



"Jailhouse"

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Jail house."

He didn't know what made him say that - "jailhouse." He believed he was thinking of his wife, ^{on her way} ~~due in minutes, walking~~ from the bus stop.

She would be wife, ^{on her way} ~~due in minutes~~ walking from the bus stop.
~~And~~ stepping ^{on slippery} ~~that would be slippery~~ pavement.
 He did until she got ~~to their~~
^{from falling} ~~down~~ home. There she would be safe
 because, with the forethought and common
 sense he was known for, he was prepared
 for freezing weather where it never froze.

But the "jailhouse" thought ~~me~~ meant he was really thinking of his ^{son} ~~grandson~~ — who should have been home from school an hour and a half ago. Fourteen, ~~14~~ tall and getting muscle, S. Gibbons worried about his grandson. There was a skulk about him — something furtive like that ~~Abbas~~ made Gibbons stroke his thumb and frown every time the boy ~~sat~~ came into view. (Notes over)

He and Vida ~~took their~~ had been pleased
to have him - raise him - when their daughters
and son-in-law ^{enlisted} Mother in the army; father in the

merchant marines ^{only available}
the best ^{out of none} ^{only picking}
good choice ~~for~~ when ~~the~~ work -

housecleaning in Harbor City, ^{for the women} ~~cleaning~~ road

hauling road trash for the men. - was

^{left} ~~available~~ ^{when} since the canning ~~so~~ folks left.

~~Young people~~ ^{parents} idle, children side

Getting ^{for him} ~~the~~ yardwork ~~in the summer~~
the Cozey women was something
but not enough to keep him on the
dime. besides ~~the~~ a favor

white the funeral flowers were still fresh when

Later much to everybody's relief L.

The sign read "Maceo's Cafeteria" but the place belonged to L. Not in deed, but ~~certainly~~ indeed. Indeed, if not in deed, ^{was} because she still ~~cooking~~ cooked

there ^{when} After Bill Casey died ~~she~~ ^{but} fell out with his widow ~~and~~ ^{before the funeral flowers faded} quit ^{agreed to} wouldn't work for ~~Heed~~

~~and~~ ^{agreed to} Maceo's pleading. He had a certain reputation for fried fish flakey (sooty black and crisp on the outside; ~~flakey~~ tender inside) - but his side orders let you down every time. What L did with okra, with sweet potatoes, hoppers John and almost anything you could name would have put this generation of ^{take-out} brides to shame if they had any. Every house had ^{an} L & kind of cook in it once. ~~The~~ Now - well it's all over.

People wait for July 4, or Thanksgiving if they can. If not they go to Maceo & hope L hasn't dropped dead at

Cafe ma

the stove. She could. Probably will
for she's because nobody is older.

Not a ^{an original} tooth in her head. She ~~eats~~ ^{hasn't}
eaten a thing ^{cornbread dipped} ~~nothing~~ but ^{fat} liquor since 1978.

Well she does like those peppermint
sticks at Christmas. She walked 3 miles

to Marco's for a ^{4 years} long time - then
~~when~~ her feet swole up. and she quit.

~~Stayed home.~~ Marco, ^{who} saw his life's
work ^{as empty as the} ~~disappear in vacant~~ booths
and rickety tables, ^{drove} ~~picked her~~ up beach

to get her. Now he ~~drives~~ picks her up

everyday and he sits ~~down~~ in a
high chair with wheels - scooting
from stove to sink to cutting table.

Her feet are OK now but she's used
to the ^{wheel} transportation and won't give it
up.

She's through talking too. Says
it wears her out. So a conversation

with her is mostly you ~~takes~~ talking
while she hums. Not loud, though.

L. hums softly. ~~So~~ = you feel encouraged
by this background music and tell her
all you know or heard.

~~everything.~~

Anybody who ~~knows~~ ^{remembers}

Anybody ~~knows~~ what the L stands

for is dead by now and it's ^{hopeless} ~~such a waste~~
of time to ~~ask~~ inquire.

Even child does
who have a word of
time to waste -
don't ask her
anymore.

Some said it was
~~maybe~~ its short for Ellen, or Ellie or

Elvira. ^{but no body remembers a time when} until she ~~took~~ ^{did not take the usher's pencil} to sign
her little envelopes. L., ^{with an} she wrote

with an usher's pencil. We gave up.

Like we gave up calling Maceo's
Maceo's, or supplying the missing letters.
Cafe Rica is what it's called. And
L. glides there still.

The food ^{is} displayed in steam trays,
and ~~and only~~ ~~more~~ after you heap your
plate you take it to the cash register
for cost analysis done by Maceo, his wife or

one of his no-count Sansar Min

The girl ^{she} ~~to her~~ called herself Toby -

Second Sunday
came in one day ^{around 1:00} - just before
Church let out. She walked the length

of the stream table, ^{checking} the array ^{like she}
with the eyes, ~~she~~ ^{on a} ~~hadn't~~ a ~~staring~~ ^{commercial} ~~poster~~.
Save This Child ^{was eating} blowing

by her work finished, ~~sat~~ ^{was} ~~wait~~
Cool air on ~~her~~ ^{before} dipping ~~her~~ ^{her}
hot hot liquor (Soaking bread ^{crusts}), through the

Kitchen door - never closed - she
saw Toby facing before the food trays ^(t)

- like a ~~star~~ ^{panther} or some such

[she said].

The big hair Sandler Gibson
saw was gone. And, although the leather
Jacket still encased her upper half - the
Skirt was a ~~thing~~ ^{see-through} ~~thin~~ ^{flimsy} ~~affair~~
swinging just above her sandals.

~~The~~ One of Maceo's no count boys
waited while ~~the~~ Toby made up her mind.
He never opened his lips to say
~~never asking~~ "may I help you?" anything in
particular? or any of the welcoming things you're
supposed to greet customers with.

L said she just cooked her liquid
and watched. to see which one would behave
normal first.

3 sides

potato salad
Sheet p.

Okra

stewed tomatoes

and 2 meats
gravyed chicken
and a barbecue.

Price of

Why did.

Her order was clearly for two: 3 sides,
2 meats and ~~rice~~ rice pudding.

Maceo's boy - Theo, they call him - smirking
more than usual, ^{moving from the cash register} food up the Styrofoam
~~plates~~ ^{dish} taking them ^{unmindful of} stewed
tomatoes sliding over the ~~real~~ plate
divider to discolor the potato salad,
~~taking~~ the barbecue ~~over~~ on top of
the gravyed chicken quarters. ("Dark meat,"
she'd ^{said} ordered.) L. said she got so
heated watching him disrespect her food she
dropped her cornbread.

~~Although~~ Tabby never took her eyes off the
~~taking~~ ~~didn't~~ ~~complain~~ food. Never met
Theo's eyes until he gave her change at the
register. ~~when she said~~ Then she looked right
at him and said, "You don't do so much by yourself,
~~do you?~~" "I expect you do ^{pretty} ^{better} ^{good} with a pause.
~~Not so~~ ^{See on} ~~by yourself.~~"
~~You're kinda helpful~~

L. ~~never~~ said she had to laugh
and didn't hide it either. Theo said something
^{mean} ~~nasty~~ to Tabby's back - but it fell flat with ~~that~~
~~the~~ ^{no} ~~an~~ ^{no} ~~appreciative~~ audience, in sight to
appreciate it.

When Maceo walked in ^{really} to bundle L into
his car and get her home before Cape Ron

[who, at that moment was . . .]
[who, ~~meanwhile was~~ . . .]

①. DARK

DESK littered
with papers

stands -

~~The dark skinned~~ woman standing at the window didn't turn her head when Toby entered but knew she was there. "Oh my lord, snow." ^{"she said"} "Look." ~~that~~ She drew back the draperies. "Come here and look. Here of all places."

"Look. O My
Lord, snow.
Here of all places."

Toby joined her at the window and peered through wobbly glass at the snowflakes. "Strange, don't you think? We never get snow. Never."

I don't believe you said Toby. I saw a man sprinkling ice salt. He ^{had it already} was prepared, so he must have expected to use it. "

You came about the job, ^{yes}?

Yes

Yes. Well. I'm Heed Casey. So. Well.
Have a seat. . . interview

"I don't know about all that. Let

me just say I'm 24 and can do anything
you want. Anything.

Good, but. References. Do you have any
letters of reference?

No

Well how ~~will~~ I know you're, you know,
honest? Discreet?

A letter won't tell you even if it
says so. I say I am. Hire me and you'll
see. If I'm not good enough-- "Toby
spread her hands.

"Let me just tell you what ^{the job is - what} kind of work
I need."

Sure

I'm writing a book. Fascinating story. About
my family. ~~Most~~ I've got most of the material
but some things need checking, you know.
Dates. Names. I've got the guest books
but some of them had the worst handwriting.

I mean the worst. And Papa didn't make them
~~to~~ print it like they do now right along
side the signature. Besides, he knew
everybody anyway and could recognize
a signature even if it was an X ^{but}
no X ^{type people ever} came. of course, ^{most people} ~~had~~ ^{had} ^{gorgeous} ^{handwriting} because

you had to be more than just literate, ^{honey}
you had to have a position - an accom-
plishment, hear me? And didn't they?"
She stopped.

"But you have no idea of what I'm
talking about do you?" You just have to
forgive ~~me~~ how I go on but it's this
book I'm so excited about. Once I
~~be~~ start thinking about it I can't ^{seem to} stop
myself. But I will, because I want to
hear all about you. Your name is ~~Tabby~~?

Right. Tabby.

Oh that's nice. Odd, too. Not as odd as mine though.
Heed. But it fits. I do heed. Take heed. (laughs)
Mama named one of us Salitude. We called her "Sally"

My eldest brother - well his name is James really but Mama ~~and~~ called him Jay. He hated it. ^{made him mean} and I always did believe that's what made him leave home so young - So. Toby. Last name?

"Skye. with an e"

"(Skye with an e)." Alright Toby
You say you can do anything I want so
you've worked before? Had a job some-where?

Look. I'm more than literate. I'm
as smart as it gets. You want research I'll
do research. You want ~~trans~~ typing, I'll do
that. You want a bath? I'll give you one.

Can you keep a secret?

Like nobody you ever knew.

Because this work is delicate. Nobody
can know about it. Nobody.

You mean Christina?

I mean nobody. Nobody at all.

What do you pay

I'll take the job

You haven't asked what the pay is.

I'll take the job. You'll pay
Should I start now or wait till tomorrow?

There ^{was a} knock on the door frame. Christina
entered ~~holding~~ ^{carrying} a tray.

~~She did not turn her head she spoke.~~
~~Without turning her head she knew a~~
~~"My hard, Snow."~~

~~When she spoke to the girl w/o turning her~~
~~head~~

"My hard. Snow." She drew back the
draperies. "Come ^{over} here and look. Here of
all places."

Ember joined ^{the tiny woman} ~~her~~ at the window
and peered through wobbly glass ^{trying but unable} ~~at~~
to see snowflakes. ~~Although~~ ^{there} the woman looked to be in
her ~~late~~ ^{sixties}, there was no odor of age about her. ^{All way} ~~Still~~ ^{she was} ~~peering~~ still.
^{lilac or} "How strange, don't you think?" ^{Sandalwood or} "The
^{butter rum-candy} Never get snow. Never."

"I don't believe you," ~~said Ember~~. "I
saw a man sprinkling ice melt ~~the~~ Since
he ~~had~~ already had it he must have ex-
pected to use it."

Startled, the ^{little} woman turned. ~~from~~ ^{and} ~~to~~ ^{face} the girl
had called her a liar before saying hello.

"You're here for ^{the} ~~came~~ about the job?" Her eyes swept
Ember's face and dropped to her clothes.
Yeah.

Quickly she looked up

"Don't you mean 'yes'?"

~~No answer.~~ ~~This room~~ ~~this room~~

like the
Kitchen below was overbright, lit like
a surgery. ^{Climbing up} ~~Climbing up~~ the stairs, ^{glancing around at} the ~~rest~~,
rest of the house, ~~was in~~ dark. Ember

because the
darkness
spread
n / n

~~had to guess what~~ ~~the rooms were for.~~ ~~Spreading~~
away from the bannisters ^{was thick} ~~was~~ Here
at the end of the hall ~~was~~ every lamp
six? ten? was on ~~under~~ ^{under} ~~revolving~~ a TK Chandelier.

~~Now~~ Now she waited for this tiny pretentious little
woman to break the silence. She herself had made.

"I'm Heed Casey. And you are?"

"Ember. Ember Skye."

"Oh, dear," ~~and~~ Heed said as if
someone has spilled — on ~~a~~ velvet: ^{Sorry of course and} ~~no fault~~
But difficult to get rid of nonetheless. ^{of course}
~~She walked~~ Regularly ~~to~~ she negotiated
the furniture: chaise, dressers, two writing

Tables, side tables, chairs high backed and low seated. All under the influence of the Great ~~bed~~ Canopied bed ~~against~~ ^{against} the ^{far} wall. Here Casey sat down at a small desk, ~~with~~ ^{gesturing with} facing ~~chair~~ ^{the} ~~giant~~ twice-lotianed hand ~~gesture~~ for the applicant to take the facing chair.

"Tell me, please, where you have worked before. The ad didn't specify a resume but I need to know your work history."

"I'm 24 and can do anything you want. Anything."

Heed smiled. "That's good to know, but references. Do you have any? Is there some one I can call?"

Nope

"Well how will I know you are honest & discreet?"

"A letter won't tell you even ~~if~~ ^{if} it says so. I say I am. Hire me and you'll see. I'm not good enough..." Ember ~~turned~~ ^{shook}

up her ^{turned} her ~~hand~~ palm ~~up~~.

Heed touched the corners of her lips, her ~~fingers~~ hand small as a child's.

"let me tell you what this job calls for - the ~~kind of~~ duties, I mean"

"~~Just~~ Go ahead." Ember shouldered out of her jacket, the cheap leather whining as tho' ^{in grief} it hurt. ^{Under it} ~~under~~ the black T shirt gave ~~little~~ support to ^{her} breasts - but they ^{apparently} didn't need any: the nipples were high, ~~aggressive~~ militant. Without the jacket her hair seemed to spring into view layers of ~~it~~ corkscrews, parted in the middle, ^{et} glinting in the lamplight.

"I'm writing a book," said Heed, ~~the~~ ^{both} satisfaction ^{and} ~~fight~~ ^{TK} giddiness ^{lit} her ^{eyes} ~~face~~. * "It's a ^{called} ~~fascinating~~ story. About my family. I ~~the~~ got ~~collected~~ most ~~(maybe all)~~ of the material, but some things need checking. You know: dates, spellings. I ~~the~~ got ~~all~~ the guest books,

* Whatever restraint she had been under in order to have a proper job interview dissolved with the mention of her book.

two or three
but ~~some of them~~ had the worst hand-
writing. The worst. And Papa didn't make
them print it the way they do now right
alongside the signature. ~~besides~~ Didn't
need to ^{how} ~~anybody~~ because he knew every
body ^{who was anybody} and could recognize a sig-
nature even if it was an X but no
X type people ever came of course.
Our guests had gorgeous handwriting be-
cause ^{between you and I} you had to be more than just literate
~~honey~~ you had to have a position, an
accomplishment, understand? ~~And~~ You
couldn't ^{hardly} achieve anything worthwhile
if your handwriting was low. Nowadays
people write like they with their feet."

[Underneath the ~~personal~~ class acquisitions the
unmistakable tell-tale of impoverished origins]

She laughed then ^{description} [TK]

"Excuse me," she said ~~through~~ as her
laughter died down. "You have no idea,
do you what I'm talking about. I get
excited, is all, ~~when~~ just thinking about it."
And then

Some small indication
of her early class origins?

But I want to hear about you. Ember,
You said?

Ember. Right.

Nice. Not common, but nice. I like it.

Well now, Ember, you said you
can do anything I want so you must
have worked some where before. ~~It~~ If
you're going to help with my book -

Ember smiled. "Look. I'm ~~more than~~ literate, okay?
I'm as smart as it gets. You want re-
search, I'll do research. You want
handwriting, typing, I'll do it. You
want a bath, I'll give you one.

Theed leaned toward her. "Can you
keep a secret?"

"Like nobody you ever knew."
Because this work is delicate. Nobody

Can know about it. Not nobody."

You mean Christina?

I mean nobody.

I'll take ^{it} the job.

You don't ^{even} know what the pay is.

I'll take the job. You'll pay. Should I start now or wait 'til tomorrow?"

slow and rhythmic
Footsteps, sounded in the hall.

Tomorrow, ~~said~~ Heed said.

Christina entered, carrying a ^{heavy} tray
No knock ^{or word} preceded her. No word ^{accompanied} her.

She enters
no eye contact
places food on
desk.

Heed lifts lid-
replaces it. Christina
leaves.

Heed smiles:
"Anything to
annoy me."

Looks wonderful
says Embor
"You eat it."

Embor does, saying
"I love this."
Heed can't stomach
slaford. That's
what she knows.

Ocean tossing thin ~~plates~~ ^{tiles} of ice
at the edge.

AK #2.

"arched to breaking" * Seven miles away, the
ocean tossed thin tiles of ice at its shore

Place
?

Caroline
Catherine
Christina
Cossey

* ~~Patches of ice~~ Patches of ice gleamed
in the then disappeared in the early
evening shadow. ^{causing} the sidewalks
she marched along ^{to} undermined ^{even} the
most agile tread

marvelled at the height of her boot heels ✓