



## "their selfishness had trashed..."

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"their selfishness had trashed..."

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their selfishness had trashed two hundred years of suffering and triumph in a moment of such pomposity and error and callousness it froze the mind. Unbridled by Scripture, deafened by the roar of its own history, Ruby, it seemed to him, was an unnecessary failure. How exquisitely human was the wish for permanent happiness, and how thin human imagination became trying to achieve it. Soon Ruby will be like any other country town: the young thinking of elsewhere; the old full of regret. The sermons will be eloquent but fewer and fewer will pay attention or connect them to everyday life. How can they hold it together, he wondered, this hard won heaven defined only by the absence of the unsaved, the unworthy and the strange? Who will protect them from their leaders?

Suddenly Richard Misner knew he would stay. Not only because Anna wanted to, or because Deek Morgan had sought him out for a confession of sorts, but also because there was no better battle to fight, no better place to be than among these outrageously beautiful, flawed and proud people. Besides, mortality may be new to them but birth was not. The future panted at the gate. Roger Best will get his gas station and the connecting roads will be laid. Outsiders will come and go, come and go and some will want a sandwich and a can of 3.2 beer. So who knows, maybe there will be a diner too. K.D. and



Steward will already be discussing T.U. It was inappropriate to smile at a funeral, so Misner envisioned the little girl whose destroyed hands he had once been permitted to hold. It helped him recover his line of thought. The questions he had asked in the mourners' stead needed an answer.

"May I suggest those are not the important questions. Or rather those are the questions of anguish but not of intelligence. And God, being intelligence itself, generosity itself, has given us Mind to know His subtlety. To know His elegance. His purity."

The wind picked up a bit but not enough to make anyone uncomfortable. Misner was losing them; they stood before the open grave closed to everything but their own musings. Funeral thoughts were mingled with plans for Thanksgiving, evaluations of their neighbors, the chitty-chat of daily life. <sup>Misner sighed and began</sup> As he began to conclude his remarks, <sup>he</sup> Misner looked at the coffin lid <sup>he</sup> and saw the <sup>window</sup> door in the garden, felt its beckon toward another place--neither life nor death--but there, just yonder, shaping thoughts he did not know he had.

<sup>What makes you think</sup> "Wait. Wait. ~~Can we be sure~~ this was a short, pitiful life bereft of worth because it did not parallel <sup>our</sup> own? Let me tell you something. The love Save-Marie received was wide and deep, and the care given her was gentle and unrelenting, and that love and care

enveloped her so completely that the dreams, the visions, she had <sup>the journey</sup> she took  
made her life as compelling, as rich, as valuable as any of ours and  
probably more blessed. It is our own misfortune if we do not know in  
our long life what Save-Marie knew every day of her short one: that  
although life in life is terminal and life after life is everlasting, He is  
with us always, in life, after it and especially in between, lying in wait  
for us to know the splendor. " He stopped <sup>disturbed a little by what</sup>  
<sup>must be other</sup> <sup>kid said, then, as if to</sup>

"Oh, Save-Marie. Your name always sounded to me like 'save  
me.' 'Save me.' <sup>And</sup> <sup>are messages hiding in</sup> But there is much more to be heard in your  
<sup>one of which suppresses all others</sup> name. <sup>On Calvary</sup> When I call it out I hear many things and I hear one true truth.  
<sup>to the little girl, he cried,</sup>  
Long, long, long ago He already saved Marie. Amen."

His words embarrassed him a little, but on that day, nothing had  
ever been clearer.

<sup>messages</sup> <sup>skins</sup> <sup>steps out</sup>  
But one ~~true~~ <sup>thing</sup> <sup>is there</sup> for  
all to ~~see~~: He ~~has~~ saved Save-Marie.

page 145 [?] Seneca or in Grace?

Coming from lush vegetation to extravagant space could have made  
them feel lost when they saw more sky than earth, grass to their