest reports of casualties reveal that Omar Kadafy's adopted daughter was among those who perished in last night's bombing of Libya by the U.S...."

"Sister, turn that down some," said Betty Jean's mother-in-law while Betty Jean plipped on the bench and waved her hand at her face, blowing all the while, and the 8 yr old spilled & ~~and~~ bowed freshly shampooed ~~blonde~~ walked properly

to the T.V. and touched the volume knob.

"~~Don't~~" That don't make a dab of difference."

"We're just glad you could come," said the mother-in-law, ushering her into the raw living room which would be finished the next time Alvin got a vacation from the mill. For now it was partially sealed with veneer paneling sporting painted wood grains which caught the setting sun through the open front door.

The girl wore a red dress above black knobby knees and a white belt to match her Keds with white ankle socks. She was popping gum in time to the ~~pop~~ replay of the gun fire the night before in Siberia.

Pop! Pop! Pop!

"Pries, y'all turn that thing down," said the mother-in-law unperturbed for all appearances, and the fat child of ~~be~~ completed for door space as Beth Jean lumbered ~~back~~ through.

"Sister, ~~Wasn't~~ wasn't they somebody at the front door?" asked the ~~afraid~~ sprightly mother-in-law, ducking through the open door into the sun light which revealed the crease on her tawny brow.

"There y'all are. Them younguns. I ~~delectate~~ ^{sewance}.

They must a left y'all setting out here in the wings. Y'all, come on in."

"We was just enjoying the night air & all,"
~~she~~ ^{the mother said} ~~she~~ ^{they} ~~said entering with extended gifts of pink
& blue ~~with~~ tied with ribbons left over from
Christ was like a holiday afterthought.~~

The cricket sibilance increased with the final
show of sun, as the replay of buzzy bomber on
the television shifted to commentary, ~~an~~ ^{an} ~~ominous~~
of nobody as dark as the night closing in around the
house growing to completion with Alvin's accumulation of
vacations. And then the evening star appeared like
eternal hope.

In the hum, the neighboring woman spent dirt
satisfied with supper done & dishes washed and
children little one's secure, ambled in two
across or along the dirt road to the shower
to make their contribution, to participate in the ⁱⁿ advent
(celebration),
& new life.

And the television droned ~~white~~ as Alvin entered,
pulled his greasy cap till low over his ^{work worn} ~~work worn~~
brow, gave the kids ~~a hug~~ and somebody's
children a hug and sat to survey the day
on the television. Soon he wandered away leaving
the world given to their tactics while he
took the heaped plate from the oven and
devoured the food while observing the drifting
onslaught of well wishers like ~~moths drawn to~~
like chickens going to

~~A~~ ^{ghost} ~~flame~~ in the living room.

A powerful clucking emanated from the living room through the shutters into the garage turned den, with the television, with each gift opened, each clever remark.

And the babbling of voices from end to end of the house drew together like a magnetic force, one voice, the voice of hope ~~obliterated by conviction~~ combined with the voice of ~~anguish~~ hopelessness.