

she said, using her habitual reply of intimidation;
she hesitantly replied, terrified that Abe and this man had betrayed her

and that he would now turn her over to the authorities. "You ever done any work in a whiskey joint", he ~~asked~~ ^{asked} absently ~~inquired~~. "No suh", ~~she~~ ^{she} ~~the scared reply,~~ ^{said,} as she clutched her box still tighter, "but I's been

a reg'lar at "Abe's" for a long time," she added proudly. "That a Fact?" ~~smirked the man,~~ ^{said Lola,} "Ya' suh", ~~reiterated Lola.~~ ^{said Lola,} "Well, I do some business

with the owner of the Southend Bar and He's a looking for some help. Abe ~~says'~~ ^{says'} you a hard worker so I'm a gonna' drop you by and you on you own after that", he ~~finalized.~~ ^{said,} Relieved but still untrusting, Lola replied,

"I sho' thank you, suh'". Cutting her off abruptly with a malignant stare the man added, "But if'n I ever hear 'bout you making threats on this here operation again, I'll fix you good, you hear, nigger gal". Startled

speechless, Lola ~~uttered,~~ ^{said,} "Ya' suh'!" Not daring to take her eyes from the rough profile of the man for a moment, Lola clutched her box and hoped for a quick departure from the lethal presence. ~~Buildings which~~ ^{pure}

seemed massive to Lola after her humble surroundings, loomed before her now as she gazed out the side of the truck, while at the same time maintaining her vigil over the vicious stranger, who was beginning to

~~maneuver~~ ^{maneuver} the truck out of the traffic ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~the curb~~ ^{the curb} in front of a square, two-story red building. Several people loitered in front of the unpretentious front of the building, laughing and joking loudly. ~~flocked~~ ^{flocked}

~~Mesmerized~~ ^{Fascinated} for the moment, Lola continued to watch and listen to the ~~the~~ ^{the} jargon exchanged among the bystanders. Interrupted by the driver's harsh announcement that this was the bar of which he had spoken and she was to just go on in and tell Cleve that Jack said to put her to work.

All of this said with no emotion, Lola, without a glance in his haughty direction, reached for the door handle, pulled up and heaved herself gladly from his truck. Entering the world of city ~~sounds,~~ ^{sounds,} Lola felt that she

had extricated herself from the last familiar link with her past and Seymore. Although grateful to be leaving the hateful atmosphere, she was tempted to beg a ride back home. One glance back through the window of the truck assured her that she was better off ~~risking her life~~ dealing with the unknown. Slamming the door twice to insure nothing left undone and therefore avoid another ^{reprimand from} encounter with the brooding white man, Lola stepped onto the curb planting both feet firmly on the brick sidewalk. Maintaining an air of self assurance she began her short saunter to the entrance of the ^{building} a few yards away. The hard surface, ^{unfamiliar} beneath her feet, made her feel ^{un}steady as she continued walking slowly, head held high. Raucous laughter from the two separate groups of people on each side of her made her halt her pace and stare curiously at them. Men and women engaged in conversations, talking at once, then trying to out laugh each other, at which time they would back away and then regroup to continue the tirade. Lola knew it must be quite late but no one seemed to care. No one noticed Lola as she journeyed on carrying her card board box, which suited her just as well since assimilation was important to her at this point, wishing to remain anonymous. Holding the box to one side, balancing it against her hip, she opened the peeling green-painted screen door whose spring had long since lost its elasticity. She entered the world of dim lights, music, and laughter much like Abe's but on a much broader scale, causing Lola to feel apprehensive. Blinking several times in the drift of smoke moving towards the open door, Lola watched numerous people involved in various activities. At the bar directly ahead of her, many people were drinking from bottles (brown) and a variety of chipped glassware. A couple danced by her path almost unsettling her fixed stance. Although the room was crowded with groups similar to those she had seen outside the building, Lola had never felt so isolated. Seymore and the

surrounding areas she knew well, but not this new world of frivolity.

Hiawatha

But the music renewed her self-confidence and she was determined to act worldly. Pushing through the throngs of people engaged ⁱⁿ with their activities, she made her way towards the bar. On her right near the ~~rest~~ corner of the bar a group of men were preoccupied with a game of what she was later to learn was called "crappie". Each in turn would toss the dice on the wooden plank floor, ^{the dice then} bounding against the wall ~~and~~ settling to the floor again revealing a lucky ~~xx~~ seven or eleven, or for the unlucky neither of the two numbers to the dismay of the players. On her left was a green felt pool table ~~xxxxxx~~ containing leather pockets into which the surrounding participants aimed the balls shot by the wooden sticks. ~~xxxxxx~~ Feeling slightly disoriented upon reaching the bar, Lola easily sidled onto the slimmy black bar stool between two ~~xxxxxx~~ men, both drinking from bottles taking long noisy swigs. Looking cautiously out of the corner of her eyes to the left, she studied the features of the man and he resembled Zeke so much that she almost retreated. Regaining her composure, she assembled her belongings on her lap, and fixed her eyes in a forward position ~~xxx~~ cutting them from left to right at brief intervals hoping for a glimpse of Cleve. She finally saw the man she assumed to be Cleve bartending at the left end working his way towards her. Wearing a white cotton short sleeve shirt covered with spatters of grease and various fluids, black pants, the large bellied, but otherwise muscular, balding man eluded an air of authority as he worked his way down the bar. Cigar dangling from his drooping lips, occasionally clenching the end between his teeth to prevent it from falling to the dusty floor while he conversed with his customers. Lola was once again intimidated as she caught bits of the conversation in progress between Cleve and a smaller man begging for a refill of whiskey. Cleve was refusing to accommodate the customer on the grounds that he ~~owxxx~~ still owed money for the last drink.

Cleve asserted his authority with a horrendous threat of breaking the smaller man's body in half if he failed to return with the money by the following night. With a promise to bring the money right away the little man left the establishment hurriedly, leaving no doubt about Cleve's position in Lola's mind. Following the man's exit with his glazed eyes, Cleve mumbled something incomprehensible to Lola, flicked the cold ash from his cigar ceremoniously, and returned to his business at the bar. Lola became more ~~xxxxxx~~ alarmed with each step Cleve made in her direction, but her fear of the law was greater. Working his way ^{WARDS} to Lola with an air of indifference, Lola decided to meet him on his grounds and sitting as tall as she could, she managed her best smile as he spoke, "What for' you?" Before her courage diminished she ~~blurted breathlessly~~ ^{answered}, "Mr. Jack done told me to say he sent me and for' you to give me work". Inspecting her carefully, he finally responded to her smile, removing the cigar from his thick lips, saliva tip glistening towards her as he pointed it in her direction and asked, "You a Who'e?" Lola's smile quickly faded as she ~~ejected~~ ^{said}, "No Suh, sho ain't now." Sensing her predicament, Cleve continued, " ~~He~~ ^{He}, ~~some~~ could use a purtty girl like you and make us both some money", His small, glazed eyes were dancing as he gingerly rubbed his forefinger and thumb together in a motion to indicate ^{ing} the ~~xxx~~ feel of money. Then leaning towards her he licked his drooling lips ~~deliberately~~. Lola maintained her position on the slick bar stool as his cigar breath hit her ~~ass~~ ⁱⁿ her sense of smell. Finally she ~~stated~~ ^{said}, "I ain't never whored none but I ~~can~~ cook." He was looking right into her eyes, bald head gleaming from the reflection ~~in~~ the overhead hanging bulb. Recouping his thoughts he ~~said~~ stood up straight placing both hands flatly on the bar and asked, "Where you live, gal?" Never having considered being asked this question Lola gropped for an answer, "I been aroun'." Afraid of being turned out with no place to go, Lola decided she had better use her powers of flirtation ^{due to her inadequate answer}

and once more pasted ^{on} her best smile. ~~on~~ Becoming bored with the game of cat and mouse, Cleve relented. "O.K., gal, you ~~can~~ stay here and work for ol' Cleve. ~~A~~ A purty gal like ~~you~~ ought to liven' things up a plenty", he ^{cried} ~~contemplated~~ ^{in her worth} as he again clenched the cigar between his gleaming white teeth. Motioning with his big hand towards the right he directed her to his room upstairs. Perspiring now from the strained efforts of flirting, Lola said, ~~appreciatively~~, "Thank ~~you~~ suh", ~~And~~ sho' nuf thank ~~you~~! EXCITED by the new addition to his seedy establishment and particularly to his bedroom, Cleve watched the saucy movement towards ~~the~~ ~~entrance~~ ~~to~~ ~~his~~ ~~domain~~. She had now rallied a few stares and suggestive remarks from the men nearby as she continued walking by the bar. Ignoring the overtures she pushed through the once-white ⁱⁿ bespeckled curtains ~~marked~~ which marked the boundary of the joint from the personal quarters. She stood trying to focus her eyes in the darker area. Getting her bearings, she approached the nearby wooden staircase which ~~creaked~~ with each careful step that she took. ^{INDICATED THE NEED FOR REPAIR} At the top she immediately entered a good sized room which contained a bed with an iron bedstead ~~covered~~ partially with dirty rumpled sheets exposing a portion of the grey striped ~~bed~~ bed ticking. Dangling from the end of a long cord suspended from the paintless thin, tongue and grooved ceiling, a bare bulb wavered gently from the light breeze ^{from} ~~two~~ ^{of} ~~two~~ large ^{dirty} glass ^{paned} windows which also ~~permitted~~ ~~the~~ provided the entrance ~~of~~ numerous bugs and moths casting circling shadows on the bed below as they made their buzzing rotation around the light. A straight chair and an unpretentious square table littered with papers and clothes sat at crooked angles to the wall in the corners ~~near~~ the windows. Another corner contained a broom handle hung from ~~w~~ wall to wall providing a hanging place ~~for~~ several outfits

similar to those worn by Cleve. Lola placed her box down by the bed and sat on the lumpy mattress. Glad for the privacy, yet unaccustomed to the sounds which were clearly audible from the noise below, and the ~~traffice~~ sounds of the traffic from the streets coming through the windows, Lola was suddenly hit with a longing for Seymore, ~~for the sounds of the life which she knew.~~ Watching her silhouette on the floor and listening to the music and laughter filtering through from below, Lola sat swinging her legs in time to the beat which vibrated the bed slightly. Again Lola thought of Zeke and she shivered. She ^{felt} no remorse but only fear of being incarcerated forever for the deed. For an indeterminable time she continued sitting in the same position contemplating her predicament, lost in her thoughts. Finally realizing that the music had ceased, she snapped back to reality. The human sounds dwindled below and moved to the streets drifting up through the windows. The sound of heavy, sure foot steps creaked up the stairs coming nearer. She hadn't really given much thought to Cleve until now. He had reminded her of ABE in some way, and she had simply placed him in that category of men whom she expected to use her in some capacity in exchange for their accommodations. Now the sounds of the footsteps reminded her of the leering face and she became apprehensive. She began thinking of Big Mo and stood looking at the doorway where he stood measuring her carefully. The look on his face confirmed her feelings; he was like Big Mo. "I see you done and got settled in ~~AND~~ ^{AND} was a' waitin' for me", he said leaning confidently on the doorjam. "Yuh Suh", Lola ^{said} ~~replied~~ bravely, still standing in the same spot. He started walking towards her eagerly ^{as} she remained planted beside the ^{bed}, unspeaking. He started unbuttoning his stained pants dropping them to the floor and stepped easily out, ^{and at the same time} removing his shoes using the toes of each foot ^{to COMPLETE} the process. "Well is you gonna git

to bed or just stand there all night"? he ^{asked} ~~inquired~~ impatiently. Lola's fears evaporated, ~~as~~ She laid down on the bed as cleve pulled the string on the hanging light above the bed and joined her. He was like Big Mo but Lola ~~wxxxxix~~ welcomed the security of having someone to protect her. (para) The sounds from the streets awakened Lola the next morning with the unfamiliar honking of automobile horns and people's voices. She lay completely still, eyes wide open, listening for a few moments before remembering all that had occurred the day before resulting in her present circumstances. She sat up and looked around for her new keeper. He had already risen and left the room. Her body was sore from ~~thexpraxixkwxixnighxxxxd~~ his amorous ^{handling (word)} ~~handling~~ of the night before, as she crawled from the bed to peer out of the window at the street below. Completely nude she kneeled at the window surveying her new surroundings for the first time in daylight. The opening offered no breeze to the stuffy room, only humidity from the pvercast atmosphere. Lola perspiring and breathless from the dizzying hieght of which she was unaccustomed, inhaled the foreign oders of exhaust emissions and steamy pavements. Her eyes were drawn below by the sounds of the inhabitants of this seemingly foreign land. Although most of them were of her race, there was an indefinable difference. Perhaps it was that they seemed more unhibited and self-confident. Feeling more comfortable after adjusting to the height, Lola continued to survey the activity below. Cars and trucks of various ^{de} ~~de~~criptions passed busily by, honking occassional ~~and~~ stopping and starting at the lighted intersections. A feeling of omnipotence claimed Lola, as she shifted positions on her knees. Below two stout women carrying ^{IDENTICAL} brown paper bags passed, exchanging their views in a loud but friendly tone. Both resembled Mattie Lou in their manner of dress ^{AND SENSES OF PURPOSE.} A momentary wave of maternal nostalgia swept over Lola as she remembered her own children now in Mattie Lou's stealthly hands. Quickly overcoming the emotions, Lola's attention was focused

across the street to a bench containing three men with four others standing near by around a utility pole. At that moment, a pickup truck pulled to a stop and the three ^{which were} seated walked to the window and began talking to the driver, then motioned for one of the others standing. ~~xxxx~~ Laughing and talking they hurriedly approached the rear and jumped on the already moving truck. The remaining three ambled over and sat on the vacant bench, ^{reminiscent their conversation.} Lola was later to learn that this was the work bench where the men seeking ^{TEMPORARY} employment by the rural farmers would wait for the opportunity to work should the need arise. The bench was almost always occupied and was a means of procuring labor for the farmers if they needed additional help. ^{THE TELL TALE} ~~SPENDING~~ ^{FOOT STEPS ON} of the stairs warned Lola that she was soon to be in the company of Cleve once more. Scrambling to her feet, she rubbed her knees and ran across the room grabbing her discarded dress from the previous night off the floor and hurriedly pulled it over her head just in time to see Cleve leaning against the door jam. "I ~~was~~ ^{was} a wondering if'n you ~~was~~ ^{was} gonna' sleep all ~~the~~ ^{the} live long day, gal", he ^{said, regarding their work to be done and you ain't a getting it done in that there bed.} ~~said~~ "Sho ~~ma~~ ain't nowy ^{agreed said Lola,} ~~replied Lola,~~ one side of her cotton shift hiked up on her ample thigh. ~~XXXXXX~~ "I ~~was~~ ^{was} just going to find you and get to working, ^{he said, cynical} ~~she lied.~~ ^{lying} Turning, he approached the descending stairs with Lola following, ~~at a close pace,~~ ^{her} shift falling into place with the movement of her ^{THIGHS.} ~~legs.~~ At the bottom of the still dimly lit stairs, even in the morning light, they reached the small narrow back room behind the bar ~~room~~ ^{partitioned} by the curtains. Sun light streaked through the one cracked glass window which faced another building which ^{THAT} looked similar to Cleve's place. The smell of ^{whiskey} ~~beer~~ dominated the other odors in the room. On one side of the room a long work table had been erected of ^{OLD} ~~unpainted~~ boards attached to to the wall with stocky poles as legs for supports on the outside. On the table were numerous whiskey bottles with peeling labels indicating prior use of the containers. A large tin tub beside the table contained more of the same. Under the table were four ~~brown~~ five gallon ^{gals}

Jimmy John jugs such as those loaded onto the truck by the stranger and Abe. Lola knew without being told that they contained white lightning. With her stomach empty, the smell made Lola slightly nauseous. Swaying slightly, she leaned against the work bench. "Here, Gal, have a little drink to settle you. You don't look so good This stuff'll get you going", ~~xxxxxx~~ Cleve ^{awkwardly} offering ~~handing~~ her the bottle from the table. Lola obeyed, taking a short ~~sip~~ gulp. The hot burning liquid seared her throat but she took another sip which abated the queasy feeling to some degree. "That's enough, gal, You ~~sure~~ ^{are} a drinker", Cleve ^{said laughing as he} ~~laughed~~ ^{and} retrieving the bottle. "You see ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~tab~~ ^{tab} bottles, well you gonna' wash ~~them~~ ^{them} all and fill 'em from those jugs there, you understand, gal?" he asked. "Sho' do now", ^{said Lola nodding and} ~~nodded~~ Lola, beginning to feel much better. "Well, get a move on 'cause we open at 2:00 and it's ~~at~~ ^{already} bout 11:00 or so, ~~and~~ ^{and} our customers be wanting some of this whiskey. I keeps plenty of ~~the~~ legal stuff too, just in case ~~the~~ ^{the} law comes ~~around~~ ^{around}, just for show, but ~~this~~ ^{this} is cheaper and got more ~~kick~~ ^{kick}." Cleve ^{said as he} ~~explained~~ ^{explained} proudly. At the mention of the law, Lola cringed inwardly but immediately felt better having been fortified with the false courage of the ~~white lightning~~ ^{moonshine}. Throughout the remainder of the afternoon, Lola took occasional sips of the hot liquid as she washed and filled the ~~down~~ bottles. Cleve was busy out front getting ready for his customers. He was a man of few words but a simple look in Lola's direction let her know he could be hazardous if crossed. Just before time to open, he came in to observe and brought Lola a tin plate of pork&beans and a piece of white bread. "Eat up, Gal, and ~~then~~ ^{then} get on up and change before we open ~~the~~ ^{the} doors" he said. ^{Checking content of water by shaking bottle for heading which indicated enough alcohol content} Lola quite dizzy and disoriented, ate quickly, then holding on to the shaky stair~~way~~ ^{upward} rail climbed ~~the~~ ^{the} stairs. In the sleeping quarters, she rummaged through her box and put on a worn pink dress which threatened to split on the sides ~~also~~ ^{also} she pulled it over her

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5

to place customer

volumptuous body. Suddenly she heard the music from below and knew that Cleve had opened. The bed looked inviting now ~~xxxxx~~ with her stomach full and the alcohol producing a drowsy effect. Somehow she managed to overcome the temptation and went downstairs. Cleve, busy at the bar, glanced towards her as she approached him, "You in plain rags, Gal, he said, we gonna' have to get you some more clothes tomorrow". "Sho' do now ", ~~absently acknowledged~~ ^{said Lola, absently.} Lola. "I want you to mingle with the men when ~~they~~ ^{she} comes in. Ain't nothing ~~like~~ ^{like} a purty ~~gal~~ ^{gal} to liven' things up", Cleve ~~admitted~~ ^{said.} In a scolding tone, he added, "Now you liven' up cause ~~that~~ ^{that} ain't no time to be acting sleepy." The front door opened and two men entered. Deep in conversation they sauntered up to the bar, halting their conversation and laughter. "What for you boys, asked Cleve, smiling, cigar in place between his teeth. "Whiskey for ~~the~~ both of us", replied the smaller of the two, grinning a toothy grin. Lola, a few feet away, watched the two wondering what to do but not for long. "Lola, ~~get~~ ^{get} over here", yelled Cleve. Moving nearer to the men, Lola stood waiting. "Say hello to my friends, Lola", ~~ordered~~ ^{ordered} ~~one~~. "Hello," ~~said~~ ^{said} Lola in her friendliest voice. "Hey, she sho' is purty, Cleve," said the larger man, dressed in a white shirt and black derby. "Yeh, she is", reflected Cleve, "Hired her last night to help out and purty the place up a bit. Ain't no ~~is~~ ^{is} shore, she says, so I took her for ~~myself~~, but she'll be friendly ~~with~~ ^{with} you." All eyes upon her now, Lola just stood smiling feeling slightly confused. A toothy grin and swift pinch on the rear from the smaller character was the returned response. "You like to dance, gal," he asked rehetorically. Before Lola could reply, he was off to the lighted Juke box ^{POSITIONED} ~~to~~ the left of the bar. Familiar with the ~~selection~~ he jangled a pocketful of change withdrawing a nickle which he quickly inserted, punching a tune and returned while the machine obeyed jerkily placing the record on the spinning turn table

placed the needle in place, beginning the first notes as Lola was likewise ~~maneuvered~~ ^{maneuvered} into the required position of contact for the ritual of dance. And so began the evening of work at Cleve's with Lola and the jukebox in perfect harmony as one man and then the other followed by more as the night wore on; all eager to experience the latest pleasure gadget at Cleve's place. Lola, between dances was given drinks of the whiskey which combined with the dancing kept her in a ~~numbed~~ ^{numbed} state. There was only music and hands; her feet moving at first to the rhythm and then simply moving. Her seeming lack of inhibition enticed the men and kept the women in a constant state of jealousy. The leering looks of all the men became as one and the music became a distant hum as Lola's feet became removed from the floor, floating in midair. Unable to endure further duress, Lola's body relinquished itself to an unconscious state. ~~Lola~~ ^{Lola} became aware of the throbbing headache even before fully awakening the following morning. Opening ~~her~~ ^{her} eyes to the dim room, she quickly closed them, then tried again at the sound of Cleve's voice. "Gal, wake up, you don't overslept. You sho' drank too much ~~last~~ ^{last} night. I had to carry you ~~up~~ ^{up} to bed. But the customers liked you a lot. I figures tonight ~~they~~ ^{they} 'll be two times more. ~~Was~~ ^{Was} a lucky night for me when you came here," he ~~finished~~ ^{said} with a double meaning glint in his eyes. Lola continued to listen, without moving because trying increased the pain. "We got to get you some clothes to wear. You ~~sho~~ ^{sho} would be purty all gussied up. So get up and get yourself cleaned and fed", he ~~commanded~~ ^{commanded}. "I bring you some food and coffee to get you goin'", he ~~said~~ ^{said}. At his command, Lola urged her body to obey, finally sitting on the side of the bed and trying to bring Cleve's face into focus. Nausea overwhelmed her and she made a fast run for the ~~basin~~ ^{basin} on the table nearby. Retching repeatedly until she could turn away and return to sit on the bed with the impatient Cleve cluthing a plate of food. Accepting it from him she forced herself to eat and

rinsed it down with coffee. Beginning to feel some ~~better~~ ^{stabilizing}, she listened as Cleve explained to her about going up the street to get some clothes. He stood and withdrew from his pocket a twenty dollar bill and offered it to her. Having never had that much money just handed to her she did not immediately accept it. Impatient ~~xxxx~~ beyond endurance, Cleve shouted, "Take it you crazy gal, you look like a pig in those clothes and smell worse." Lola accepted it ~~now~~, crupling it in her hand, and after drinking the remainder of her coffee she slid from the side of the bed and rummaged through her box of clothes. Resounding steps on the stairs ~~indicated~~ ^{told her} that Cleve had left. Lola became excited at the prospect of buying new clothes as she continued to clutch the bill as she stripped the old frock away and redressed in another of similar fashion. The money still wadded in her hand, Lola set out slowly up the street to find the yellow Bargain Barn as Cleve had instructed, ~~before she left.~~

Walking along the sidewalk so near the moving vehicles made Lola a little edgy. Each honk of a horn made her jump slightly. Soon she mustered her courage and gained momentum more self assured as she watched the other pedestrians and decided to imitate their carriage and mannerisms. Soon she began to enjoy the hustle-bustle around her, smiling to those whose eyes made contact with hers, but suddenly she was thrown askew when she reached an intersection with a traffic signal light. Unsure about why the people alongside her were waiting, even though no traffic was passing, she decided again to follow suit watching intently the green signal turn to a bright red. She was caught off guard momentarily as the others crossed. Then the absence of voices made her realize that she was alone and she ran quickly to catch up with the others. Reaching the busier section of town two blocks farther she was fascinated with signs which she could not read and colored lights. She became confused when suddenly more people joined the throng and many went in different directions. She stopped completely still and decided she should be nearing her destination. Just as she caught sight of the yellow bargain barn a few yards away as described by Cleve, she saw a uniformed man ^{she} walking towards her from the other direction. Her breath caught in her throat; clasping her hands to her heart, she commanded her feet to move and somehow made her way to the yellow building. Once inside she stood to the side of the open door peering out watching the man she was sure was the sheriff pursuing her ^{because of the badge which she had heard} Much to her relief ^{was the noise} he was merely standing looking confusedly towards the entrance, scratching his head, then he began walking slowly in the same direction from which he had come. Exuding a sigh of relief, Lola stood for a minute to catch her breath when a voice from behind her said, "Can I help you, Lady?" Turning quickly, Lola saw an old reverent-looking bald man with a friendly smile dressed in baggy pants and a print shirt.

"I needs some clothes", she ~~replied~~^{said}, extending the hand with the crumpled bill. He simply looked at the ~~offerings~~^{money}, then at the sad attire of the shopper, ~~and~~ said, "I ~~can~~^{can} help you girl; come on over here". Following him carefully so as not to walk too closely for fear of trampling the delicate creature, Lola stopped at the long rack which ran the length of the entire store filled with various clothing of all descriptions. The clerk stopped in front of a section of dresses of varied colors. "What color and kind you want, Lady," he asked, turning to gaze into her eyes. The word lady made her feel as important as Miz June and she beamed brightly as she ~~said~~^{said}, "Red, Suh", "Red it is for the pretty lady", he said, moving hangers of dresses aside to reveal a bright red dress much like the one Zeke had destroyed. "Oh, Lawd' suh, I sho' nuf 'likes it," she said. With much ado, he removed it from the rack with a flourish swinging the wide skirt in a broad circle. "Here, hold it up to yourself and see if'n it fits", ~~he offered~~. Delicately, she reached and held it by the shoulders with the thumb and forefinger of each hand carefully bringing it to her shoulders then looking down. The beauty of it made her beam. She felt complete and totally happy, her past problems blocked out. Only the color red remained dominant in her thoughts. Suddenly ~~and~~ her happiness was dashed as she remembered a slight problem, "Does I have enough money, she asked giving him the sweaty, crumpled bill. Unfolding it carefully, he replied, "Sho' do now, you even got nuf for some more dresses." Excited by the prospect of owning two dresses like the one she was holding she made her wishes known to the ~~xxxx~~^{little} clerk. Hesitantly, at first, he finally withdrew from the rack a dress similar to the one she was holding. Elated at the thought of two red dresses, Lola was finally brought down to earth by the clerk's suggestion of a pair of shoes to match. She had never thought that shoes could be red and was utterly thrilled at the prospect of it. After trying two pairs of red

shiny shoes they found her size and she sat on the wooden stool holding her feet up to catch the glimmer of the day light through the window on the shiny red surface. Even though her feet were once again rebelling from the restrictions, she thought them beautiful enough to suffer for. The reverent old man was likewise pleased. His many years spent in the business had brought him few joys to compare with the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ naive young beauty's ecstasy over something others might find simplistic. A man of little means himself, the inadequate amount of money mattered little to him compared to the happiness derived from this customer's satisfaction. He stood at the door watching her walk down the street until the red shoes were no longer visible. (1953, 16 years old)

(1957, 20, years old)

Life for Lola for the next four years was to be one long social whirl with the aid of alcohol generously supplied by her keeper and the men ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ who were attracted by her ~~xxxxxxxx~~ uninhabited presence and beauty. Although she was a woman of unusual beauty, her character was shadowed by her inability to control her consumption of ^{alcohol} ~~liquor~~ which had also enabled her for the most part to forget Zeke and her entire past. Each day was spent in filling the bottles with moonshine in the small dimly lit room, and nights were spent dancing and entertaining men with her charms which Cleve had decided were more profitable to share than to have total access to. Lola's enebriated state left no room for moralizing even if she had had truly definite values. During some of her more sober moments, Lola often thought of Seymore, of the ^{life} ~~sounds~~ dear to her and most of all the fields and woods, but her hectic ^{life} in the city left little time for nostalgia.

One hot summer night near to closing time, Lola was sitting on one of the bar stools talking and laughing with one of her customers. She was wearing another red dress from the Bargain Barn, feet clad in the same red shoes whose heels were now crushed down by her heels having given in to their plea for release. Sweat was trickling down ^{between the cleavage of her breasts} her bosom to which the man's eyes continually travelled. Another man behind her was embracing her ~~occasionally~~ ^{and} kissing her neck. Enjoying being the center of attraction, Lola continued drinking and laughing. Suddenly a familiar voice from the seat on her right sobbered her completely. "Lola, ~~is~~ ^{that} you?" the voice asked. Turning slowly while lowering her glass to the bar, she saw Zeke looking much as he always had before but more mature. The two men with Lola, sensing a strong tie between the two, ^{he} made themselves scarce. Unable to speak, Lola just stared as if were a ghost because she had always assumed he had died. Now seeing him again she wasn't relieved or fearful, just stunned by his presence. As if time had never passed, he said in a familiar tone, "You is coming home with me. I know's you ~~can~~ near bout kilt me, but we's got chiluns to raise and Mama ^{is} gettin' on in years. ~~Get your things.~~ You is still my wife." Anger overcame ~~ther~~ and shock and Lola finally managed to open her mouth to utter a few words. "You ~~be~~ ^{is} the one who ~~almost~~ ^{is} kilt me an I ain't caring ^{what} you do I ain't goin' back, sides ~~the~~ ^{this} is my home now," she said rising with her hands on her hips facing Zeke who had stood also. Taking her by her shoulders, roughly shaking her, in a loud voice through gritted teeth he shouted, ^{is you coming or is it} ~~is you comin' or is it~~ gonna have to drag you back where you belong like before and ~~the~~ ^{the} time you won't be ^{knifin'} ~~knifin'~~ me ~~or no body~~ cause I ~~is~~ gonna be watching", ^{he} warned still holding her in a grip from which she could not escape. Sobered by the fury which had lain dormant since the last

encounter with Zeke, Lola extricated herself from his strong fingers with renewed vigor brought her right knee up with lightning speed into his groin causing him to double over onto the bar groaning in agony. Then standing back at a safe distance she shouted, "I ain't goin' nos ~~where~~ ^{with the} likes of you". All the customers and Cleve had gathered now, curious and interested, but not interfering, having heard enough of the conversation to realize that this was a disgruntled husband with the right to claim his wife. No sooner had Lola uttered the words than the partially recovered Zeke sprang from the bar, and before she could anticipate his next move, ~~had~~ brought his clinched fist up under her quivering chin with a mighty blow. Lola ~~reeling~~ ^{falling} back could hear the crunching bone combine with the sound of faraway voices ~~and~~ as she began spinning, then blackness encompassed her.

^(P. 300) Pain dominated all other feeling and thoughts as the half conscious Lola was jolted slowly back to reality. Each jolt intensified the throbbing in her chin which reflected to her entire face and neck region. ~~She was~~ ^{She was} becoming aware of sounds; the rattle and whir of an engine and the night sounds of frogs and crickets. Sight restored; her eyes struggling to focus on a ~~spine of~~ rusty patch of blue speckled paint, a chrome door handle, and a cracked, moonlit window. Finally comes awareness of surroundings and the presence of another being. A hand moving to the face indicates the restoration of motion; touching the swollen chin and mouth; face turning slowly to the left seeing the blurred profile of a man. Alert senses, verifying the image of Zeke, spur the mind to action reviving the whole person. The blurred profile, taking on the image of a complete face, turns to watch the reviving victim and speaks authoritatively, "Either way you is going home, dead or alive. I ~~can~~ ^{can} bury you aside you ~~own~~ ^{own} Mama if'n you want, but you ~~is~~ ^{is} going home." Struggling to stay conscious but gladly giving in to blissful unconsciousness, Lola relents.