

Sunday Evening / A Man Like You

Rooted in his ~~big~~ reclining chair, he can ~~see~~ <sup>through the front window</sup> see ~~that~~ the old blue car looked had pea-sized ~~stabbles~~ bullet holes in the door and the ~~fat~~ <sup>young man</sup> getting out was the type to take pride in getting shot at.

Keeping his ~~long~~ <sup>slim</sup> white feet in the seat of the wheel chair before him, B.F. sits higher, straighter, waiting for the knock on the door.

The young man with long ~~stung~~ <sup>stung</sup> hair knocks on the front door -- He's wearing blue-gray coveralls with elastic in the waist. He's so skinny that the elastic doesn't even stretch.

"Come in," B.F. says and ~~wiggles~~ <sup>wiggles</sup> his feet.

The man opens the door, a peep, looks in, ~~then steps inside & closes it~~, His eyes are sunken, no color that B.F. can see, just hard eyes.

"You the fellow come after the goat, Wreckon?" says B.F.

The man closes the door. Steps inside.  
"U'm the one called."

"Have a seat," says B.F. & lifts himself higher. "Ain't nobody here but me, and I can get around good. So you'll have to <sup>go</sup> back <sup>to</sup> the

And get the goat yourself.

The man sits on the end of the couch by the door, crosses his legs at the knees. He has on white socks & lace up brown shoes. "How long you been out ~~How long~~ here?"

"Out where?" says B.F.

"Living out here in these woods?"

"All my life," says B.F. "Left one time went with the army & I was a paratrooper in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, World War II, Born your age, a little younger."

The young man is sitting on the floor with both hands around it, like some exercise, looking around. Not listening. B.F. knows when he's losing them -- these young people.

"Young fellow like you -- where you from?"

~~Valdosta~~ "The West Coast, California."

"Well, what you doing in S. Ga?"

"Visiting a old Aunt in Valdosta."

"What's her name?"

"Why?"

"Just thought I might know of her, that is all."

"No you don't." The young man has both feet flat on the floor & his chin in his hands

lean forward, so he can look thru the doorway to the kitchen. "Got a fine home here," he says,

"New home, my two girls built it for me & ~~my~~."

"Her?"

"My wife ~~she is gone~~ <sup>for</sup> a minute, today

he should quit talking now. Then, "She's gone to Macon, to a wedding. Her brother's. I used to go all over with her myself. But not anymore. Can't get around to go like I used to could."

detail

"What's wrong with your legs, partner?" says the man.

"Partner" kind of halts B.F. again. Then "Got some old nerve problem. Doctors say I won't never walk again. But I ain't no fool en."

"So you can walk?"

"Not much." B.F. motion with his "Here to the door and I'm wore out or fell, one."

"You mean your legs just give way?"

"Buckle right under me." He places a hand under his right knee. "Beginning to wonder if it ain't my knee caps wore out."

"You mean, your <sup>knee caps</sup> ~~might~~ <sup>need</sup> ~~get~~ <sup>replaced</sup> right?"

right

"That's it," B.F. decides the fellow is all right, after all -- better company than no company on a Sunday afternoon -- and goes on to tell him about the lady he met at the feed store a while back who had both knee caps replaced. But right in the middle of his story, the man cuts in, "How old did you say she is?"

"I didn't ask," says B.F.  
"I meant the nannie, the goat."

B.F. laughs. "I thought there for a minute you were talking about the old lady had her knees ~~operated on~~ replaced."

The man doesn't laugh. Sits back with his right left foot <sup>feet</sup> crossed over his right knee and his dirty hands laced on his lap. His nails are long, dirty.

"You a mechanic?" asks B.F.

"Not if I can help it."

B.F. waits for him to tell what kind of work he does. Nothing. "I bet you're one of them Moody boys, you know Moody Air Force Base other side of Valdosta?"

"Nope," he says, like they're playing some kind of game now.

5

details

B. J. wants him to go, but doesn't want him to go. He dreads being by himself again. Can tell he's losing his audience, but lurches into one of his war stories anyway. A ~~miracle~~ miracle that he can tell this story so clearly, without missing a detail, because the young man is openly, deliberately, going through the mail. B. J.'s wife left the coffee table, before the couch, with her "crochet work." B. J. can't believe it! "I guess you all sit social security, right?" says the man.

Let's see if the game is over now and they've known each other for ever.

"What happened to your car?"

"My car?" The fellow turns on the couch, lifts the sheer white curtains & stares left & right, but not necessarily at the car.

"Them's bullet holes, right?"

"Oh, yeah." The man laughs, drops the curtain, turns facing B. J. with an amused look on his sharp, podgy face.

"Somebody shooting at ya, huh?"

"You a mighty curious fellow."

"You right curious yourself," says B. J. He moves his feet to the edge of the chair,

then to the floor.

The young man sits back, staring up at the ceiling with ~~the knot~~ in his neck sliding up & down like mercury on a thermometer as he talks. "Had a little run in with some old boys over some dope. Said I owed em some money but I didn't."

"B I don't want to hear this. Over he found a moon shine still in the woods behind his house, <sup>but</sup> pretended he hadn't seen it. ~~He knows~~ Still, he doesn't want the man to go, can ~~send~~ <sup>feel</sup> his excitement rising over what might be coming up. What?

"Bet the law pulls you over a right smart in a car like that?"

"A right smart," says the man & laughs. "When you sell cows, do you cash the checks & keep it ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> hand?"

"I don't ~~know~~ <sup>know</sup> what you're getting at."

"Well, let me put it like this" - the fellow sits forward with his hands in praying position before his face - "If you ~~can~~ <sup>can</sup> deposit the checks, you risk losing your social security, see?"

"You ever heard of safety deposit boxes?"

"Yeah, heard of mattress too."

"Mattress."

9

"You know..." The fellow grimaces — he has a broken front tooth that makes his face look lopsided; — as he mimics lefty a matriarch I show something indignant.

"You fooling with me now, say BF, 'I like ~~the~~ fellow 'll cut up a little.'"

The man laughs, stabs. "Ain't every man can take a joke."

"You're more than likely find that old nannie out with corn. Just drive on south of Lee home, thru the gate — see you latch it, coming & going, and follow the road by the fence across the branch."

"Hold it," the man says, holding up both hands. "Need to visit your men's room first."

"Just go on thru the butcher there, down the hall on your left." BF says it as if he is still relaying direction to the river camp, but I believe as soon as the fellow is in the hallway — he's in the butcher now — he will get in his wheel chair & go out on the front porch, so that one of his cousins <sup>or a neighbor</sup> might find him ~~then~~ <sup>then</sup> the man has shot him thru the head before his body sets.

go back. TV on, air conditioner humming  
refrig

He tries to hurry, scoots forward to the  
edge of his chair with towel his wife made  
him sit on rolling beneath his hips. Lean  
forward he holds to the arms of the wheel  
chair & stands, turns, plops into the  
blue vinyl seat, unlocks the drawer just as  
he hears the door open in the bathroom.  
Is he just going in, or coming out?

Out B.F. decides, paddling with both  
hand & almost to the door, when he hears  
the helmet drop on the bucket slide open  
& shut. He ~~turns the knob~~ <sup>turns the knob</sup> to the front door, rolls  
back for the door to open, wheels up to  
the threshold & with all his might wheels  
the chair over & out. Outside on the  
unpainted front porch where the air is hot  
compared to inside & yellowflies are  
swarming, he starts to turn & shut the  
door when the man steps in the doorway  
says. "Shut that door for me, will you?" B.F.  
says. "Yellowflies, lateful things."  
# # #

If his life depended on it, B.F. couldn't  
tell you how, why, he ended up in the old  
blue car with bullet hole in the door, heading  
toward the <sup>across</sup> the pasture when the series  
bellying down on the straggly trees along



the back run. "That's the family cemetery there," he says, pointing across the rusty wire fence to the small square of white headstones.

"You're the one responsible for that flag there?" <sup>the ~~white~~ <sup>negashya</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~center~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~cemetery~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~red~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~blue~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~flag~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~blowing~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~on~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~high~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~pole.~~ <sup>is</sup></sup>

leaving  
to  
rather  
trail.

"Old girl loved her husband there put it up. I like it though, don't you?"

"No sayon'd notice" - "How he's doing."

"You a hippie?"

"You could say that."

B.F. is no longer afraid, just interested. When the old car gets to the branch ford, it's not going to make it across. Surprise.

But when the car gets to the <sup>sandy</sup> slope, going down into the ankle-deep brown water, it just motor on up the other bank and under the trees to rise to the orange sun again.

"It be dogged," says B.F. "if this ain't a fine car." He is scared again. "What time is it?" he asks, holding to the strap above his door.

10  
"Time."

"Yeah, what time."

"Time." The fellow is smirking again. That face of a devil looking down at the pretty sun.

"The wife'll be on in anytime now. Looking for me."

The fellow drives north ~~down~~ the long pasture with his eyes straight ahead. "Cows oughta be coming on in anytime now. Sil ole goat'll follow em wherever they go." Suddenly he lowers the old nannie who has ~~not~~ been getting on his nerves so here lately. Truth is, she hasn't done a thing to bother him; he just decided to get rid of her because she wasn't a cow. He decided to get rid of her for something to do. To have somebody to talk to. Like now.

"I got raised a bunch of younguns," he says. "They don't come around much though." He watches the fellow eye for signs of interest or murder. Keeps talking though he knows it's his ruin. "Old men like me gets lonesome for somebody to talk to. You know

what I mean?"

"I know."

"Yeah, I bet you do. A fellow like must get lonesome."

"A fellow like me. What does that mean?"  
(car rattling, headline droopy, toughing heads.) 'keeps scary B.F.)

"Don't mean nothing. Hey, there they are. Su Yorder, over by the beaver swamp." (turn ear, com alive)

"I believe I'll get a calf while I'm at it."

"Calfs ain't for sale, no more." The laugh. "See that little nigger there walking toward, I call him Red Man 't cause he look like his daddy. Old full yorder, now he's a sight. Full blooded Santa Gertrudis, is what he is."

~~Red~~ The hip high calf tips toward the car, stops when it stops, stands before it. (bloody white) Hattie watch from herd, crab

"Yeah, that's the one I want." (Glas)

"No sir, he ain't for sale. Com here, boy - hand out the one. You got any apples in here. A crack, what have ya?"

The man laughs. "You one crazy

old man says the fellow - gets out.  
The calf tips closer & stalks white  
B F scratches his broad red head &  
card brady ears, and talks calf  
only - talks him.

The man on the other side is  
standing, leaning on the side of the  
car with the bullet hole. He is  
counting the roll of money. B F knows  
from the drawer in the kitchen.

"Man as crazy as you are  
worth killing." <sup>the man</sup> plays & pockets the  
cash & gets back in the car. Starts it  
and turns onto the half tipping close  
leaked (dusty - crab grass)

B F hooks his arm up the window & doesn't look  
the "stop" <sup>everybody</sup> stole my money, "didn't ya?"  
"He did."

"How much you get?"

"How much you have."

"You can kill me if you know."

"Won't shorten my life but 6 months,  
a year at the most." (Cemetery)

"I don't want to kill you, man. What  
you think I am some kind of freak?"  
"I'd say so yeah."

"Then you'd say wrong. My mama was

a Christian woman, raised me right."

"Well ~~the did~~ I've got all the say my Sathy in the world for her then." (The light on at the house)

"Lester, old man, I done made up my mind - driving seriously now, "I'm taking you back to home, gone set you in your wheel chair & I'm gone."

"Well I'd like to say it's been a pleasure, but it ain't."

~~That~~ "Least it was something, wach it?"

"What you mean?"

"Least you wach & just sitting there playing with your navel on a Sunday afternoon."

"I'd as lief do it."

He stops car, gets out, opens the gate corner back & driven thru it. Gets out & closes it.

"So you don't want to take the goat off my hands."

"Not this time old man. I'm too worn out from listening to you."

"Well you think about, let me know."

The man helps him out & get to car, to the chair. Can see wife's face in the window.

"I might call the sheriff," he says on the porch in his wheel chair.

"I might ought to."

"Well, I ain't."

"I gotta go."

"Think about that goat I call me, you hear?"

(Ain't many young people I take sep time with)

(Rastafarian religion)

he say - he's rastafarian

Bob Marley

(contrast men in different worlds)

(peace symbol hanging from leather string on rear view mirror)