

Thank you for subscribing to my newsletter!
Here is a thank you ~ two of my award-winning short stories.
I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I enjoyed writing them.

Come alive and stay wild,
~M.

A handwritten signature in black ink, written in a cursive style. The signature appears to be "M. J. Aronson" and is oriented diagonally from the bottom-left towards the top-right.

Walker Smith

They had taken themselves to whisperin behind his back whenever he come by cause they wasn't really sure if what they heard he done was true or not and there was no one around willin enough to ask him outright if it was or just rumors that folks made up with misinformation as they was sometimes prone to do.

But My Mama says they wasn't rumors and that it was all true up to the last detail which is why every time he walked by at least one person was prayin the grace of God be close by. She says you could always tell when he come into a room by how quick it got quiet and how none of the men would dare look him in the face.

My Mama, bein a maid at the hotel as she was, had to talk to him sometimes when she brung him his supper or a cup o coffee. He would tell her everything she already knowed about what happened but he would tell it like it was what shoulda been all along and how everyone oughtta been like him in the first place. My Mama told him she wasn't sure it should always be that way but she went on listenin to him talk his stories anyway. It weren't long after they was havin conversation regularly and not always just about him, but sometimes he asked her questions which she felt no obligation to respond to but would tell him the answers anyway.

He told her that although she disagreed with him he respected her cause she weren't like the rest and cause she talked to him like he was a person who done what was done and it didn't matter, right or wrong. So they come to have long talks and sometimes durin the middle of the day even he waited for her to have supper with and soon they was seein quite a lot of each other.

My Mama hoped the town could forget what he done as easy as she did but it didn't work out. She wanted to be happy, and he wanted her to be happy, so they got married with the preacher as their only guest. My Mama says she wanted it that way so it would be more personal but he didn't believe her and was hurt by it. But My Mama has a way of makin people feel better and soon enough she let it known that she was proud to be Mrs. Walker Smith and then they was talkin to her same as always. But the men still found it hard to talk to her husband.

My Mama kept her job as a maid at the hotel cause it was their only money since he weren't gettin any at the time from the farm he bought on the edge of town, but she liked workin anyway, especially at the place they met cause when he weren't there with her she could still remember him. They were both happy and learned to love each other which is how I come to be an existence in My Mama's womb.

She gone to the doctor one day for not feelin normal and he told her I was there. She felt better cause she learned about havin babies when her friend was with child.

Her husband come home from the fields and sat down to supper. As My Mama served him she said "You haven't asked what the doctor said." He asked and she told him "We're doin just fine." He asked what she meant by "we" but My Mama didn't say a word, just smiled instead. So he known what she meant and he jumped up and swung her around the table he knocked over in his excitement.

After that he worked extra hard in the fields and in town cause it was his duty to provide for his family which was growin bigger every day. My Mama quit workin at the hotel. The crops were growin good and he told My Mama over supper they should be

okay for the harvest cause what she didn't want to keep for makin meals they could sell or trade so My Mama could get baby things and make me clothes.

He kept sayin he was sure I was a boy cause each first-born in his family for three generations was boys; but My Mama said each first-born in her family for five generations was girls; and five is more than three. He didn't argue but kept thinkin it nonetheless – that I was a boy.

When My Mama started gettin bigger and bigger they thought I might be twins and liked the idea cause maybe I'd be one of each. But I wasn't twins, just big; and My Mama kept eatin and gettin bigger herself.

Her husband never let on that he thought she was fat and he always told her how beautiful she was. She known he would always love her until the day they both die and she gone to Church every Sunday thankin God for the man sittin beside her.

The harvest come quick and he got a lot for it so My Mama had plenty in storage to feed them through winter which also come fast. It lasted long too, but they wasn't far from town if they needed help which they never did and her husband thought good of this cause he doubted someone would really come if he asked.

They sold the rest to the mercantile just as her husband promised her and then he bought her fabric to make clothes and a quilt to keep her warm. She started makin it before Thanksgiving when the first snowfall come. She says it was beautiful to sit by the fire and sew.

Her husband had to start huntin for meat cause they didn't have a smokehouse to keep much in at one time. Every week he'd hunt for a day or two and bring in enough to feed them proper for a bit. He never got used to carryin a gun for huntin so he used traps and skinned rabbits. My Mama once said she'd like deer meat but he couldn't bring himself to kill anything bigger than himself and she understood so she quit askin although she never quit hopin.

She finished makin the quilt just as Christmas come around and it was as good as she dreamed it when she first started. She took extra cloth from the baby clothes and made her husband a new shirt to keep him warm when he went trappin but she hid this from him as a present so he didn't know she'd done this for him.

He was hidin a present from her too cause he taught himself to shoot deer and had got one some time before Christmas. He built another smokehouse far from the house and cured the meat there so she wouldn't know, and he made a small blanket from the skin for the son he thought he goin to have. He'd gone to the mercantile and traded rabbit skins for a pretty necklace he wanted My Mama to wear. He wrapped all these up in paper and tied with a pretty ribbon.

My Mama says the snow was beginnin to fall and he had to go trappin for their Christmas Eve meal tomorrow. While he was gone she walked herself to town and stopped at the mercantile to get sugar and molasses to make some sweets as a surprise for her husband.

She talked a bit with friends at the hotel when she stopped for hot tea but then she had to leave. It was snowin awful hard, thick and wet. My Mama says she was scared that day to walk back to the farm by herself but she knowed her husband to be waitin for her soon and I was active so she didn't feel alone so she took her package and started to walk.

She didn't get far when a husband of a girl she knowed from the hotel come by and offered to ride My Mama home with his wagon. The wife come along too so the three of them rode back to the farm in a wagon which is somethin My Mama don't do much cause she likes to walk.

The women got to talkin about the Christmas that was after tomorrow. The man from the wagon didn't say nothin but let his wife talk "us" and "we" like he was conversin with them.

Soon they come to My Mama's farm where her husband was waitin near the fire and pacin as though he'd been nervous about her bein gone so long in such weather. My Mama asked the people from the wagon in to warm by the fire and they come inside. The man looked at her husband and didn't say nothin but her husband walked up and thanked the man from the wagon for bringin My Mama home through the snow.

My Mama says they watched the two husbands shake hands as if they'd never not talked and suddenly the man from the wagon found it easy to talk to Walker Smith cause he'd been so good to My Mama that nothin he done in the past mattered no more. But he never said this aloud; My Mama says it was just understood.

After the people from the wagon got warm they left to get back to town. My Mama asked them to come back after the Christmas and the wife said yes. The husband didn't say nothin but let the wife talk again for them both.

My Mama says the snow come down worse that night than ever and when they woke up there wasn't a sun but dark clouds and white snow everywhere. She says she didn't mind cause it was Christmas Eve and there was no place for them to go anyhow.

Her husband told her she was right but she didn't know about the presents he was hidin by the smokehouse far from the house. He didn't tell her this but made up a reason to go out for a bit which he did against her protests.

My Mama didn't worry cause she loved her husband and she knowed him to always come back to her so while he was gone she took her presents from hidin and started to cook supper.

She had saved sweet potatoes from the harvest and cooked them next to rabbit meat and then made molasses cakes for dessert. She even got fresh milk from the cow that mornin that her husband didn't know about.

She says when he come in the door she knowed he would be happy she was his wife. She laid her gifts on his plate with a note she wrote the night before after she seen him shake hands with the man from the wagon.

My Mama waited for him to come back from the cold snow but he didn't come. She didn't know how long he was gone cause she fell asleep under her new quilt by the fire waitin. When she woke she known it was late in the day but she couldn't tell for sure since the sun hadn't been out all day for her to look at.

The snow had stopped fallin but there was so much of it on the ground that My Mama worried for her husband to find the right path home from his walk. She thought maybe he'd gone to town for some reason and was still there waitin out the storm.

She decided to go to town for him so they could walk back together and he wouldn't be alone. She wrapped herself up in her shawl and coat and even folded the quilt around her shoulders and arms. It weren't as cold as she first thought it might be but she still got a chill.

She walked with a lantern hopin maybe she'd see him walkin the road to home so she wouldn't have to go all the way to town. But they didn't cross paths so she kept walkin.

My Mama says by the time she got there she was tired and not feelin well so she went to the hotel to sit for a minute before lookin for her husband. She asked for a hot tea but before they brung it to her she collapsed on the floor and they had to call the doctor from his family cause I was wantin to be born.

I was tryin to be born a long time, givin My Mama no rest for nearly a day, while she cried for husband to be brung to her. The man from the wagon went to My Mama's farm lookin for her husband but he weren't there. So he come back to town and got men together to look for him in case he got in trouble durin the storm.

The wife of the man from the wagon helped My Mama give me life even though it took a while. The doctor said I first wanted to be born but then changed my mind and tricked everyone. But a few hours later I wanted again to be born and this time I didn't change my mind only I went about it slow.

My Mama told me she knowed I didn't mean to keep hurtin her for so long but that maybe I was waitin for her husband to be found before I was born. I can't really say except I know it was Christmas, and I always liked Christmas, so maybe that's what I didn't want to pass up.

I was finally born to My Mama without her husband bein there. The man from the wagon returned and called to his wife to talk to her outside My Mama's room. My Mama says she didn't know what he wanted to talk of but the look on his face wasn't happy. She was too tired though to think about it and she fell asleep with me in her arms.

When she woke the wife of the man from the wagon was sittin near cryin quietly. My Mama asked her why and the wife come to the bedside and sat down to tell her that her husband was dead. He had fallen into Cold Creek and was found drowned and almost frozen a mile from the smokehouse goin the wrong way to the farm they had together.

The man from the wagon found him with his sack full of packages and skins and thought him to be a sad replacement for Santa Claus especially since he turned up dead. He guessed that Walker Smith got confused in the snow and didn't know how to get home but had kept tryin even though he was goin the wrong way.

My Mama asked the wife what the packages were and she told her deer meat which made My Mama cry even harder cause she known what love he had for her to kill a deer.

They had the funeral in two days after the wake cause they wanted her husband to thaw a little first. Some people from town come to it which surprised My Mama but not the man from the wagon cause he had been tellin everyone how he talked with her husband and how he was good to him and My Mama. There was a rock placed at his head which read "Walker Smith", the year he was born and the year he died.

The people from the wagon walked My Mama to the hotel where she stayed for days before she could bring herself to go back to the farm. She says I cried all the time cause I missed her husband but I don't know about this since I never met him.

The wife of the man from the wagon took care of My Mama and me for a while even after we were at the farm. Winter ended and the snow began to melt. My Mama knowed she couldn't keep the farm and thought to sell it to whoever wanted to buy it and she'd move back to workin at the hotel.

I was growin older as a child when I heard someone talk about My Mama and the man she had loved as her husband. I never was told what it was he done that everyone thought wrong except her and My Mama would never tell me. She says it was before me and I shouldn't worry for things in the past to haunt me. But I wonder at times when people see me in the road or comin to school, why they look at me like they do.

My Mama once told me I look like her husband but I also look like her. Once I tried figurin out which parts were hers cause I thought then I could take the rest and know what her husband looked like, but I couldn't do it.

The whisperin around me never stopped all the time I lived in town until My Mama passed on and I was married to a man who loved me enough to take me to his farm. I still go to town once in a while to buy at the mercantile but the whisperin never stops.

I been to her husband's gravesite a couple times since My Mama died cause she's right next to him. I ask him all the time what he done but nothin but the whisper of the wind answers me. I guess there are some things in life we're just not known to have the answers to.

Rambling

We were driving on 35W out of the cities at an easy speed because it's not like we were in any rush to get anywhere after the play ended although it was still early even after we ate dinner at that Yuppiefest-type restaurant that's in what they call the Warehouse District although I don't know why they call it that because I didn't really see any warehouses, just a bunch of buildings that held some nightclubs and eateries and places to go when we wanted to have a good time or just listen to loud music but tonight we didn't want to go anywhere or should I say he didn't want to go anywhere because I wouldn't have minded if we went dancing but he doesn't like dancing anyway and about this time I'm starting to wonder why I ever go out with him at all because all we do is go places where we sit and watch or eat but do nothing else and I like to participate in life because after all what is life for if not participation so of course I'm kind of quiet as we're still driving away from the cities and I guess he could sense the tension in the quiet because instead of talking to me he turned the radio on and it was a little loud which surprised me but not really because that was his way of letting me know we had a lot to talk about but he'd rather not discuss anything right now because he also dislikes confrontations unlike me which is not to say I enjoy confrontations but I do like to know when someone is upset with me so I can try to take care of the problem instead of letting it fester but he doesn't think of it that way because to him it's not burying a confrontation, it's just getting an unpleasantness out of the way by not dealing with it at all which may be his way but not mine and just before I ask him a question he turns the radio on even louder which is also his way of telling me to keep quiet so I just look out the window and wonder how far we've come from the cities and whether or not we've actually gone too far but then I see the skyline and realize we're not that far away at all, just far enough to get away from the action and I can feel myself getting annoyed or possibly even angry at him because I'm also getting tired of him being the one who always decides where we go and what we do which is usually dull and boring and as I'm making my mind up to not go out with him again I also begin to wonder if maybe we have boring dates because I'm the boring one but I don't think that way but maybe I'm wrong because if I wasn't a boring person you would think other guys would ask me out unless they think I'm not boring just unreachable which is really funny because I also think I'm about as down-to-earth as you can get and all in all I'm pretty happy with who I am and whom I'm becoming except for the times I watch television and wish I was one of the characters on my favorite shows which I have several of because each different character I like has traits I'd like to be a part of me and maybe they are but they certainly don't fit together as well as they do on television because the characters have several writers and directors who dictate their life and all I have is myself and maybe my guardian angel although I haven't seen him or her ever but that doesn't mean I don't believe in guardian angels but sometimes I do wonder about them which is usually at the same time I wonder about fate and if right and wrong are really as black and white as we're taught when we're really young because if they are, why do our views change as we get older and are we all right or are we all wrong or is it a fairly good chance that each of us could go either way and if that's true do we have the power within ourselves to decide which direction our life will take but I really don't think so because right now my direction is taking me away from the cities which is not my personal choice and I wonder

if I can change that so I begin to look at my options which include grabbing the steering wheel and probably causing an accident but that's not the kind of excitement I really want so I guess that's out of the question and my other option is to say something but before I do the radio gets louder because he has ESP or something which I really don't believe but it wouldn't be too bad if he did because then all the thoughts I'm thinking he would know and we really wouldn't have to talk about anything which would save him from confrontation and would let me know he is aware of how I feel but deep down inside I know he doesn't have ESP and while it was a nice thought while it lasted, now I really have to decide how I'm going to let him know I'm not a boring person and I want more in my life than watching movies and eating pasta and how could anybody not want more than that and then I realize how accusatory that sounds but I can't think of another way to say what I feel and then I remember everyone used to tell me I would always say what was on my mind anyway and as I begin to question what's holding me back this time a thought appears in my mind that maybe I don't want to say anything because I don't want to hurt his feelings because maybe I actually like him and then of course I almost start laughing to myself because I just know that can't be true and then I start searching for the real reason and I think it's because I'm a good person at heart and I don't like hurting other people's feelings unless they really deserve it which I guess he doesn't except for right now and even then I'm not so sure because my feelings are hurt and it brings to mind the pop phrase "one good turn deserves another" which I guess is vindictive and most people think that's not a serious part of my personality but right now I'm beginning to wonder how well those people really know me because I'm feeling pretty vindictive right now or is that just anger because they're kind of one and the same or maybe they're only similar because anger is the starting point for being vindictive because you wouldn't be vindictive if you weren't angry or upset would you or would you be vindictive without emotion and I wonder if I could ever be that way but that seems really cold-hearted to put it nicely and I don't know if I would really like to be that way and then I remember one of my fantasies is to marry a man in the Mafia for the sole purpose of adding excitement to my life which brings me back to the point of possibly being boring now because if I'm not boring why do I need a gangster to keep my life interesting and then I think maybe I'm not boring just mixed up a little bit and perhaps I should seek professional help but the only thing they would tell me is to confront my problems and talk them out but each time I try to do that the radio gets louder and the skyline gets smaller and by now I even have a headache only I don't know if it's from the radio being so loud or if it's from my jaw being clenched so tight to keep myself from yelling that I can almost taste my fillings which I have six of and you don't really think of six as being a relatively high number until you see six silver spots in your mouth and you can't escape them no matter how you twist around in front of the mirror unless you just keep your mouth shut and don't talk or laugh or smile and it's a pretty safe bet I won't be doing any of those things for a while at least not while I am around HIM and I suddenly wonder if in his mind he is thinking of me as HER in that derogatory tone that we all acquire once in a while and if he is thinking of me that way I wonder what in particular is he thinking and could he be mad at me like I think I may be mad at him but why would he be mad at me when I don't think I've done anything wrong and then I question whether or not I'm in that denial stage of some sort of mental anguish and that brings me back to seeking some sort of professional help and I know I'd only pay them to help me

get to the root of the problem when I already know what the root of the problem is and he's driving me away from the cities and I realize I can't really see the skyline anymore, just a glow in the sky where it should be and we're still driving away and my headache is getting worse by the mile but there's nothing I can do about it except maybe turn the radio down but I'm afraid to because he might get mad or upset if I do that and I really don't want to give him any justifiable reason to be mad at me because if I do then that means I'm partly to blame for this date-turned-to-hell-in-a-car-ride and I don't want to be partly to blame because it's easier to handle if it's all his fault and I can blame everything of him but then I realize how self-centered that sounds but of course that's not the real me and I really hope that's not what he's thinking of me because if it is then there's no longer hope for us to work this out and then I almost laugh because we all know by now I don't want to work this out anyway and all I really want to do is go back to the cities but since we're not doing that the next thing I want to do is just go home and talk to the walls because any noise is better than this silence I feel choking up on me even though the radio is still louder than I'd like it to be and this brings to mind those paradox arguments we discussed in philosophy class and suddenly I realize that what we are taught in college IS useful in real life and I wonder what I missed on those days I wasn't paying attention to the instructor and then I wonder if they let you take a course over again just to learn what didn't sink into your brain the first time but if I did that it would take up time that would be better spent doing other things one of which is not riding in a car away from the cities on a road that is now fairly deserted and dark and if I let my mind wander this could turn into one of those Alfred Hitchcock-type-shadowy-darkness-creepy-suspense scenarios except for the fact that the road is familiar so that takes a bit of excitement off the edge and here we go again back to being boring and this car trip is taking a lot longer than I remember but of course it would because if time flies when you're having fun wouldn't it stand true that time virtually slows to a near non-existence when you're nearly bored to death and I know that sounds exaggerated and maybe it is but then again maybe it isn't and I wonder what he is feeling and thinking although I'm not really interested just curious but curiosity killed the cat and here we go again with that misplaced need for excitement and I'm starting to decide that maybe all I really need is to crawl into bed with my teddy bear and take a nice long nap and that sounds so comforting that I take a deep breath just as we turn down my street and he looks at me out of the corner of his eye and I wonder if he thinks I'm grateful to be so close to home and although I am that's not the reason I took a deep breath or is it and my thoughts are becoming very scrambled as he slows the car to a stop in front of the house and I get out of the car into the night air where everything seems calmer and quieter and better and I watch as he slowly drives away down the road rambling back toward the cities as I silently whisper goodbye.