

health scares
facing your own mortality
salesman tries to sell her a car.

It was about the same time Gransellie started sending money to Oral Roberts that she went to a doctor in Jacksonville. She parked her car in a used-car lot.

She had a bad leg. Usually up & about, ^{early} each morning, making toast in her Sears toaster over ~~not~~ coffee. Gransellie was boiling water for her ~~chopping~~ ^{gimping} about her ^{little} trailer ^{at 10 with morning} wearing yesterday's ^{prunt-cotton} frocks ~~with~~ The blinds were closed on the ^{factory} double jalousies were still drawn & there was a sick, gray ^{gray} room light in her living room & kitchen. Her ^{hair} ~~hair~~ looked like a dusty mop -- but from her bedding and even feathers from ~~the~~ down pillows ^{she} ~~was~~ ^{He was} ~~silent~~ ^{sedentary} but ~~seldom~~ ^{seldom} sick.

My mother found her that way one morning ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{middle} of the week and sent me over ^{by Sat} ~~before school~~ ^{each morning} to help out. Gransellie was usually fussy that first morning, hopping from her tiny closet over bathroom & up the narrow hall, while I was putting on a load of towels & bathclothes & underwear in her washer next to the toilet.

Her TV was on to one of those ^{local} ~~morning~~ ^{morning} shows that ~~tell about~~ ^{have} feature chiropractors for dogs & such.

I could hear her settle in her chair, then get up, hopping & grumbling, to change the channel on the TV. Gransallie had a bit of use for dogs. While she was up, she came to check on her washer.

~~that~~ I had put in one-half cup of TIDE. I had. What about bleach? she asked, ~~letting~~ dropping her huge cotton drawers sidling past her, lifting her skirt & dropping her drawers. She ~~sat~~ sat on the toilet between the bathtub & the washer & let go. Unrolled some tissue & set the roll on the washer, holding onto the washer as she got up. ~~I~~ I started out, leaving the lid up ~~after~~ on the washer for her to check.

I fluffed her narrow bedroom, between the bathroom & the living room, & made her bed. I fluffed her pillow, while she stood holdy to the door jamb, instructing me on how to make her bed hospital style.

Oh ^{aching} ^{mules!} She hobbled back ^{to the hall} toward the living room & settled into her chair again to watch a program on TV about ^{inane} ^(something silly on TV show)

The whole trailer shook like it was being towed up the interstate while I cleaned ~~the kitchen~~ bread crumbs from the kitchen counter tops. Tea grounds were always in the sink, along with her black ~~cast~~ iron frying pan. Gransallie was in her chair with her bad leg propped up on ^{the} kitchen chair, with a pillow on the bottom while the washer spun out its final rinse water.

3
I'd opened the blinds & there was a latticed light
across the white tile floor, Gansellie'd just moan
& fussing & was ready her daily Bible devotion.

The toe nails on her propped foot were yellow & thick
but clipped square & neat. I saw a feather from
her hair ~~in the drifting~~ ^{with the dust} in the sunlight.

I was almost done, almost free on my ~~Sat~~ ^{day} ~~☆~~
from school.

I left went into the ~~perky~~ bathroom with its silver-
spackled mirror & began taking the ~~clothes~~ from the
washer & ~~putting~~ ^{them} into her red plastic ~~laundry basket~~.
~~They were~~ ~~curiously~~ The white towels, bath cloths
& underwear were clamped with something white --

either undissolved soap powder or paper. Yes, paper.
I stuck to the perforated ^{paper} ~~cardboard~~ ^{long irregular triangles}
~~on the bottom~~ ^{yellow} a ~~rough~~ cardboard. ~~that looked~~
~~like~~ I took it out, looked at it, tossed it in the
trash can ~~beside~~ ^{to the} ~~the~~ ^{the} bathtub, then picked
up the basket, ~~was~~ ^{headed} out the door, into Gansellie's front yard
to the back of her

around the south end of the trailer,
clothes line.

While I hung towels, ^{in the pinkeying air,} I could see her watching
from the west window. In a minute, she ~~knocked~~
~~opened~~ ^{opened} the jalousie & yelled, "Shake 'em,
honey. Shake 'em wrinkles out. ~~Shake~~ She
closed the window, sat again, ready again
I ~~shook~~ ^{shook} a towel & ~~it~~ ^{it} looked like snow.

I shook another & it snowed harder. ~~At the~~
way up the line, I shook & hung the clothes & when I
got done, ~~she~~ ^{it} looked back, it came to me
Gansellie had knocked

the ~~whole~~ ^{roll} of toilet tissue into the washer.

I ~~took~~ ^{in the blotting} ~~reworked~~ ^{reworked} them, hung them out in air and ~~staked~~ ^{staked} my ~~spat~~ ^{spat} all Sat evening raking Grandmother's back yard. She kept clucking her tongue, looking out the window, & shaking her head.

On Sunday morning, she got up, turned on the TV and started watching Oral Roberts. ~~She~~ ~~had~~ ~~since~~ she'd retired as a practical nurse in St Augustine Fla & come back to Blount Ga to live, she had never missed church.

On Monday morning, ^{on the way up the lane to meet the school bus} ~~before school~~ I mailed her first check to Oral Roberts in the mail box ~~up the lane at the highway.~~

On Wednesday I stayed out of school & ~~went~~ ^{rode} with her to ~~see~~ ~~the~~ doctor in Fargo Fla. I was 15 & had my learner license I could drive with an adult in the car, but she wouldn't let me. Anybody ~~that~~ ^{who} ~~would~~ ~~wash~~ ~~wash~~ clothes did & know how to wash, sure did & have any business driving. She left early & drove slow up the long lonesome to Fargo, ~~cutting~~ ^{cutting} east short cutting thru the woods roads to Jacksonville. A slow sunny jerky ride & suddenly we were hell bound up the ~~long~~ ~~face~~ ~~of~~ in four lane traffic ~~wiggly~~ ^{wiggly} around her little blue car. She talked to them, all of them, about their bad driving, tell me

till we got to the arched bridge over the St John
river & saw the hospital & clinic bldg. rising in
the sun-blazed blue sky.

That was not my first trip with Shansalle
at the wheel, so I scooped down & braced my
torso on the dash & held to the strap above my
door. Across the bridge & she missed her turn I
had to meander back & under the fast throughfare I
finally parked to the left of the hospital, got her
~~white~~ ~~black~~ triangular pocket book & got out. We were
late. The fact that a ~~black~~ pocket book her ~~white~~
pocket book ^{not her white sprig one} was swinging from her arm was proof
she ~~wasn't~~ herself.

A short ~~man~~ ^{black} with dyed black hair & mustache was
sauntering across the parking lot, grinning. He stopped,
lit a cigar, & came on toward me & Shansalle.
She was hobbly, leaning to my arm, headed for
the narrow street next to the green lawn of the
hospital.

"Lady," called the man. "Hey, lady."

Shansalle turned, ~~glared~~ ^{glared} at him. One of
those "who me?" looks I knew she would have
given me if I'd told her she, & not I, had knocked
the roll of tissue into the washer.

The man strolled up, still grinning. "You looking
for a ^{good} car, ma'am?"

(We were late)

6

She dug my arm ~~hard~~ did a buddy prong
giddy up of the curb, hobbling on. "One of them"
she said low. "Flodia ~~is~~ eat up with these
nuts."

It turned and saw the sign over a small
triangular buddy. ~~Kindred Cars~~
"Grassatiu," I said, ~~toed up~~ ^{toed up} ~~the grassy~~
slope of the lawn, "listen."

"Shh," she said.

~~The man~~ I looked again and the man
was just standing there, <sup>(short-slaved
yellow-shirt)</sup> gnawing on his cigar.