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Ships at a distance armed men walked on the board. crispy arms were borne and they were carried and they were carried and they were carried and they were carried and they were carried on.

Women forgot all those things they don't want to remember, and remember everything they don't want to forget. Then they act and do things accordingly.

The women filed in the boat, not the dead, but the dead and sick and ailing with them. They piled and floated; the sudden death, their eyes flung wide open in judgment.

The people all sat there because it was sumedown. The sun was gone, but they kept their fires in the sky. It was the time of sitting on coals in the hood; it was the time to hear things and talk. Those sitters had been tongueless, voiceless, eyeless. Communiques all and the houses were gone, the skies felt human and powerful. Some of the sound, and lesser things. They passed nations through their mountains.

Seeing her as she was, made them remember the sun, the hadron, winds and swelled with relief. They made their statements with questions, and keen in toots and the laughter. It was wise, cruel, hard.

"What she done, coming back here in dem overalls? Can't she find no dress to put on? -- where's dat blue satin dress she left her in? -- what all dat money her husband died and left her? -- what all dat foot year old woman done? did she have swingin' down her back late some young gal? -- where she left that young dead girl from she went off from here with? -- thought she was going to marry. -- where he left her. -- what she done with all them money? -- Bitchin', he off wid some gal so you. she ain't even got he hairs. -- why didn't she stay in this place. -- When she got to where they were turned her face on the back, lay not spoke, they rammed a noisy, good enough and left their horse settin' open and this case a horse. Her speech was pleasant enough, but she was 12.22.

The men noticed her firm buttocks. she had grape fruits in this ship._pasts, the great rope of black hair swinging to be wind and unwinding in the wind like a plumy, took her pique-roses, straight to those holes in her shirt. They were saving with the wind what they lost with the eye. The women took the faded shirt and nuddy on alls and laid them away for remembrance. But nobody moved, nobody spoke, nobody ever thought to swallow spit until after her gate slammed behind she.
Ships at a distance have every man's wish on board. For some people they come in with the tide, for others they sail forever on the horizon, never out of sight, never never landing till the watcher forgets and turns his eyes away.
Pearl Stone opened her mouth and laughed real hard because she didn’t know what else to do. She fell all over Mrs. Lumpkin while she laughed.

Mrs. Lumpkin snorted violently and sucked her teeth.

“Humph! Y’all let her worry youa, you ain’t like me, ah ain’t got her to study ‘bout. If she ain’t got manners enough to stop and let folks know how she been made out let her Guam!”

“She ain’t even worth talkin’ after.” Luke Moore chewed their little corn. She’s high. But she looks low. Dats what ah say, don’t tell the women runnin’ after young boys.”

Phoeby Watson hitched her rocking chair forward before she spoke. “Well, nobody don’t know if it’s anything tell er not. Me, being her best friend, and ah don’t know.”

“Maybe we don’t know. But things like you do, dat’s what I know how she went away from here and we left her come back. Taint no use in you runnin’ to close no old woman’s tax.”

“Jame is Mack, Phoeby. Friend er no friend.”

“Dat she aint ab she as some f y’alls dat telling.”

“Shes way past forty to my knowledge Phoeby.”

“Who been forty-two at de outside.”

“She’s way too old fer a boy like Tea Cake.”

“Tea Cake aint been no boy fer some time. He’s round thirty, his own self.”

“Don’t reck what it was, she could stop and say a few words with us. She act like we done done something to her.” Pearl Stone complained. “She de one been done wrong.”

“Twan’t what you ever know her to do so bad as y’all make out.”

The worst thing she ever knowed her to do was taking a few years off her age and dat ain’t never harmed nobody. Y’all makes me tired. You have to ‘sence me, cause Ah’m bound to go take her some supper.” Phoeby stood up sharply.

“Don’t mind us.” Luke smiled. “Just go right ahead, us can done, you better go see how the fuh.”

“Saw!” Pearl agreed. “Ah done see how dat lil meat and tried too long to talk about. Ah kin stay way from home long as Ah please. Mah husband ain’t fancy.”
you mean, you mad cause she didn't stop and tell us all her business, @yhow—
"Oh, ru, Phersy, if you're mighty to go, ah could walk ova dere wol-y.
Mrs. Lumpkin volunteered, it's sort of duckin' down dark. Re-
hooger man might catch yuh.

"Now, ah thank you, Miss, I couldn't catch me whar enuf steps ah'm goin'! Anyhow mare husband tell me say no
first class hooger would have me, if she get anything
to tell yuh, you'll hear it."

She hurried on, off with a covered bowl in her
hands. She left the porch saltivin' her back with moisture
questions, they kicked the awayin's up and started
Phersy Watson didn't go in by the front gate and down the
palm walk to the front door. She walked around the fence corner
and went in the intimate gate with her barking plate

B mulatto rice. Janie must be round that side.

"Hello, Janie, how you comin'?"

"Aw, pretty good. Ah'm tryin' to save some suh de-
tendness and de dirt can't make nuf."

"Ah see you is. Gal, you she looks good. You-
looks like yous' own daughter."

"Man wid din' overalls on, you shows yous' womanhood."

"Gwan! Gwan! You must think ah brought yuh somethin'
when ah ain't brought home a thing but mahself."

"Dats a gracious plenty. Yo' friends wouldn't want
nothin' better.

"Ah takes dat flattery offa you, Phersy. Cause ah know
it's from de heart."

"Phersy! Aint you know ya pointaummy? C'mon dat'll nant
you thought me? Ah ain't had a thing on mah stomach
since time ah's rise."

"You didn't eat easy. Give it

"Ah knowed I found the hungr', no time to be huntin'
no time. Not enough bacon grease, but ah reckon it'll fill
"Ah'll tell you in a minute," Janie said, lifting the cover.

"Gal, it’s too good! you swatchs a mean funny sound in a kitchen!"

"Aw, dat ain’t nothin’ much to eat, Janie. But Chin-habla.

Janie ate heartily and said nothing. The vari-colored cloud
disturbues, stirred up in the sky was settin’ by

"Here, Phoeby, take yo’ ole plate. Ah ain’t got a bit 3 use for

Phokey laughed at her friend’s rough joke. "You’re just as
crazy as you ever was."

"Hand me dat towel on dat chair by yo’, honey, temme dry

mah feet." She took the towel and rubbed vigorously.

Came to them from the hig road.

"Well, ah see Mouth—Alright is still settin’ in de same

place. By all reason they got me up in de Moon Now."

"Yes indeed! They know me! bout you’n’ me do yo’ self. Oh ain’t:

part what they’s happenin’ now. They done ‘hurt’ don’t your

it God, don’t think no mo’ bout ’em than ah do them a

lost bale in de big grass."

"Ah hears what the day cause they just will collect round mah farm

came its on de big road. Mah husband git so sick I’m sometim

he makes some all of the home."

"Sam is Night too? They just wearin’ out yo’ settin’ chairs."

"Yeah, Sam say most of ‘em go to church so they’ll be sure to nice

in judgment. Deets de day dat every recent is spotted to be Wedd Morn.

They wants to be there and hear it all."

"Sam is too crazy, you can’t stop laughin’ when you see round him."

"Uh-huh. He say he aims to be there himself so he can find

but who stile his born co’ts joke."

"Phoeby, dat Sam & you’re just won’t quiet, crazy thing!"

"most 2 dike fizzleous is so hot up on yo’, because all the

hurt them to chancy to judgment to find out about you if they

Tec nows ahn’t no. Tell yo’ fat and tell’em don’t you a

wad some part of me, and when ah’t he is now and where at to

tell yo’ clothes dat you got to come back here in seven halls."
"
"Ah don't mean to bother wid tellin' em nothin'. Plucks a friend of mine got de trouble. You can tell 'em what ah say if you wants to. Dats just de same as me cause mah tongue is in mah friend's mouth."

"If you so desire ah'll tell 'em what you tell me to tell 'em."

to start af wirh, people like them wasnt up too much time.

"Tell em to look into me laying in de lake, and see whether it was done right on not. They don't know if it's done right on not. They don't know if life is a mean or a hell."

"So long as they git a name to know on they don't care who it is or what about. Speciality it they can make it sound like evil."

"Ah ain't tell 'em, do come and see it. But they don't come and see it."

"Ah been a delegate to de big convention. Ah seen me. Ah seen me."

They sat there in the fresh, young darkness close together.

Phoeby eager to feel and do through Janie, but hating to show her the least human longings—self revelation. Phoeby held her tongue as she couldn't help moving her feet. So Janie

"Ah still got nine hundred dollars in dis bank. Tea cake ain't went and dey had no money. Tea cake ain't got no money, and he didn't let me for no young gal, neither. He give me every conversation in de world. He'd tell 'em so too, if he was here. He wasn't gone."

Phoeby dilated all over with eagerness. "Tea cake gone?"

"Yeah, Phoeby. Tea cake is gone. And dat's de only reason you see me touch him—cause ah ain't got nothing to make me happy no more where ah was at. Down in de

"It's hard for me to understand what you mean, dey way at times!"
"Now, tain’t nothing like you might think. So tain’t no use in me telling you somethin’ unless a git you or understand in t’unless you see by a young’un an’ a diet from a long time on you for his suffer’.

"Git all ready and waitin’, if he aint got some more to eat it, dat’s his hard luck.”

Well then, we can set right where we is and talk. Ah fot de house all opened up to let dis breeze get a little catchin’. Depend on you for a good thought. And ah’m talkin’ to you from dat time, makes everything old, so the tussin’, young, darkness became a monstrous old thing, while Janie talked.

Janie saw her life like a great tree in leaf with the things suffered, things enjoyed, things done and undone. Dawn and dusk was in the branches.

"Ah know exactly what ah got to tell you, but it’s hard to know where to start at.” But ah reckon make lifetime acquaintance at Mammy’s gate. She called me to come in while she de house because she seen Johnny Taylor kissee’ me once de gate.”

It was a spring afternoon, and Janie had spent most of it under a blossoming pear tree. She had been standing every minute she could stretch from her chores under that tree for several days. In fact ever since it had been in bloom. She called him first to gaze on a mystery from barren branches standing stark against the sky of bloom. How? Who? How? How? It followed him through all her with other vaguely felt questions that had stirred the earth. She was stretching on her back beneath the tree when the windblew...
"Ah ain't never seen mah papa, and ah didn't know him if ah did. Mah mama, neither. She was gone from round
live long before ah was big enough toh know. Mah grandma
I raised me. Mah grandma and de white folks re wronged deh. De
Washburn. She had four grandchillun on de place and all
mah grandma knew was dam. Nanny cause dat's what every
tree on de place called her. Nanny used to ketch us in
Mrs. Washburn did de same. Ah reckon they never bit us
wuz pretty aggravating ah speck.

"Ah wasl dem white chillun so much till ah didn't
know aboug white till ah was round six years old.
pictures and without崽n anybody, Shelby, dat was de
thought de picture for Mrs. Washburn. To see and pay him
so when we bought at de picture and everybody got point of
with long hair standing by Eleanor. Thats where ah was
So ah act, "seems we. ah don't see me.

Everybody laughed even Mr. Washburn, Miss Vellie, de mama
pointed to de dark one and sawd "Dat's you, Alpha but dont you
Know your own self?"

Day all nudder called me alphabet because so many people
done named me different names. Ah looked at de picture an
ah told."
"aw, ain't we colored!"

Den day all laughed real hard. But before ah seen de picture, ah thought ah was just like de rest.

"Us lived dey havin' fun till de children at school yard. They made it sound real bad and crumpled main

lum helped her out on it mob whole heap."