



Frank Money and Bride [Outline and Early Draft]

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WMM

FRANK MONEY

AND MS

"Bride"

Google:

K-rations circa 1950 - SPAM + Hershey
poke salad

Notes/Outline: FRANK MONEY

1953 plus

Structure: a "floating" narrative from Frank's point of view to face [on recto or above the 3rd p.v. text below—with different type face] the third person narrative. I.e. the opening section about the horses.

Not really an out line, but what I know now.

1. Frank Money is strapped down in a hospital bed. Thinking about his sister and the horses. Her name is Ycidra and is called See. Their mother heard this name while she was pregnant and thought it would be a good name if the baby was a girl. She was standing in a food line at a church in El Paso (The Church of the Redeemer) waiting for pickled pigs feet and bread. The woman in front of her said and spelled her name to the church worker. Their mother had left the group of families walking day and night from the town they had been ordered to leave on pain of death. There were hundreds of them carrying all they had on their way to tk where they hoped to be welcome.

2. At the time of his recollection, See works for a respectable physician who is experimenting on her to develop a device (uterine) which he hopes to patent. These experiments are life-threatening. See likes the physician's wife, who is kind to her,

but she is also reluctant to quit because having escaped a violent marriage and with no where else to go, she persuades herself that the pain she endures during the experiments are 'not so bad' and if they are, they are punishment for the reckless life she led earlier.

3. Frank has received a letter with no signature saying "You should come get you sister out of here. Fast." *Or she be dead.*

4. Frank is subject to violent 'shell shock' episodes as a result of his Korean war experience. While on a guard duty in tk he watches a Korean's child hand moving through barbed wire at the edge of the post. The child's hand is trying to collect refuse in the garbage. This happens every evening to Frank's amusement, until another guard sees the child stealing and blows her away. Her hand remains among the orange peels—a hand smaller than the original orange. Frank is "brave" following that incident—shooting any Korean, Chinese soldier or civilian who "gets in his way." Even volunteering for ambush sorties. His behavior and the things he witnesses in others produce the nightmares and violent outbursts he has when ^{discharged} ~~stateside~~. It is one such which has landed him in the hospital under the care of not so much doctors as ward workers. His eruptions take two forms: hiding and fighting. The latter lands him in jail on and off; the former lands him in this psyche ward: he was found cowering in tall-grass by the side of the road—waiting, peeping through the blades trying to see horses standing like men.

K-ration

** AS in a
rage-focussing
an enemy instead
of Cambrade, war
& his own
sentimentality*

5. Instead of (or in addition to) seeing the bottom of a man's foot shoveled into the ground, he would see a child's hand. Sometimes the foot turned into a hand; sometimes both separately but equally dead. He chastizes himself: why the fear, the sweat, the trembling, the dread—just a foot or hand already separate already dead, harmless, fingers too small to hold all of an orange. Laughs, remembering the movie (The Hand? or Five Fingers?) Embarrassed and terrified yet unable to stop running, hiding, running, hiding during which he screamed obscenities at all who approached and positioned twigs as though they were guns.

6. In 'floating' narrative:

Chapter 30
*
"I can tell. I can tell when it's coming. The first time I was quiet... sitting on a bus next to a woman. Her flowered skirt was a world's worth of color. Her blouse bright red. I watched her skirt hem turn...the flowers blackening, her red blouse white as milk. Then everybody, everything. Outside the window too...trees, sky, a boy on a scooter, grass. All color gone. Like ^{an old} a movie screen. I didn't yell then. I just thought something bad had happened to my eyes. Bad, but fixable. I wondered if this was how dogs or cats or wolves saw the world. I got off the bus and walked toward a Chevron station, its black flames shooting out from the V. I wanted to go in the bathroom, look in the mirror to see if I had an eye infection, but the ~~whites only~~ sign stopped me. The sun hurt, ^{so bad} its mean, mean light drove me to look for shade. I didn't yell. I didn't smash anything. Anything at all. That was later on when the sun-

light wouldn't stop and I knew ~~all~~ color was invented. Not real at all. Now I can tell when it starts—and take precautions."

5. The urgency is to escape the hospital and get to tk to rescue his sister. *

6. Carrying See in his arms, she is bleeding, blood thick on the back of her dress, down her legs. Now he is happy to get past a few passengers and sit in the back of the bus where bench seat gives them room. He knows the driver and the four or five riders believe he is dragging a drunken woman home. He gets off at the corner of tk and tk. See's feet don't work; her toes scoot the gravel as the backs of her feet are dragged along.

He enters the old neighborhood and can't help marveling at his sudden sense of safety and the comfort of the familiar. Houses he recognizes; the number runner lady with her glass of sharpened pencils and a small jack knife to keep them that way; her nephew, much older now, who did the running, sitting on the porch with her; ^{blue Shirley Temple} the singing yard to yard that he had forgotten.

Arrives at Miss Ethel Fordham's house and mounts her porch. A peck basket of Kentucky Wonders rests by a chair, on a small table a colander and a paring knife; through the screen door he can hear singing. A group of children collect just in front of the yard. At first their eyes are wide with concern (who is this sick or drunk woman?) then one of the boys points at See's bloody dress and laughs. An older girl hits him on the head saying "Shut it!"

* They have taken his clothes - but not his shoes where the letter is hidden. He is deliberately loose so they will loosen the wrist bands.

Sweet.

Frank hollers, "Miss Ethel, you in there? It's me. Sweet Money. Miss Ethel?"

A boy comes to the screen door, saying, "She next door watching her television show."

Ethel Fordham comes around the house onto the porch steps. She doesn't look at Frank. She frowns instead at his burden. "Ycidra? Oh, girl."

Frank cannot explain, but tries to. Miss Fordham helps get See through the house into a bedroom. As she lays the unconscious girl down, she says "Wait yonder" and points Frank out of the room. Then she lifts up See's dress and parts her legs. "Have mercy." Shouts to Frank ^{Who has not moved. "Get out of here"} "Go snap those beans. I got work to do." ^{or something.}

7. Ycidra: She never felt the pain right away. Later the burn/grind would knock her to her knees. Handsome Melvin. The last letter from him said "On my way. First of the year." That was a year ago.

Ycidra. That is her name (pronounced a-si-dra). Melvin, Mayan, Guaraní. In any case, her mother named her that because once, in a bus station in El Paso, she heard a woman call out that name. A child ran toward the woman and buried her head in her lap. A moment of quiet satisfaction and the name seemed so beautiful among all the bus station noise.

She is the sister of the narrator. As children, five, six years old, they crept on land forbidden to them.

NOTHINGS II

Yes, well. What I once thought of as my emotional strength now seems to me a combination of ignorance and denial. A deliberate willingness to look away, to erase the dirt of life and other people and stay in the light. Now it appears there is scenery and writing only for consolation. Everything else is frightening, alarming. Even the good things that happen in my family are overcast by "but suppose?" or "can it last?" The essence of old age. Not fear of dying (though certainly of pain) since afterlife is either interesting or nothing.

A nasty state to be in. Free floating despair; inability to change things--revise and reinterpret them.

On the other hand there is humor. The savior of the mind. For example, I have learned that our family name on my mother's side (Willis) is more invention/surrender than I assumed most former slave families were. It seems that our real ancestor is a man called Juan Gonzales! (Which is doubly questionable if he is from Africa.) He escaped from Cuba. A slave and felon; he murdered the white (I suppose) under boss on the plantation. Got to Alabama and changed his name to John Willis--of which there are some four generations of John Willis's. So far I have no further details. Apparently he went back and forth from Alabama to Cuba under this new name. Must have been early part of the 18 hundreds, since my grandfather Willis was born in 1861. This is one reason, of many, why I despise the current fad for DNA testing to see who "our" ancestors were. People lie. For good reasons and other ones. Also the commerce of all this "testing" is repugnant to me. And how come everybody learns only how wonderful their bloodline is. Where are all the Juan Gonzales's? The raped women who chose not to say whose child they bore? The many, many other enslaved women who took in children not their own for safekeeping and protection? Those "passing" into another 'race.' And why is 'knowing' these anecdotes more thrilling than inventing them? And even if one can 'know', what is it that you do know? What I know about Juan is both interesting and absolutely nothing. I like it like that. The true response of a writer, I suppose. Now I can imagine him without the obstacles of facts. Maybe he was brave (killing and escaping), but maybe he was a coward.

Ycidra. That is her name (pronounced e-sidra). Mexican, Mayan, Spanish. In any case, her mother named her that because once, in a bus station in El Paso, she heard a woman call out that name. A child ran toward the woman and buried her head in her lap. A moment of quiet satisfaction and the name sounded so beautiful among all the bus station noise.

She is the sister of the narrator. As children, five, six years old, they trespass on land forbidden to them.

...not suggesting that media try deliberately to subvert and seduce, to enchain and dull... could have more respect if it were conspiratorial. In fact media may very well be... that the combination of excitement and dullness—which they latched up on—is... they are made for. Nevertheless we must look elsewhere for reliable information... beneath the acceptance of the world as flat and ignorant, is the ancient idea... that knowledge is guilt.

Francis's return (after being in the hospital and Hallway)

There is living in the small shot-gun house that were born in. She... not knowing how to be like even when there is nothing urgent.

"They stood up like men. We saw them. Like men they rose.

"We shouldn't have been there. The property was forbidden to ^{us} ~~darkies~~ ^{colored people}. Close knit wire alternated with wooden stakes. But when we saw a place where some animal had dug under it--a coyote maybe or a labrador--we didn't resist. Just kids we were still the grass was shoulder high and, looking out for snakes, we crawled on our bellies through it. The reward was worth the gnat stings and the damage grass juice did to our eyes. In front of us, about fifty yards off, they stood like men, hooves crashing and striking, their manes tossing back from wild white eyes. They bit each other like dogs, but when they stood, reared up on their hind legs, we held our breath in wonder. One was rust colored, the other deep brown, both sunny with sweat. Their snorts were not as frightening as the silence broken only by the clashing hooves. Nearby horses stood aloof, looking away. It stopped. The rust colored one dropped his head and pawed the ground while the winner loped off in an arc nudging mares before him.

As we elbowed back through the grass looking for the dug out, we lost our way. And when we heard the quiet voices of real men beyond the fencing, I grabbed Ycidra's hand and put my finger to my lips. Never lifting our heads, we saw. We saw them pull a body from the back of a mule and throw it into a hole already waiting for it. One foot, stuck above the edge, quivered. Just a bit. As though it could still get out, that with a little effort it could break through the dirt being shoveled in. We could not see the men doing the burying, but we saw the edge of a spade drive the jerking foot in to join the rest of itself. When she saw that black foot with its mud and cream colored sole being whacked into the grave, Ycidra's whole body began to shake. I hugged her shoulders and tried to pull her trembling into my own bones because as a brother two years older, I thought I could handle it.

The sky was cantaloupe by the time they left but it took a while before we felt safe enough to disturb even one blade of grass and move on our stomachs searching for the scooped out part under the fence.

You ever heard a quail down here in your whole life?

Along with a sign saying SD, the land was circled by

[I am not suggesting that media try deliberately to subvert and pacify, to excite and dull us(I would have more respect if it were conspiratorial). In fact media may very well believe that the combination of excitement and dullness—which they lucked up on—is what they are made for. Nevertheless we must look elsewhere for reliable information. Lurking beneath the acceptance of the world as thin and ignorant, is the ancient idea that 'knowledge is guilt.']

Frank's return. *(after Cee is healed and Hattie gone)*

Ycidra is living in the small shot gun house they were born in. She is sorting scraps of cloth, not knowing how to be idle even when there is nothing urgent to be done.

Frank enters

Hey, look at you.

Bad?

No. You looking good.

You okay?

Tk

This is a no count meal—just some snap beans-- but I didn't know you was coming. Want me to catch a hen?

Oh, no. Anything'll do.

I know you liked Mama's fry pan bread [Lifts apron to handle hot pan handle]

Want me to slice up these tomatoes?

Yes.

What's all that?

Scraps. For quilting.

You ever need a quilt down here in your whole life?

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Soup kitchen station. And though every body else calls my sister Cee, Momma never does--she always uses the full name ~~and so do I~~. At least she thought about it, treasured it. As for me, no such memories. I am named Frank after my father's brother. Luther is my father's name; Ida my mother's. The only interesting part is our last name. Money. Of which we had none.

Handwritten notes:
 Pregnant, she thought if the baby lived and was a girl that would be her name.
 : Ycidra
 or See

I am strapped down now but not for long. The restraints, cloth not leather like before, are loosened because they think the dope still swims through my veins into my head and that I am unconscious. If I could, I'd laugh. Never, not in the deepest sleep after making love, not even when Korean bullets were cut from my back, my leg, nor when a regulation billy club smashed my head--never was I unconscious. The mind thinks whether it is aware of its thinking or not. They don't use Momma's word: ugly-acting. They say shell-shocked from x years ago in the army. It's true; I am shocked, but not from shells.

I have to get out of here. One more night, one more day of faking quiet and I'll be free.

Meantime I stay with the horses, a ~~black man's~~ twitching foot and Ycidra trembling under my arm.

Handwritten notes:
 See

Other than a few opportunity couplings, I've known only four women. Three of them were serious relationships and I liked the small breakable thing inside each one. Whatever their personality, smarts, or looks, something soft lay inside them. Like the breast bone of a bird, shaped and chosen to wish on. A little V, thinner than bone and

barely hinged, that I could break with a forefinger if I wanted to, but never did. Want to, I mean. Knowing it was there, hiding from me was enough. It was the fourth woman who changed everything. In her company the little wishbone V took up residence in my own chest and made itself at home. It was her forefinger that scared me and if it wasn't for ^{See} Yoidra I'd still be hanging from her apron strings.

Women are eager to talk to me when they hear my last name. Money? They chuckle and ask the same question: who named me that or if anybody did. If I made it up to make myself feel important or was I a gambler or thief or some other kind of crook they should watch out for? When I tell them my whole name, first and last, they scream with laughter and say "Ain't no such thing; all money is false, a trick." No end of pleasant talk after that and it's enough to keep our friendship going way after it's dried up just so they can make lame jokes. "Hey, Money, how you making it?" "Hey, Money! Got some?" "Money, come on over here. You owe me."

It's tired, old stuff but it kept things gentle and welcoming when I got fed up with being by myself and sought out company.

No.

Then what you make them for?

Visitors buy them.

What visitors?

Tourists.

People over in Mount Haven. Miss Johnson from Good Shepherd buys them from me and sells them in Mount Haven.

Nice.

More than nice. We got electricity now and it costs money. The electric fan is worth it ~~it~~ ^{alone} [^]

You could get you a frigerator.

It's just me here. What I need with a cold box to store stuff? I can food every year. Anything else I want I go outside and pick it or kill it.

What happened to that place we used to sneak off to?

Some folks bought it for a overnight place. Called it a bed and breakfast. Then some other folks took over and it was a card-playing house. Then women came. And guess what?

Night.

Frank gathers a half made quilt, picks up a shovel and tells Ycidra, "Come on. I need your help."

"What for?"

"Trust me."

I'd trust a little light more.

Bring the lamp.

Why you carrying my quilt?

They find the spot where the man was thrown into a hole. Body was apparently dropped in shallow pit. Nothing left except a skull, a complete set of intact hand bones and the pelvis. Frank collects them and places them in the quilt. The parcel weighs hardly two pounds.

and See

Later, early morning, Frank walks [^] the streets.

1. Meets people he knows and who remember him.[Man named Cat; a shop-keeper; tenor and some women.]
2. No sidewalks.
3. All houses painted white; each a porch railing of a different color.
4. Gardens are edges of flowers but mainly vegetables.
5. Children: none are alone, all are with other children or overseen by an adult.
6. Singing voice in one yard. Joined by another singer answering.
7. Cars all gleam.
8. Boy and man sitting in truck bed legs hanging over playing harmonicas.
9. Sides of some houses thick with tk bushes, on which sheets, pillow slips and underslips drape.
10. Frank knows what he is feeling is safety of home exaggerated, but the pleasure and comfort are overwhelming.

The end of this walk is to a place to bury the two pound parcel. With a wooden plaque that says: HERE LIES A MAN. [or I know this man—depending on the Korea incident]