



## "II. It would be inaccurate..."

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"You and Henry have any children, Miss Chain?"

"Yeah. Yeah, we had some." Chain giggled. She drew out a baby picture & began to pick her teeth.

A melancholy tuft of grass  
had forced its way up  
through a crack in the  
sidewalk ~~to try to reach nature~~  
meet a rain to break her mind.

Ernie went to the window, and

~~got~~ looked out at the empty street.

She thought of Percy Prince

and how he loved Chain. What

did love feel like? she wondered.

How do grown ups <sup>act when they</sup> love each other?

~~She~~ Into her mind's eye came the  
picture of Cholly and her mother in bed.

He making sounds as tho' he were in

pain as tho' something had him

by the throat and wanted to let go.

His noises were awful. But ~~the~~ not nearly

~~chilling~~ <sup>as bad as the</sup> ~~absence of~~

~~any sound~~ <sup>no sound at all</sup> ~~whatsoever~~ from her

mother. ~~Of one didn't know,~~ It

was as though she was not even

there. Maybe that was love.

Choking sounds and silence.



Dezember

8  
2 w's



## Insert #2

Turning her eyes from the window,  
Lumie watched Fan. ~~change~~ who had changed  
her mind about the barge and was arranging  
a small, but sturdy, porpoise. She was adept  
in creating any number of <sup>hair</sup> styles although the  
final result of each was a pinched + harassed  
look. Then she applied makeup heavily.  
Now she gave herself surprised eyebrows + a cupid  
bow mouth - later oriental eyebrows and a badly  
slanted mouth.

Chain sat shelling peanuts + popping them  
into her mouth. ~~Now and then~~ She belched softly,  
purringly, lowingly.

Hooker, in a beautifully trembling alto, began one  
of her blue repetitions. "I got a man who is sky soft Brown - - -

end  
part  
with  
Chain's  
belch.



Beginning 24 - 7.

(2)

H

These gargoyles fulfilled the obligations of their profession with a liveliness, chicanism, and earthy brutality. The simplicity of their attitudes about themselves was reflected in their names: Hooks, Fan and Chain. The beauty <sup>and appropriateness</sup> of each name lay in the fact that it recalled ~~in its direct appeal~~ to the tangible, and therefore understandable, world of things.

Eunice, on that October morning in 1947, the morning of the stone lid triumph, climbed the stairs to visit, although always 'secretly, her <sup>only</sup> friends'.

Even before the door <sup>was</sup> opened, Eunice could hear Hooks singing: sweet and hard as new strawberries:

I got Blues in my meal barrel  
Blues up on the shelf  
I got Blues in my meal barrel  
Blues up on the shelf  
Blues in my Bedroom  
Cause I'm sleepin' by myself.

"Hi Chumpkin! Where you sakin'?" Chain never called Eunice the same thing twice but invariably her epithets were nice & generally edible.

"Hello Miss Chain" Hello Miss Hooks. Hello Miss Fan"







[illegible]



Eunice fingered the fringe <sup>79</sup> on the scarf that  
"I never seen nobody with as many  
boy friends as you got, Miss Chain." ~~How come~~

"They all wants to they love you?"

What else they gonna do? Aint I  
"Cause I'm <sup>so</sup> rich and good lookin'. They  
wants to put their toes in my curly hair.  
And get at <sup>my</sup> money."

"You rich, Miss Chain?"

"Puddin', I got money's nammy."  
~~I got an ad in the~~

"Where you get it from? You don't do no  
work."

Stet → "Yeah" said for "where you get it from?"

"That's the Gospel."

"Hoover give it to me. I did ~~him~~ a favor  
once, for the F.B.I."

"What'd you do?"

"You know, there was this crook you  
see. ~~A real low-downer. He loved~~  
~~me, but I was his girl. But I don't~~  
~~know he was such a rat.~~

~~His name was John. Something.~~

He was as low-down as they come,  
and the F.B.I. wanted him, bad.

~~He was, that I was his girl. I was~~  
little and cute then and ~~A~~ ~~she~~ ~~loved~~

~~me. Could think~~ his damper on. To tell  
it true, I was the only one could handle  
him. He'd go out a rob a bank and kill  
some people and I'd say to him - soft like.

"John, you should n't do that." ~~Why don't~~



sat  
 you get a job like other folks? Well, the  
 Depression was <sup>on</sup> bad then, and he'd say he just  
 had to bring me pretty things. Tacey drawers,  
 and all. And every Saturday we'd get a  
 case of beer and <sup>up some</sup> fry ~~up~~ fish, ~~for ourselves~~  
 We'd Deep fry it ~~just~~. It'd be hot  
 and cracklin in meal <sup>+ egg</sup> batter, you know,  
 and when it was <sup>all</sup> brown + stiff we'd  
 break open that cold beer... "Chain's eyes  
 began to went soft, ~~when she~~ <sup>as the only thing she</sup> ~~thought~~  
 of good thing to eat. ~~She went off in a daze~~  
 about the fish until ~~E. interrupted her.~~ <sup>E. and the day down before Chain!</sup>

In the silence  
 that followed  
 \* Chain saw  
 see Chain's  
 face even  
 teeth settling  
 down into the  
 back of crisp  
 pass, see those  
 of fingers?  
 pushing back  
 into the mouth  
 a small piece  
 of that hard  
 back into her  
 mouth. The  
 "pop" of the  
 beer bottle cap  
 already  
 with a ~~little~~  
 The saw a cress  
 that moved into  
 the nostrils  
 along with that  
 first  
 stream of vapor  
 before the cold  
 beavers hit the  
 tongue.

"But what about the nose?"  
 "Oh, she ~~wasn't~~ <sup>wasn't</sup> ~~like~~ <sup>like</sup> she's the lady Dr. Ford"  
 Fan boasted. "Dillinger would it have  
 come near you lesser he was going  
 Big game hunting in Africa + shot  
 you for a hippo"

"Well, this hippo, had a ball back in  
 Chicago - whoa Jesus 99!"

~~Chain~~ <sup>always</sup>  
 "How come you say W. J. and a  
 number?" asked E.  
 "Cause my mother ~~had~~ <sup>taught</sup> me ~~not~~ <sup>never</sup> to cuss"  
 "Did she teach not to drop your drawers?"  
 asked fan

"Don't have none" Said Chain. "Never  
 Saw a pair of drawers till I left  
 Meridian and ~~got a job~~ <sup>worked</sup> ~~for~~ <sup>as</sup> ~~long~~ <sup>day</sup> work  
 white people in Cincinnati. That  
 my white woman gave me some of ~~old~~  
 that was ones of hers. I didn't know  
 what to do with them. I thought they  
 was some kind of ~~not~~ Stocking Cap



I put them on my head when I dusted and swept. When she saw me she liked to feel out "

"You must have <sup>been</sup> ~~one~~ a dumb some body"  
said Jan.

"How'd I know? ~~no~~ Who'd ever think of trying to keep ~~that~~ ~~again~~." "Did what? ~~the~~ ~~po~~ the use of putting on something you have keep taking off every day." Dewey never let me keep them on long enough to get used to them."

"Denver who?"

"Dervey who?" Chicken!  
"Dervey who?" ~~Dervey~~ Chicken, you never  
heard <sup>me</sup> tell of Dervey?

"No Ma'am"  
~~Happy Birthday~~  
Jewey twice  
"Oh Honey, you missed Ray your life  
you wait he's off out  
Wooah for us 1-9-5 Penn

~~There was a man~~. Um! - You talkin'  
bout Smooth! I met him when I  
was 14 - ~~we lived together for 3 years~~  
~~we ran away together and lived like~~  
~~married for 3 years!~~ He taught me  
~~how to be a woman, that was~~ I'd  
all these Klinker-tops you see running  
up here? ~~None of 'em can take~~  
50 of 'em <sup>in a son</sup> ~~to make one pair~~. wouldn't  
make <sup>a</sup> Dewey Prince <sup>ankle bore</sup>. Lord, how  
that man loved me!"

That man loved me!"

1. That man loved me!  
 2. That why he left you to sell tail".  
 3. "Well, when I found out I could sell  
 it - That somebody would pay cold cash  
 for it ~~if~~ you could have knocked me  
 over with a feather.

Hooks began to laugh. "Me too. My Aunt whipped me good that first time when I told her I didn't get no money."



Isaiah "Money?" for what, He didn't owe  
~~me~~ me nothin' She said "The hell he  
didn't!"

They <sup>used</sup> all ~~described~~ <sup>subdued together</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~laughter~~ <sup>laughter</sup> They  
~~looked like~~ Three merry witches <sup>smoked</sup>  
~~smoking~~ the big fat long ago time  
of innocence. They ~~did not~~ <sup>so</sup> ~~chatter~~  
~~prostitutes with~~ <sup>belong to those generations</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>which</sup> ~~they~~  
prostitutes <sup>outlined in novels</sup> with great and generous  
hearts - dedicated to ameliorating the  
lucky, barren life of men - taking money  
incidentally and humbly for their  
generosity. They with the exception  
of Chain's fabled love for Decey  
Irene <sup>the</sup> ~~dated~~ <sup>woman</sup> ~~man~~ (all men) <sup>with out</sup> ~~they~~  
~~abused~~ <sup>stare, reproach or discrimination</sup> ~~them~~ <sup>when</sup> ~~they~~ Their visitors  
<sup>with a</sup> ~~colours~~ <sup>batter become</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>mechanically</sup> ~~use~~ <sup>by use</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>white</sup>  
men they hated black men, Puerto Ricans,  
Mexicans, Jews. All came under  
their jaundiced eyes & were the  
recipients of their disinterested wrath.  
They ~~that~~ took delight in cheating  
them. On one occasion that the  
town knew of well, they lured a  
Jew up the stairs, poured on him  
all three, ~~turned him up by his heels~~ <sup>held him up by his heels</sup>,  
shook everything out of his  
pockets and threw him out of the  
window. He of course, had no recourse  
to the law for his reputation <sup>as a good citizen</sup> was dear to  
him.

Neither did ~~the~~ <sup>they</sup> ~~have~~  
respect for women who <sup>although</sup> ~~were~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~in the~~  
~~colleges~~ <sup>so to speak</sup>, ~~but~~ <sup>nevertheless</sup> ~~decreased~~



regularly

Their husbands. "Sugar-coated whites"  
they called them. They their only respect  
was for <sup>what they suggested have described as</sup> so-called "Good Christian Negro  
women". On top A woman whose  
reputation was spotless & who tended  
to her family, ~~they~~ who didn't drink or  
run-around, ~~or~~ had their undying  
if covert affections. They would sleep  
with her husband and take his  
money, but <sup>always</sup> with vengeance & scorn.  
Nor were they pretentious of youthful  
innocence, they looked back on  
their own youth as a period of ignorance  
and regretted they had not made  
more of it. With Eunice they were  
as free as they were with each  
other. Chain concocted ~~many crazy~~  
stories for her because she was a  
child - but the stories were breezy  
and often rough. If Eunice had  
announced her intention to ~~be like~~  
the life they did - they would not  
have ~~been~~ alarmed. ~~on~~ <sup>As to</sup> ~~on~~  
~~tried to dissuade her.~~ <sup>Don't, Robert?</sup> ~~her line from~~  
~~for a while changed her mind about the~~ <sup>mother, Eunice's sister</sup>  
~~bones and a small but sturdy poor padover~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~Stones~~  
~~adept in making any number of~~ <sup>looked</sup>  
~~styles each one of which~~ <sup>like the others</sup>  
makeup heavily. Now, she gave herself  
surprised eyebrows and a  
Cupid bow mouth. <sup>on devilish</sup> ~~oral~~ <sup>eyes</sup>  
Chain sat ~~crack~~ <sup>a slash of a mouth</sup> shelling peanuts  
and popping them into her mouth.  
Every now and then she let out a  
soft ~~purring~~ belches softly, puningly

~~The corners are laid away~~ \*The sky den  
the conversation & ~~the conversation~~ ~~was~~ ~~at~~

X when she was  
satisfied.



