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# Literary Imagination and Community Mental Health: A Deleuzian Analysis of Discourse in a Fiction Reading Group

Rodney Teague

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LITERARY IMAGINATION AND COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH: A  
DELEUZIAN ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE IN A FICTION READING GROUP

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Rodney C. Teague, M.A.

August 2012

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Approved May 4, 2012

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## ABSTRACT

# LITERARY IMAGINATION AND COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH: A DELEUZIAN ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE IN A FICTION READING GROUP

By

Rodney C. Teague

August 2012

Dissertation supervised by Eva Simms, Ph.D.

Anecdotes about life-altering encounters with literature are not hard to find. We commonly hear someone refer to a novel (or other fictional work) as "life changing." The mechanisms by which literary imagination effects its transformations, however, are more elusive. Rather than an after-the-fact outcome study or reflection on what a literary work has meant to someone, this study presents an empirical, qualitative investigation of transformations as they occurred in the participants' language during a fiction reading and discussion group in a community mental health setting. Session transcripts—with embedded fictional texts that were read aloud during group sessions—have been analyzed from the perspective of researcher as literary critic and through the Deleuzian lens of rhizomatic assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2005). This nonlinear, non-hierarchical and non-referential approach allows for a re-imagination of the relationship among readers, texts and authors. Initial interpretive commentary lays the groundwork

for and is followed by specific and detailed theoretical analysis of three primary themes that follow from the rhizomatic perspective and which arise in the transcript data.

The first of these, *Assemblage*, details the ways that participants engage in and with fictional story-worlds. This engagement is such that text, readers, author, and other elements of context join together in chains or blocks of becoming. These becomings rely on the particular mimetic structure of the fictional text that simulates 'real life' experiences for readers. The special kind of engagement occasioned by fictional texts leads to transformations of linguistic forms, images and concepts.

Transformations addressed in the next segment, *De-formations*, include analysis of mental health talk as it encounters the poetic story world in our sessions. One demonstrable result of this encounter is what I am calling the *vernacularization* of mental health talk. Elements of clinical, usually diagnostic, language introduced in our sessions are transformed in the direction of more colloquial and 'plain-language' use. This result suggests that fiction reading moves mental health consumers away from the problem-saturated language of mental health discourse (White & Epston, 1990) that too often reifies and reinforces illness and dis-ease rather than supporting wellness. As they encounter rich, literary characterizations, diagnostic terms are fleshed-out, embodied and contextualized as compared to their antiseptic, clinical presentations in diagnostic manuals and clinical charts.

The final section, *Re-narration*, examines implications of transformations in participants' language for narrative identity, that is, participants' self-understanding and re-contextualization in light of their encounters with the fictional story-world (Ricoeur, 2005). Participants were not assessed following the group's conclusion, but it is possible

to discern nascent or potential changes in narrative identity in the language of discussants and to speculate on what changes participants may carry forward into their lives beyond the reading and discussion group.

Finally, implications are discussed for re-understanding the therapist as literary critic and for the development of locally produced bodies of literary criticism as work appropriate to community mental health providers and clients. Also, affinities and areas for possible coordination between literary therapy, bibliotherapy and narrative therapy are discussed.

## DEDICATION

For Erin, my love. You're in my heart and soul. And for our children Tal, Ches, and Emma Ruby. You four are my latest in a long run of excellent teachers. For your lessons, I am the most grateful.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As I approached my classroom on my first day of teaching at Tuskegee University I overheard one student in the hallway ask another about me, "is that a teacher or a student?" I can only assume he referred to my youthful and relaxed appearance. I was far too nervous to reply or even to acknowledge the question of course, but, reflecting later, my answer could only have been, "God willing, always both."

Reflecting further, I realize that I have been unusually blessed by and through a constant stream of truly excellent teachers. What follows is an abridged thank-you list:

- My mother and father who taught me how to value and treat other people and who have modeled faithfulness and integrity in all things;
- Laura Shoffner, my high school literature teacher who startled her students on the first day of class by scrambling on top of her metal desk and banging out the thunder from the first scene of Macbeth. She taught me how to make crazy work in one's favor. She also introduced me to some fantastic fiction and set me on a path toward psychology via Jung's collective unconscious;
- Robert Sardello who taught me about the silent language of the soul;
- my father-in-law, Larry Allums, who taught me about the fiery grace and joy of a contemplative life and that to be a teacher means learning generously;
- Glenn Arbery whose admonishing voice I have heard throughout this project, warning me against profanity, saying "poetry isn't for anything;"
- Louise Cowan for her piercing vision, fiercely independent intellect, and gentle, generous humility;

- Dan Warner who taught me that there's a lot to be said for being normal, and who will always be a better friend than I;

- Tony Barton who taught me that it is my ethical obligation to make crazy work in my favor... and about letting people in on the secret, wink-wink;

- and for my director, Eva Simms, for reading Rilke during our first class meeting, thereby confirming for me that I was in the right place. For her steadfast dedication to her intellectual and personal vision and for lending me the confidence to pursue mine. For space-clearing and guarding the space for my lengthy gestation and laying-in with this project. For intuiting how to motivate me, including a few timely butt-kickings. You have from our earliest interactions listened earnestly to my ideas and have maintained enthusiastic faith in my ability to follow through on them. This dissertation process has been long and difficult, but it has also been by far the most satisfying experience of my academic career. I have finally done the project that I wanted to do. You helped me figure out what that was and you encouraged me--that is, you fostered in me the courage to see it through. Thank you.

- Generally, this has been the tenor of my experience through graduate study at Duquesne--encouragement to find and pursue what I am called to. I am better for the experience. Thanks to all of my teachers here--faculty, staff, clients and fellow students.

- I am grateful for material, moral, and financial support from my Mama-G and from my extended family. If you ever doubted me, you never let on...

- and finally, I am thankful to My wife Erin and our children who are all four my teachers as well. I am grateful for their patience and forbearance. It is to them that this work is dedicated. Tal, it's finally over, buddy. You may never know how motivating and

wrenching were your tears those times when I refused to stop working and play catch with you. I hope you will forgive me for those times...

To all of you, my teachers, mentioned and unmentioned here, I am grateful.

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## Introduction

*Skinny, funky, dreadlocked Avery spoke easily about his life as a street artist. He actually held a brush in his hand as we listened—everyone at ease—to his stories of privation, fear, abjectness, hopelessness. Odysseus’ lamentations for his lost men and his lost home fade from our hearing precisely as they ground this collective moment. Homelessness in Homer is thematized naturally and to powerful effect; no one left storyless regarding homelessness.*

*No one breathed while Juanita told of finding a payphone and just enough change to call her mother one day in the driving rain.*

*“Mi Madre,” she said, “told me she didn’t want me.”*

*The “no,” the silence, the click. The fullness of the impossibility of home.*

Many years ago I co-facilitated a literary reading and discussion group that profoundly impacted my thinking about literature, psychology and community. That group, which inspired the current study, was formed as a joint venture between my employer (at the time), The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, a small, nonprofit, community educational institution, and a neighboring halfway house and recovery program for “dual diagnosis” psychiatric patients<sup>1</sup>. Our collaboration, named “Windows on the Arts,” brought halfway house residents across the street to the Dallas Institute on most Friday afternoons. Previously, and following are presented a few remembered scenes and musings from those afternoon sessions:

*Desperation of prison life, isolation in a loveless marriage, a child’s death, a spouse’s trauma, bankruptcy and ruin. We exchanged losses like handmade gifts—reluctant at their giving and their taking. A common focus on the concrete story of a fictional-mythical character loosened something and primed the flowing of all of these stories—these tellings, these connectings. All irreconcilably different but undeniably connected as we all were through the exchange. Through*

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<sup>1</sup> These patients carry diagnoses of both substance use disorders and at least one other psychiatric diagnosis

*connection and difference, determination and possibility, hopelessness changed in the telling of tales.*

My work with the reading groups bridged my interests in poetry, literature and clinical psychology in a very satisfying way. Still, years after my experience I have questions about what was going on in those groups. Was our work merely recreational or might it have some lasting effects for me and for my fellow readers? I came to psychology through literature and have long been convinced of their affinity. When I returned to literature after receiving a B.S. in psychology I (re)discovered greater insight regarding the human world in the novels of Dostoevsky and Faulkner than I had found in four years of psychology textbooks. But just *how* do stories and other artistic productions inform us about people? More importantly for me, how do they *work* on people? Participants said that their experiences of the world were changed through their encounters with texts and with each other vis-à-vis the texts. What did they mean? Further, to what discipline did our work—and to some extent do I—belong? Is this educational work in the Humanities? Is it healing, transformational, recovery work in psychological science? Could it belong to both? What happens in the estuarial mingling of these disciplines?

My sense of personal satisfaction around the work of the reading groups is supplemented by the responses and reactions of resident-participants throughout the program. The population of halfway house residents, and so of the reading groups, was diverse along age, ethnic, and socioeconomic dimensions. Young teens enrolled by parents at their wits' end, juvenile and adult offenders court mandated to the program, young and middle aged adult parents, former business executives, ex-convicts fresh from hard stints, men and women living on the street, older multiple-repeat residents—all



comprised our groups. Beyond this diversity of backgrounds among participants, average length of stay for halfway house residents was around three months, which meant a high turnover rate for our groups. Every few months the group's composition changed completely. Participation was strictly voluntary; the Windows on the Arts program never became an official part of the treatment/recovery program. Still, nearly everyone did participate. Residents encouraged each other to show up with their books and to participate in discussions. Across the hundreds of very different residents who participated in reading groups, many similar comments came to my ears over and over. Countless participants made a point to tell me that they appreciated the opportunity to read and to talk. "It feels good to use my mind again," some said. Many told me that they had forgotten that they used to like to read or that they never had before. Many commented that our sessions provided a much needed break, a kind of thinking and relating alternative to the heavy schedule of required therapeutic activities and groups that comprised the treatment and recovery program. Many residents indicated that our sessions had actually been important to their recovery. Their unsolicited testimonies suggested to me that they felt some manner of empowerment through their participation—that they learned something about themselves and, by and large, they enjoyed the learning. I learned from the halfway house administration that during exit interviews following completion of their treatment programs, patient-residents consistently named the Windows on the Arts program as a significant factor in their treatment program.

My sense about the value of the groups is the wellspring of my research interest in reading groups as appropriate to mental health settings, but questions arise for me about

how this kind of work fits into the profession and practices of mental health. Again, it is significant that our groups were not part of any official treatment program. Halfway house staff members did not attend our groups (except occasionally as voluntary participants in our discussions), so there were no (working) mental health personnel or practitioners involved in its process. There was never any planning or discussion for its integration in the larger therapeutic goals of the recovery program. There was no evaluation of residents' participation—which was, again, strictly voluntary. It is not simply that our groups were beneficial in spite of the program's ostensibly non-therapeutic purpose and status. Rather, its status outside of the rubric and discourse of traditional therapy and treatment was a primary feature of the Windows on the Arts program. It may be that it was beneficial (effective)<sup>2</sup> precisely because it was an explicitly nontherapeutic activity and experience. It is further striking that this nontherapeutic modality was consistently evaluated by residents as therapeutically valuable to their treatment and recovery efforts. But for my purposes it is not enough (and not quite right) to say that the group was nontherapeutic. I wish to investigate a particular kind of (extra-therapeutic) engagement with literary language and forms.

### **A Research Question in Two Parts**

What happened in the Dallas group and how might such effects be articulated so as to recommend similar groups as appropriate offerings in mental and behavioral health

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<sup>2</sup> This progression may be helpful in saying what I mean by therapeutic. Helpful is vague and also value-laden. Effectiveness points to what is demonstrated in the analysis and presented in results.

settings? These questions from my experience with the Dallas group lead me to the following research question: “what is therapeutic about (explicitly) nontherapeutic reading groups?” This study will interrogate my sense of the bridge between literature’s poetic imagination and clinical psychological work. While this transversal relation is not the primary focus of my research, it figures as a reflexive index for my point of view as researcher.

The present study is an investigation of a reading group, based loosely on the model of the “Windows on the Arts” program in Dallas. Its investigations address two aspects of the research question stated above, one negative (although it will turn out to be positive) and the other positive (although it will involve some degree of self-negation).

**The negative: *nontherapeutic* groups.**

The reading group I have studied shared features with explicitly therapeutic group modalities. It will have elements of focus on the group’s own processes. It will be largely self-regulating in the flows and interruptions of its movement and directions. It will have its own specific situation and context—its timing, conventions and duration—aspects referred to in psychotherapy literature as “frame” (Yalom, 1995). But more interesting for my purposes will be its departures from traditional therapeutic modes. This is the first and *negative* aspect of my research question: my claim regarding the group’s *nontherapeutic* status. The activity of the Dallas groups, though tied to the sponsoring mental health organization, starkly contrasted the regimented and closely monitored schedule of chores and therapy groups of the halfway house recovery program. The nonevaluative and loosely structured format allowed more freedom and a more relaxed discursive environment. That is, the discursive focus (tone) of the group was different

from those of the process, psychoeducational, twelve-step and other therapy groups in which residents spent most of their days. Aspects of what I will call *mental health talk* (or *discourse*) that did arise in our group interactions did so because of the prior immersion of group members in these discourses. I include myself in this “immersion,” since I had a B.S. in psychology and an interest in psychopathology.

But the notion that mental health talk was somehow imported into our group is misleading. It is not as though elements of psychiatric discourse somehow contaminated an otherwise purely “artistic” or literary or humanistic discourse. Rather, mental health talk—self stories about addiction, diagnosis, treatment successes and failures were regular fare for the group.. This calls into question, perhaps, whether it was truly a nontherapeutic group. However, although the group provided space for participants to engage mental health discourses as they were relevant to their experiences, the group did not insist on or initiate those discourses nor reward participants for their reproduction or punish them for their abrogation. That is, the arts group did not explicitly or purposely produce, reproduce or reinforce mental health discourses and it is in this sense that I claim it was “nontherapeutic.”

Mental health discourses—in their diagnostic labeling and normative aspects—tend to be self-reinforcing (Foucault, 1971/1972; Parker, Georgaca, Harper, McLaughlin, & Stowell-Smith, 1995). That is to say that like any professional jargon, psychiatric/psychological language (as well as the specialized language of addictions recovery) invents and then continually falls back on its own categories of understanding. Patients (or clients, consumers, etc) may become initiated into such discourses as ways of re-understanding themselves. It may even be that recovery from substance use or other

psychiatric disorder *means* coming to identify with and to deploy new discursive structures associated with psychiatric and behavioral health. Foucault understood discourses as practices that systematically form the objects and subjects they address (Foucault, 1971/1972). Mental health discourse proceeds by categorizing mental patients or addicts and continually constructs mental illness identities for the persons who take them on.

A woman spontaneously introduced herself upon her first appearance in the Dallas reading group by standing and forcefully stating, “Hello, my name is Alice, and I am an alcoholic.” She brought with her into the group a subjective practice belonging to the culture of addiction recovery, particularly the twelve-step model. It is right to assume that every one of us brought numerous discursive practices with us into the reading groups. And since our groups were composed primarily of folks who were currently and presently ensconced in a culture of addiction recovery and mental health treatment, it stands to reason that they brought with them discursive practices—like Alice’s self-identification—appropriate to addiction recovery and mental health treatment. It is my presumption that a key therapeutic element of nontherapeutic reading groups involves interrupting discursive practices that determine a (therapeutic) group’s composition and focus. That is, the activities of a group composed of psychiatric patients brought together because of their status as psychiatric patients for the purpose of focusing on causes and potential cures of their psychiatric conditions will remain largely within a psychiatric discourse concerned primarily with diagnostic nosologies, symptomatology, and medicalized treatments. We might expect some symptom improvement working solely within that discourse, but so is there significant criticism of psychiatric discourse from a

variety of perspectives including Foucault's genealogical deconstruction (1961/1988; 1971/1972), anti-psychiatry (Szasz, 2007; Laing, 1967; Guattari, 1992/1995), social constructionism and rhetoric (Gergen, 2000; Cloud, 1998), and critical psychology (Parker, et al., 1995; Parker I. , 2002), among others. These authors argue in various ways that psychiatric discourse is part of the creation and sustenance of mental illness. While it is problematic to characterize psychiatric talk or mental health talk as unitary discourses, they do adhere—even in their variants—to what Mikhail Bakhtin (2006) calls centripetalizing discourses. That is, they seek to centralize and codify understanding under an authoritative voice. They continually consolidate their own power through formation of the objects and subjectivities they (purport to) describe. The present study provides, I believe another dimension to this critique from a literary perspective exemplified by Ransom's appeal to the "delicate needs of the [human] organism" that are not amenable to the "gross practical enterprises" of science (1941, p. 22).

It is also wrong to assume that typical therapy groups operate solely within the discourse of mental health talk. Multivalency and polysemy—centrifugalizing or deterritorializing trends—are powerful forces in any human interaction (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2005; Holquist, 1981). Multiple and heterogeneous discursive strains or lines operate concurrently and interdependently. In any conversations between two people there is some degree of understanding (accord) as well as misunderstanding (discord). In any relation there are territorializing and centripetal forces as well as movements working to resist these unifying forces—forces of deterritorialization and centrifugalization. I am interested in examining these processes—to investigate their movements and workings. My assumption is that literary talk in mental health settings

interrupts dominant psychiatric or mental health discourses and disrupts its processes of self-creation and self-sustenance. When Alice talked about her experiences of marriage as contrasted with those of Homer's heroine, she spoke angrily and with the authority of experience—no longer, for the moment, identified and positioned as “an alcoholic.” This kind of disruption opens up possibilities for transformation that remain closed channels within the dominant, centripetalizing discourse(s).

It is in this sense that the negative construction “nontherapeutic” turns out to be positive. Nontherapeutic does not mean “not therapeutic” in the sense of “not helpful.” Rather, the reading group is helpful because it develops its own therapeutic modes, outside and beyond those discourses constructed and condoned by the mental health professions.

### **The positive: why literature?**

I draw on four theorists for the understanding of literature with which I began this project as well as methodological grounding. I will rely more heavily, for both theoretical and methodological grounding, on three sources. First, I am indebted to the works of Gaston Bachelard, whose phenomenology of poetic imagination describes the powerful, de-formational function of the literary image. Next, I will tap the post-humanist, post-phenomenological work of Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze (D&G), whose radically nonrepresentational perspective on language and the literary work of art charts the transversal movements and transformational becomings affected through engagement with such works. Then I will make a brief excursion into late work by Paul Ricoeur related to narrative identity, and finally, I will turn to the literary scholarship of Mikhail Bakhtin, whose theory of the novel and of novelization through multivoiced discourse

(heteroglossia) will further situate literary talk's power to de-form typical constructions and uses of language.

Bachelard's poetics proceed by specific (phenomenological) analysis of poetic images as they appear to a reader in a text. He emphasizes the *interruptive* nature of the poetic image as a "sudden salience on the surface of the psyche" (Bachelard G. , 1958/1994). Imagination produces novelty, deconstructing existing forms. Bachelard writes:

We always think of the imagination as the faculty that *forms* images. On the contrary, it *deforms* what we perceive; it is, above all, the faculty that frees us from immediate images and *changes* them. If there is no change, or unexpected fusion of images, there is no imagination; there is no *imaginative act*. If the image that is *present* does not make us think of one that is *absent*, if an image does not determine an abundance—an explosion—of unusual images, then there is no imagination....Thanks to the *imaginary*, imagination is essentially *open* and *elusive*. It is the human psyche's experience of openness and *novelty* (Bachelard G. , 1943/2002).

In the same work, *Air and Dreams*, Bachelard writes that poetic works always aspire toward new images that propel us in a kind of spiritual mobility; "imagination allows us to leave the ordinary course of things" (p. 2-3). In a later work, *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard writes that the novelty of the poetic image places it apart from processes of signification. It is outside of regular language and regular events, placing language into a "state of emergence, in which life becomes manifest through its vivacity" (1958/1994).



Bachelard explores the question of how images do their deformational work through a phenomenological question: “what happens when I *encounter* the image?” He refuses to attribute cause to poetic image, claiming that the (psychoanalytic) search for its antecedents in the life of the poet will not yield its secrets. Rather, his study requires “a study of the phenomenon of the poetic image when it emerges into the consciousness as a direct product of the heart, soul and being of man” (1958/1994, p. xviii). But how can the image be transmitted, affect others besides the poet? Bachelard’s answer relies on reverberation of the image in a depth of imagination activated in the reader by the novelty of the image. Bachelard’s image is characterized by *transsubjectivity* precisely because of its deformational functions. Its action undoes categories and calls boundaries into question. “At the level of the poetic image, the duality of subject and object is iridescent, shimmering, unceasingly active in its inversions” (1958/1994, p. xix).

Bachelard anticipates the work of Deleuze and Guattari (on, for example, "strange becomings and unnatural participations" (1980/2005, p. 240)), that novelty does not simply reside in the (static) image, but that a new subjectivity is (provisionally) formed in the encounter of reader and image. He writes, “in this union, through the image, of a pure but short-lived subjectivity and a reality which will not necessarily reach its final constitution, the phenomenologist finds a field for countless experiments” (1958/1994, p. xix). For this proposal, I take Bachelard’s question as my own: what may be said of the subject(ivities) appropriate to and appropriated by a particular (encounter with an) image or text?

But Bachelard’s project is solipsistic and modern—his investigation of his own presumably solitary encounters with countless poetic texts. My interest expands the scope

of this investigation. At the level of the individual, Bachelard's method is appropriate. And, he points to the increasing complexity of (trans)subjectivity involved in writing and reading: the poet, image-word, and reader combine in a mysterious kind of union that is Bachelard's field of exploration. Still, I wish to carry this project further, to a level of greater complexity, taking account of still more dimensions of significance relevant to the situated encounter of reader with text. Here, Deleuze and Guattari's (D&G) (1972/1983) explication of rhizomatic assemblages will assist me. For D&G, there are no individuals. "Everyone is a little group," they write, insisting that too rigidly parsing the world into individual, human persons is arbitrary and simplistic, missing the complexity and multiplicity of attachments that go to make up any entity. They prefer to speak of assemblages of elements—multiplicities—"plugged-into" one another in endless and machinic chains (emphasizing the productive nature of assemblages). *Rhizomatic* assemblages "do not have fixed origins like the roots of a tree; they are tuberous—multiplicitous, adventitious—and connect in nonlinear assemblages to other things" (Jackson, 2003). In any assemblage are found formal elements of stratification (territorialization) as well as "lines of flight" that potentiate movements of deterritorialization. "In a book, as in all things," D&G write, "there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification" (1980/2005, p. 3). While they emphasize the dynamic play of stratifying and loosening forces, they are clear in their position that the overall movement of all multiplicities is in the direction of deterritorialization and continuous variation. This is not a movement toward chaos, but rather toward innovation

and novelty<sup>3</sup>. They do not claim that we should prefer absolute deterritorialization in the sense of utter deconstruction or disorganization. Rather, we should recognize that organization and deterritorialization are always in dynamic play and that the latter is the vital impulse driving creativity and innovation.

Not only is any book (or text or passage or image) its own assemblage, D&G argue that these word-assemblages straddle the (imaginary) divide between organization and deterritorialization. The organization of its language (i.e. its grammar, syntax, and signification) gives the text certain and definite form. At the same time, since language is plastic and multivalent—open to variable interpretations—the text-assemblage is open for novelty in interpretation and use. One side of the text-assemblage “faces the strata...or signifying totality, or determination attributable to a subject; it also has a side...which is continually dismantling the organism” (p. 4). The text opens onto countless possibilities and interpretations. It is a portal, a jumping off point or a plugging-in hub for access to connections within and among assemblages. The lack of definite starting and ending points marks the text, conceived in this way, as a rhizomatic assemblage. But, the text-assemblage is not a closed system. Rather, it plugs-in and is plugged into other assemblages that form, with its addition, new assemblages.

As an assemblage, a book has only itself, in connection with other assemblages... We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in

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<sup>3</sup> Here an affinity immediately appears between D&G and Bachelard’s claims regarding poetic imagination’s procession toward novelty.

which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed....A book itself is a little machine...the only question is which other machine the literary machine can be plugged into, must be plugged into in order to work (p. 4).

The text does not contain or express meanings. Rather, it *affects*, through its connections and becomings with readers, discursive and nondiscursive practices, and institutions movements and becomings involving all of its constituents.

As a reader approaches a text and encounters its images through the organization of its language (its form), aspects of the reader-assemblage plug into aspects of the text-assemblage based on valences in each, forming novel reader-text assemblages. There is a double-becoming of reader and text. Each is changed by the other, by plugging into and working on the other. New subjectivities are in this way formed.

Bachelard's notion of the image echoes this rhizomic understanding of the text. It is deformational, unattributable, non-causal, but *functional* despite *meaning* or *representing* nothing. It is its own becoming. Its function depends on the double-becoming bond described above, the nexus of which comprises the reading subjectivity. This is a (trans)subjectivity that tends toward increasing valence. Greater possibility. Deterritorialization is the possibility and assurance of innovation—of telling a different story or working according to a different image.

This last point—telling a different story—simultaneously illuminates the ways literature works in and on readers and brings us back around to the question of therapeutic effect. Paul Ricoeur, whose foundational, philosophical work on narrative form and function has been seminal to the narrative turn in psychology and the other social sciences (Freeman, 2004; Murray M. , 2003; Sarbin, 2004), revisited related

material in his final published work, *On Recognition*. There I read a passage that I found inspirational to this project. He wrote in an extended section on narrative identity that the reader of stories may, through critical consideration, learn to "narrate oneself," and further that "learning to narrate oneself is also learning to narrate oneself in other ways" (2005, p. 101). For Ricoeur, this possibility rests on the fictional plot's ability to draw the reader's attention to the tension between a character as continuous and immutable (self as "*idem*") even while she adapts to (historical) emplotted events (self as "*ipse*"). Narrative identity is forged, then, for characters *and for readers* "at the intersection of coherence conferred by emplotment and the discordance arising from the peripeteia within the narrated action" (p. 101)—at the threshold, that is, of order and chaos, the line straddled by the text-assemblage in D&G. The reader's engagement at that threshold potentiates new (narrative) identities, new ways of storying her or his life—a potent potential outcome for psychological therapy work.

Finally, I'll turn to M.M. Bakhtin, whose work on the novel informs portions of D&G's *A thousand plateaus* and has gained popularity among not only literary theorists and critics but among critical theorists and poststructuralist thinkers across disciplines. Rather than a generic theory, which would argue for a list of criteria and characteristics that mark a literary work as a member of the category (genre) "novel," Bakhtin argues that it is precisely the *impossibility* of such a pre-established list of criteria that marks the novel's uniqueness (Bakhtin, 2006). The combination of uncombinable elements makes the novel novel. Two tendencies produce the novel: first, *heteroglossia*, the co-presence of varied and heterogeneous voices, elements, languages, styles, and subjectivities, and second, the *dialogic* tension of centripetal and centrifugal forces working within words

and discourses owing to the profoundly perspectival (contextual) situation of dialogic participants (actors and producers). Bakhtin writes,

distinctive links and interrelationships between utterances and languages, this movement of the theme through different languages and speech types, its dispersion into the rivulets and droplets of social heteroglossia, its dialogization—this is the basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel (2006, p. 263).

Bakhtin argues for the (generic) novel as the ultimate (artistic) emblem of the way discourse works in the world—that is, through dialogic heteroglossia. Translator and editor Michael Holquist describes, in his introduction to four Bakhtin essays collected as *The dialogic imagination*, Bakhtin’s emphasis on the struggle between centripetal and centrifugal forces in life and language.

This Zoroastrian clash is present in culture as well as nature, and in the specificity of individual consciousness; it is at work in the even greater particularity of individual utterances. The most complete and complex reflection of these forces is found in human language, and the best transcription of language so understood is the novel (2006, p. xviii).

The implications of Bakhtin’s theory transcend (generic) literary studies (as evidenced by the adoption of his work in cultural studies, philosophy, and psychoanalytic theory). Holquist goes on to argue that Bakhtin came to understand the “novel” not as a canonical category of literature taking its place alongside epic and lyrical forms, but rather as a *force* at work within a given system to reveal the limits and artificial constraints of that system (p. xxxi). Thus, when instances of heteroglossia are found within traditional lyrical forms, it is due to the *novelization* of that form. Similarly,

elucidation of the dialogic forces at work within utterances, assemblages and discourses—that is, elucidation of tendencies toward orderliness, unity, and stability as well as forces that resist and threaten stability—may be said to work toward the *novelization* of these forms (discourses, assemblages). Critical, narrative analytic methods conceived as tools to understand the ways in which assemblages of actors (reading group participants) actively produce ordered, predictable patterns of relating as well as innovating interruptions, deformations and lines of flight may be said to be practices of (discovery and production of) novelization.

The preceding discussion of literary and poetic language points to the participation of this kind of language in something extra-linguistic or extra-discursive. Bachelard's image is a flickering of soul communicated in shimmering, transsubjective resonance. Bakhtin writes of dialogic forces swirling through conversations and works of art and grappling for an upper hand in either cohesion or explosion. Deleuze and Guattari portray literary language straddling a threshold bordering form and orderliness on one hand and on the other a consistency that resists the stratification of any form whatsoever (including linguistic form). Reading together works not just to open up discursive possibilities. Stories *move* and they *move* people.

## Statement of Critical Perspective

The reader may infer quite a lot about me from the foregoing theoretical introduction to this project. The present section is intended to bridge theory and method by making explicit my point of view as I approach this research. It is about my worldview and my personality and my politics and how these have led to the present study as well as to my (intended) approach to the task of group facilitation and subsequently of critical interpretation and analysis.

It is important to note that I am writing this as retrospective reflection in the spirit of Walsh's understanding of research *approach* as the clearing through which phenomena come into view (Walsh, 1995, p. 335). According to this perspective, the researcher's attitudes, which form the conditions of a phenomenon's appearance, are themselves invisible at the time of that appearance. In addition, these attitudes inevitably change in their encounter with phenomena of interest. Only afterward, in light of the phenomenon that has revealed itself, may the attitudes that presaged the phenomenon be fleshed out through questioning the nature of the world (clearing) into which this phenomenon has been born. Walsh writes,

The structure of any phenomenon is the structure as seen by a particular researcher *from the vantage point of a particular approach*. The understanding of a phenomenon therefore requires a thorough delineation of the approach through which that particular phenomenon came into view. (p. 338)

This delineation is a questioning about point of view. From what position is it possible to perceive the phenomenon here described? What attitude (posture, stance, orientation) brought about the phenomenon in this particular way? So I attempt here to delineate the



attitudes that brought about the current findings, these reflections being themselves among the results of the study.

In an earlier section I described the Dallas reading group as antecedent to the current project. There I partially answered the question “why literature?” but this question wants further treatment here. More specifically, the reflexive question is something like this: why are literature and psychology inextricably linked for me? Two anecdotes from my own experience will help to answer. The first takes me back to the first day of a high school literature class when Mrs. Shoffner leapt atop her desk and banged thunder on its metal sides while she recited the weird sisters’ incantations from the first scene of Macbeth. She was, needless to say, an enthusiastic (and eccentric) teacher of literature who had my attention from that first day. With her I read Faulkner and Dostoevsky in addition to Shakespeare and others. She also gave me my first introduction to psychology, introducing Jung’s collective unconscious as an argument for the broad significance of literary study across cultures. It was my first formal exposure to psychological theory of any kind, and her explanation of myth—culturally significant storytelling—seemed to me an immediately intuitive proof (or at least a demonstration) for the notion that there are both (unique) individual and (shared) collective dimensions of human experience. Although individual human beings partake in entirely unique life circumstances and perspectives (points of view), there are significant dimensions of life that we share—that we can recognize in each other’s experience and share through our stories. That stories are shared and sharable is acknowledgment of the basic human paradox of simultaneous individuality (uniqueness) and collectivity (similarity). The study of literature through this psychological lens became for me, then, a way of working

at the threshold of this basic paradox. Canonical literature is—at one level—simply an acknowledgment of (some of) the stories that “work” in this regard--that work at this threshold. What we regard as a “classic” (or perhaps even as a work of “literature”) is what 'stands the tests of time,' what transcends idiographic place and time to participate recognizably in common or widely shared experiences.

Obviously, canonical boundary lines (inclusion and exclusion) depend on a great many economic, political and cultural factors. The historical winners write not only the history books, but also the fictional works that populate the shelves of power. Disputes over the Western literary canon have raged in academic theaters of the culture wars for decades. One result of the postmodern de-centering of traditional power and influence has been the inclusion of previously marginalized artists and voices that certainly “work” at the threshold of individual and collective experience. I view this democratizing trend as a necessary corrective to a myopic and hegemonic worldview that stunted our collective imagination. Literature, that is, does not function as a thresholding mechanism if certain voices and perspectives are systematically excluded from the multivoiced dialog of Bakhtin’s heteroglossia. The goal is not then a universal perspective (the “Truth”—which would demolish the threshold), but the richest possible collection of perspectives that cluster fittingly around the vast possibilities for perspective.

Still, difficulties persist. Not all stories are equal. That is not to say that all stories are not important. I am a student of psychology precisely because I am convinced that every story matters. But I am also convinced that not all stories are equivalent. Fictional, literary stories and poems are carefully crafted, well-made things. We are all tellers of stories (Freeman, 2004; Murray M. , 2003), but we reserve the name “storyteller” for

those who mesmerize us with gripping, well-told tales (or else for naughty children who tell us lies). As novelist and cultural critic Albert Murray noted,

A narrative seems realistic because it was designed (and polished!) to create that effect....When he creates short stories and novels, the writer no less than [the American blues singer] or the ancient Greek playwrights is composing and choreographing song and dance imitations of experience. It is by means of such imitations that he evokes the dynamic image which embodies and expresses his conception of human nature and of the meaning and purpose of human conduct. (1973, pp. 20-22)

Fictional literature is an artful imitation of life that invites us into the (threshold) experience of simultaneous individuality and collectivity. We learn what is acceptable and normal as well as about transgressive prohibitions and possibilities through stories. We learn to negotiate differences of opinion and perspective through discussion of the episodes, circumstances and actions negotiated and undertaken by fictional characters.

I take broadening, enriching and multiplying perspectives to be basically valuable. Developmentally, increasing perspective taking ability is considered a matter of cognitive and socioemotional maturation. But my concern is probably because I want to be better understood myself. It may be truer to say that I have a horror of being misunderstood. My second anecdote fits in here and takes us back even farther in time, to my third year when I lived for a short time in Manhattan with my mother and father. My folks secured a spot for their precocious toddler on a children's television program, Romper Room, filming at that time in New York City. The show's hostess, Miss Sherry, sang songs, played games

and engaged in imaginative play with a different group of about ten preschoolers during each show. During my show, Sherry engaged the children in stretching exercises.

Sherry: “Stretch down and touch your toes. That’s right boys and girls. Now stretch up as tall as you can stretch. Stretch up to the sky and see what you can grab onto. Suzy, did you grab hold of something? What did you pull down?”

Suzy: “I pulled down the sun!”

Sherry: (brightly) “Oh, that’s fantastic, Suzy! William, what did you pull down?”

William: “I pulled down the moon!”

Sherry: (brightly) “O, wonderful, William, you pulled down the moon! And, little Rodney, what did you pull down?”

Rodney: “I got a tree frog!”

There was a pause, and then laughter from Miss Sherry and the other children and, I learned later, from some of the parents watching via closed circuit in another room where my mother— no longer for that moment a soft-spoken Midwesterner—had words with a few of those who were mocking her baby boy. Mocking for what? To be honest, I still don’t understand. Sure, I get that it was an imaginative exercise. But, really? The others pulled down the sun, moon and stars and then laughed at my tree frog? It wasn’t standard enough imaginative “storybook” material, perhaps? I felt like I had walked into a trap. My answer failed to match storyline expectations of which I was unaware. Later I reasoned to myself that I hadn’t balked at the other children’s answers but had simply thought the tree frog a more satisfying and realistic solution (it's possible that I was an overly serious child, but that's hardly the point).

Of course, as far as I know I was unaffected at the time by this episode—now a somewhat apocryphal favorite funny story in my family’s canon. My version relies mostly on my mother’s (frequent) retellings which still include some harrumphing about those other parents. But as I have reflected on the story it has become emblematic for me of the risks and rewards associated with the imaginative co-construction (constitution) of reality that rests on the uneasy threshold of individual and collective experience—the same threshold that is worked in literary fiction.

A *Paris Review* interviewer asked novelist Andrea Barrett whether a feeling of "not being at home" was important to her writing. Barrett's reply:

Sure. I've never known a writer who didn't feel ill at ease with the world. Have you? We all feel unhoused in some sense. That's part of why we write. We feel we don't fit in, that this world is not our world, that though we move in it, we're not of it. You don't need to write a novel if you feel at home in the world. We write about the world because it doesn't make sense to us. Through writing, maybe we can penetrate it, elucidate it, somehow make it comprehensible.

(Gaffney, 2003)

I am convinced that we *read* what these authors write for much the same reason. There is such incredible variety in the ways that we human beings can experience isolation, alienation, the uncanniness of a once-known world that looms, suddenly unfamiliar like the houses that menace JH Van den Berg's unhappy client in his *A different existence* (1972). We press our noses against frosted windowpanes, longing for warmth and welcome.

So what's the point of the tree frog story? It was startling to find myself in violation of some norm of which I had been unaware and which, even afterward, I did not understand. Differences of perspective are, of course, ubiquitous, but I wish to point out that the stakes are high. In order to be normal and reasonably happy, functioning members of a society, we must continually manage our position (see later discussion of "attitude" regarding this human balancing act) with respect to innumerable guidelines and expectations the precise boundaries of which are seldom explicit. They are, rather, matters of unspoken determination, agreement and interpretation.

Mental illness is certainly a multifarious and multivalenced cluster of phenomena, but I am certain that one of its significant dimensions is, almost invariably, one's failure to maintain a kind of good standing with respect to the sometimes bewildering array of expectations faced by each of us. It is a failure to establish and maintain an attitude with respect to the world that accords well enough with others' perspectives. It is to deviate too much from innumerable norms to be able to get along in the world. I remember here that van den Berg's conclusion to the case study mentioned above includes the statement that "loneliness is the nucleus of psychiatry" (p. 105).

Fiction reading is not escape from "the" "real" world. Rather it is, at its best, the mortification of a false positivist view of the world. It is the multiple partition (multiplication of perspectives) of a world that pretends to present a unified front, and for many, a seemingly endless stream of disapproving faces. Of spoken and unspoken reproaches. Of furrowed brows and clucking tongues and shaking heads and wringing hands and well-meaning concern and certainty about the appropriate course of action "in her case," in the case of the one who simply doesn't fit in.

Fiction reading is at once salve for the painful isolation of outcast status and is also practice in the imprecise arts of interpreting and negotiating complex real-life difficulties and relationships. It is practice interpreting "what exactly is going on here," practice dealing with disagreements about what is going on here, and practice in molding one's interpretations to one's worldview so as to make the resulting world a more comfortable place to live.

I suppose that I am trying in this project generally and through my group facilitation (or interventions) specifically, to chart a moderating and politically moderate course between my own unique perspectives based on personal history on one hand, and the vast array of perspectives of which I may become aware as well as those of which I am not yet aware, nor may ever be aware. I say that this is a politically moderate approach because while I adhere to the democratic (and poststructuralist) assumptions of narrative therapy (White & Epston, 1990), I also defer to the authority of the (literary) text. The radical assumption of narrative therapy is that individuals may be encouraged to find alternative and preferable stories to the oppressive ones which no longer function to the benefit of the individual. I am in favor of this direction, but it is important to acknowledge that some of us are better storytellers than others--again, not all stories are equal. If we are going to be in the business of encouraging revisions of personal stories and narrative identities, why not learn from the experts how to write and tell the best stories we are able? Remember, from Bachelard, that it is not a matter of transmitting and imitating content. Rather it is about transmitting inspiration toward self-authorship; toward telling one's own story and the possibilities of telling it differently.

## Research Context

I strongly value both community and individual self-determination but with careful attention to the constraints imposed on self-determination by the complicated interplay between collective and individual experience. As it concerns the design of the present study, I wanted the group to be as collaborative and inclusive as possible, and I left matters of its composition, meeting times and duration, and focal texts for discussion during the first meeting of participants.

The decision to read our texts aloud stemmed primarily from my wish not to exclude potential participants based on differing levels of literacy, education, etc. Group participants readily agreed to this procedure after I assured them that the choice to read aloud would always be voluntary. I believe we experienced a greater sense of group cohesion as a result of this format than if we had read separately, and then come back together for discussion only. As it was, we were literally in it together--struggling to read or listen to the same difficult dialect or puzzle through some strange construction. This procedure also eliminated the pressure and potential resentment of a reading "assignment" to be completed prior to each session. Finally, beyond group cohesion, the read-aloud format created a profoundly different oral and aural experience than had we read silently and individually. The effects of this oral aspect of the group may bear further exploration and reflection, particularly in relation to oral storytelling traditions and the jazz/blues idiom in relation to African American communities (Murray A. , 1973). One result on which I will speculate here is that the oral format contributed to a proliferation of potential meanings and interpretations available to and for our assemblages and transformations. Yes, we all read from identical printed texts, but the



transcript-text reproduced here as Appendices include full versions of each story we read, not in their pristine printed form, but complete with all of our misreadings, mispronunciations and omissions, along with our comments and questions, all of which were fair game for the becomings that drove the action of the group sessions. This dimension of the interactions further exemplified the mutability of narrative expression. Mistakes, contradictions and uncertainties are part of the game. They are grist for the narrative identity mill, getting rolled right up into the stories being created and told.

I endeavored to be generally nondirective in facilitating the group so as to allow the generation of opinions and discussion among participants. However, I found myself talking a lot during the sessions (it seemed like even more during transcription), so I tried to ask questions rather than to make statements that would directly impose my opinions on our discussions. Of course, my questions and statements influenced the direction of discussions, but I believe that my strategy mitigated somewhat the extent to which I was perceived as an expert or authority regarding particulars of the stories we read. In many ways, of course, I was the "expert" or "authority" in the room. I was the researcher and the group's originator and facilitator as a result of extensive, advanced education. I was the person with the greatest reading experience generally and was able to familiarize myself ahead of time with the short stories we read and with their authors and the contexts of their writing. I tried to share this breadth of experience in a helpful way, so as to assist us in working through the questions that arose in our reading and discussions. But I also used this experience to try to remain faithful to the texts as authoritative "equal partners," along with participants, in the sessions.

Several instances appear in the commentary and analysis sections that show me strongly insinuated in the conversation, usually in disagreement with one or more participants about some point of discussion. These are instances that, I feel, highlight my intended approach as facilitator, particularly as an advocate for textual faithfulness, even in cases where the specific instances reported represent relative failures of my stated and intended nondirective attitude. These instances receive some specific treatment in the following commentary.

### **Setting and Dramatis Personae**

Our group convened once weekly in late summer in the free-standing, one story community mental health clinic in a small town in (mostly rural) Macon County, Alabama. We gathered around a small conference table in a room adjacent to the general clinic waiting room from which morning talk and game shows blared from the television whenever someone opened the door. Attendance was generally consistent; there were never fewer than six of us in a session. All participants reported limited previous reading experience.

Participants were eight clinic clients, six who participated in day treatment on most week days. Five were women and three men. All participants were Black or African American and they ranged in age from thirty-eight to sixty-one. Following is a brief introduction to participants who become characters in the transcript-text. With the exception of my own, the names given are pseudonyms.

Virgil - The protagonist of the group in many ways. He is outspoken and self-assured, cool, even tempered and good-humored. Much of the

commentary and analysis involves Virgil because he is by far the most vocal. Among group members, he is the leader. Virgil did not attend the final two meetings of the group. He told me later that he felt "conflict" developing in the group and he chose to remove rather than involve himself.

Connie - She and Virgil are close friends. They help and look out for one another. Generally I find this to be true of group members and Connie is frequently involved in caretaking activities with other members—anything from helping with pronunciation to getting a tissue. She is strongly religious and she appears to suffer physiological effects—stammering and tremor— which are consistent with long-term antipsychotic medication (extrapyramidal side effects, parkinsonism).

Randy - His interest in the group stems from his acting hobby—Randy has been active with the local repertory theater. He is friendly and buoyant in manner and carriage. Randy took over the unofficial role of outspoken group leader in Virgil's absence during the final two sessions.

Betty - Because of emergent family circumstances that put her in charge of caring for her young grandchild, she missed several sessions. I missed her because of her easy, inviting smile and the world wisdom she carried in her weary-seeming shoulders.

Sandra - One of the youngest members of the group, Sandra claimed to be a fairly frequent reader—more so than other group members. Sandra made infrequent but interesting and insightful comments during our sessions. She seemed occasionally bored and she fell asleep a few times.

Ben - Ben is ample and bald with a friendly but mostly serious temperament. He reported during our first session that he is currently studying at Harvard Medical School and he brought with him to most of our sessions a thick, hardbound medical dictionary or encyclopedia. He told me separately that he wants to work in mental health treatment. His productions during our sessions were measured and thoughtful.

Sophie - Sister to Daphne and her opposite in appearance, Sophie is tall, slender and slightly severe. She is quiet and sweet in demeanor and was studying for her high school equivalency exam. Sophie lives with her sister and the two are very close. Sophie missed two sessions for her GED class.

Daphne - A jolly foil for her sister, Sophie. Daphne is quick to laugh and was socially engaged in our group. She told me repeatedly that she enjoyed participating and she took her turns reading aloud, though she hardly ever commented on what she (or the others) read.

Daphne suffered with a hacking cough that frequently interrupted

the group for brief intervals. She said she was concerned she might have bronchitis.

Rod - This is me, in my role as facilitator and participant.

## **Method**

Qualitative research methods have sought to overcome the difficulties of external validity (generalizability and applicability to “actual” situations) found in quantitative, experimental research by remaining close to phenomena of research interest as they are experienced by persons involved in them. They trade so-called internal validity that comes through strict experimental controls for “real life” and experience-near accounts of phenomena.

First-person ethnographic or auto-ethnographic accounts, interview transcripts, and solicited protocols have served as data for qualitative analyses. Still, none of these data-productions are identical with the objects or phenomena of interest of their researchers. For instance, a narrative reply to interview questions about the experience of beginning psychotherapy is not the same as the experience of beginning psychotherapy. We should not assume that by analyzing such data, we are studying the phenomenon of beginning psychotherapy. Problems of representation and representability inform my thinking about method. An exploration of the interactions of readers with literary texts cannot be accomplished through protocol analysis. For example, Cohen (1994) found recognition of self-change in both affective and cognitive domains in the self-reports of therapeutic reading participants. While these are valuable findings for the therapeutic uses of literature, they are several steps removed from the action, from the dynamic thresholding activity of poetic language.

Instead, I have undertaken a critical, narrative analysis of reading group sessions, with the transcriptions of those sessions along with video recordings taken as the text for analysis. This transcript-text includes the read-aloud stories engaged as part of the group

as well as our discussions around these stories. This has allowed me to get as close as possible, I feel, to the phenomena of interest in this study.

The method relies largely on a critical perspective, elucidated in the foregoing theoretical introduction, and proceeds through analysis of imaginative processes in the language and interactions of an assemblage of readers, text, author, setting, facilitator, etc. It is a perspective that attempts to hold the point of view of literary and poetic imagination acting through its language as an active threshold for exploration and innovation.

Mark Freeman (2004) describes his narrative inquiry as a kind of literary criticism defined as "a broad interpretive understanding that seeks to unpack literary texts for their meaning and significance" (p. 70). Its specific perspective at a given moment is determined not by a set of techniques, but "by the nature of the phenomenon, what's interesting about it, and what's worth saying" (p. 71). He suggests that narrative inquiry is appropriate to data that extend "beyond the psychological plane," and that, as argued by Ricoeur, actions and texts are simultaneously connected with and separate from their actors and authors. A critical narrative analysis, then, while attending to actors and authors, trains its particular attention on the text itself. This move from individually localized subjective meanings to texts (understood, remember, as assemblages) expands the range and power of the method to the "social realities" constitutive of individual actions (p. 69). Similarly, the work of literary criticism, according to Cowan (1972), is not about a poem or a work of fiction alone. Rather, it is always also an activity of social criticism, penetrating the technique of art as well as the psyche of society (p. vii). My approach, then, is from the perspective of literary critic and taking for my text the text of

fictional stories as they interact with the "critical appropriation" (Ricoeur, 2005) of other readers.

### **Participants and procedures**

I secured permission to recruit participants for this study from the Clinical Director of a community mental health center in small city in east-central Alabama. I then approached clinical staff members at the facility to describe the project and to enlist their assistance in recruitment, as requested by Duquesne University's Human Subjects Review Board. Prior to meeting in person, I supplied each staff member with written instructions—in letter format—regarding recruitment and participation in the study (Appendix A). When we met in person, each agreed to consider clients who they deemed appropriate for the reading group and to invite those clients to participate. Shortly thereafter, each staff member provided me with names and contact information for clients who had accepted the invitation to participate. I contacted each and set up a collective first meeting. During that meeting, I again described the research project, including its origin in the Dallas "Windows" program, and read aloud along with prospective participants the Informed Consent document for the research study (Appendix B). All eight of the clients invited by clinical staff members signed consent forms and we agreed together on a time, date and duration for our first session and a regular schedule for subsequent sessions. I asked for suggestions for group members as to what we should read and none were offered. Participants agreed instead that I should choose some stories for us to begin with, understanding that participants might make suggestions for future readings though none were forthcoming.



I chose two stories by Zora Neale Hurston, "John Redding Goes to Sea" and "Escape from Pharaoh;" two stories by Ralph Ellison, "Boy on a Train" and "Flying Home;" one story by Eudora Welty, "A Worn Path," and one, "Rikki Tikki Tavi," by Rudyard Kipling. I made these choices based on my own interest and, with one exception, a local connection with the authors. I intentionally avoided selecting works with particular topics or themes because, while it is certainly not the case that all stories or fictional works are equal (that would pretty much be the end of a literary critical enterprise), I believe that I can demonstrate the workings of literary language (as theorized earlier) with any literary works. I chose works with well-known authors whose work has been anthologized and has amassed a body of criticism around it. But primarily I was excited to tell group participants that Ralph Ellison had been a student at the nearby University (and that he and I share Oklahoma City as our hometown) and that Zora Neale Hurston had spent the first part of her life in the next tiny town down the highway from where we held our sessions in the town of my current home address. Eudora Welty is, of course, a well-known Mississippi writer and Kipling is the odd man out. I chose his story from *Jungle Book* mostly for contrast. It is a children's story (though I still enjoy it greatly) peopled by animals locked in idealized life and death struggles while the hapless human beings—secondary characters—stand by and watch. I wanted to see how it would work in comparison with the others.<sup>4</sup>

Our group met for seven non-consecutive weeks (due to an intervening holiday and a personal conflict in my schedule) during the same ninety-minute period in the

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<sup>4</sup> Rikki Tikki does not figure in the analysis of this research so for the sake of interest I will report here that it did not work. It was unanimously the least favorite among group participants—a subject for brief commentary in the Discussion.

morning on the same day of the week. Sessions were video and sound recorded from a single camera positioned so as to capture the best view of most of the participants (this meant that my back was usually to the camera).

Transcripts of six group sessions (one session was not recorded due to a technical (read: "human") error)<sup>5</sup> were produced with the assistance of two undergraduate students enrolled in a research practicum course. Each research assistant signed a Confidentiality Pledges (Appendix C) that was maintained along with Informed Consent forms and video/audio recordings (burned to digital video discs), and in accordance with confidentiality provisions of the Informed Consent document, in a locked file in my home. Research assistants produced three session transcripts between them and I produced three. A transcription guide (Appendix D) and class discussions served to guide the transcription process. I reviewed and edited transcripts produced by assistants and then proceeded to analysis of all session transcripts through multiple, sequential reviews of each. Six session transcripts are presented as Appendix E.

My criteria for selecting and defining data-moments for analysis was based on two questions: first, when and where are there indicators of mental health talk (discourse) and what happens when they appear? Second, when and where are there indicators of literary talk (discourse) and what happens when they appear? Keywords, I assumed, would signal the advent of mental health talk (e.g. talk about one's diagnosis) or literary talk (e.g. mention of a character or theme). However, mental health discourse and literary or poetic discourse did not turn out to be broadly parallel elements battling against a

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<sup>5</sup> Discussion of Welty's "A Worn Path" was almost entirely contained in the lost session, so that story does not figure in the analysis. After the recording blunder, I made a redundant audio recording of each session, though subsequent video recordings were successful.

neutral linguistic background as my original question-formulation seems to suggest. Instead, our discussions so seamlessly adopted the story-world's reality that it became the backdrop for the sessions. My (implicit) assumption may have been that discussions would look like something like advanced seminars in literary studies in which students talk *about* plot devices, characterization, voice, etc, in the jargon of a literary discipline. That would have counted for "literary discourse," but what I found did not. Thus it became expedient to identify elements of participation and engagement within our fairly natural and plain-spoken discussions of the stories.<sup>6</sup> Particularly, my analysis proceeded through identification of instances of mental health talk and analysis of their operation and importance vis-à-vis in the discussion of our stories.

The following Findings section does not present an exhaustive analysis of all of the group sessions, nor even of the stories addressed in them. Rather, these results are intended to demonstrate some of the operations of poetic language in action, with particular focus on its encounters with mental health talk (discourse). The results demonstrate how productive and illuminating such a method/perspective can be, generating a significant amount of analysis from a limited selection of the overall transcript-text.

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<sup>6</sup> Determination of beginning and ending point for data-segments did rely, as I assumed, on a kind of rhizopoeitic attention to elements of the assemblages in play, and based on my earlier discussion of the work of Deleuze and Guattari. Questions in this vein include "When did the conversation turn in this direction?" "Does it interrupt some other topic?" "How do I know these things have occurred?" "What movements, accelerations or decelerations, and intensifications appear?" Attention to these questions helped me to extract segments from the transcript-text for analysis.

## Findings

### A Roadmap for the Analysis of Findings

Following is a roughly chronological interpretive commentary based on close reading of the transcript-text for two of the five stories we read and discussed during four sessions. Passages have been selected which demonstrate the attributes and activities of poetic texts-in-action according to the theoretical assumptions I have outlined in the Introduction. I have paid particular attention to passages that include productions of mental health talk, in accordance with the primary research question of this study. Story summaries precede each section of commentary to orient the reader (and initiate him or her into our assemblage). Excerpts from the transcript-text are set off from the text and italicized. In the commentary, fictional character names are italicized for clarity.

The initial commentary lays the groundwork for and is followed by specific and detailed Theoretical Analysis of three primary themes as they appear in and are elucidated by transcript data and interpretive commentary. The first of these, *Assemblage*, details the ways that participants engage in and with fictional story-worlds. This engagement is such that, as suggested by Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2005), text, readers, author, and other elements of context join together in chains or blocks of becoming. Becomings rely on the particular mimetic structure of the fictional text that produces experiences that simulate 'real life' experiences. The special kind of engagement occasioned by fictional texts leads to transformations of linguistic forms and concepts.

Transformations addressed in the next segment, *De-formations*, include analysis of the behavior of mental health talk in our sessions as it encounters the poetic story world. One demonstrable result of this encounter is a *vernacularization* of mental health

talk. Elements of clinical, usually diagnostic, language introduced in our sessions are transformed in the direction of more colloquial and 'plain-language' use. Preliminary suggestions regarding the implications of this finding are introduced here and followed up in the Discussion.

The final section, *Re-narration*, examines some of the subtle and powerful ways that, just during the conversations of our group, individual members' narrative identities shifted. These changes suggest some of the concrete ways that persons may alter their narrative identities (Ricoeur, 2005) through assemblage with fictional texts and what they may take with them into their other, various assemblages and involvements. This section acknowledges the interplay of emphasis between individual and group, assemblage and subjectivity that are at issue and in play in this research.

The Discussion section summarizes findings, elaborating on the vernacularizing shift in mental health talk and on the reading group as community-fostering practice. Finally, it points to limitations of the present study and suggests directions for future investigation and community therapeutic involvement.

### **John Redding Goes to Sea**

#### **Story summary.**

Our first story was Zora Neale Hurston's "John Redding Goes to Sea," first published in 1921. Set in the rural Florida of Hurston's childhood, the story relies on an omniscient narrator and dialog that alternates between protagonist *John's* elevated-educated diction and his parents' thick and difficultly rendered southern rural dialect. As the story begins *John* is a "queer child" given to moony curiosity and daydreams and possessed of an early and powerful desire to see the world. This put him at odds with his

homebody mother, *Matty*, and most of the residents of his rural community. *Matty* remains convinced that her son's oddities are the result of a curse placed on him by a witchy village woman exacting revenge for some past injury. Her superstitious talk is a point of contention for *John's* father, *Alf*, the only one who seems to understand his boy's longings. We learn that *Alf*, too, had as a young man determined to see the world, only to find himself caught up in the domestication of family life.

As a boy of ten, *John* frequents the bank of the St. John river running near his home. There he sits for hours setting twigs and bamboo bits—his ships he calls them—adrift in the current to "sail away down stream to Jacksonville, the sea, the wide world and John Redding wanted to follow them" (Hurstun, 2008, p. 1). Saddened to find some of his ships caught up in the weeds along the bank, *John* scolds the weeds but receives a wistful, portentous warning from his father that not only twigs and ships but sometimes people too, get caught up before they can make their way downstream.

Years pass and the young adult *John*, having availed himself of all available opportunities for schooling, has become the town educator. He still yearns to travel, but each time he breaches the topic, his mother goes into crying fits, refusing her blessing and begging *John* to stay at least a little while longer. We hear *John* boldly repeat his determination to leave and his father voice support, but at each turn, the boy remains home-tied. Years later, by now married to a simple, local girl, *Stella*, *John* again gets the travel bug and determines to join the Navy and sail away to sea. The dithering *John* believes he can keep his wife and go away too. *Stella* and *Matty* "take up arms" against *John*, with *Matty* proclaiming that should he leave, he would be dead to her—welcome not even to visit her grave.

As the story nears conclusion and the villagers prepare for the summer rainy season, the *Reddings* are visited by a *Mister Hill*, man building a new river bridge. The weather report calls for heavy storms earlier than expected. Extra hands are needed to secure the bridge. *John* agrees to go and, speaking resolutely for the first time, tells his wife and mother he is going. The women and *John's* father pass the stormy night in uneasy watchfulness, bedeviled by signs and omens of death (a screech-owl lighting on the rooftop). At first light all rush to the bridge site to find the works have been washed away in the flood. All the men but one are accounted for and, straining his eyes, *John's* father can just make out his son, floating outstretched and prone on a piece of timber, abdomen gashed from some collision in the flood. One last time, his mother tried to keep him, ordering *Alf* to retrieve her son. But this time *Alf* speaks resolutely, saying "Leave him g'wan...Ah'm happy 'cause dis mawnin' mah boy is goin' tuh sea" (Hurston, 2008, p. 16).

#### **A queer child (commentary).**

Our reading and discussion begins with the difficulty of Hurston's dialect and some self-recognition from participants:

*Ben*

*John Redding Goes to Sea. The villagers said that John Redding was a queer child. His mother thought he was too. She would shake her head sadly and observe to John's father: Alf, it's too bad our boy's got a spell on him. The father always met this lament with indifference if not impatience. Aw woman, stop that talk bout conjure. That aint so no how. All done wat john to get that foolish in him. (...)*

*Rod*

*that's kindof hard to read right there isn't [it ben?]*

*Ben*

*{nodding}*

*Sandra*  
*[it is, it is]*

*Rod*  
*[right, I mean you did great] with it, but*

*Sandra*  
*[(it is hard to read)]*

*Rod*  
*what's she doin there? Why's that hard to read right there?*

*Sandra*  
*(it's...)*

*Ben*  
*broken English*

*Rod*  
*its its broken. She's writing in a kind of dialect in a kind of broken English that's exactly right so it's kind of difficult on purpose. So what kind of dialect is that? What does that look like to you what does that seem like?*

*Connie*  
*broken down English.*

*Rod*  
*yeah.*

*Ben*  
*it's kind of southern like.*

*Rod*  
*yeah, exactly, exactly.*

*Ben*  
*it;ls like*

*Sandra*  
*its like phonics*

*Betty*  
*it's southern*

*Rod*  
*yeah, that's exactly right. So that's part of hat she's doin. So that's part of what she's doin. So it kindof looks funny and it's like, what is that word? And sometimes I [have to I'm not even sure.]*



*Sandra*  
*[mmhmm]*

*Rod*  
*but we'll just we can kind of work through it and see what we [what we get from it]*

*Betty*  
*(i catch myself) sometime talkin like that cause I was [born in the country]*

*Rod*  
*[sure], sure*

*Betty*  
*... country girl*

*Sandra*  
*(yeah, it's suthun..)*  
*[session 1, lines 360-413]*

Betty—gently, self-deprecatingly— identifies with the story through country dialect, insinuating herself into our attention and into the new text. This very much fits her style—laid back, not insisting on herself, but neither hanging back. Participants simultaneously assert their individuality (style) and participate in the assemblage of text-author-readers-setting. Betty's self-insinuation is an alliance with the story. "I am like this story because I am a country girl," she implies. Participants' productions can (must) be viewed simultaneously as individual assertions and dissolutions. The difficulty of the dialect will reappear in discussion shortly.

In the following passage, only moments removed from the first, Ben provides an accurate but concrete summary of the story's opening argument between *John's* mother and father about the spell that may or may not have been placed on him. I asked, "what's she talking about "conjugation?" Ben's reply follows:

*Ben*

*it seems as though that... the family is in some kind of cult tryin to conjure spirits and their sayin that the boy he's not in it and they's tryin to say that he's gay (.)*

*Rod*

*[well that's]*

*Ben*

*[that's what I'm gettin out of it]*

*Rod*

*okay, alright, so that "queer" makes you think that right? [Where it says] he was a queer child*

*Ben*

*[yeah]*

*Rod*

*[I think and (...) I'm glad you bro't that up. I think when she was writing this, was before that word had anything before that word had anything to do with gay=*

*Betty*

*Mmhmm*

*Rod*

*= So what does it mean? Aside from gay cause we know that meaning of it. ( ) if we describe somebody as queer, we're describing a sexual orientation. But it it aside from that, what does queer mean? Does that...*

*Ben*

*[would a wuld a...]*

*Betty*

*different*

*Connie*

*[differnt!]*

*Rod*

*[jest different(/)]*

*(other inaud.)*

*Ben*

*[homosexual]-i'm not gonna say gay cause gay is bein happy; hap gay is bein happy. That jus. That means happy. sayin uh homosexual that's what queer she's [sayin.]*

*Virgil*  
*[(a fa:ag)]*

*Rod*  
*[I don't think so] cause in the same way that gay means happy, queer just means different. Queer means weird.*

*Betty*  
*Mmhmmm*

*Rod*  
*so I don't think she's talkin about him—cause he's a kid—so he's not he's not homosexual, he's just different. So that everybody sez man the kid is different. What is it about im? That's a weird kid. Right? And his mom sed I think he's got a spell on im. Somebody put a spell on im. And his dad sez nah, he's just weird. He's just a weird kid. So I think that's where we are to begin with to begin the story. But im glad you bro't that up. Cause when we see that "queer" in there, we we got to figure out what she's talkin about [(..)]*

*Ben*  
*[I concur]*

*Rod*  
*okay. Ben, you want to keep on reading? Keep goin?*

*Ben*  
*I'll pass (somebody else)*  
*[session 1, 459-510]*

This passage demonstrates the polyvalence of poetic or language as well as a few things about the operation of the group. The controversy here focuses on use of the term "queer" to describe young *John Redding*. Ben's summary of the story's opening is straightforward and literal, concrete. He infers the family's involvement with occult activity from talk about "conjunction" and the common, current, colloquial use of "queer" as a reference to sexual orientation. The use of that term means something categorical about *John* according to this formulation. *John* is gay. My response is equally categorical in its

reaction. No, that's not what it means—*John* is not gay<sup>7</sup>. The text itself corrects this categorical interpretation later in the story:

*Betty*

*Life was simple indeed with these folk. John was the subject of much discussion among the county folks. Why didn't he teach school instead of thinking about strange people and places? Did he think himself better than the gals theresabout that he would not go a courtin any ()? He must be fixed as his mother claimed. Else where did his queer notions come from? Well he was always queer and one could not expect a man to be different from the child. They never failed to stop work at the approach of Alfred and inquire after John's health and ask when he expected to leave.*

*Rod*

*okay, one second Betty. Thank you. Just a real quick pause here. Um, so what's happened here? A lot has happened in this just two paragraphs here.*

*Betty*

*[mmhmm (he ...)]*

*Rod*

*[he's grown] up, right*

*Group*

*mmhm*

*Rod*

*he's gone to school he's grown up he's not ten years old anymore, we figure eight years have gone by—he's kindof grown. And Ben, look what's happened in here we've gotten back to, she uses that word again two times in this paragraph, "queer," and it's right after she's talkin about how he won't go courtin these [ladies.]*

*Sandra*

*[mmhmm]*

*Rod*

*All these gals like him all these girls like him but he wont go he wont go after em. So i think maybe people around the town are saying there's something wrong with [that boy]*

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<sup>7</sup> It turns out that I was wrong about the word. The Oxford English Dictionary reports that "queer" was employed as a pejorative term for "homosexual" as early as 1914. It seems likely, then, that Hurston's use of the term is intentionally ambiguous.

*Betty-[mmhmm]*  
*[session 1, lines 794-821]*

Queer means "different," yes, but that sense of specifically sexual difference and, among the "simple" country folk, sexual deviance cannot be excluded from the meanings that are in play in questions surrounding *John*. No, he's not simply "gay," but neither is he simply "not gay." All possible meanings are in play.

I also note here the formalism of Ben's response, "I concur," to my argument. The exchange, aside from its demonstration the pliability of poetic language, shows something about the power dynamics in the group. Reading the transcript, my disagreement with Ben on this point feels like a (sharp) correction, and it seems clear that he defers to my authority on the matter. He answers as a participant in a graduate seminar, perhaps at Harvard's medical school. Even though I thought of myself as a participant, I did not avoid being the expert in the room--the one with the correct answers. Here is a place where, as suggested in the earlier section on critical perspective, I insinuated myself more stringently into the discussion than I intended. In this case I was reacting to the possibility that we readers might recapitulate the particular (heteronormative) ostracism visited upon John by the villagers by reifying the categorical description ("John is gay"). In hindsight, this was an overreaction and a failure to trust the mimetic function of the text. I could have avoided such stark power-assertion had I trusted the text and its assemblage to "self-correct," as happened only a few paragraphs hence. A simple and casual mention of the nuanced evolution of the word "queer" would have been in keeping with my intended, moderate stance and would still have maintained fidelity with the text.

*John's* stick-ships caught in the weeds along the riverbank became an important image for our discussions. When we first see young *John* setting his sticks loose in the stream of the St. John, imagining them sailing on to the open ocean and becoming inconsolable when they get caught up at water's edge, Sandra notes the analogy between *John* and his stick-ships as well as the story's controlling metaphor of finding freedom flowing to the horizon.

*"he doin para/graph\, but he fillin his speech is in po::ems..bout the ships...he still imaginin things."  
[session 1, lines 645-6]*

She differentiates the declarative, literal level of storytelling from the figurative, metaphorical level. He is filling his speech with poems or he is feeling his speech poetically. Both possible meanings are allowed. *John's* felt poetic experience of becoming his ships as they flow and as they falter in the weeds is felt by Sandra as she reads. Or rather *John's* felt experience is hers. She lends her body and voice to this character so that he can have an emotional-poetic experience that is her own and that we share with her. She is clearly affected by this image, she nods and gestures and produces guttural moans and a few undecipherable words before uttering the above phrase which seemed to make its way thickly to her surface. She enacts the child's affectedness and longing.

Later on, when the grown-up *John* and his father discuss their common domestic plight, Virgil notes the grown-up status of the analogy:

*virgil  
in other words he tryin ta tell im some things are like this=*

*sandra  
=mm:hh:mm=*

*virgil*

*=you know, some things in life get hard too when you (jes cant) cant make a accurate path, carry on like some (.) o the little sticks you know got tangled goin down the stream, his life gettin tangled up now=*

...

*virgil*

*[(.life gettin harder now)] .... aint like the little boy who could just wander off an go play with the little sticks an imagin em goin downstream. now they gettin tangled up.*

*[session 1, lines 1649-1674]*

Virgil clarifies the metaphorical dimension for us. It is John's life that is getting tangled up. Not until after some discussion about John's mother (a little bit later) will Betty and then Randy make explicit the connection to their own lives.

#### **Troubling behavior (commentary).**

Our reading of this Hurston story yielded two instances of mental health talk. In the first of these, Virgil's choice of the terms "behavior" suggests a particular perspective on the story world. He has just read a passage in which *Alf* and *Matty* argue about the "travelin dust " spell she believes has been placed on her son. *Alf* chastises her superstitious talk and instead explains *John's* temperament in terms of natural male proclivities.

*Virgil*

*Matty, Alf began as he look as he took his place at the table, dontcha know our John is different from all other child's round? He (may may) (lows) he's goin to the sea with his when he gets ris. When he gets grown. (and I reckon all of them im.) The woman turned from the stove, skillet in hand, Alf, (you aint gonna tell is you). John cant help wontin to stray off cause he got a spell on im. But you otter be ashamed to be in-coura[gin] him. Aint ah done tol you forty times not tuh talk that lowlife mess in front of mah boy? Well, if th' aint no conjure in tha world, how come mitch potts been layin on the back six months and the doctor cant do (.) no good. Answer (?) that. The very night John was done born, Granny saw old witch Judy Davis creepin outta duh yawd. You know she swor the fix me fuh marryin you way from her daughter, Edna. She put a travel dust frm dust down*

*fuh mah child. That's what she done. Thus make him walk wy from me and even since he been able ta crawl, he been tryin tuh go. Matty, a man done never no travel dust tuh make it wanter hit de road. It just comes naturally fur a man tuh travel. They all want to go at some time or other, but they cant all get away. ah wunt mah John tuh go and see cuz ah want to go mahself. When he cum back ah can see them furen places wit his eyes. He cant help wanting (..) to go cuz he a man child.*

*Rod*

*should we stop there and see where we are? Again, it's easy to get caught up in this. Especially in her, in the when the mother's talkin when Matty's talkin, um its its hard to get. So they're arguin about spells again, right?*

*Virgil*

*talkin bout his son and stuff, he he dont want nobody to talk about his son cause you know feelin down about the way everbody keep talkin about him how how his behavior is goin*

*[session1, lines 695-719]*

Virgil invokes a potential exemplar of mental health talk, "behavior" to describe the boy. In doing so he highlights an important difference in characterization between fiction and mental ("behavioral") health. Virgil says that others in the town talk about the boy's behavior and, indeed, the story's first line tells us that "The Villagers said that John Redding was a queer child." But this characterization is global. John is a queer child. They do not identify and analyze particular behaviors. Now *Alf* and *Matty* do seem to engage in this kind of analysis insofar as they argue as to the *cause* of his oddity. *Matty* argues for an external, supernatural cause (conjure) and *Alf* for difference germane to his nature as a male child.

Virgil's translation of the global characterization of the problem child into "behavior," does a few things. First, it identifies an individual actor to whom specific behaviors are attributed. Behavior focuses analytical attention on specific actions divorced from their broader circumstances and from a larger community of actors--the simple folk of the Florida woods who are puzzled by the boy. "Behavior" is



individualistic. The problem is focused on *John*, and at the same time externalized from him. It, his queer behavior, is *John's* problem. Behavior is observable, as opposed to the volitional or natural attributions applied by both mother (external locus) and father (internal locus). Virgil's "behavior" implies neither of these. Instead, it suggests that the behavior should be thought of and dealt with in isolation. *Alf*, according to Virgil, is upset that people are treating his son as though he has a problem (behavior) when he, *Alf*, believes he's just being a man-child.

Next, however, Virgil moves us from a reductive focus on behavior into the richly contextual world of the created story.

*Virgil*  
*and then you gettin deeper and deeper into it like he got spells and witches and*  
*people leavin out the yard.*  
*[session 1, lines 723-4]*

It gets deeper, or, rather, "then you gettin deeper" which may also read "you *get in deeper*." Now we're in deeper than the analysis of behavior. Now we're confronted with spells and witches and memories of past intrigue. These are the material substrate of entanglement and context. The clinical language of behavioral science intentionally keeps things clean. But it's deeper now and we're in it because whether or not we believe *Matty* or *Alf*, the mother's invocation of spells and witches and the rest leaves them with us. We're in that world now.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps we are allied with *Alf* in wishing that she would leave off speaking of these things in the child's home. Clinical analysis endeavors to rescue us

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<sup>8</sup> We can't un-experience the story world once we're in it. This consideration is addressed in the discussion.

from superstition—from spells and witches. But in so doing it may also "rescue" us from the richness of the rest of the story.

**Diagnosis and emotional manipulation (commentary).**

Later, after reading that *John* has once again kowtowed to his mother's wishes, Ben invokes depression—a clear exemplar of mental health talk—to explain both *Matty's* character and *John's* reluctance to leave home.

*Rod*

*One question i had is that i know that he wanted her blessing, you know i know that he wanted her consent and that he respected his mother and that's, we can we can understand that, but if he wanted to go so badly and explore the world, why didnt he go anyway, why didnt he just go? why couldnt he just make the decision to go?*

...

*Ben*

*sometime it can cause, maybe he had it in hi mind that it can cause his parents maybe his mother some kind of severe depression or somethin like that. an maybe he dont want to see huh sick like that*  
*[session2, lines 444-494]*

In response to my question—why didn't *John* just go ahead if he was determined to leave? Ben waits, formulates his answer and delivers after an interval and a pause. And, it is not surprising that his answer is in terms of diagnosis and sickness. But Ben's use of diagnostic language here is only nominally related to an entry in his medical encyclopedia. Instead, it may reveal something about colloquial experiences and meanings of mental illness. Omens of death menace all of the characters and, of course, we know the ironic resolution in which *John* 'leaves home' dead on a raft rather than by his own volition. His mother proclaimed that if he should leave he wouldn't be welcomed

back even to her grave, which he would likely drive her early into ("*John, mah baby! You wouldn't kill yo' po' ole mamma, would you?*") These statements, particularly *Matty's* threat of her own death prime Ben's response in terms of concern for her health. For Ben, physical, bodily sickness and death becomes mental illness—they are easy analogs—in this case, severe depression (which does, after all, carry a significant mortality rate).

Ben's sense of this scene suggests a link between depression and manipulation on the part of a parent or loved one and complementary guilt on the part of a child. The text gives us a version of a family scene that must be replayed over and over in (real) families everywhere. "It would just kill your mother if you \_\_\_\_\_." It's a short step to the (clinically ratified) "Your mother is depressed! You know she can't handle your \_\_\_\_\_." Hurston's *Matty* is fragile by way of weepiness. Ben's version, by way of depression. But his attribution focuses on the son's guilt. In *John's* mind, his actions might *cause*, not *distress*, but *severe depression*, a medically ratified condition far more grave than simply "Mom's upset and weeping again." It is grave enough to make *John* stay. Subsequent discussion picks up *Matty's* emotional manipulation of her family through her weepy emotional fragility. Other participants agree that they recognize her manipulation from their own experiences with family members.

Later in the same session, Ben revises his characterization of John's mother with another technical diagnostic label applied colloquially.

*Rod*

*in that [too]...but you know one of the things i was thinkin about this week when i was thinkin about john is that .. one of the problems for him is that he seemed to be in between. he didnt make a decision to just go, which he could have, which he could have. he could ve said well, i wished, i'd like to have my mother's blessing, that would be ideal, i dont want to hurt her, but this is what i have to do for myself, and he couldve just gone on. OR HE could have made the decision to make a life for himself there, right/=*

...

*Ben*

*see it was it was like that--his mother was tryin to live live his [life]*

*Betty*

*[his life]*

*Ben*

*like sh like sh like sh::e (wanted to want) to be him, thats like bipolar, you know, cuz she she wand da portray him be him, an it got so bad that she didn even want him ta go help ta fix tha dam fo the..um when the [storm came]*

*Rod*

*[she wanted ta hold onto im right/]*

*Ben*

*[mmhhmm]*

*[session 2, 711-751]*

Is this a continuation from Ben's earlier talk about the mother's depression and John not wanting to cause her illness? Or is this different? He says that she wants to *be* him, wants to live his life. His earlier production seems to associate depression with manipulative nagging. Now, 'bipolar' means active meddling? I imagine an exchange, perhaps between a son and his mother as in, "Stop actin all bipolar an tryin tuh live my life! I'm a grown man!" Apart from this kind of colloquial use, it is hard to understand what may be meant by bipolar as applied here—perhaps a (delusional) merger in which the mother believes she is her son—but I do not believe this is what Ben intends here.

She "wanted to be him" or "wanted to want to be him?" The construction could point to some resentment on the part of the mother who, on some level, wants to go away and have adventures, or who wanted at some time to do so, or who wants even to experience those kinds of longings. In this case, what Ben calls "bipolar" is her ambivalence vis-à-vis her own desires and her overt condemnation of John's desires as a (passive-aggressive) means of participating in them.

Ben's production feels reflexive. It is as though he's reaching descriptively for something and then, struggling, comes back to his default—a psychiatric label for the family circumstance he somehow recognizes. But the conversation that follows is joined by other participants who recognize a familiar dimension of human familial relatedness—tension between overbearing / overprotective emotional attachment and secure attachment that allows the loved one (child or other) space to explore and to develop. The label, "bipolar," fades quickly in favor of the struggled-after description of events, actions and relationships that make up the problem at hand. The details of this context lead us to recognizable, experience-near terrain. Discussion could have gone in many directions and the direction it did take may or may not have matched, but certainly did not exhaust, the sense of Ben's characterization. We did not arrive at *the* answer but *an* answer that further frames questions important to understanding the story. Part of "John's problem" has to do with his relationship with an at least occasionally overbearing mother and that tension of holding close and letting loved ones go.

**Caught in the weeds (commentary).**

The long discussion following Ben's production has participants addressing the above-mentioned tension in relationships and it revisits the trope of ships getting caught up. Betty expresses frustration at being held fast by family circumstances. Both she and Randy express desire to "just go!" to fly away to freedom.

*betty {grinning; looks down, crosses arms, purses lips}  
[live] their lives. ooh, i know how hat feels [is, MH MH MH]*

*rod  
[thats a good point] thats a good point, ben.. did you say somethin betty?*

*Betty  
well i say i know how that dat feel*

Rod  
how does that how what feel?

Betty  
my life is somekinda way like that

Rod  
about between holdin on and [lettin go {gesture—holding then letting go}??]

Betty  
{gestures-open armed} lettin go, they wont let me go you know {repeats gesture more boradly}

Rod  
(hh) oohh, yeah

Betty  
letting go a they wont let me go

Rod  
mmhmm. they wanna hold on [an]

Betty  
[wanna hold on]

Rod  
keep keep you keep you doin what yer doin

Betty  
mmhhmm [wont] let me go

Randy  
[(my life) same] fill same way too

Rod  
do you?

Randy  
[(i feel wanna)] let it go

Betty  
[yeah I can] mmmm. wanna run away= {open armed gesture, palms angled upward}

Randy  
=run away, [let it go]

*Betty*  
*=[GIT away]*

*Randy*  
*[let] it go and git away from it all*

*Betty*  
*MMMM/ thas tha way I feel*

*Randy*  
*'cided i wannoo get outta {town} fo awhile*

*Rod*  
*yeah/*

*Betty*  
*just wanna GO, jes, Im FREE/ I just wanna go\*

*Rod*  
*mmhh/*

*Betty*  
*jus keep holdin me back*  
*[session 2, lines 792-868]*

Something has broken free here, even amidst this talk of feeling held back, Betty and Randy have managed, in the rhythm and the content (signification) of their dialog, to escape the weeds at river's edge. Betty joins excitedly with *John* ("ooh, I know how that feels") and joins his predicament to hers. The gestures are expansive, the pace of discourse swift as Randy joins her. The two of them carry *John* and his boats along with them as they describe the specific, personal family circumstances that they recognize in the story. The pace stalls again as *John's* stuckness has really become their (our) own.

*Rod*  
*kay, uh so we can we can kind of.. [see what it's]*

*Betty*  
*[relate to im]*

*Rod*  
*ye[ah wh]at it feels like to get stuck in the weeds [so to speak] to have our ships*  
*get tangled in the weeds at the edge of the river*

*Betty*  
*[mmhhmm] {whispers} right*

*Rod*  
*a little bit...*

*{8-second pause}*

*Randy*  
*{softly} its crazy, i never read the story (but \_\_\_) I feel like I jus need to let it go*  
*release it*

*Betty*  
*mmm*

*Randy*  
*let that let it release and let the fillins come out.*

*Betty*  
*we cant. mah fililns wont come out*

*Randy*  
*somehow we're gonna have to break that mold*

*Betty*  
*it be anger when i bring it out and i dont like that so i just keep it within me.. and i*  
*(kindof boil with anger, come im full of anger*

*{increasingly loud mechanical noise from outside the window during this talking*  
*about anger...}*

*Rod*  
*that can be kindof scary=*

*Betty*  
*=yeah i be (..) angry, so much been held in .. i jus don know how to let it go. let it*  
*out. can't let it go.*  
*[session 2, lines 962-1007]*

Randy's prescription for the problem here described—his own, Betty's, and John's—namely *release*, is preceded and occasioned by a sequence of dialog which enabled participants to practice exactly that. No, the problems aren't resolved, but they



are "out there" flowing with the movement of the group rather than, as Betty puts it, stuck inside. Randy's statement prompts Betty to deepen her statement of the predicament. Not only does she recognize that stuck feeling, but also that her feelings, her anger, are stuck inside. Again, there is no ultimate resolution to this problem in this sequence, but to some small extent, she does "get it out" even as she explains her frustration at not being to get it out. The (original) transcriber's note about the increasingly loud mechanical noise outside the window provides a note of environmental isomorphism or synchronicity with the content of the discussion. Participants (and transcribers) are distracted by the sound of the heavy machine crescendo that urges Betty's usually hushed tones louder and louder until she is practically shouting about getting her anger out. A serendipitous catharsis, this. Accident? Coincidence? Fine. But the street construction joined our assemblage for that moment. Everything counts. The group discussed anger briefly after that. A few suggestions were offered. And soon after, our discussion of "John Redding" ended.

## "Flying Home"

### Story summary.

We spent the better part of three sessions working with Ralph Ellison's short story, *Flying Home*. Written in 1944, Ellison's story tells of a young, northern Black man in advanced pilot training with the group that would come to be known as the Tuskegee Airmen. The young pilot, *Todd*, finds himself in a frustrating holding pattern as Black pilots have not yet been approved for overseas combat. While flying yet another solo training mission over Macon County, Alabama, *Todd's* plane collides with a buzzard, and spins to crash landing in a field. *Todd* wakes on the ground blinded with the Alabama sun and with the pain of a badly broken ankle. There he is confronted with two Black faces belonging to *Jefferson*, the old sharecropper, and his young son (or grandson), *Teddy*. Startled by the spectacle of the crash, *Jefferson's* concern is initially with *Todd's* safety and comfort while *Todd's* thoughts—even while he struggles to orient himself—turn to the implications of the incident for his training; the "one important thing in the world" was to return his plane to the airfield "before his [White] officers were displeased" (p.148). Unable to stand, and loathe to endure the humiliation of "riding an ox through the town, past streets full of white faces, down the concrete runways of the airfield," he is resigned to wait with his plane while *Teddy* goes for help (p.149-50).

The two, now left alone, present Ellison the opportunity for tense juxtaposition regarding the status of Blacks in the America of his time. *Todd's* contempt for what he sees as an ignorant old peasant builds as *Jefferson's* questions and (mocking?) stories threaten the younger man's fragile sense of himself. Even while heaping derision on the old man, *Todd* admits that the now crumpled vessel represents his only dignity. He is

naked before the airplane that has become "like the abandoned shell of a locust...Not a machine, a suit of clothes you wear" (p.151). *Jefferson's* childlike curiosities about the plane and his inquiries about *Todd's* training highlight the impossible tension that has caught the young pilot "between ignorant black men and condescending whites" (p.152). The old man's stories—one of having seen buzzards or "jimcrows," as *Teddy* calls them, eating the innards of a dead horse and coming up greasy as "if they'd been eating barbeque," and another, a 'tall tale' of his expulsion from heaven after repeatedly running afoul of St. Peter's attempts to curtail his (and other Black angels') flying prowess—signify *Jefferson's* symbolic representation of the Black "folk," still rooted to the enslaving ground of the American South (Lucy, 2007). *Jefferson* tells the stories ostensibly to pass the time and to keep *Todd's* mind from his pain while they wait. But *Todd* in his psychic turmoil sees only himself in the image of "buzzards feeding on a dead horse" and in *Jefferson's* clip-winged heavenly jester plummeting back to the earth of Macon County and he, *Todd*, is infuriated at this mockery. The wise and gentle old trickster becomes a bedeviling clown in *Todd's* increasingly agitated perception. *Todd* rails at the incredulous old man to "Go away. Go tell your tales to the white folks" (p.161).

Counterpoised with *Jefferson's* ribald tales are two italicized memories from *Todd's* childhood. The first, a long account of the origin of his boyhood obsession with airplanes, plays on the child-*Todd's* confusion of a toy plane encountered at a fair with the first real airplane he would see flying over his house some months later. "Some little white boy's plane's done flew away and all I got to do is stretch out my hands and it'll be mine!" (p.164). The child's disappointment had been bitter and his mother had abused

him for his foolishness. Though the fall resulting from his attempt to snatch the high-flying airplane resulted in no permanent injury, the boy was bedridden with a fever for a week during which he dreamed restlessly of the airplane and of his grandmother's words: "young man, Yo arm's too short to box with God..." (p.166). We are unsure whether his fever pre-existed this episode. We are also unsure what kind of error he has made—perceptual? Logical? Appropriate to his age or not? His mother's concern, voiced to the boy's doctor, over whether or not there was anything wrong with his mind lingers with the reader, carried into the present of the plane crash and the grown man's struggles to situate himself in the reality of his circumstance.

The second of *Todd's* memories—this one not italicized in Ellison's text—has the boy on the street with his mother hurrying him from where he lingers to watch the silver cross of an airplane float across the sky. There was a burst, and "the air filled with a flurry of white pinwheeling cards that caught in the wind and scattered over the rooftops and into the gutters" and that warned "Niggers Stay from the Polls," and that carried the image of the "eyeless sockets of a white hood" (p.169). The technological marvel of the boy's fascination cruelly transformed into a devilish tool for racial violence and intimidation. The memory suggests that young *Todd's* fascination with airplanes and flying was from the beginning inextricable from threats associated with racial prejudice.

When help finally reaches *Todd* in the field, his worst fears are realized. *Graves*, the murderous white man who owns the field into which the plane has crashed, arrives with *Teddy* and two orderlies from the local insane asylum (who had earlier been searching for *Graves'* deranged and murderous cousin). *Graves* orders that the young flyer be straight-jacketed for having the audacity to train as a pilot. That, and because

"the niggah brain ain't built right for high altitudes..." (p.171). *Graves'* verbal and physical abuse seemed to break something loose in *Todd* who seems to explode in "blasts of hot, hysterical laughter." In the end, *Jefferson* convinces *Graves* to let him and *Teddy* escort *Todd* back to his airbase. "Lifted out of his isolation, back into the world of men," *Todd* joins in communion with his erstwhile tormentor. The story's final image is of one of *Teddy's* jimcrows silhouetted against the horizon, transmuted in flight to a glorious "bird of flaming gold" (p.173).

The story is complex, compelling and difficult—becoming downright brutal toward the end. Ellison ventures past the well-known front story of the difficulties encountered by black pilot trainees—resistance from bigoted elements of white America, both in the public and within the military establishment—to an imaginative interrogation of the internal (?) struggles further complicating circumstances for one pilot. It is undoubtedly a story about race—about evolving personal and collective racial identities, about prejudice and bigotry and the struggle to overcome these.

We might say that is a profoundly psychological (even psychoanalytic) story, with its treatment of internal struggles, motivations and conflicts, paranoias and neuroticisms. But its work is accomplished through rich symbols, polyvalences and ironies. Fragmented storytelling with its flashback memories and frame stories mirror the pilot's fractured self-identity and serve as commentary on the modern human condition. It is also a story about thresholds of personal and collective importance, and the tensions between the promises and illusions of modernity and the terrors of premodern American life.

### **The judgments of others (commentary).**

The longest and most complex of the stories we read, it is not surprising that this was the story on which we spent the most time. With the story's multiple flashbacks and internal dialog competing with spoken dialog, a lot of discussion focused on clarifying the plot. Also, from the outset, *Todd's* agitation presents a problem for us. Just why is he so agitated and why does he behave as he does toward old *Jefferson*? Race and mental health figure prominently in the story and so in our discussions. Revisiting the transcripts after the conclusion of the group, it appears that I am generally more interested in addressing the racial dimensions of the story than is the group as a whole. Specifically, one participant, Virgil, seems to repeatedly minimize and deny the importance of race in the story. At times the transcripts reveal conflict between the two of us about whether or not race is important. Attributions regarding mental health are entangled with race and social status in the transcript, so I have included in this analysis discussions of race as well instances of mental health talk. In the following passage, Ben provides a serviceable synopsis of the early part of the story and he adds his commentary on race.

*Ben*

*The guy I think I don't know if he's Tuskegee Airmen or what uh...but he's trying uh to fly...Pass an exam so he could go fly into uh...the war so they can uh...be in the war anyway he crashed his plane and this older guy and this young::: young boy they found him and his ankle was broke and he was kinda embarrassed that he crashed the plane. And he was also...I think he was kinda embarrassed by his race for the some reason. I don't::: I don't know why would somebody be embarrassed by their race because race to me is just...we all the same color underneath the skin we just...its only skin and he sent the little boy back into::: into town back to the airfield to tell that he crashed the plane and the older guy was there telling him stories he was trying to comfort him but he was kinda embarrassed about the older guy, and about his race. I don't::: I don't understand why::: why was he embarrassed about his race.  
[session 3, lines 437-447]*

Ben identifies race as a central issue for *Todd* and quickly declaims its importance for him personally. He de-identifies himself with the character while clarifying his own identifying characteristics either for his own sake or for the sake of fellow participants. "This guy *Todd*," Ben seems to say, "is embarrassed by his race but I am not like that. Race doesn't matter to me because it's only skin deep." There is little reaction from other participants to Ben's comment. He appears to speak directly to me and it may be that he is particularly interested in letting me, the group facilitator and the only White person in the room, know that race is not an issue for him. His choice of "embarrassed" may be instructive as to the general hesitance among group members to talk about race. It is somehow embarrassing to discuss; difficult to broach, a forbidden topic of conversation. Ben is not too embarrassed to broach it here, but he does so with an apologetic wince.

My own hesitance around this conversation is soon after revealed in a brief passage focused on the historical context around race in the story.

*Rod*

*well this is in nineteen yeah nineteen forty-four so uh right around the time of World War II uh but uh still a while ago o how are things different would you say..if at all*

*Connie*

*blacks had to be in one section and (white people was doing they thing) in another section*

*Rod*

*ok, so segrega[tion]=*

*Connie*

*=[segregation], right*

*Rod*

*was definitely.. uh. in effect. where do you think the pilot was from maybe what we should do is start again reading and then get to where we came from or get to where we stopped last time would that be smart...*

*[session3, lines 532-538]*

The interaction is sharper, starker, in text than in the video/audio recording. Here, it appears to be a correction by me, as the group facilitator, of Connie's production. It sounds like "ok, so what you mean is segregation." This labeling serves to capture context and to distill complexity into a single word. It jargonizes segregation rather than allowing the context-conversation to unfold. It seems as though I am hurrying through this topic, rushing toward an answer—"It's segregation. Let's move on." This seems to work against the opening, divergent mode of fiction reading that is an important topic of this research. I seem to be starting with some assumptions about racism, segregation, the history of the South, etc., rather than allowing the meanings of these things to unfold within our sessions, rather than allowing Connie to teach me. Her construction carries the sense of inequality that my one word does not. Blacks, she says, had to be in one section while the whites were doing their thing elsewhere. The races were not simply "segregated," rather blacks were alienated and denied opportunities to do their thing that were easily afforded and even taken for granted by Whites. "Segregation" is euphemistic. I then quickly move to another topic, asking the group about *Todd's* Northern origins.

Shortly thereafter, Virgil describes *Todd's* predicament in terms of achievement and failure, noting the importance of others' estimation, and he does acknowledge the role of race in *Todd's* concern.

*Rod*

*So what's this what's this humiliation that he's talking about? He's imagining what?*

*Virgil*

*what is all about (tha concep i believe he's tryin uh tuh use is) he wanna achieve something in life and not be a failure by wrecking that plane gonna put or put a minimize thinking thinkin of him you know people might say you not good enough to fly*



*Rod*  
*right*

*Virgil*  
*and then you know [he] just because it was an accident that people sometimes*  
*people don't look at it that way*

...

*Rod*  
*instead what's he afraid people might say about him instead?*

*Virgil*  
*that::: that I didn't read the part but I I jus I jus think that uh he gone be humili:::*  
*humiliated you know tuh that he's black*

*Rod*  
*right*

*Virgil*  
*An at that day and time you don't get but a couple of chances*

*Rod*  
*right right I think that's a good that's exactly the point is that he thinks I got one*  
*shot here*  
*[session3, lines 653-687]*

The crash, generously confirmed as an accident (in the sense that it could have happened to anyone) in Virgil's production, has imperiled *Todd's* pilot-training ambition, the only possibly meaningful achievement to him. Virgil acknowledges that *Todd's* success or failure will depend not only on what happened (an accident), but on others' judgments of him. Others may not look at it in the same way. And though he doesn't give much detail, Virgil allows that *Todd's* blackness has something to do with his fear of humiliation, with how those nameless others might look at things differently. Specifically, his race might mean that he doesn't get the benefit of the doubt or multiple "chances."

This is the first of numerous mentions Virgil will make of second chances in reference to *Todd's* situation. It is a point of disagreement between him and me, as evidenced in the last lines of this excerpt. Virgil says "you don't get but a couple of

chances," and I agree, but change the number of chances: "he thinks 'I got one shot here'." In the next passage, Virgil repeats this theme of second chances, suggesting that *Todd's* concerns are exaggerated. Things aren't as bad as he assumes. He elaborates with a metaphor.

*Virgil*

*and he wanted to become a pilot so bad and he jus you know he fantasized about::: about all the little bad details but he never know... in the story we'll see but you never know how it might come out. They might just say you know you get a second chance or whatever*

*Rod*

*yea I::: I think your right but I think you've got it but I think you got it but that's what he's concerned about right cause were getting a look sort of inside his head so to speak you know what I mean uh. Getting to know what he's thinking what he's worrying about... Because what do you have to be to be a pilot? How would you describe a pilot?*

*Virgil*

*you have to be you have to be sharp*

*Rod*

*you gotta be sharp right?*

*Virgil*

*because it's just like [barry] borrowing your parents car and you wreck it*

*Rod*

*(laughing)*

*Virgil*

*you'll never borrow it again for a while or maybe you'll never borrow it again until you get your own*

*Rod*

*yea and they say well well you weren't you weren't old enough to drive you weren't mature enough to drive or some'mm [like that]*

*Virgil*

*[some'mm] lak that  
[session3, lines 696-731]*

Virgil's comparison of *Todd's* circumstance to adolescent hijinx serves to minimize the importance of the incident. It also infantilizes the pilot and subordinates him to the parent-like authority of his (White) officers—the "others" ("they") who will adjudicate his ambition. Virgil separates himself from *Todd's* pessimism, saying "you don't know how it will turn out" and he reaffirms a trusting and generous worldview by suggesting that there will always be a second chance. Virgil's metaphor suggests that there are authoritative parents out there who provide an umbrella of security for the child until he is grown (and can get his own car, airplane, ambition/achievement).

While Virgil would go on to acknowledge a (rather abstracted) role for racism in the circumstances surrounding the story, other participants were more vocal regarding the specific impact of race (racism) on the action of the story and on the relationship between *Todd* and *Jefferson*. In the following passage, Connie's comments on *Todd's* attitude toward *Jefferson* imply difficult and conflicted racial attitudes on the part of the young pilot.

*Rod*

*And he says humiliation was when you could never be simply yourself when you were always a part of this black old ignorant man. What's his attitude about that old man?*

*Connie*

*(he a little) he won't be able to accomplish:::accomplish thangs in life. Um he felt that (because) of his color he won't be able to do things. Um... white people probly could.*

*Rod*

*yea and what if he what if he gets carried to town on an ox cart uh driven by this old as he called him ignorant old you know farmer man and he's gonna be looked at as*

*Betty*

*Failure=*

Connie  
=failure

...

Rod

*feeling the lump form in his throat that was always there when he thought of flight. It's crouched there, he thought, like the abandoned shell of locust. I'm naked without it. Not a machine, a suit of clothes you wear. And with a sudden embarrassment and wonder he whispered, "It's the only dignity I have..." What's he:::he refers to the {what} he says..."with all I've learned I'm dependent on this peasants sense of time and space". What does that make you think of?*

Connie

*that um he feel like he may not accomplish what he started out to do  
[session3, lines 830-877]*

She seems to say that, in *Jefferson's* presence, *Todd* questions his own abilities because of his race. Stripped of his mechanical "suit of clothes," the young man has come face to face with his own self-loathing, his own racial prejudice. The buzzard that "knocked [him] back a hundred years" dropped him squarely into his worst fear and hatred: nothing now separates him from the old "peasant." Save for his flight suit and his dramatic entry on the scene, he could have been mistaken for one of them, a peasant himself. In his flight suit, however, he finds himself in the worst possible in-between position. An enigma to the Black sharecroppers and a pariah to dangerous southern Whites like *Graves*, his seems a permanent and irreconcilable alienation. *Jefferson's* questions, his stories, his very image, sap *Todd's* confidence and courage.

*Todd's* reaction to this confrontation with a Blackness still rooted to the "common ground" of southern enslavement (Lucy, 2007) is reactionary and defensive. His attacks on *Jefferson* spurred sharp criticism from the group, particularly from Virgil, who explicitly and spontaneously links the *Todd's* attacks to mental health diagnosis and stigmatization.

*Rod*

*and he's comparing himself a little bit with the old man and referring to the old man as a peasant a peasant is what?*

*Connie*

*somebody you don't want to be around*

*Virgil*

*a bum uhm, a beggar*

*Rod*

*kinda like kinda like a beggar or a slave even a little bit someone who works the (land) like the lowest class right? It takes us back to a time of kings and queens right and peasants were the lowest*

*Connie*

*of the lowest*

*Rod*

*of the lowest of the lowest people who worked and who were extremely poor and relied on the kindness of the king right or of the royalty or whatever. So he refers to this old man as a peasant. Does he does he feel like he's better than=*

*Connie*

*=yes*

*Rod*

*=than that old man? that's what it seems like*

*Virgil*

*What it seems to me like it's:::it's intentionally uh he's:::he's like up on himself to too much. like he he better than everybody cause he flies a plane*

*Rod*

*ok*

*Virgil*

*the man don't meet his standards cause he work... everybody have to be labeled with a job which is a trash man all the way to the president somebody gotta do it some type of job*

*Rod*

*right*

*Virgil*

*so you know like, people categorize you today because if you have a mental illness=*

Rod  
=mmhmm=

Virgil  
=to::to::to regular people, peoples wif a mental illness is BUms all the way from crack heads .. everybody get la'beled with a LAbel all the way to the day (to tuhday?). And he labeled this man right here as being a peasant ..somebody that's worthless and this man actually giving him a lending hand and trying to help him off a a mission he wasn't able ta that he could:::couldn't complete cause HE crashed the plane

Rod  
right

Virgil  
and then you know why by him crashing the plane the man has offered his help cause he was hurt

Rod  
right

Virgil  
see what I'm saying/

Rod  
yea I:::I do sounds like you're not too crazy about the way he's about Todd's attitude, [right]

Virgil  
[he got a] he got a real he got a real bad attitude

Rod  
you said he's kinda egotistical he's up on himself

Virgil  
right

Rod  
now this is kinda tough at this point cause, I mean I see whatcha mean and I agree with you.. Does Todd...now think about it remember back to the time here...Does Todd have a right to be proud of what he's accomplished? And what he's trying to do

Virgil  
[right]

Group (chorus)  
[right, yes]

*Virgil*  
*but at the same time a stu::: a a stumbling block came in his path [by wrecking]*  
*the plane*

*Rod*  
*[ye::ah] right*

*Virgil*  
*so now he's thinking a::all crazy and wild; what they go[ne thi]nk and say*

*Rod*  
*[mmhm] right*

*Virgil*  
*he said was it a white man you going to get tuh help im ah ah up on the ox cart so*  
*whoever you know ifh if he fail himself you got to think about how to accomp re-*  
*accomplish again=*

*Rod*  
*=mm-m[hm]*

*Virgil*  
*[but] he going about it the wrong way he:::he downing people already*  
*[session3, lines 879-992]*

The young, educated, northern and upwardly mobile *Todd* drew ire from *Virgil* for being "up on himself," feeling better than others just because he flies a plane. *Todd* silently, mentally reviles *Jefferson*, totalizing the old man with the pejorative "peasant." *Virgil's* attack is on *Todd's* actions and character, but also in defense of *Jefferson* and all who find themselves on the losing (one-down) end of labeling and prejudice based on social status. *Virgil* aligns himself with *Jefferson* and against the young pilot. He then makes an important analogy to rampant stigmatization associated with mental illness. This comparison brings the story-circumstance home, makes it personal, for *Virgil* and, it seemed, for all the participants.

Virgil's productions in this passage are dense enough to warrant closer analysis. He identifies *Todd's* primary flaw as pride. The young pilot is "up on himself" because he flies planes.

*Virgil*  
*the man don't meet his standards cause he work... everybody have to labeled with a job which is a trash man all the way to the president somebody gotta do it some type of job*

Virgil's criticism of *Todd* expands to include the judgments and standards of haughty others and the ubiquity of social status (read: class) labeling. Virgil offers an ecological critique of such labeling; after all, everybody has a role to play. We need trash men as much as we need presidents. We should be grateful for their willingness to perform undesirable jobs or occupy undesirable stations rather than reviling them. A longstanding incommensurability of perspective between (so called) working people and (so called) educated people is reprised in the story text and highlighted in Virgil's statement. *Todd* thinks but does not say "peasant" while *Jefferson* jeers the young man with an innocent-seeming question: "how come you want to fly way up there in the air?" (p.153).

As Virgil continues, "*labeling*" changes in the next line to "*categorization*:"

*Virgil*  
*so you know like, people catergorlize you today because if you have a mental illness=*

The tone of the slight sharpens subtly with this shift. Everybody *gets labeled* according to station but *people categorize you* if you have mental illness. Labeling happens passively. Standards for propriety and station (class) are built into our socialization process. Categorization, however, carries an active voice in Virgil's statement along with more active connotation and etymology. People are labeled according to pre-existing



categories. Who designates the categories? The term's Greek root carries the sense of proclamation and accusation, of predication and even of prediction. The categorizer arbitrates and publicly proclaims the qualities that are assigned to a subject. Virgil's use of both terms (label and categorize) invokes a double- or multiple-stigmatization of mental illness. If you have a mental illness then you have been designated according to a medical nosology (catalog) of illness that attaches certain attributes to you and partially delimits your subjectivity (subjecthood). Furthermore, psychiatric categorization (diagnosis) carries specific predictions (prognoses) for future behaviors and symptoms likely to delimit characterizations of your future subjecthood (personhood, identity). This is the preliminary level of stigmatization. Having been assigned to one or another category of mental illness (read: "abnormality"), you become subject to another level of labeling subsequent to and simultaneous to the first. [Self-identification changes to include one's diagnosis. Whatever else I am, I am also now a (schizophrenic, manic depressive, etc.).<sup>9</sup> Other people, *regular people* (who have the default label, "normal"), now have a (medically ratified) basis on which to alter (downgrade) their judgments and their labels.

*Virgil*

*=to::to::to regular people then, peoples (wif) a mental illness is BUms all the way from crack heads .. everybody get la'beled with a Label all the way to the day (to tuhday?). And he labeled this man right here as being a peasant ..somebody that's worthless and this man actually giving him a lending hand and trying to help him off a a mission he wasn't able ta that he could:::couldn't complete cause HE crashed the plane*

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<sup>9</sup> proliferating numbers of diagnostic categories, comorbidities, and differential diagnostic criteria have increased general confusion: "I am a schizoaffective disorder, bipolar type??"

Mentally ill persons are on a par with "crack heads," an updated analog for peasant, a colloquial lowest of the low. Like *Jefferson* in *Todd's* eyes, so are people with mental illness in the eyes of the world. Virgil's construction here—*bums all the way to crackheads*—complements his earlier bottom to top hierarchy: "*trash man all the way to the president*," but this time, with the addition of the mental illness category, one's potential for movement is restricted to the horizontal plane--the lowest of the low.

Finally in this passage Virgil notes the compounded unfairness of *Todd's* insult. Not only is his contumely unfounded (after all, every job is worthwhile), but it is also aimed at the only person in the world who can and has helped him in his current predicament. *Todd* is so blinded by his social and racial prejudice that he considers as "worthless" the only person who is literally of use to him. The preceding passages reveal rhetorical and semantic alignment between Virgil and *Jefferson*. The tacit agreement of other group members suggests that Virgil speaks largely for the group. As a rule, we are allied with *Jefferson* <sup>10</sup>

In the last few lines of the excerpt under consideration, Virgil agrees with my suggestion that *Todd* has reason for pride based on his accomplishments so far. However, says Virgil, *Todd's reaction* to the setback—"stumbling block"—of the plane crash is the appropriate basis for our judgment of him. Rather than thinking about how to move on from here, he seems to have spun off of his axis. He is "*thinkin all crazy and wild*" about *what they're gonna think and say, about what the white man's gonna do*. Instead of considering how best to move forward—how to *re-accomplish* his goals—*Todd* has

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<sup>10</sup> Here, as elsewhere I rely on Sarbin's (2004) contention that for the engaged reader of fiction, imagining entails belief as the default state of affairs. Story elements and arguments about them are given credibility unless effort is made to disbelieve (p. 18).

turned negative energies outward. At the first experience of hardship, Virgil intimates, the young man has abandoned hope, has turned to *downing* others instead of righting his own ship. Notice, here too, the allusion to second chances in Virgil's 'try, try again' message. He, like *Jefferson*, fails to understand what *Todd* is making such a fuss about.

**Something wrong with his mind (commentary).**

The connection Virgil has made between mental health and labeling / prejudice gains a complicating complicity from the story-text itself when *Todd's* mother questions the boy's mental health. Having failed to pluck the mistaken-for-a-toy *real* airplane from the sky and having fallen to earth in a sobbing heap, the child is examined by a physician on house call. Asked "if anything was wrong with [*Todd's*] mind," the doctor explains to the boy's mother that he had had a fever for several hours. The boy is confined to bed for a week during which time he continually sees the plane just out of his reach and hears his grandmother's admonition: "young man, yo arm's too short to box with God" (Ellison, 1996, p. 166). Though the doctor's explanation is in terms of physical illness—a fever—group members seem to key on the mother's question regarding *Todd's* mind:

*Virgil*  
*[he seen tha doctuh]*

*Rod*  
*...he was embarrassed, his mothuh sed, boy you you a fool.*

*Virgil*  
*his mother asks was something wrong with his head he had a fever for two days, [but]...*

*Rod*  
*[ri::ight]*

*Virgil*  
*[he coulda/] hadda a metal/ illness/!*

*Rod*

*aaayea:::yea who knows... what do you mean by that? What do you think?*

*Virgil*

*I::I'm saying could have been .. bi ..coulda been mana depressed bipolar ; jes obsessed (teligent,) you [know]*

*Rod*

*Hmm mmhmm.. u:um=*

*Virgil*

*=had a mental illness {quickly and quietly}, I'm just sayin for example, that's not rilly=*

*Rod*

*=yeah, [right]*

*Virgil*

*[but] that's not really that's not really it but I'm saying the doctor came in and said he had a fever the mother asked wu:uz anything was wrong with his [head]*

*Rod*

*[wrong] with his mind, yea [right]*

*Virgil*

*[ri:ight](..)*

*[session 3, lines 2491-2525]*

Notice that Virgil's commentary shifts from "*mind*" (in the story text) to "*head*," but remains within the sphere of the mental rather than the physical. He does not suggest a skull injury, rather that *Todd* may not be 'right in the head'. The shift in terminology serves to paradoxically (ironically) reinforce one subtlety of the story we're told. His mother's concern is not about injuries sustained in her son's fall. Hers is a formless dread about his capacity to get along in the world. Is he going to be alright? To be able to take care of himself. Her unease contributes to our sense that something is not right with *Todd*. She receives, however patiently it is delivered, an instrumental answer from the doctor. The boy had a fever. He should rest. We cannot say whether this explanation assuaged her fears. Nor can we feel certain that the precipitating episode is satisfactorily

explained by this ambiguous diagnosis. It puts one in mind of references to 'brain fever' in Victorian-era fiction in which the disease was frequently contracted as a result of intense preoccupation, emotional shock or abject disappointment. Though the term today refers to encephalitis of unknown origin and is scarce in medical use, into the twentieth century, brain fever was a scientifically acknowledged medical condition unique in that "it assigns emotional causes to a disease which then follows a prescribed physiological course like that of other recognized diseases" (Peterson, 1976, p. 464). The doctor's explanation, then, does little to un muddy our question about *Todd*. The Victorian reference (intentional or unintentional as it may be) does contribute to a sense of precious fragility in the constitution of the boy. It also reverses the current medical psychiatric tendency to posit physical (biological) etiologies for emotional disorders. The signs are reversed, but in both cases, a mind/body split is reified by proposal of a linear causal chain between them. Mind affects body *or* body affects mind.

Virgil acknowledges the doctor's diagnosis, but verges toward the mother's suggestion that something is wrong with the boy's mind (rather than with his brain). Restating the facts of the case (*he had a fever for two days [sic] and his mother thinks there's something wrong with his head*), it suddenly occurs to Virgil that "*he coulda had a mental illness.*" Maybe that's what his mother had in mind. But what is the nature of this mental problem? Pressed, Virgil answers tentatively (*I'm jus sayin it coulda been...*) with a curious list of diagnostic and nondiagnostic terms. First comes manic depressed bipolar, the construction of which follows a tendency in colloquial (nonprofessional) mental health talk to employ "bipolar," not as a replacement for the older diagnostic term, "manic depression," but as a modifier indicating severity or chronicity. Hence "not just

manic depressed, but *bipolar* manic depressed" (which means really, really crazy). Next, Virgil adds, he's '*just obsessed*' and finally, cryptically, "*telligent*." The first term indicates (severe) clinical (psychiatric) distress—both iterations of the disease (manic depression and bipolar disorder) have been invented (coined) by medial (psychiatric science). The second term occupies a gray area between medical and popular use. It has been appropriated by medicine (psychiatry), as in Obsessive-Compulsive Anxiety Disorder<sup>11</sup>, but its birth is vernacular. This characteristic gives it a different status among mental health terms, I think. It is less stridently categorizing and othering, perhaps. Here, "obsessed" both is and is not mental health talk. Anyone is likely to agree with the casual assessment that young *Todd* is obsessed with airplanes. At the same time, a clinician might use the term diagnostically to describe him. He is "obsessed" colloquially and he may be "obsessed" clinically. Virgil's modifier, "just," for obsessed may nudge his meaning in the direction of the colloquial or it might refer to the fact that he is nothing but obsessed with airplanes.

The third term of Virgil's statement, "*telligent*," may be illuminated by his later statement relating intelligence and mental illness:

*Virgil*  
*[most] people in this world (that are advanced) is mostly manic depressed bipolar people on high.. advancement in tha mind. He wuz, you gotta be you know you gotta be more intelligent than anything ta fly a plane cuz you got ta have accurate skills and all, elevation of tha mind, tha's why i knew that he wus either goin manic a little bit over to the insanity part when he crashed that plane, cu he wahavin too many delusional=*  
*[session 4, lines 2099-2104]*

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<sup>11</sup> a diagnosis popularized by recent reality television programs about hoarding behavior

Virgil seems to suggest here that intelligence and mental illness are two sides of a coin. Virgil's language is continuous with his general critique of *Todd's* behavior toward *Jefferson*. People with "*high advancement*" and "*elevation*" of the mind are likely to be "up on" themselves and they might resort to "downing" other people if they ever stumble and fall back to earth.

Virgil's tentative inclusion of the partial "*telligent*" in his litany of diagnostic referring to young *Todd* is an astute, non-medical comment on *Todd's* predicament. It refers back to the mind-body (brain) dilemma contained in the doctor's "fever" diagnosis as well as the location of the problem in the head and mind alternatively. In his childhood, *Todd's* curiosity (obsession) had been total—encompassing body and mind—so much so that he was bedridden with fever. But something happened in the intervening years, we must presume, that drew the young man's desires further and further into the ethers, leaving behind the "small world" of his humble childhood and untethering him from any ground. By the time we meet *Todd*, he has withdrawn into prideful reliance on the elevation of his own mind, learning, and the dubious promise of bourgeois mobility and of modern technology. These have, he believes, enabled him to leave behind the dross of his personal and ancestral past. In his visual encounter with a kite-flying child immediately before the crash, his exuberance is revived, but he fails to heed the warning of the string that connects that child's flight dreams to solid ground. Then comes that buzzard's sanguine interruption to *Todd's* disembodied, angelic climb. Suddenly downed to earth, he is confronted with his ancient, abandoned embodiment symbolized by the weird prehistoric shadows cast by oxen and by *Jefferson's* gnarled fingers. It is his intelligence, or rather his over valuation of intellect that leads to *Todd's* downfall. The

movement of Virgil's statement is from technical diagnostic language (bipolar), through the dual-use colloquial and clinical (obsession), to a one-word (partial word) suggesting a plainspoken commentary not only on *Todd's* character and predicament, but also on the symbolic arc of the story-myth.

In the remainder of the previous passage, Virgil further distances himself from his diagnosis, saying "*that's not really it.*" He has merely been giving examples of the mother's concern voiced over *Todd's* mind. In the continuation, however, the group appears to have settled on the middle ground of obsession.

*Rod*

*...So what did she think was wrong with his mind? You know, that's [what I'm tryin ta]*

*Ben*

*[he have obsession..with planes airplanes]*

*Betty*

*[obsessed]*

*Rod*

*[ok, he wuz obsessed, right ] yea that's right but then she/ she felt like he should have known that the plane was really you know it was really flying way up high in the sky and he wouldn't been able to reach it or something*

*Kim*

*[ri:ight]*

*Betty*

*he wuz fantasizin so much about it*

*Rod*

*right^ like he was SO [obsessed with]*

*Betty*

*[so obsessed with airplanes]*

*Rod*

*yea that it overwhelmed his young reason or something like that right?...huh...*



*Ben*  
*he puttin he was he's putting airplanes over people's fillings ... uh... he's putting it over race and culture and he's...he's putting airplanes like...like it's some kind of god or something tuh him*

*Rod*  
*ah, that's int[eresting]*

*Ben*  
*[yeah]*  
*[session 3, lines 2529-2566]*

Obsession rhetorically matches the polyvalence of the text and the full context of characterization we are given of *Todd*. It is the preferred term. But Virgil returns to the mental health explanation below in an interesting & illustrative interruption of a fellow participant's production.

*Rod*  
*you think that his obsession carried on yea he's still obsessed with air[planes]*

*Ben*  
*[he said] that he only dignity was to fly plane was airplanes*

*Ben*  
*he crashed the plane so.. =*

*Virgil*  
*=I think he got a mental illness*

*Group (chorus)*  
*{laughter}*

*Rod*  
*what do you think about that, what kind what what would you say about that?*

*Virgil*  
*like manic, a little manic. grandiose thoughts*

*Rod*  
*ok kind of grandiose*

*Virgil*  
*somewhere in that category*

*Rod*  
*yea*

*Virgil*  
*seem to be that way cau the way he treating that man the way that little story he*  
*told all along wuz obsessed with planes and trying something trying to*  
*accomplish something that he always wanted to do...*  
*[session 3, lines 2566-2598]*

Ben's comments on *Todd's* idolatry of the airplane complement Virgil's commentary about *Todd's* haughty intellectualizing. But Ben is working something different out here—*Todd's* obsession persisted into his young adulthood to the extent that his dignity came to be bound up with piloting the plane. In line with earlier discussion, we could say that *Todd* has left the solidity of earth and body behind in favor of the angelic promise of technological transfiguration. Now that he has crashed the plane, however...what? Virgil's utterance interrupts and truncates this line of speculation. What production is prevented? What might Ben or others have said along this line? That *Todd* is a man with no dignity? That he is not even an individual man but a man only in racial abstraction (a "Black man"). That he is now disgraced by a new status as a failed Black pilot? That he couldn't handle the pressure of the task. That for whatever reason, he really wasn't good enough to be a pilot? That he failed? That he was a failure? All of this is too difficult perhaps? It is easier to interrupt this line of thinking with a flippant return to what was a moment ago a tentative hypothesis: "He got a mental illness." It is now a bad, sick, joke—like the straitjacket at this story's end. But it gets a laugh. When asked, Virgil answers, with seriousness, that *Todd* seems a little manic, grandiose. With those weighty technical words, casually spoken, the session ends.

### **Attitude problem (commentary).**

Three things are happening in the following passage from the following week's session with respect to the present analysis. First, Virgil continues his condemnation of *Todd's* character and treatment of *Jefferson*, but, whereas Virgil previously equated *Todd's* derisive labeling of the old man with stigmatization of mental ill persons and other social undesirables, here he assigns a label of mental illness to the pilot at least partially on the basis of the pilot's judgmental attitude toward *Jefferson*. The second activity to note is the dispute between Virgil and me over the importance of race and role of racism in *Todd's* actions and the relations between characters, with Virgil continuing to downplay both. Third, Virgil takes up a second attribution regarding *Todd's* behavior—this one in terms of "attitude"—that parallels the mental illness attribution and label. Eventually, receiving little support from the group for his mental illness hypothesis, Virgil seems to back off of that one and settle instead on the nontechnical term based on "attitude," as something "we can all agree on." The group's tacit approval at the time seems to bear this out, and further consideration of this section of transcript-text has convinced me that Virgil's rhetorical move here, whatever its motivation, has produced a serendipitous *mot juste* to describe that sense, described earlier, of the problem with *Todd*—our unsettling sense that something is wrong... Virgil's application of the nontechnical term "attitude" is an example of the polyvalence and the centrifugalizing function of poetic language and imagination. Clinical language is here de-formed through poetic imagination and nudged toward re-formation in a more colloquial (vernacular) iteration that is at once vague yet rigorous and that matches with greater precision the

contours of the fictional-yet-real predicament with which the reading group assemblage struggles.

*Rod*

*Well what what happens then? So he crash lands in and so what happens next? What's the [conflict in the story?]*

*Virgil*

*[he was] he was going despair able, confusion about hisself, I can't say it was racist thing, I would say it's more like, he was being foolish about his occupation of being a ha havin a having a pilot job that he was u:um... ya know be mo be more than what he was, but he had just wrecked tha, it was just a plane ya know, it was just a common accident, so he took it irrational, the wrong way, he was fantasizin in his own mind that uh, how people would respond to the, [to the ac]cident.*

*Connie*

*[tha acc]ident*

*Rod*

*Yea...*

*Virgil*

*So...*

*Rod*

*And how did he think people were gonna, what was he worried about? What was he concerned about?*

*Virgil*

*His umm. His umm...*

*Rod*

*How did he think people were [gonna react?]*

*Virgil*

*His [self-con]fidence. His confidence because he said that you only ya know you only get one chance to fly.*

*Rod*

*Right...Right {nods head}*

*Virgil*

*Back then ya know, you probably wreck a plane. They probably put you on the sideline, so he wrecked a plane.*

*Rod*  
*{Shakes head in agreement} So he felt like, now you started to say it wasn't necessarily a race thing or maybe it was what was the thing about race with it?*

*Virgil*  
*It wasn't no race; it wasn't no racism in there because he was just talking to...*

*{Knock at the door}*

...

*Virgil*  
*He was only talking to the two black people see.*

*Rod*  
*And then we'll get back to it, so virgil you were saying that he was talking to two black people in the field, an old man.*

*Virgil*  
*[One and the boy.]*

*Rod*  
*[And the son,] yea...*

*Virgil*  
*And I don't believe no racism with that, (it was all uh consum what they was) interpret(ive) by themselves so ya know. It [wasn't...]*

*Rod*  
*[So he,] so those two men weren't saying oh well ya know you weren't good enough to fly that plane, they weren't saying anything like that.  
[session 4, lines 396-512]*

Virgil refuses race and racism in this passage because there are only Black characters in the story so far. The implication is that there is no threat or impact of racism without a literal, White body present. He declines to acknowledge the special burden of representing "your whole race" which *Todd* attributes to himself as well as the racial prejudice implicit in *Todd's* denigration of *Jefferson* ("humiliation was when you could never be yourself; when you were always a part of this old black ignorant man") (p.150). Virgil's refusals strike me as an attempt to ward off, to keep at bay the specter of racism that hangs over and permeates the story. Particularly troubling, perhaps, is the device by

which Ellison makes the Black pilot both a victim of and mouthpiece for a pervasive societal prejudice. Virgil's solution is to make *Todd's* prejudicial thoughts and statements a result of poor upbringing and flawed character. They are personal, characterological and even psychiatric problems located within *Todd*. Discussion continues:

*Virgil*

*Because old man Jefferson was giving him a story about you know how he was flying in Heaven.*

*Rod*

*{Nods head} right....*

*Virgil*

*And trying to enlighten him that it was okay, (look he) Jefferson was telling him, he was telling him a story to make him feel more comfortable about wrecking the plane and you will have another opportunity to fly no matter what, now just flying a plane or whatever, you gotta soar in life [you gotta] reach another accomplishment..*

*Rod*

*Oh that's nice.*

*Virgil*

*He gotta reach another accomplishment because if you just keep at this one thing, at it just a plane ya know, you get to old you might not could fly a plane and the war over and what you still ain't gonna fly no more or know you still aint gonna fly no mo. so he was trying to teach him ya know, you gotta fly in life. That what he was telling him in that story.*

*[session 4, lines 514-535]*

*Jefferson's* story is a version of an old folk (tall) tale about the pervasiveness of institutionalized racism (it goes all the way to heaven) in the wake of Emancipation and the dashed hopes of Reconstruction and about the Black person's capacity to "carve out a survival strategy in a racist world" through a strategy of simultaneous affirmation and rejection of dominance (Ostendorf, 1976, p. 193). For Virgil, however, *Jefferson's* tale is not about race at all, rather it's a pep talk—don't worry what will happen with the plane,

the Army, white folk; "you gotta soar in life"—and you will always have other opportunities (second chances) to do so.

*Rod*

*umm, that's nice and that's uh that's uh a very different kind of interpretation, a very different way of understanding old Jefferson's story. How did Todd take it?*

*Virgil*

*Todd took it & thought he was being sarcastic.*

*Rod*

*thought he was.*

*Virgil*

*Thought he was being funny.*

*Rod*

*Thought he was making fun of him RIGHT?*

*Virgil*

*He wanted to, he wanted to hit the old man if he could have gotten up on his feet but see I seen like, he had a mental (il) a mental problem from the start because of the way he was, ya know calling him an idiot and what else he called him?*

*Rod*

*A peasant right?*

*Virgil*

*Yea a peasant...*

*Rod*

*{Nods head} yea.*

*Virgil*

*And he was doing the old black man, saying I don't wanna be something like, I don't wanna be nothing like you, if not the same words but he was telling his self to his self i don't wanna be nothing like you, if you don't wanna be nothing like him, everybody got like i said last time, everybody got a job (prevasist), from a janitor all the way up to the president, somebody gotta do some type of job to keep the world revolv*

*Rod*

*umm hmm. {Nods head}*

*Virgil*

*So he was downing Jefferson and that led to make me think he want to hit the man*

*that led me to think he got a mental illness, man.  
[session 4, lines 537-579]*

For Virgil, the tall tale is only *Jefferson's* attempt to encourage the younger man while taking his mind off of the pain of his broken ankle. *Todd's* reaction represents a gross misapprehension of the situation, and the degree of his anger suggests mental illness—a disconnection with reality and a problem of emotional stability (anger).

*Rod  
umm hmm. {Looks over paper}*

*Virgil  
Cause he, He got an attitude problem.*

*Rod  
That's interesting, what do you mean you think he has a mental illness? What's the difference between that and an attitude problem?*

*Virgil  
I think he got a mental illness.*

*Rod  
Like what? Like...*

*Virgil  
Like the way he acting ya know, he came in age; i mean a rage of anger.*

*Rod  
Umm hmm, he's got some anger.*

*Virgil  
He was already hurt with a broken ankle, and he just telling you a story just a story about, about an angel flying through heaven and you think he being sarcastic and funny. That, that's a, that's a, that's a, that's a, that's a sign of mental illness to me.*

*Rod  
yea...*

*Virgil  
And plus ya know, people that fly planes are more from a like borderline genius to insanity, it seem like he was very high intelligence but at the same time he was in a manic mode.  
[session 4, lines 581-613]*



Note here Virgil's return to an association of intellect with madness. This return connects his present attribution of mental illness to his earlier attribution following on the boy-*Todd's* reaching, falling, fever and convalescence. Remember that then, *Todd* was described as "manic depressed bipolar, obsessed and 'telligent." His intellect (and/or level of education—here, as in sociological research findings, intelligence and class are correlated) lends to *Todd* a kind of fragility, vulnerability to mental and emotional instability.

*Rod*  
*hmm. He was in a, he was kind of uh, whaddaya [mean?]*

*Virgil*  
*[hyped up]*

*Rod*  
*Hyped up*

*Virgil*  
*Hyped up. He was very hyped up after that story.*  
*[session 4, lines 615-625]*

Virgil has adopted "attitude" as a parallel description (alongside mental illness) and then, pressed by me to differentiate the two, specifically by designating "what kind" of mental illness, Virgil specifies anger (rage) and mania (he is "hyped up"). He does not, however, seem committed to these specificities, preferring the general "mental illness."

Earlier, Virgil connected mental health categorization and social status labeling in a way that seemed to be based on his personal experience. Virgil recognized the story-circumstance as similar to something in his general experience and introduced the analogy to our text. In the above passage, Virgil suggests that *Todd's* treatment of *Jefferson*—labeling him a "peasant"—indicates or even constitutes mental illness on *Todd's* part. The question of what is revealed or suggested about mental illness and social

status labeling by Virgil's judgment as well as how the fictional text operates to bring about these transformations is addressed in the following section of theoretical analysis. Virgil's analogy implies, as noted previously, his identification with *Jefferson*: I am like *Jefferson* in that we are both unfairly labeled, he because of social status and me because of mental illness (which is now an analog for social status). Virgil now re-inserts something he found or extracted from the text—mental illness labeling—back into the story through his application of the label to *Todd*. The move is, from this perspective, retaliatory—Virgil acts on *Jefferson's* behalf, as his ally, to defend an attack felt personally by Virgil when *Todd* attacked *Jefferson*. Virgil is strongly "plugged into" the text assemblage through this alliance, becoming, metaphorically, the character of *Jefferson* and lending himself to the old man. Virgil behaves "as if" (Sarbin, 2004) he *is Jefferson* when he returns the insult he feels personally from the young man.

*Jefferson's* very presence is for *Todd* a painful reminder of a shared racial past he has struggled to efface through the Sisyphean struggle of combat flight training. *Jefferson's* antipathy for *Todd's* education and ambitions is voiced in Virgil's analogy between intellect and mental illness. "You'd have to be crazy to want to fly way up there in the air—especially with all those white folks gunning for you," *Jefferson* seems to say. That Virgil does not find irony in *Jefferson's* approach to *Todd* may explain the force of his reaction / retaliation. *Jefferson* never affords *Todd* or his circumstance the gravity the pilot believes it warrants. *Jefferson's* antipathy is discharged through flippant humor rather than indignant reaction to injury. He simultaneously affirms and denies *Todd's* lofty ambitions and accomplishments with bemused equanimity.

Acts of insult and retaliation are exchanged across levels of "hypotheticalness" (Sarbin, 2004, p. 11) that depend on poetic uses of metaphor and analogy. Ransom writes that in the apprehension of poetry we must allow "for all appropriate emotions and attitudes...that can find their excuse, or their chance in the text" (1941, p. 25). All possible terms (i.e. both words and aspects of assemblage) are in play and are subject to loosened rules as to their combinability. Inversions and combinations occur across levels of possibility and consequence. It is not quite the case that 'anything goes' but regulation depends on the text and one's fidelity to it as well as the group's tolerance for imagination and belief (Sarbin, 2004).

Virgil becomes *Jefferson* but also *Todd*. All are variously socially undesirable and mentally ill. It is the play among levels of hypotheticalness of the story-world that lends its potent status as quasi-real playground for mimetic action. It is a space of unnatural becomings and unexpected arisings. Its status as real-but-differently-consequential invites readers' (relatively) unreserved engagement with story themes and characters. We are free to say and think things and to try out possibilities that would be impossible otherwise. Who knows what scenes from Virgil's life take their part in this present exchange—what old battles echo.

The discussion concludes as follows:

*Rod*

*He was very hyped up...okay. Uh, what do the rest of you think? What do you think about old Todd here? And old Jefferson? What do you think about Virgil was saying about his umm anger, his mental illness, his attitude problem, or however it is.*

*...{eight second silence}*

*Virgil*

*I think we can all agree he had an attitude problem. If it not if it don't really rationalize back to him having a mental illness.*

*Rod*

*Yea, he's definitely got, he's got a conflicted attitude I'd say.*

*Ben*

*He's afraid of failure too. It's something like a phobia too, afraid of failure, we all fail but try to get back up and dust yourself off and go again at something else or at the same thing.*

*[session 4, lines 629-643]*

Virgil backs off of his mental health diagnosis, perhaps out of concern with overall agreement, and, though he waits a few seconds for others to respond, he preempts others' contributions and potential disagreements on this topic. The mental health diagnosis simply fails account satisfactorily for the story-circumstance. We cannot dismiss, dispose of this character, this man, these men and their circumstances (which have become our circumstances) through the deployment of a simple diagnostic label. What we can do is agree that "he's got an attitude problem." That he, *Todd*, and we are faced with a problem that has to do with attitude. This term that starts out as flippant, idiomatic dismissal of the young man but sustained attention to its aspects and senses reveals an illuminating polyvalence involving disposition, posture, perspective (action impulse) and orientation. In the forthcoming theoretical analysis, the appearance of this term is developed as an example of the resonant explosion of significance resulting from engagement with the deformational forces of poetic fiction.

("attitude", n., n.d.)

### **Dissent and recusal (commentary).**

Later in the same session, we read the second of *Todd's* flashback memories in which intimidating Ku Klux Klan leaflets were dropped from an airplane onto *Todd's*

boyhood neighborhood. The memory occurs toward the end of the story when *Todd* is seemingly in and out of consciousness. Discussion rests in part on what is actually happening and there is some speculation that rather than being a memory, the episode is the product of *Todd's* delusional state, perhaps brought on by dehydration, pain, etc. Virgil is a strident proponent of this theory, employing several strategies to maintain his refusal; *Todd* is delusional, he has a mental illness (like we said before), he is fantasizing, his mother wrote the cards, and it didn't have anything to do with race anyway. More participants eventually come to agree with Connie, who states that *Todd's* memory of the plane as a fiery sword and the detail of the hollow eyes under that white hood are things that "he wouldn't make up," so they probably happened. Specific elements of the text determined a general structure of events that was, beyond a certain point, no longer subject to the malleability we have previously seen. Fidelity to the text provides a kind of self-correction to any threat of chaos in poetic engagement. This exemplifies Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/2005) contention that the text straddles a threshold of order and chaos, providing a platform for innovation without losing contact with the stratified ground of consensual reality.

Virgil declined to attend the final two sessions following this session. He told me privately later that he felt growing conflict in the group and that he decided it was best for him to sit out, so as to avoid the stress involved in conflictual situations. He said that he wasn't having problems with any particular group members or with me as facilitator. He said that he enjoyed the stories and discussion and that he would consider participating in future reading groups. Virgil's recusal bears exploration as a dimension of the activities of our assemblage. His self report as to his motivation—a strategy of conflict

avoidance—is unimpugnable. That is undoubtedly why he withdrew. But in the spirit of an analysis that puts all possible terms in play, Further speculation is warranted.

Generally, I consider Virgil's departure to be a matter of overt self-re-narration, and I consider it at some length in theoretical analytic section pertaining to this particularity.

## Theoretical Analysis

In what follows I have drawn specific links between interpretive commentary on the transcript-text and several guiding theoretical frameworks to demonstrate an overarching progression toward innovation through the poetic engagement. Most of this analysis refers back to excerpts and commentary already presented. Other examples are drawn from sessions and stories not yet discussed in the Findings section. For these, the briefer excerpts and story summaries presented here should suffice to orient the reader.

This section presents a specific analysis of three separate but complementary operations that I find in the transcript-text. The first, *Assemblage*, addresses the ways that we come to be involved in the story world, to engage with literary language and imagination. Fictional and poetic texts are characterized by a particular kind of likeness to "real life" while remaining distinct from "real life." This artistic, *mimetic* function (Murray A. , 1973) offers unique opportunities for the formation of alliances between and among terms (persons or aspects of persons, elements of texts, elements of setting, personal or collective histories, authorial intention, etc.) that, outside of the literary imagination, would have little or no correspondence. Within the poetic assemblage however, boundary lines loosen and the terms change places across numerous thresholds that become "unceasingly active in [their] inversions" (Bachelard G. , 1958/1994, p. xix).

The becomings that form assemblages already imply the second level of analysis, *De-formations*. This section examines the ways that the terms of poetic assemblages are altered through their engagements. The name, *de-formations*, recalls Bachelard's claim (1943/2002) that the action of poetic imagination is always ahead of itself, never residing

in a static or fully formed image. Instead, it functions to break down our pre-existing images and notions and to prepare the way for something new. As the terms of assemblage enter into alliance with other terms—other real people, other fictional characters, other real or fictional settings or situations, etc—they form unnatural becomings by which, each term is simultaneously deterritorialized and reterritorialized by the others (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2005). Each is broken down, or de-formed, in its pre-existing state, and, to one extent or another rebuilt or re-formed in the image of the other terms of the alliance. In this section we will see mental health talk encounter the poetic language of the story-world. These encounters with the mimetic world of fiction offer some lessons about how mental health talk operates in the actual world. We will see occasions when mental health talk is inadequate to the rich, contextual world of the literary imagination and will witness its tendency to shift in the direction of an exact<sup>12</sup>, colloquial and vernacular language (or to be replaced by terms with these characteristics).

Finally, Re-narration recalls Ricoeur's argument (2005) for learning to understand and revise one's narrative identity through literary engagement. The analysis picks up the transformations that are noted in the progression of involvement through becoming and de-formation/re-formation, highlighting movements toward re-narration demonstrated in the transcript-text and opportunities for potential movements to come. I am not presenting dramatic anecdotes of life-altering encounters with the stories here. Nor are participants followed in any kind of outcome study. Rather, I point to opportunities, openings for potential movement in a variety of directions that appear in the transcript-text as clear correlates of the assemblages and transformations addressed earlier. This is

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<sup>12</sup> "the exact passage of that which is underway" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2005, p. 20).



not a narrative therapy group, a purpose of which would be to identify and cultivate preferred alternative narrative paths for clients. However, the present analysis does identify openings for supporting that type of re-narrating work in a complementary narrative group. This potential future direction is addressed in Discussion.

### **Assemblage**

It is idiomatic to say that we "get involved" in a story (or movie, TV program, etc), but what does that mean? Participants demonstrate numerous ways of engaging in and with the stories we read, and I have chosen to understand this engagement through the concept of assemblage (which avoids some of the problems with "engrossment," "transportation" or "suspension of disbelief" as concepts for what people do when they get involved in a story). Assemblages involve mutual becomings through alliances among aspects of a circumstance. Deleuze & Guattari use the term "haecceities" to refer to these singular collections of aspects allied in mutual becomings (1980/2005, pp. 261, 507). The unit of measure or the focus of attention becomes the haecceity (rather than an individual subject or group of subjects) in all of its contextual particularity, including its perpetually emergent status. These "blocks of becoming" loosen the boundary lines of static identification ("I am me" "that is a book") and allow those lines to be redrawn. Texts, remember, straddle a divide between form (stratification) and disorder (plane of consistency) that invites readers (or "parts" of readers) to plug into them in a variety of ways. Parts of readers ally with parts of texts along with other terms including authorship, other participants, setting, and time of day, etc. These formations operate throughout the transcript-text, but here we will look at a few examples in detail. Note that the examples presented here are not the only instances of the operations of assemblage and becoming,

rather they are *demonstrable* instances that allow the reader to infer the general and ongoing operation of these forces throughout our engagements.

The text-as-assemblage is demonstrated initially by the simple expedience of italicizing fictional character names in the commentary and analysis to enable readers to differentiate fictional characters from group participant-characters. The two groups of persons (with their different ontological statuses) have become so closely associated in the transcript-text as to be indistinguishable. To say that Virgil retaliated against Todd for the latter's insults to *Jefferson* is to set three characters (with different ontological statuses) in an equivalent plane of action and involvement. Each character is changed by taking on interaction with the others. The story-text is changed at this specific plug-in point with Virgil such that he becomes one of its characters just as the pilot and the old man become parts of his world and part of the story of his life and experience. The italics serve to remind one of the levels of hypotheticalness and reality that become so quickly and easily blended in the literary engagement. The notion of *blending* is important here since the movement is not unidirectional. It is therefore insufficient to say that we (real people) "suspend our disbelief" with respect to the fictional or imaginal. Rather, our engagement with the latter puts our "real" status into a kind of suspension. Blocks of mutual becomings and alliances are formed which potentiate all manner of exchanges and transformations.

***The judgments of others (analysis, assemblage).***

The identification of actual characters with fictional characters is a significant and recognizable category or mode of literary becoming (assemblage). We identify with characters who are like us and de-identify with those we consider to be unlike us. In

either case, something is changed or learned about both terms of the association. Earlier I called Virgil's identification and alliance with *Jefferson* a "strong" plug-in to the text assemblage. In part it is so because he simultaneously identifies with *Jefferson* and de-identifies with *Todd*, siding with the older man and taking (verbal) action against the younger. Virgil rails against *Todd's* elitism and the insults and labels with which he denigrates the old sharecropper. Virgil characterizes *Jefferson*, on the other hand, as wise, helpful, and understanding. Virgil makes explicit some of the parts of his own experience that get caught up or plugged into the story and the dispute between its characters when he picks up on *Todd's* labeling of *Jefferson* based on social status and then quickly compares social status labeling with mental illness stigmatization.

*Virgil*

*the man don't meet his standards cause he work... everybody have to labeled with a job which is a trash man all the way to the president somebody gotta do it some type of job*

*Rod*

*right*

*Virgil*

*so you know like, people catergorize you today because if you have a mental illness=*

*Rod*

*=mmhhmm=*

*Virgil*

*=to:::to:::to regular people, peoples wif a mental illness is BUms all the way from crack heads .. everybody get la'beled with a LAbel all the way to the day (to tuhday?). And he labeled this man right here as being a peasant ..somebody that's worthless and this man actually giving him a lending hand and trying to help him off a a mission he wasn't able ta that he could:::couldn't complete cause HE crashed the plane*

The analogy serves to associate Virgil (and the rest of the participants) with *Jefferson* as recipients of insult at the hands of snobbish regular people like *Todd*. Virgil is not

casually interested either—he is hotly emotionally invested in the Ellison story which has through his analogy just *become* the story of *his* life. The story characters do not literally come to life to become acquaintances of Virgil's. Neither is he, Virgil, magically transported into the storybook world to interact with its characters. Rather it is the becoming-*Jefferson* of Virgil that retaliates against *Todd's* misdeeds and it is the becoming-Virgil of *Jefferson* that feels the sting of the modernized version of the "peasant" epithet fairly hissed by some "normal" person on the street: "get away from me you *crackhead!*" The unnatural participation of real and fictional persons and their aspects allows for the inversions and transformations that we saw in the close reading of this segment of transcript-text. Mental illness and social status are inverted and become analogs. *Todd* receives a mental illness label from the becoming-Virgil of *Jefferson*, which, by virtue of the analogy established between mental illness categorization and social status labeling, may also be described as a becoming-*Todd* of *Jefferson* (Virgil) and a becoming-*Jefferson* of *Todd*. It is the mutual becomings, the interplay of all terms of the equation, that makes possible the transformation of mental health labeling that takes place here (addressed in greater detail in the De-formation section).

***Life on a train (analysis, assemblage).***

Other participants also engage or plug in by identifying with characters. Sandra empathizes with the mother in the other Ellison story we read, "Boy on a Train" (which does not appear in the commentary). This story is a semi-autobiographical account of two brothers and their mother relocating to another city by rail. We learn that the boys' father has recently passed away and that the mother has been offered work in a nearby town. The story's centerpiece is the mother's remembrance of her and her husband's trip

fourteen years earlier along the same route but in the other direction as they migrated west from Georgia seeking a better life and a place to start a family. Her tearful admonition for her eldest son to remember the journey and its meaning for their family moved Sandra to empathy. She marked the woman's tears and commented that she now has "*got so much to do since she got them boys*" and would now be without the help and support of her husband [session 2, lines 1613ff]. She cried because she knew she would have to work so hard to provide for and protect those boys. The women in particular and the group as a whole identified empathetically with the mother in this story.

This kind of empathetic identification with a fictional character has, I think, a special status relative to experiences of empathy with "real" people. In both cases we enter into becomings with the empathetic-other. However, in those encounters with actual others, our experience of becoming is often blocked by our conceptual attachments to (binary) self/other identifications and oppositions. The level of hypotheticalness in fiction bypasses, to an extent, this problem. Becoming is automatically entailed with fictional characters because we do not so staunchly guard against transgression at the borderlands of individuality. This helps to explain why literary encounter and imagination provides an effective 'playground' or workshop, a training ground, in this case, for empathy and for perspective-taking in general.

The combination of empathetic character identification and a more general identification with the story circumstance marks another effective block of becoming. Asked why the author may have written this story, what is its action or drama, Virgil answered by saying "*life*" [session 2, lines 2023ff]. The story is simply about life and about "*remembrance of the father that passed and (torment) turmoil and grief about how*

*life can take a toll on you cuz she tellin huh son to be aware of life.*" Here Virgil gives an excellent précis on the mimetic nature of literary fiction. It is the mimetic function of poetry, according to Albert Murray (1973), that gives it its transformational power. Literary fiction is an artfully crafted imitation of real life, distinct from a recording of actual real life that would, he argues, have the feel of "tedious unreality" rather than the "'slice of life' realism" of the fictional text (p. 20). Instead, fictional "song and dance imitations of experience" form the workshop or studio in which, as we have already discussed, readers adopt and try out the postures (attitudes) suggested by the fictions they engage. The mimetic function draws its readers into their own imitative experience—a reenactment of a reenactment:

Even as the short story and the novel embody and thus describe and define the world as the writer perceives it, they also serve to initiate the reader into it. When the writer *relates* a story to the reader, he literally *connects* him with what the story is about (p. 22).

The story is about life, Virgil says. "*At the same time,*" however, "*its just a travelin jes remembrance (s'like) you jes get in tha car like go up the interstate maybe travel t'oklahoma ourself.*" We all recognize and can relate to traveling stories and to the losses suffered by this family as well as the nostalgia that accompanies traveling, especially to relocate. But Virgil also verbalizes the becoming-story of this moment (haecceity) perfectly. We could after all, he says, be travelin' up to Oklahoma altogether ourselves. We are becoming-travelers to Oklahoma. The mimetic action of the story's characters and actions that 'could be us' corresponds to the markings on Deleuze and Guattari's orchid that mimic and attract the wasp which it needs to reproduce (1980/2005). The unnatural

becoming-orchid of the wasp and the becoming-wasp of the orchid form a block of becoming by which the wasp is deterritorialized as wasp and simultaneously reterritorialized as becoming-orchid. The converse is true for the orchid. Neither will finally become the other (as in a finished product), rather becoming is considered, from the perspective of the assemblage, an irreducible end in itself. The recognizable markings of Ellison's crafted story-orchid are family, grief, traveling and relocating. These deterritorialize individual reader-wasps and readers as a group (assemblage), connecting us or plugging us in to the story's action. We are reterritorialized in that our personal experiences and remembrances of similar events now belong in a sense to the events of the story. They are forever associated with these story events. We can no more un-experience the story than we can any of our actual experiences (and of course, our experience of (reading) the story is an actual experience). The mutual becoming is the fertile ground for multiple interpretations of a given story as well as the loosening (deterritorialization) of our own sedimented self-understandings which may then be re-understood in light of new interpretations.

Murray claims that the mimetic assemblage of experience, poet (creator), and participating audience is the "fundamental vehicle of information, instruction, wisdom, and moral guidance" that is basis of the human educative process proceeding from the time of the ancient Greek *melpés* (song and dance ballads) through to drama, poem, hymn, folk tale, novel or blues riff (1973, pp. 22-3). That last part, the blues riff, involves improvisation by an apprentice—an audience member / workshop participant who tries out a posture (attitude) and then another and another. Virgil perfectly embodies and verbalizes this activity in his placement of the whole group assemblage on the interstate,

travelin' up to Oklahoma ourselves. Moments later, he described the story as "a big scenery" in which we saw and experienced what that (fictional) family saw on their journey. A big scenery and a big canvas with respect to which we are all simultaneously artistic subjects, patrons, artists, and more.

*Caught in the weeds (analysis, assemblage).*

Demonstrations of becoming-assemblages abound through the text-transcript. The absence of a readily identifiable literary or poetic discourse in the transcripts points to this process. We seamlessly adopt the story worlds and their participants as our own. We speak not of this or that "character," but of *John* and *Teddy*, and a mother and a father as if they were our neighbors or distant acquaintances or members of our own family.

Thanks to the becoming nature of the engagements, we also talk about these characters as if they were ourselves.

These identifications and incipient actions recall Sarbin's (2004) notion of imagining as "as if" behavior. Engagement with poetic imagination in fictional texts affords readers the opportunity to enter into an infinite variety of circumstances rendered with mimetic artistry and to imaginably "try out" reactions and responses to each at varying levels of hypotheticalness. This is the emotional "work-out" to which Ransom refers (1941), and Richards' "thousand tendencies to action" in the imaginal and attitudinal response of reader to poetic text (1926).

Participants engage similarly with other aspects of a story—its action or its formal elements. For example, Betty identified quickly with the dialect in "John Redding," stating,



*(i catch myself) sometime talkin like that cause I was [born in the country]...  
country girl*

Betty insinuates herself into the story assemblage by asserting her individual style. I am like this and it is like me. The country girl part of Betty plugs into the "broken down" southern dialect employed by Zora Neale Hurston in the story. Betty establishes an intentional alliance with the story, thus becoming part of the text-assemblage. In so doing, she appropriates (reterritorializes an aspect of the story, remaking it in her image. The story is like me.

Betty, Randy and others also identified with *John Redding's* caught-ness of at the hands of his mother and wife (as well as his own irresoluteness). *John's* circumstance provides the mimetic lure that catches Betty's and Randy's recognition ("*ooh, I know how that feels!*"), sweeping them, and the rest of us, into its scope. But this relation also demonstrates the polyvalent and overdetermined nature of the poetic-text-assemblage. It is not only the recognizable family tension between attachment and freedom in *John's* story that catches us up and plugs us in. We enact caught-ness in our struggles to read, understand and navigate the difficult southern dialect in which the story is conveyed. We literally get stuck and stumble over Hurston's language, failing to establish consistent rhythm and flow between *Matty's* broken down English and *John's* overblown, highbrow speech. This correspondence of formal and semantic elements, poetry's magic moment (Cowan, 1972), belongs both to the action of becoming-assemblage and to that of deformation and transformation. I have chosen to discuss it at greater length in that following section. As in this example, we will continue to see the formation and action of becoming-assemblage throughout the progression of this analysis.

## **De-formation**

Becomings imply (entail) transformation. So the changes we expect to see in this section are prefigured in levels of engagement already discussed. The kind of becomings discussed imply de-formations as well. De-formations form a bridge between becomings (engagement) and re-narrations, or the changes in the world that result from those becomings. They are its operations. The becoming-*Jefferson* of Virgil implies that the pre-existing version of Virgil has come unhinged as it moves toward alliance with *Jefferson*. The deterritorialization will never be completed—he will not become *Jefferson* and cease to be Virgil. But the meaning of Virgil has already changed in its emergent form as becoming-*Jefferson*. I hope the reader will forgive the clunky-ness of this language in order to gain additional purchase on the notion of the deformations of the poetic imagination.

The imaginary mode, writes Bachelard, "is essentially *open* and *elusive*. It is the human psyche's experience of openness and novelty" (1943/2002, p. 1). Its language, contrary to that of science, seeks not to "bar out all possibilities but one" (Richards, 1926, p. 33), to settle, that is, on the one correct answer, but to follow emergences and becomings of the kind described in this study. Whatever is presented to imagination is immediately thrown beyond itself in anticipation of what it is not yet. All possible meanings, interpretations and combinations are in play. This polyvalence of terms and images, this centrifugalizing force (Bakhtin, 2006) of language in literature determines "an abundance—an explosion—of unusual images" (Bachelard G. , 1943/2002, p. 1). Language is placed in a state of continuous variation and launched toward innovation and novelty. This operation presents a unique opportunity to examine instances of mental

health talk, demonstrating its typical functions in mimetic versions of everyday experience as well as its potential permutations.

***A queer child (analysis, de-formation).***

Hurston's description of the young *John Redding* as a queer child at the beginning of our first story provides an early example of the polyvalence at play in poetic fiction. Ben's pronouncement that *John* is gay was not borne out by the story, but neither was my categorical refusal of the possibility that *John* is gay. Multiple appearances of the term "queer" in the story-text to describe *John's* difference from the other (normal) townsfolk seems specifically valenced toward suspicion of sexual difference: *John* fails to conform to the townsfolk's expectations of an eligible (heterosexual) bachelor. *John* is not gay, but neither is it true to say that "queer" here has nothing to do with being gay. The imprecision of the term, its anexactness, is its accuracy and appropriateness to the story-circumstance. This is characteristic of Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/2005) assemblages and the continuous variation of their terms: not "either-or" (gay or not gay), but "yes, and" (ineffable, sexually and otherwise).

***Caught in the weeds (analysis, de-formation).***

Poetic polyvalence is not restricted to the semantic meaning of the terms employed. Participants noted the difficulty of Hurston's southern country dialect in "John Redding" (and later in "Escape from Pharaoh") and we all stumbled through reading it aloud. Particularly difficult is *Matty's* thickly "broken down" speech when placed alongside *John's* educated and often overblown speech. An example taken directly from the story-text will illustrate:

"Lawd knows," she would sigh, "Ah nevah wuz happy an' nevah specks tuh be."

"An' from yo' actions," put in *Alfred* hotly, "you's determined *not* to be."

"Thas right, *Alfred*, go on an' 'buse me. You allus does. Ah knows Ah'm ign'rant an all dat, but dis is mah son. Ah bred an' born 'im. He kain't help from wantin' to go rovin' cause travel dust been put down fuh him. But mebbe we kin cure 'im by discouragin' the idee."

"Well, Ah wants mah son tuh go; an' he wants tuh go too. He's a man now, *Matty*, An' we mus 'let *John* hoe his own row. If it's travelin' twon't be foh long. He'll come back to us bettah than when he went off. What do you say, son?"

"Mamma," *John* began slowly, "it hurts me to see you so troubled over my goin away; but I feel that I must go. I'm stagnating here. This indolent atmosphere will stifle every bit of ambition that's in me. Let me go mamma, please (p. 5)"

And the same passage in the transcript-text:

*Betty*

*lawd knows she wuld sigh, I nevu' wuz happy and nevah spect to be. ah from yo action, put in Alfred hoatly, you determined not to be. right, tha's right, al fred, go on an abuse me... you al..*

*Rod*

*you allus does (laughing) [that's hard...]*

*Betty*

*you allus does. I knows ahm (...)*

*Virgil*

*(softly) I:I'gnant*

*Betty*

*mah ignarant and all dah, but this is mah son. Ive rared and bored him. he ant help from wontin to grow roving cause travel dust been put down fuh him but maybe he can cur him by dis couragin the idea the idea. Well hah wont mah son*

*duh go and he wont duh go too. he's a man now, Matty, an wus mus let John row his own row. If is travelin, twon be for long. He'll a come back to us .. bettah than when he went off. what do you say son? mama, John began slowly, it hurts me to see you so troubled over my goin away but I feel that I mus go. I was s:s strengenatin(?)=*

*Rod  
stag'nating=*

*Betty  
stagnating here...This ins inda um...=*

*Virgil  
indalent=*

*Betty  
indalasin atmosphere...will str:iive..*

*Rod  
stifle*

*Betty  
will stifle every bit of ambition that in me. let me go mama, please. what is there here for me? Ah sometime ah get the feelin just like a lump of dirt turned over by by the plow. jus where it falls there ewhere it lies. no thoughts of movin or nothin. i wanna make myself sumthin, not jus be where ah wuz born. now John, it's bettah fuh you to stay here and take over the school. Why don't you marry and settle down? Well missus Redding said, pursing her mouth*

*Rod  
oh, we missed, we missed one line in there I think.. why [don't you marry] and settle down  
[session 1, lines 840-874]*

We get "caught up" in the dialog like *John's* reed boats get caught up in the weeds. More specifically we are caught in the mother's dialect like he is caught in her overbearing pronouncements and her stifling provincialism. The textual device and the imagery set up new blocks of becoming:

we (readers) = *John* = reed boats getting caught = *Alf*

which relates to

southern country dialect = author (Hurstons) = mother's (overbearing) love = weeds

These new equivalences form temporary assemblages or blocks in which we become allied to other members of the block. We take on *John* and enact his plight as we struggle with his mother's speech.

As previously noted, this assemblage exemplifies poetry's mysterious magic moments (Cowan, 1972; Ransom, 1941) when levels of experience (form and content) that share no logical connection inexplicably and synergistically coincide. Sandra noticed the connection when she stated that *John* was "*doing a paragraph*" but that he was "*fillin his speech in poems.*" Does she mean filling or feeling or neither or both? Either way, she recognizes the imaginative, poetic activity that's going on concurrently with the declarative, literal action of the story. What she points to in this production is the imaginative equivalence of *John* and ships which we have now joined by enacting getting caught up. He is talking about ships but "*thinkin about himself going off to the sea.*"

Betty's and Randy's subsequent participation in and performance of "I am stuck (like *John*)" by family entanglements participates in the equivalence "I am a ship getting caught." But, importantly, even though we all stumbled and stuttered, we eventually got through the dialect that caught us up. Even *John* eventually made it downstream to the ocean, albeit in dramatically morbid fashion. Even there, however, the group agreed vocally with Virgil's assessment that *John* finally met with peace and blessing. More concretely relevant to Betty's circumstance, the becoming block that we have described allowed her to verbalize feelings that had been caught "inside." The telling of this self-story belies Betty's self-description as someone who cannot "let it out." The dialog between she and Randy breaks free of the weeds at the water's edge and merges with swifter, flowing currents.

*Randy*  
*[(i feel wanna)] let it go*

*Betty*  
*[yeah I can] mmmm. wanna run away= {gesture}*

*Randy*  
*=run away, [let it go]*

*Betty*  
*=[GIT away]*

*Randy*  
*[let] it go and git away from it all*

*Betty*  
*thas tha way I feel*

*Randy*  
*'cided i wannoo get outta {town} fo awhile*

*Rod*  
*yeah/*

*Betty*  
*just wanna go, Im free i just wanna go*

The description is to some extent the cure. The becoming-ship of Betty is sometimes stuck in the weeds and sometimes gets unstuck. This is the de-formational power of images to which Bachelard (1943/2002, p. 1) refers when he writes that imagining is always imagining something that isn't (yet). The equivalence set up in engagement with *John's* story brings to light and to voice her predicament—"they won't let me go." She is a ship, stuck in the weeds. But ships have the possibility of getting free. In fact, freedom and flow is their default activity. Even her language points to possibilities for imagining and eventually telling a different story (re-narrating à la Ricoeur). The combination of deformational imagery and deformational language—the atypical expression of Hurston's difficult dialect—combine to potentiate new lines of flight or flow in Randy and Betty's dialog. She excitably describes feeling stuck but also utters this last line: I just wanna go,

I'm free. The highly affective charge to this utterance suggests a fruitful possibility at least for revising her typical way of narrating her own stuckness. Becomings entail deformation and transformation which in turn yield opportunities for re-narration.

What gets deterritorialized and de-formed here are typical ways of thinking (self-concepts) and speaking. The combination of modes (formal linguistic and conceptual), this compounded uncanniness, is itself a line of flight away from the stifling ground of sameness and stuckness. It is particularly interesting that Betty, who initially commented on the dialect's similarity to her own "country girl" talk, is the one who is particularly affected by these deforming elements. D&G suggest that linguistic lines of flight are operative when one finds oneself a foreigner in one's own tongue (1980/2005, p. 98).

***Becoming-vernacular (analysis, de-formation).***

A particular focus of this study has been to examine the behavior of mental health talk as it occurs in our sessions and particularly as it interacts with the language of literary fiction. What happens when these occurrences of mental health talk are subjected to the de-formational forces under consideration here? Two trends are demonstrated in answer to this question. First, instances of mental health talk—usually diagnosis—seem to be held up and suspended for examination of how they are used and how they function in the circumstances in which they appear. This is certainly a function of the analysis which takes specific interest in these kinds of contributions, but the stark relief in which mental health language appears also results from fundamental differences between the worlds gathered by clinical and poetic language and engagement. The purposes of diagnostic language seem to run counter to the centrifugal movement of the literary text. Diagnostic terms appear when participants attempt to pin down, define and foreclose a



situation or character. As a clinician, I find it useful and instructive to see the specific kinds of purposes to which diagnostic terms are put. What is more interesting though, is the second trend by which, when subjected to the centrifugalizing hypotheticalness of the poetic text—when placed in continuous variation—the diagnostic terms appear weightless, or perhaps mass-less. They are without gravity, drawing little to themselves of the richness of the story worlds. Instead, continuous variation seems often to mean finding other, more descriptive terms. Instances of diagnostic and mental health function in the examples that follow as markers invoking a powerful discursive strain—that of mental health institutions—but that signal a broader contextual reality. They tend to suggest a contingency beyond themselves, and then to fall away. Here, it seems, Merleau-Ponty's dictum holds: a word (a diagnostic label in this case) is a gesture and its meaning is a world (1945/2004).

***Troubling behavior (analysis, de-formation).***

Virgil's move, when describing *Alf* and *Matty*'s early dispute about their son, from "behavior" to "you gettin deeper" is the first of multiple instances of a trial and error use of language to find what best fits. I described "behavior" as a quasi-clinical (mental health) term and discussed its de-contextualizing and subjectifying implications for the boy (the "problem" has to do with specific, identifiable activities that belong individually to the boy). If we describe *John*'s behavior clinically--absent-minded and disoriented wandering, distractibility, episodes of vacuous staring, bizarre verbal productions (talks to himself--perhaps suffering hallucinations)—we might just find a DSM diagnosis for him. A more generous reading might suggest that he simply is temperamentally inclined

for broader horizons—but then we have verged from behavior into characterization of the boy based on the whole context and action of the story.

Virgil's construction gives us the whole heart of the matter--beginning with behavior gets us nowhere. We get little from learning about *John* as divorced from the rest of the story. Virgil immediately notices that it's gettin deeper, thicker and messier, and the change is reflected in his language. He proceeds however to tell us that we are "*gettin deeper and deeper into it like he got spells and witches and people leavin out the yard.*" We are confronted in Virgil's indeterminate statement with the messy and potentially threatening context of the story-world. It is read both as "it's getting deeper" and as "we're getting deeper" into the entanglements of the story. This "atypical expression" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2005, p. 99) functions as the cutting edge of the deterritorialization of meaning as we enter the story. Notice is served that there is more here than meets the eye or the ear.

The story-world with its varying levels of "hypotheticalness" (Sarbin, 2004) is precisely the right place for conjuration and omens and the skeleton-tree spirits that menace the boy. Group participants honor their presences and powers in the story. One participant remarked of ominous appearances during the story that "*nature is startin' to happen*" and that the characters had better take notice and be warned. In the story-world, the characters and spirits alike are taken metaphorically "as though" they are real people. At this level of hypotheticalness, they are, Hillman (1983) tells us, "neither literally real (hallucinations or people in the street) nor unreal/unreal ('mere' fictions...)." They are the teachers from whom we learn in literary encounter and education. They present us with opportunities to encounter the array of possibilities and impossibilities in the world. We

have lessons to learn from them. In the story-world, we can disdain *Matty* as a smothering and overbearing mother, but we would do well, as participants have done, to recognize the warnings she both sees and represents.

***Diagnosis and emotional manipulation (analysis, de-formation).***

The reader will remember that Ben gave us two examples, in discussion of the same story, "John Redding," of diagnostic references to mental illness in the context of family dispute and manipulation. The first was an explanation for *John's* hesitance to leave his mother:

*Ben*  
*sometime it can cause, maybe he had it in hi mind that it can cause his parents*  
*maybe his mother some kind of severe depression or somethin like that. an maybe*  
*he dont want to see huh sick like that*  
*[session2, lines 444-494]*

I argued that Ben's interpretation ups the ante of the pressure put on *John* by *Matty* to stay in a way that must be replayed over and over in *Prozac Nation*-era families: "Mom's depressed! She doesn't need you \_\_\_\_\_!" or "You know I have depression, how could you \_\_\_\_\_ now?" The invocation of medical/psychiatric discourse—the weight of the mental health establishment—renders the argument unassailable to the average son or daughter. Ben even adds the clinical qualifier, "severe," which could be appended to either above script for added effect.

This is in no way intended to deny the existence of depression as a clinical condition or the real suffering of those to whom the label is clinically applied. However, this analysis suggests the importance of investigating not only the uses of mental health language by and in the institutions of its production, but also its lay or common usages. We have already seen that clinical language may not be up to the task of adequately

describing fully contextual (round rather than flat) fictional characters. We may learn from its attempted application in these situations something about the fullness of the experiences suggested, pointed to, by their use. Ben's example of depression used as a tool of emotional manipulation suggests a complicated household (and perhaps community) dynamic that may be distilled in the reductive diagnostic label "depression," beyond which the real story lies. The depression label would not return in our discussions, but shortly thereafter Ben applied another diagnostic label, bipolar this time, to *Matty*.

*Ben*

*see it was it was like that--his mother was tryin to live live his [life]*

...

*like sh like sh like sh::e (wanted to want) to be him, thats like bipolar, you know, cuz she she wand da portray him be him, an it got so bad that she didn even want him ta go help ta fix tha dam fo the..um when the [storm came]*

*[session 2, 711-751]*

I described Ben's production of this label as reflexive. He is trying to figure something out as he speaks, searching for the appropriate terms to describe and explain a family circumstance that seems familiar and simultaneously inscrutable to him. "*that's like, bipolar, you know,*" strikes me as Ben grasping for familiar, powerful and clinically sterile language for what otherwise appears to be a messy maternal entanglement. The diagnostic labels, depression and now bipolar, are produced in an attempt to come to a definitive answer or solution. What is needed, however uncomfortable it may be, and what comes of further discussion, is elaboration of contexts and discovery (illumination) of some points of common tension among group participants. We do not find resolution, per se, but we do find recognition. The labels fall away in favor of continued struggle to

appropriately describe and understand the messy circumstances in the Redding household as well as in our own.

***The judgments of others (analysis, de-formation).***

Images of and language related to mental illness figures prominently in Ellison's "Flying Home" and in our discussions around it. The general trend of those discussions became attempting to figure out just what was the problem with *Todd*. Attributions of mental illness to *Todd* have been discussed at length throughout this findings section.

We saw the formation of a Virgil-*Jefferson-Todd* block of becoming—particularly Virgil's alliance with *Jefferson*—and from that block we can derive a transformation of mental health diagnosis (labeling and categorization) from clinical description to a weapon of rhetorical alienation and denigration. *Todd* cruelly labels the old man who doesn't rise to his social standards and who reminds him of his own heritage of subjugation. In this fictional insult, Virgil hears his own experiences of insulting labels and categorizations from people who think they're better than him for whatever reason and who make themselves (feel) better by downing others based on the categories and labels of social status and normalcy (mental health). Partly in retaliation for *Todd's* slight ("Oh yeah? I'm a peasant am I? Well you're crazy! How do you like that?") and partly as a commentary on a larger dilemma around the judgments of others, he applies the mental illness label, bipolar, to *Todd*. The implied commentary is in three parts. First, that mental health labeling is employed as a consequence (punishment) for bad behavior. *Todd* has acted badly and therefore deserves the punishing label. Second, he, *Todd*, must be crazy to denigrate and insult the old man based on ridiculous social standards. After all, we need garbage men as well as presidents. Finally, there is a commentary in Virgil's

retaliation about retaliation through the use of labels and categorization. The insulting terms that *Todd* uses to describe *Jefferson*—peasant, ignorant, clown—are all things that he is afraid of being or ways that he is afraid of being perceived. His insults are defensive and as such they apply to himself as well as to *Jefferson*. Virgil highlights this equivalence: in order to call *Jefferson* low-down or crazy, *Todd* must be low-down and crazy too. Mental illness labeling has become a dimension of the relations among Virgil and the story characters, the becoming-*Jefferson* of *Todd* and the becoming-*Todd* of Virgil. *Todd*. The equivalence set up between mental illness categorization and social status labeling, particularly the classist and elitist derision exhibited by *Todd*, in Virgil's relation to the story's characters is an important instance of a transformation of mental health talk. It highlights the common, implicit equivalence of mental health status with social status that is not given a lot of attention or traction in clinical circles. A wealthy madman is "eccentric" while a crazy poor man is the lowest of the low, frequently Virgil's "crackhead." The polyvalence of Virgil's construction, mental illness in continuous variation here emphasizes its relationship to social status (and to social justice). It is a mistake, an ethical failing, to consider one term of the equivalence without the other.

***Something wrong with his mind (analysis, de-formation).***

The reader will also remember another of Virgil's diagnostic formulations, "manic depressed, obsessed, intelligent," following discussion of *Todd's* boyhood folly with the toy / real airplane. The de-formational movement in this construction is from the strictly clinical term (manic depressed bipolar) through the dual-use vernacular and clinical term (obsessed) to the polyvalent "*intelligent*" which, I argued, suggests *Todd's* over-

intellectualized and precious fragility. He is unstable, ungrounded in his body or, for that matter, to the body of the earth. He is subject to 'losing his nerve.' Virgil's tentative, "*I'm just sayin it could have been,*" suggests that the bipolar label serves mostly as a placeholder for mental illness in general, though the specific label does reappear later on. There is some general agreement about obsession among the group. After all, most people would likely agree that *Todd* is obsessed with airplanes and flying. Yet the most cryptic part of the formulation, "*intelligent,*" has significant staying power in our discussions. Virgil associates "high advancement of the mind" with mental illness—invoking a kind of maniacal genius—but also with snobbishness and elitism of the kind exhibited in *Todd's* treatment of *Jefferson*, which is the other occasion for Virgil's attribution of mental illness to the pilot.

*Todd's* intellectual elitism leads him, in Virgil's (and in *Jefferson's*) opinion, to over-analyze his circumstances and come to overly pessimistic conclusions and predictions. Virgil and other participants criticize *Todd* for his attitude (in its psychological sense) and reaction to his situation. In other words, whereas *Todd* looks elsewhere for someone or something to blame, the group seems to put the responsibility squarely on him. His failure to adopt a more positive, can-do attitude earns *Todd* the group's disrespect and their attribution of mental illness as well as bad attitude. These perspectives suggest a largely individualist perspective on subjectivity among the group that may bear on mental health talk's uses and understandings. It is primarily *Todd's* failure to 'pull himself up by the bootstraps' that results in attribution of mental illness to him. The fact that he adopts a dramatic posture in measured response to the impossibility of his (perceived) circumstances seems lost on group members and may indeed be lost on

many mental health diagnosticians and practitioners. It is common parlance among practitioners of cognitive and behavioral therapies to say that what happens to us doesn't determine our outcomes, rather our response to what happens determines our outcomes. The push for agency and personal responsibility is understood and is a vital dimension of mature self-determination, but such statements risk de-contextualizing the roles in which individuals find themselves positioned by systems larger than their individual powers to control—even by the sunshiniest of dispositions.<sup>13</sup> I wonder if group members' attribution of mental illness to *Todd* matches their own experience of diagnosis. Perhaps their response to difficult circumstances was deemed inadequate to successfully negotiate those circumstances and the result is a diagnosis of Schizoaffective Disorder (bipolar type), and a month long institutionalization followed by day treatment and quarterly med checks with the psychiatrist. The individualist tenor of the group's interpretations regarding *Todd* reflect an unintended consequence or sequela of subjectivizing diagnostic practices that locate problems within the brains or behavior of individual human beings or selves without considering the broader contexts in which those problems arise and are sustained.

Virgil's mental illness label makes a final appearance before it disappears, but by the time Virgil interrupts Ben's discussion of *Todd's* failure of dignity to say "*I think he got a mental illness,*" it has become a joke. It is quipped to produce the laughs it receives and, it seems, to truncate a line of thoughtful discussion. I speculated earlier that Ben's

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<sup>13</sup> Correction of this individualist tendency is a goal of poststructuralist narrative therapies, enacted by identifying (outing) the various controlling storylines or narratives involved in the maintenance of whatever problem has led to therapy initiation along with alternative narratives that refute the problem-maintaining storylines. Work is then pursued through letter writing, family work and other means to nurture those alternative narratives and their concomitant practices with potential to dislodge the individual and family from problematic circumstances (Madigan, 2011; White & Epston, 1990).



comments were heading in a direction that diverged too far from Virgil's optimism about his case, one that did not necessarily point to second or third chances. The bad joke of mental illness was an expedient brake on that conversational flow.

***Attitude problem (analysis, de-formation).***

After that interruption, the diagnostic label, bipolar, once again falls away in favor of the anexact mot juste, "attitude." This movement stands as an example of diagnostic language which fails to account for the rondure and complexity of persons (virtual or actual) apprehended in the fullness of their lived contexts, and of the transformation of clinical language into vernacular language. The problem with *Todd*, the problems with which we have struggled around this story, are problems of attitude. The simple term explodes in many-faceted valence about the problem. Illuminations emerge around disposition, posture, perspective (action impulse) and orientation.

The common or colloquial meaning and intention of the phrase here is plain. We do not like the way the young pilot acts toward the kindly old man who helps him, and the phrase ("bad attitude" or an "attitude problem") is meant to censure and admonish the young man. The accusation itself is spoken with a certain, peppery *attitude*. Apart, though, from the idiomatic sense, it is *Todd's* taciturn disposition toward the old man and his general pessimism and ill humor we find troubling and unpleasant. From a psychological perspective, we might call the latter a neurotic temperament or refer to negative or pessimistic habits of mind or thought, depending on our orientation. Each of these senses of the word *attitude* match in some way the group's sense of the young man.

But because, as previously noted, all of the terms and all of their senses are in play in the poetic deformation of the story-world-assemblage, other significances arise.

Attitude refers in another of its iterations to the disposition or posture given to a figure in a sculpture or painting. Think of the tiny proneness of Icarus splashing down relative to a leaning shepherd and the inclination of a ploughman in Breughel's *Icarus*—turning leisurely from disaster. This sense of the word brings an artist's intentions and deliberate manipulations of his subjects into play. How has Ellison positioned his protagonist, *Todd*? He is written into a posture of impossibility and failure, having already crash-landed when the story began. Icarus after the fall, only Black, injured and stranded in Jim-crow-era rural Alabama. Our sympathies are aroused by this recognition of what we might call *Todd's* radical and desperate thrownness. If the story were rendered as a frieze, *Todd* would never leave that field—the story begins and ends there. Even if the weird parade conveying *Todd* on his litter seems to be on its way (toward salvation?), we'll never see it leave, only the final glimpse of a large, shiny black buzzard silhouetted on the horizon. We see the aspirational heights, we see the lowest of the low, and we are left with an unresolved, impossible in-between.

But stopping here we would miss the interior posture of the pilot—his self-doubt, his naive, modern, bourgeois aspirations crashing against one hundred plus years of history written into the lines of *Jefferson's* face and hands. *Todd's* history and conflicts are dramatically rendered through memory and flashback according to another sense of "attitude." Here the word refers to the theatrical assumption of a posture. This sense suspends our concern with the author's perspective and brings us back to *Todd*—the living, breathing, bad-attitude-having dramatis persona we have been talking about for three weeks now. He is animated now, no longer carved in plaster, yet this sense of attitude highlights the adoption of posture as the fulfillment of a role; in response to

dramatic circumstances. This sense also emphasizes *Todd's* thrownness, but now we're also interested in his response. He is written, born, scripted into this scene, now what's he gonna do? This is where the group's criticism begins. Virgil and others recognize the crash as an "accident" and as a "stumbling block," even as a "failure," but they will not condone what they view as his paranoia, pessimism and his derisive, elitist treatment of *Jefferson*. He should focus on re-accomplishing his goals, says Virgil; "turn his stumbling blocks into stepping stones," quips Randy. *Jefferson's* tall tale offers *Todd* the encouragement of knowing that he has done his best and that regardless of accomplishment or failure of particular goals, the ultimate goal is to "soar at life."

I wonder how else he could have played the hand dealt him That's the sense of Ricoeur's (2005) suggestion about learning, by engaging with others' (fictional) stories, to self-narrate—to author our lives within constraints with which we are faced or to learn to do so differently, with more satisfactory outcomes or with greater self-coherence (integrity). The question is not simply academic, for in Ricoeur's formulation we learn to self-narrate by working to apprehend the resolution of conflicts in stories we engage. Albert Murray makes specific reference to posture in describing the reader's role as a "dance apprentice" in a workshop or studio who takes a position based on the text's imitation of real-life circumstance. The "landscape" created by the reader's posturing creates the ground for possible future actions (Murray A. , 1973, pp. 23-4). For re-narration and re-creation.

The psychological sense of "attitude" is dramatically revived and revised by noted literary critic and "father of the New Criticism," I.A. Richards (Elton, 1948, p. 153). In his Glossary of New Criticism, Elton attributes the following definition of "attitude" to

Richards: "the non-overt impulse to action involved in the poetic response of the reader" (p. 156). This use of the term was unknown to me prior to this investigation and I consider its appearance a gift. It is an instance of what Bachelard calls "pure sublimation," the serendipitous transmutation of mysteries into visible form through poetic imagination and language. Richards' own differentiation between the rhetorical modes of poetry and science provides a kind of explanation for this poetic process.

In its use of words poetry is just the reverse of science. Very definite thoughts do occur, but not because the words are so chosen as logically to bar out all possibilities but one. No. But because the manner, the tone of voice, the cadence and the rhythm play upon our interests and make *them* pick out from among an indefinite number of possibilities the precise particular thought which they need. This is why poetical descriptions often seem so much more accurate than prose descriptions (1926, p. 33).

The poetic sense of the image selects or allows for selection of appropriate descriptors from an indefinite number of possibilities.

John Crowe Ransom devotes the first chapter of *The New Criticism* (1941) to Richards, who he calls the "Psychological Critic,"<sup>14</sup> describing his Richards' abiding concern with the response of readers to poetry and, particularly, the precise mechanisms of emotional arousal in the experience. His sense of "attitude," then, leads us to reflexively consider our part in the predicaments of the text-assemblage. All of the analyzed (and analyzable) utterances of such a group can be considered to be partial-

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<sup>14</sup> Ransom smugly describes the psychological thinker as one "who invades our discussions by telling us that what we think is knowledge testifies less to any objective referent than to our own subjective emotions and desires" (p.11).

potential responses to poetic calls for action in the sense Richards gives to attitude(s). But these are only bare representation of the possibilities for action that are potentiated but not overtly taken. Ransom (1941) acknowledges the usefulness of scientific discourse in its proper place, but he insists that poetic encounter is needed to exercise the attitudes:

Poetry is needed as a complement to science because it is prepared to give the emotions and through them to the attitudes, their daily work-out; science intends to suppress them in order to map the objective world without distraction. Science is for use in our overt or gross practical enterprises, but poetry ministers directly to the delicate needs of the organism (p. 23).

Just as all possibilities of term and sense are in play in the story-world, so all of its possibilities for action and reaction are available to its readers. Retaliation, indifference, indignance, exuberance, anger, withdrawal.

Virgil leads a group response toward softening diagnostic pronouncement on *Todd* and toward a multilayered, anexact yet precise description of the problem of attitude in the text-circumstance. Ben identifies fears that motivate the pilot. A little later in the same session, Constance, eschewing others' descriptions of *Todd* as "delusional," notes that *Todd* seems "puzzled." Later still she softly speaks the same word to assess the state of things—of our assemblage—in the story's wake, "puzzling, puzzling." Randy's indignation at the story's end is distilled in the single, sternly repeated word, "insulting." He dismisses both *Todd* and *Graves* as "bipolar" by the story's end. Each of these are or suggest overt attitudes (quasi-actions) of participants at this point in the story. They say nothing of the myriad roads not taken.

The final sense of "attitude" comes from technical aeronautical terminology describing the orientation of an aircraft with respect to the horizon or another frame of reference. It is also used to describe the more complex relationship of an aircraft to its surroundings, particularly airflow and gravity. "Climb attitude" or "spin attitude" are examples of specific uses that imply more than simply nose up or nose down orientation ("attitude", n., n.d.). The implication is that at any given position, orientation and perspective vary along multiple axes. This sense highlights the levels of complexity with which we are grappling. The levels of metaphorical and literal relevance to our story are immediately apparent. "Attitude problem" here takes on the shimmering reverberation of Bachelard's poetic image. I see a wildly pitching gyroscope and spinning altimeter accompanying this phrase when applied to *Todd* the pilot's disorientation with respect first to the (literal-fictional) horizon and then with respect to his axis of spin ahead of his fall from the (literal-fictional) heavens. But *Todd's* orientation was, from the story perspective, skewed with respect to the horizon of race relations and personal aspirations in America's dawning modernity. We see this in his disdain for *Jefferson* and in his disorientation when torn from his protective mechanical shell with its instruments on which he relied to maintain his appropriate orientation—to tell him, literally, which way was up. And what about *Jefferson*? What about his orientation and perspective? Is he as "backward" and "ignorance" as we hear from *Todd*? Certainly he is with respect to a certain modern sensibility. Why would he stay there, 'in his place'? What about his exhortation to *Todd* that "*you got to come by the white folks too?*" Does he have the proper orientation with respect to the cultural horizon?

And the complications compound when we include ourselves in the equation. For we are each airplanes in flight and crashing, *Todd* in his various ages and iterations, *Jefferson*, *Graves* and the rest. And we are in position(s) relative to each of these as we consider the story. What is our position, our orientation with respect to these characters, their relations and their images? In the broadest sense, the better grasp we have on the variety of perspectives and orientations we occupy with respect to the myriad of possible horizons with which we are presented, the greater our opportunities for imaginal experimentation and re-narration of ourselves. Arbitration of what is the best or the right perspective or orientation is a matter of negotiation between individual and group sensibilities with the mediation of the text.

It seems there has been an explosion of significances, valences, and lines of nuance occasioned by the selection of a precise yet anexact thought from among indefinite possibilities generated within the text-assemblage. What's the story about? It's about a problem of attitude. In a sense, all stories pose problems of attitude. These puzzle our engagement—offer emotional workouts and stretch our perspective-taking capacities.

***Insulting buzzards (analysis, de-formation).***

The final example of poetic de-formation I wish to highlight here concerns Randy's struggle with Ellison's morbid joke about buzzards in "Flying Home." The reader will remember the significant presence of buzzards in "Flying Home." A buzzard was the efficient cause of *Todd's* crash. One of *Jefferson's* tales was of buzzards that glistening in the sunlight after feasting on the inside of a dead horse, and the final image given in the story text is of a buzzard flying into the sunset, transformed into a "bird of flaming gold"

(p. 173). You may also recall the Teddy's ironic name for the death birds, "Jim Crows."

Randy had a strong reaction to the joke:

*Rod*

*but the one about the buzzards was gross, it was um, They the damndest birds, once I seen a horse all stretched out like it was sick so I hollered get up from there just to make sure and dog on if I don't see two Jim crows, Teddy he calls those buzzards Jim Crows and we wondered if that was funny or not.*

*{Randy shakes head, "no"}*

*Rod*

*Not funny, Randy thinks that is not funny at all.*

*Randy*

*Because you don't wanna be called the Jim Crow.*

*Rod*

*well he's calling buzzards Jim Crow*

*Randy*

*He's calling buzzards Jim Crow, ya know if you think about that, the person Jim Crow and we don't wanna be called Uncle Tom.*

*Rod*

*That's right, that's right so you think it would be insulting to the buzzards to be called Jim Crow or...*

*Randy*

*I don't know, I'm not too sure. But it would probably be insulting.  
[session 4, lines 833-856]*

As in other examples of de-formations, this one entails becoming-assemblage. Randy joins in an unnatural participation with the buzzards, a becoming-buzzard in which he takes their part against the insult of being referred to as Jim Crows. This block also entails and establishes an equivalence among racial epithets: "Jim Crow," "Uncle Tom," and, arguably, *Dabney Graves'* "Nigguh," that will appear later in the story. Randy's becoming-buzzard is also a becoming-*Todd*, since the pilot is so closely associated with the Jim Crows' symbolism throughout the story. *Todd* admires and is reviled by them



and, when he can endure no more of *Jefferson's* (presumed) mocking, he shouts, "Why do you laugh at me this way?.. Can I help it because they won't let us actually fly? Maybe we are a bunch of buzzards feeding on a dead horse, but we can hope to be eagles, can't we? *Can't we?*" (pp. 160-1).

The de-formation here has to do with the ubiquity of insult around racial bigotry. The buzzards are vile and disgusting death-eaters and death-dealers in this story, nearly "making a meal" out of pilot *Todd*. Their very presence is insulting. But even they do not deserve the insulting Jim Crow appellation. Insulters and insulted change places. No one escapes the tincture of this insult. Randy is not particularly strident in his refusal of the joke but here, as he is at the story's end, he is thoughtful and grave as he considers and repeats the word, "insulting." We will see in the following section Randy's response, primed by his association to the image of those insulting birds.

## **Re-narration**

We don't have to hear dramatic life changes or talk in terms of liberation or personal empowerment to see the potential benefits of the movements and transformations that have been described. The becoming-vernacular of mental health talk potentially bridges a widely acknowledged divide between providers and clients (Charon, 2006) and establishes common ground (rapport) through common language (Cowan, 1993). As a mental health practitioner I appreciate what I have learned about common usage of mental health jargon and its functions in conversation and in (virtual) real life family circumstances. It may be a tool for manipulation and coercion. It sometimes stifles innovation by stopping conversation and debate as it did or threatened to do in our conversations. It tends to insist that it knows precisely what is going on and that the discussion need not proceed. It flattens character(s). It cannot, in these cases, open possibilities for the kind of critical appropriation of context and subsequent self-re-narration suggested by Ricoeur and demonstrated here. However, as mental health talk is subjected to the novelizing forces (Bakhtin, 2006) of poetic fiction it is swept up in centrifugalizing heteroglossia. It retains its connection to mental health establishment and its treatment modalities, but gains valence with the colloquial, experience-near understandings of everyday struggles. In the very process of this becoming-vernacular, that possibilities are opened for re-imagining and re-narration.

These are the things I can demonstrate: an emotional workout, innumerable opportunities for considered (virtual or potential) activity, changing valences or points of contact and plug-in to the assemblages at work in this study and speculations about their impact elsewhere in participants' lives now and in the future. Although I have referred to

individual participants by name throughout the presentation of these findings, my comments here about individual participants represent a departure from my previous ways of referring to them. Here, in addition to considering aspects of participants in becoming-assemblage(s) with me, other participants, our story-texts, etc, I am considering participants as individuals separate from those assemblages who have moved away into different aspects of their lives, plugging into all manner of other kinds of assemblages and becomings. I am thrown into the tension of (provisionally) assigning narrative identity, at once commenting on a singular activity germane to an extended moment of assemblage belonging not just to each individual but equally to me, while simultaneously speculating as to a continuous characterization of each individual subjectivity, coherent across multiple emergent assemblages (which is to say not at all belonging to me).

I feel in this section I am stepping across a threshold from collective to individual (though not in any absolute sense). That is, whereas I have felt as though I am speaking from the inside of a phenomenon (assemblage) I now feel as though I am speaking about individual participants from the outside. More than questioning the 'take home' message or the moral of the story, this question of re-narration is a matter of deepening the thresholding tensions, discussed in my statement of critical perspective, between individual and collective as well as between individual as continuous and individual as situated. We are individuals that participate in collectivities, yes, but even our individualities are called into question. (Remember, we are all little groups, after all.) In this sense, the individuality/collectivity threshold is subsumed by the continuity/particularity threshold. Narrative identity is the tension of personal coherence

and integrity in the midst of the turbulence of shifting multiplicities, assemblage-affiliations and (unnatural) machinic becomings that comprise our experience. Literary fiction gives us opportunities to practice our thresholding skills. But my reticence to pronounce or confer narrative identity on others is overblown. It is enough to acknowledge that my pronouncements as researcher/critic are no more and no less provisional and partial than my self-pronouncements and self-understandings. Our judgments and evaluations always require poetic license. They are imaginative acts. We just have to remember not to take them too literally.

*Peoples' exodus (analysis, re-narration).*

As with the other sections of this analysis and this progression of becoming-deformation-re-narration, this section is interpenetrated by the others, and so this section on re-narration begins with a de-formation. Similar to one we have already seen, this de-formation relates to the difficult dialect in a Zora Neale Hurston story, this time "Escape from Pharaoh." Hurston's fictionalized account of the Biblical Exodus story focuses on Moses' struggles against the Egyptian ruler but also his struggles to win the confidence of the Hebrew people. The story presents a kind of peoples' history of the Exodus in which ordinary (Hebrew) folks complain that, among other things, if they've been freed, they should be able to go fishing tomorrow rather than pack up all of their earthly belongings and prepare to walk into the desert. The dialog is not as difficult as that we found in "John Redding," but it employs Hurston's plainspoken and occasionally broken, southern dialect. This was a striking discovery for Sophie:

*Rod  
and then they're sayin theyre not sure they have too much confidence in him. its  
interesting to see what the author, cuz obviously we dont find these things in the*

*old testament story right of the exodus. we dont find people complaining to moses that they want to go fishing the next day, or they dont want to pack up and leave, right. so this is her version of the story. this is her fictional account of what people might have sed or thought and we get a little bit different version of moses than we usually do, right?*

*Sophie*  
*why do people talk like they did back then?*

*Rod*  
*why did?*

*Sophie*  
*why did they talk, ya know,*

*Rod*  
*like [how]*

*Sophie*  
*[they] accent ( \_ \_ ) they talk. they [inherited that] or what?*

*Rod*  
*[how did they talk?] Um, which accents? whadda you mean, the way she's writing?*

*Sophie*  
*tha way theyre talkin*

*Rod*  
*the way theyre talking in the in her stories?*

*Sophie*  
*uh huh*

This sequence demonstrates Sophie's initial involvement in the story at a different level of hypotheticalness than mine. When she asks why they're talking like that, I am initially confused and I answer in terms of the author's creative device: "*the way she's writing?*" No, Sophie answers, "*the way they're talking.*" Of course neither are literally true, but both are virtually true and operative in our assemblage.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Sophie's version is more virtually true while my version is more literally true.

*Rod*

*why do you think? why do you think? she, well, um, she writes, and remember in some of her earlier stories we had a hard time reading some of her dialect, its a very, we sed that she wrote the conversations of i think country people like where she wuz from like from*

*Sophie*

*oh, [they were country?]*

*Rod*

*[her rural home.] well thats whats interesting, shes writing um the the dialog in this story the same as she writes it in other stories that are about the rural south in the twentieth century*

*Sophie*

*probly ( ) from slavery huh?*

*Rod*

*uh huh*

*Sophie*

*probly they (didnt learn to read back there [in slavery])*

*rod*

*i think thats right i think thats right, so shes again shes making a connection between her own people and the hebrew people way back when, so she writes the same dialog=*

*Rod*

*=in the same accents even though we know the hebrews would have been speaking a different language and we dont know what their speech woulda sounded like cuz nobody nobody wuz around back then. so shes again she using her imagination. this is how she imagines it to be. thats a good question, you know, why is she writing you know the speech like that? uhm.. do you think that shes even making a statement about people of her time, you know, and their reactions to bein free and wondrin what does it mean to be free. i mean, swappin one bossman for another? whadoes at make you think of, anything?*

*Sophie*

*in moses moses an ems days, i didnt know they you know talked in nat kinda speech.*

*Rod*

*right, and i think they probably didnt. i think they probably didnt but when she's writing this story, she chooses to have them speaking like that. yeah, i agree its a*

*funny its a funny thing, it doesnt. i mean this is not we dont read this in the king james bible, right? it didnt sound [anything like that]*

*group {chorus}  
[no, no]*

*rod  
in the bible. so she's trying to make the story more familiar i think to try and get us in mind of the well, what [might it have been like]*

*sophie  
[she did a good job in writing the story though]*

*rod  
i think so too, its, i think so too, it really does give us a different feeling about it. um, i think shes asking what might it have been like to actually be there. what would it have been like if moses came to you and sed okay, you know, we've been here for three generations now, it's time for us to leave. might we go, what? i dont know. i dont know if i want to follow this guy. um.*

*Sophie  
i would want to know where we wuh goin.  
[session 6, lines 1294-1390]*

Sophie started out pretty engaged with this story, as did most participants. It was familiar to all of them and some said they had recently studied it in Bible School. Randy reminded us of the famous performances by Charlton Heston and Yul Brynner in the classic movie version. But Sophie's involvement takes on a different animation from this point in discussion. She is drawn into engagement by a noted self-similarity in the story dialect, not unlike Betty's recognition of herself ("country girl") in the "John Redding" dialog. Like Betty, she finds herself a foreigner in her native tongue, but here the de-formation has an added dimension because it is a deterritorialization of her expectations about *Biblical* language. Never before has she heard the complaints of ordinary people (or perhaps given a thought to the presence of "ordinary people" in Bible stories) on that day of departure or heard their entreaties in a language so similar to her own. She repeats a variation of the revelation four times in the session, "*I didn't know they talked like that,*"

with its implication "*I didn't know they talked like me.*" She adds at one point that the characters "*got out what they really wanted to get across—they got it out,*" suggesting that not only were ordinary people actually involved in this momentous, mythical-historical event, but that in Hurston's version they were capable of making themselves heard. On her final repetition of the revelatory phrase, she indicates her flexibility regarding levels of hypotheticalness, rephrasing her statement in an acknowledgment of metaphorical understanding and flexibility:

*Sophie*  
*[(i didnt)] know if they [talked] that way.*

*Rod*  
*[yeah they]*

*Sophie*  
*they mightve talked that way*  
*[session 6, lines 2007-2014]*

Sophie's surprise at discovering that these Biblical figures "talk like me" demonstrates all three principles explored in this analysis (becoming-assemblage, deformation, re-narration) *and their progression*. Sophie is engaged in the text-story-author-setting assemblage when the 'way I talk' part of her plugs into 'they talk like that too?' part of the story-text. Her surprise suggests that her previous beliefs about Biblical figures (and about Biblical, Ecumenical authority?) is de-formed by this device, though we do not know to what degree. How might Sophie's relationship to Biblical history change as a result of her encounter? Might this experience nudge her in the direction of a greater degree of personal participation in her religious and faith practices? Of course I cannot say. Even without speculating as to the degree or direction of the change however, to the extent that her presumptions and expectations regarding Biblical history have been



changed in a truly surprising way, her relationship to Biblical truth must have changed as well. And that change surely portends and even entails a change in her own story—her self-narration or narrative identity.

Ricoeur suggests that literary engagement affords readers experiences with the intersections of the continuous self and the contingent self. Recognition of ourselves in the conflicts and dilemmas experienced by fictional characters or real-life others is a step toward refining what Paul Ricoeur terms *narrative identity* (2005, p. 101). "Learning to narrate oneself is also learning how to narrate oneself in other ways," by encountering and negotiating the dialectic of the enduring, immutable dimension of self (*idem*) and the changing, particular, historical self (*ipse*). It is the "intersection of coherence conferred by emplotment and the discordance arising from the peripeteia within the narrated action" that defines personal identity as narrative identity. The engagement with poetic texts becomes a crucible for working out this profound mystery of self-understanding and self-creation—how will I go on in the face of inevitable crises and day to day challenges that threaten the coherence of my story? My very sense of myself?

Narrative identity and re-narration have to do with developing coherent yet flexible self-understandings in the face of innumerable contextual complexities and contingencies. They have to do with writing one's own story and nimbly re-writing it when the world changes again and again and again. This is the experience of literary engagement, Ransom's emotional workout and the dance workshop described by Murray. It is what happened to Sophie. Her understanding of Biblical history—a significant dimension of her overall worldview—shifted surprisingly through her reading and our discussion of Hurston's story. As the world changes, we change. Through my literary

engagements I become multiple—hypothetically, virtually, but in full participation. I multiply my valences. Re-narration means changing the world and my place(s) in it. It is about how I continue to plug into all of the other assemblages and moments (haecceities) of which I am and will be part and which comprise the me I understand me to be. This is individuation with a different unit of measurement—not of the "self" but of self-in-context. The paradox of self-continuity and self-contingency. This is the task of re-narration.

***Insulting buzzards (analysis, re-narration).***

Other examples of movements and potential re-narrations are entailed in the becomings and transformations we have already seen in the transcript-text. Randy's previously outlined de-formational encounter with insulting buzzards is already transformational in that it deepened the experience of the insult of racial bigotry, prejudice and hatred. No one, not even those disgusting, bloody, scavenging vultures deserves to be referred to that way—as Jim Crows or as Uncle Toms. The magnitude of his indignation at the violence of the story's ending seems primed by his refusal of the jimcrow joke—*Jefferson's* joke, Ellison's joke—earlier on. It's simply not funny. By the story's end, he has a ready response to all this hatred, forcefully bringing to bear the pride of the Tuskegee Airmen and other heavy hitters of African American history and the Civil Rights Movement including CJ Walker, Booker Washington, GW Carver and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., right up through the election and presidency of Barack Obama. The (failed) joke turned insult directed against the buzzards enacts a becoming-buzzard of Randy who feels the racial epithets of the story personally but also hypothetically through the image of the birds. The transformation, in the story's final scene, of the

buzzard to a bird of flaming gold is recapitulated in Randy's stirring, sweeping and prideful monologue. The insult is real, it is serious and tarnishing, but there are a lot of resources to bring to bear in its contradiction. Here, the world has changed due to a shift in Randy's perspective. Engagement with the story and its insulting, insulted buzzards has enforced an unwanted, insulted perspective on Randy and has prompted a response. Now, one might argue that there's nothing new in the content—the historical knowledge—of Randy's response. But its deployment in the face of a personal insult potentiated by the story's imagery and action may be something new. At least it seems to present a newly aspected relationship to issues of racism and insult. It is a statement of collective and personal pride he punctuates by stating,

*Randy*

*=an i realize there aint- nothin wrong with [this town].*

*Rod*

*{nodding}*

*Randy*

*nothin wrong with [this town]. i lak tha town, so there you go.*

*[session 4, lines 2425-2432]*

I have no doubt that Randy has here rewritten himself and his story in the face of his experience of the story.

***Caught in the weeds (analysis, re-narration).***

We saw the becoming-ships of Betty and also her becoming stuck and then becoming unstuck through free flowing dialog with Randy and others. Her experience of self-recognition in the story as well as in the experiences of fellow participants and then her experience of herself speaking aloud about what had previously been caught "inside," are already a re-narrating experience and point to possibilities for further revisions of her

typical ways of understanding herself and her stuckness. How will she carry forward her ship-ness with its possibilities of (conversational) free flow? How might her laid back "country girl" raise its voice to hearing above the din at the water's edge? Again, these questions point to potentialities demonstrably enacted in our transcript-text.

***Loosening up (analysis, re-narration).***

Transcript-text segments demonstrate a movement in the direction of loosening-up on Ben's part. He came into our sessions as the strict and serious diagnostician, gravely delivering formal and concrete interpretations as in that early one about *John Redding's* family being in a cult and trying to say that he was gay (and remember the formal reply, "I concur," after I disagreed with him). It seemed that practice and exposure within the group to multiple perspectives shifted Ben's own perspective. We saw earlier how he seemed to struggle to describe a messy family circumstance. There I said that he seemed to fall back on clinical language as a kind of comfort. Still, he demonstrated a willingness to get into the fully contextual mess with the rest of us and try to figure it out. Several sessions later, Ben offered a thoughtful and *abstract* explanation of the *Todd's* grandmother's (dreamed) idiomatic expression, 'young man, yo arm's too short to box with God,' stating that "*God gotta lot planned fa him ta be somethin else instead of a pilot. she sayin that you fightin with God when tha real plan is fa you ta be somethin else.*" If it does not represent a re-narration in itself, this movement into and across levels of hypotheticalness and metaphor within our transcript-text suggests possibilities of re-narration for Ben based on the operations of de-formation described here.

*Dissent and recusal (analysis, re-narration).*

The most blatant and overt action demonstrably undertaken by a participant must be Virgil's recusal from the final two sessions. Although some re-narration is, I think, clearly implied, its nature remains a matter of speculation. As I stated previously, I must take Virgil at his word: he left the group because he felt undefined tension and conflict building and did not wish to subject himself to their influence. Still, in the spirit of this investigation, all aspects and possible iterations of this action are fair game for consideration. All are in play. Among the most obvious possibilities is that his action represents the clearest of flight-lines, perhaps. A simple refusal of all stratification and territorialization. A protest against the historical racism and racial violence in the Ellison story. Against, perhaps, the White antagonist or the author or against me (another White antagonist?) for foisting it upon the group. Or, perhaps against what he perceived as my overly controlling facilitation and insistence regarding certain interpretations of the text.

Aside from obvious possibilities, two are most salient for me. One is that Virgil steadfastly refuses to "play the race card" on *Todd's* behalf. His refusal of race and our dispute and Virgil's eventual decision to leave represent an admirable defense of personal responsibility on Virgil's part. Second is the possibility that the inversions and proliferation of perspectives in Virgil's relationship to story characters and actions and the attendant implications for self-understanding may have become untenable for him.

As to the first possibility, my insistence on talking about certain elements of racism in the story may amount to attempting to make the story too much about race in an overarching sense. Virgil's resistance to this effort is a steadfast affirmation of personal responsibility and a refusal to resort to race as an excuse—refusal to "play the race card."

It may even be that my insistence has the obverse effect of critical practices and language in (White) literary criticism that obscures race—or the "Africanist presence"—in White literature, as Toni Morrison argues, robbing us of the opportunity of discovering "the nature—even the cause—of literary 'whiteness'" and the role it plays in the "construction of what is loosely described as 'American'" (1992). Perhaps it wasn't mine to talk about. Decrying the racism safely (hypothetically) contained in the story, I somehow made it alright for me to be there talking about somebody else's racism. It is an appropriation and cooption of discourse and an inadvertent power move. The White group facilitator in the absurd position of arguing to a group of Black participants that racism is really, really bad.

The story is not all about race and racism, but prejudice and the threat of racist violence permeates the action. *Graves'* appearance at the story's denouement seems to confirm the opposite conclusion—that it really is all about racism. His brutal fulfillment of *Todd's* worst fears suggests racial violence as an existential threat so great as to trump all other concerns. Issues of individual and relational psychology are muted, truncated by its activity. *Todd's* desperate wish to be considered an individual, apart from his race, is ultimately impossible, as is, then, Virgil's desire to consider nonracial aspects of *Todd's* predicament. Not only will the sharecropper, the white officer, and the southern bigot all consider him only as a representative of his race, ultimately we, his observers, even in the luxury of our unsolicited and unforced arbitration will judge him as the victim of racist violence. He will not get a fair hearing. His real errors and flaws forgotten or unacknowledged, the demons of his self-doubt unexorcised.

The second possibility is that the inversions that were in play within the becoming-blocks of which Virgil was part became too uncomfortable. After all, he was aligned with *Jefferson* but also with *Todd*. *Jefferson* was a man of wisdom, knowledge and understanding but he was also an "ass-kisser" and an "Uncle Tom" [session 3, lines 1645-1655]. In the same way that *Todd's* insults entailed the unflattering dimensions of becoming-*Jefferson*, Virgil's alliance with the old sharecropper is sure to be a mixed bag. In this inversion, in the multifarious nature of his affiliation with *Jefferson*, we see a similar general strategy: simultaneous affirmation and rejection of dominance that we saw in the old sharecropper's tall tale about flying in Heaven (Ostendorf, 1976) and in his strategies for 'coming by the white folks'. Something may have shaken loose in the midst of all those inversions that felt uncomfortable about Virgil's relationship to me as facilitator, as mental health authority, or to the clinic as a whole. Either way, the only possibility was to leave. The world has changed and the (narrative) self—and its actions—along with it.

***Self-re-narration (analysis, re-narration).***

I suppose that I am the one participant for whom I can speak with certainty as to particular re-narrations resulting from this study. And still, their ultimate trajectory and resulting attitudes remain uncertain. In the course of this document I have written myself into a new personal history and have mapped, tentatively, new territory based on changing conceptualizations of myself as clinician, researcher, and reader.

Specifically and most striking to me, the vernacularization of mental health talk, particularly in Ben's responses to "John Redding," has meant revisiting and confronting, in my own family history (Grandfather, bipolar), the vast difference between the

diagnostic label—its declarative, clinical significance—and the increasingly bizarre and confusing family circumstances it came to euphemize. It was a relief, a godsend really, to be able to pin all of the confusion and badness on that powerful little word. But the conceptual fix was temporary. The slippage between the label and the actuality it tried to represent was just too great. Too great to ignore and too great to adequately address for me and for everyone else it seemed. I might trace the beginning of my clinical career to that slippery metonymy. To a world that changed completely and to competing strategies for restoring order, coherence.



## Discussion

### Summary of Findings

The Findings have presented a close reading and interpretive commentary on the transcript-text, laying the groundwork for an Analysis section connecting the interpretations to organizing theoretical constructs. This structure of progressive distillation yields, I believe, a coherent rationale for the initial interpretive strategy and for the employment of literary fiction in mental health settings. Here, I summarize findings particular to the sessions and stories of this study as well as findings that may be generalizable to future research and clinical and community practice.

#### **Particular findings.**

##### *Ease of engagement.*

I was struck by how easily, seamlessly we "entered into" the fictional worlds of the stories we engaged. I suppose that I prepared to answer a lot of questions about why we should be reading this or that. This finding can be attributed to the voluntary nature of the group. Participants really wanted to be there and their actions supported their verbal reports that they enjoyed the group.

I noted earlier the lack of something easily identified as literary discourse related to this point. It has to do with enjoyment and with the inviting nature of literary texts. We get easily drawn into stories. We become them or become allied with them in the language of this study.

### *Story selection.*

These analyses take note only of those activations that have passed a threshold of liminality, surfacing in language or affectation, thereby subjecting themselves to the short-handled dip net of exploration. Countless unseen activations, as suggested by Sarbin (2004) and Richards (Ransom, 1941) are inspired by poetic, imaginative engagement. No two reading groups would yield similar results—even given identical texts.

The selection of stories for this study presented the group with a good variety of potential loci of engagement or plugging in points. Local authors wrote in (mostly) familiar language about familiar settings and themes including everyday family life with its banalities and its struggles as well as familiar historical circumstances. That initial familiarity facilitated, I think, our relatively seamless engagements. No one seemed entirely left out or alienated by the stories, with the exception of Kipling's *Rikki Tikki Tavi*. Again, it was on our list by way of contrast, and it succeeded as such. A foreign author (authorial (imperial) voice or tone), setting, and world-presentation (the magical realism of talking animal characters) seemed enough to distance the group from significant engagement.

It is not surprising that the most and richest engagements corresponded to the stories with the greatest tension and most difficulty. My sense is that these stories, "John Redding" and "Flying Home," in our case, provided the greatest emotional workout for all of us. Recall the transcriber's note at the final end of our discussions of Ellison's story: "*group seems weary of such serious talk.*" She was certainly right. This issue will reappear in Limitations and Future Directions, but it bears mention here: my awareness

heightened during the sessions of the degree to which our experiences with literary fiction are *real* experiences. That the family dramas and racial hatred and violence and threats of violence, because of the successful mimetic operation, act as powerful evocations of participants' past experiences and as present-tense experiences in their own right. That does not mean that I would shy away from difficult stories in the future, but it does bear constant awareness and care regarding participants' wellbeing. In the future I may elect to preview difficult stories for participants so that no one is entirely blindsided by such difficult material.

*Attitude.*

*Todd's* "Attitude problem," for me, arises from this study as a reverberating, illuminating literary image "alive with the life of living language" (Bachelard G. , 1943/2002, pp. 2-3). Simultaneously, it is a particularized exemplar of vernacular language which proves to be far superior in its capacity for polyvalent description of complex, multilayered and heterogeneous circumstances than clinical, diagnostic language. I don't wish to overstate the importance of this particular finding, but I will never again hear the word in the same way. In future engagements with this story it will certainly arise, as it may in other literary and nonliterary therapeutic circumstances owing to the flexibility and breadth of its descriptive scope. But also in ordinary, idiomatic use, its aspects have much to say or question about point of view and about what it means to have a bad attitude or an attitude problem.<sup>16</sup> As surprised as I was by the polyvalent fitness of the term attitude to the problem of *Todd* in the text-assemblage, I was struck by

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<sup>16</sup> I am thinking here as a teacher of undergraduate college students who hears this phrase frequently from students and colleagues alike.

the slow, continuous process of the emergence of that fit. I was actually the first one to utter the word attitude in the transcript, but the breadth of its application did not unfold until it had been worked through the text and through multiple participants' working over the text.

In the resonance we hear the poem, in the reverberations we speak it, it is our own. The reverberations bring about a change of being....It is as though the poem, through its exuberance, awakened new depths in us....The reverberation...involves bringing about a veritable awakening of poetic creation, even in the soul of the reader, through the reverberations of a single poetic image. By its novelty, a poetic image sets in motion the entire linguistic mechanism. The poetic image places us at the origin of the speaking being (Bachelard G. , 1958/1994, pp. xxii-xxiii).

### **General findings.**

#### ***A three-part movement of literary imagination.***

Specific examples drawn from the transcript-text and explicated in the Theoretical Analysis repeatedly demonstrate a common trajectory in participants' engagements. Their engagements are productively described from the perspective of becoming and assemblage, transformations and, more specifically, poetic or linguistic de-formations are demonstrated to be entailed in their becomings, and finally, alterations in participants' ongoing relationships to contingencies of the broader world (with its multiplicity of assemblages) are described as re-narrations or proliferations of valence which participants will carry forward in indeterminate ways.

Broadly, there is a twofold justification for the assemblage-becoming perspective adopted in the study and in the analysis. First, it is a helpful language for describing what happens in the literary engagement which also entails valuation of creativity and innovation that matches my own sense of what is therapeutic—of what clinical psychology should be aiming for. Second (and related to the first), the very language of becoming and assemblage avoids the kind of objectifying subjectification that Foucault discovered in the medicalization of madness (Madigan, 2011). Attention to the uniqueness of moments and movements of assemblage (haecceities)—in this case, the movements of and within the transcript-text—removes the temptation and necessity of treating—describing and thereby constructing—individual, mentally ill subjects. Notice that the only diagnoses in this study are fictional ones. There are individuals, yes, with their own trajectories beyond the present study. The emphasis on assemblage, however, lends a balance in the direction of co-existence, collectivity, and emergence to the understanding of what it is to be a patient and a person.

***Vernacularization of mental health talk.***

We have seen the twofold de-formation of occurrences of mental health talk in our sessions. Diagnostic terms are held up in suspension so that we can better understand some of the ways they are used colloquially. Then, owing to the levels of mimetic hypotheticalness in the virtual playground of the fictional/poetic world, the terms are transformed radically enough so as to disappear altogether, replaced by rich and messy descriptions and polyvalent, anexact (poetical) language that nonetheless seems more accurate than clinical descriptors.

Mental health terminology exists, ostensibly, to lend a common language to mental health practitioners and a systematic classification for sufferers so as to facilitate the alleviation of their suffering. As such, mental health discourse has an important place and important tasks to perform. But we also know, thanks to Foucault and others (Foucault, 1961/1988; 1971/1972; Parker, et. al., 1995), that mental health discourses participate in the construction and maintenance of the objects they purport to describe and classify. They reify the processes of dis-ease that they wish to cure. And, from the present study, we know that they are frequently inadequate to the description and understanding of complex, radically contextualized, real-life circumstances that are mimetically represented in literary fiction. Instances of mental health discourse in our sessions appeared to stop conversation and debate, flatten character(s), centripetalize the constellation of their assemblages, and territorialize complex circumstances according to their reductive nosologies. These instances and uses of mental health talk cannot, then, open possibilities for heterogeneous encounters of the kind that encourage self-re-narration in Ricoeur's sense. Diagnostic language relies on routinization and standardization for its usefulness. But it leaves us stuck retracing our discursive steps, pacing the same worn and problem-saturated ground. However, we have also seen that as mental health discourse encounters the de-formations of literary imagination, it tends toward colloquial uses that encourage precisely these kinds of experiences of renewal. In the process of the becoming-vernacular of mental health discourse, possibilities are opened for re-imagining and re-narration. Stories move us. Even if they move us in unpleasant or difficult directions, we move through those difficulties and move on (the cathartic function of Tragedy relies in part on this narrative feature).

I find Ricoeur's work, cited in the Introduction, is in keeping with the value of novelization and multiplying perspectives. He argues for enhancement of narrative identity through critical consideration of the fictional character's situation at a threshold between continuity and historical specificity. This is a movement toward a kind of narrative or imaginative flexibility in fiction readers. The result is not simply to make us better readers of fiction, but to potentially alter individuals' perceptions of and therefore their co-constitutional decisions and practices regarding the realities they live each day. Imaginative flexibility is implied in Deleuze & Guattari's serial worldview symbolized by the "and...and...and" that replaces the categorical worldview of "either...or..." (1980/2005). It is the difference between inclusion of a variety of perspectives by asking about the conditions of possibility for each (how is this possible and what are its implications for the world?) and exclusion based on inflexible categorical and often binary thinking and discourse. Medicalized mental health and diagnostic discourse usually corresponds to the latter, less flexible, worldview.

Vernacularization is a democratic movement or power shift, restoring authorship--the authority necessary for the (re)creation of narrative identity--to the person. It wrests authority, in part, from the typical power-holders: institutions and their practices and discourses that do not necessarily want the power and control that they wield by default. Responsibility for selfhood / subjectivity is too great a burden for our helping professionals and institutions. They are already burdened beyond their ability and beyond reasonable expectations for what they should be able to do. Assigning identities is an activity beyond their scope. Fiction reading and discussion groups return authority as well as responsibility for this task to consumers (clients). The kind of critical

consideration of the vicissitudes of employment described by Ricoeur cannot be imparted by a therapist as part of a psychoeducational group session; this work is un-manualizable. The work must be done by and through individuals and groups, its outcome always unpredictable. It fosters self-efficacy as it builds a body of community-sponsored and client-centered knowledge and self-identification. Rather than creating and reifying its own wisdom, in this kind of activity the community mental health institution supports and ratifies its clients' capacities to understand and create meanings for themselves.

***Building communitas.***

Another finding not specifically investigated in this analysis, but indubitably present in the study's execution, involves my sense of the reading group as appropriate to a philosophy of community mental health that emphasizes cultivation of healthy and vital community. Ritual elements of our gathering, like the regular time and place of our gatherings and the food (not meals, but tasty breakfast treats) we shared, that are common to other kinds of group activities are part of this sense. But other elements seem more specific to fictional engagement. These more specific elements include the shared becomings through identification with story elements and characters as well as the sharing of personal associations and experiences that followed on these textual engagements. Assemblage is, perhaps, a colder word for community.

Reading together is a particularly community-building experience, as described by Cowan: "in contrast to the ordinary, hierarchical, standardized, and competitive operations of society, governed by what [Victor] Turner calls Structure, *communitas* provides an intense experience of the equalitarian, diverse, and cooperative mode of Anti-Structure" (1993, p. 14). *Communitas* is cultivated when groups—temporary unities



assembled for creative purpose—follow their own inner direction, while at the same time they are guided and grounded by the texts under their consideration. Anti-Structure forms culture and provides the "rich and multifarious" life of a society by providing non-deterministic spaces and opportunities in which participants are free to redefine themselves in an expanded "moral cosmos." The analogical and dialogical engagement of individuals within the author-text-reader assemblage recapitulates the radically contextual nature of the fictional story world—rich in the incessant, fresh particularity that enlists emotion and attitude. The individual becomes part of a larger world, the *communitas* of puzzling together over uncertainties of great importance to ourselves and others who have become our fellows through the endeavor.

Hospitality seems natural to these gatherings. Maybe this has to do with the inversions and multiple (hypothetical) roles, including multiple iterations of hosting and being hosted (guesting?)—and reversals across threshold between these two—involved in becoming-other in the text assemblages. We puzzle over dimensions of the text. We negotiate disagreements and their resolutions or lack thereof. We practice living with certain tensions and disagreements. And we also struggle with getting, literally, on the same page with one other.

Implied in Ricoeur's possibility of self-re-narration is understanding that others can tell their stories and retell and revise them too. And that we do this all of the time. This is akin to the experience and development of empathy. Fiction reading is practicing with the mutability and co-constitution of everyday experience. Current and ongoing neuroimaging research (Mar, Oatley, Djikic, & Mullin, 2011; Mar, Oatley, Hirsh, dela Paz, & Peterson, 2006) suggests that fiction reading stimulates mirror neurons in parts of

the brain implicated in human empathetic responses. The present study finds concordant evidence in the language of reading and discussion participants. Becoming, transformation and re-narration are empathetic movements. Part of what participants are doing is "becoming" each other, becoming the characters they read about, becoming, in a larger sense, the world. Becoming is also belonging; coming to be housed in a world that is, in part, of our own making. It is shaping and forming the world in our own image, reducing, perhaps, our own alienation. You can have your moon. I'm sticking with my tree frog.

### **Limitations of the Present Study**

#### **Story selection.**

As noted above, the story selection had its intended effect, streamlining engagement among participants with the noted exception of the Kipling story. That said, story selection was haphazard except for the local connections. In the future, I will experiment with selections differentiated by thematic content and genre at least. I wouldn't shy away from difficult stories but I might provide some warning in the spirit of a specific continuation of informed consent so that participants have a better sense of what's coming. I feel participants were a little blindsided by the difficulties of the Ellison story.

#### **Facilitation.**

Re-reading the transcript-text, I found myself critical of a lack of focus and consistent point of view in my facilitation of the group. Through the present study and analysis, however, I can envision the kind of perspective I would like to develop as both

facilitator and critical commentator. Broadly, this perspective will attempt to adopt an optimal hold on the tension between fidelity to text-assemblage and to the possible perspectives (valences) related to it.

### **Analysis.**

Similarly to the noted limitation regarding facilitation, the analysis lacked focus, certainly in the beginning. Again, the findings of this study provide coherent rationale for the method and interpretive strategy eventually adopted. This rationale will guide future research and practice and will certainly continue to be refined.

### **Recommendations for researchers.**

Each statement of limitations is its own recommendation for how to do something differently the next time. Specifically I would make three recommendations at three levels of abstractness. First and most abstract, it may only be possible to identify one's critical perspective in retrospect, with the coming-into-view of the phenomena of interest. Still, I will plan to build that reflection more intentionally into the research process at earlier steps, so as to work (facilitate, analyze) more intentionally from that process and to be able to revise that process along the way. I think this would partly alleviate my sense of having intervened somewhat haphazardly and then having to reflectively interpret those interventions entirely in hindsight.

Second, at a moderate level of abstraction, I would streamline the data collection and analysis process as much as possible to allow analyses to inform the group process. Rather than collecting an entire body of recordings for transcription and analysis after the conclusion of the group, I would develop specific but not deterministic criteria for

selecting data segments from the videorecording viewed in the days immediately following each session. Then only those segments could be transcribed and analyzed in detail. While there is a satisfying sense of completeness in the transcripts included here, I am not convinced of their usefulness for research or therapeutic purposes. Undoubtedly, given this procedure, one might miss significant sections of text and what happens in the reading of text that cannot be or is unlikely to be noticed without close reading of complete transcriptions. One possible solution to this problem would involve in-session preparation for initial analysis. The facilitator would, during sessions, as we read, mark passages to return to for analysis. Therapeutic listening is wanted here. Significant pauses and interruptions, errors, etc. all get noted in the margins of the original text during sessions and these notations serve as the initial guide to analysis and data selection once the researcher returns to the recording to select segments. This activity has to be natural and simple enough not to distract from the facilitator role. Perhaps a confederate, collaborating participant or co-facilitator would be helpful here.

Finally, concretely, higher quality audio and video recordings from at least two camera positions might greatly enhance analysis of verbal and nonverbal dimensions of group interactions. This is particularly important for the rhizomatic perspective adopted here. After all, everything counts--every smirk, stutter and nod contributes to our assemblages and may become relevant data for analysis.

## **Future Directions**

Future data collection will include participant productions in the form of interview transcripts, written commentary, personal story, and/or guide questions generated in part from current and future transcript data. This will facilitate expanded evaluation of the re-narration aspect of the movement of literary imagination reported here. In a similar vein, it may be possible to evaluate self-story productions from mental health clients for specific narrative and poetic elements that suggest movement (change) of the type sought in narrative therapies, i.e. Ricoeur's self-narration in other ways (re-narration). The next step, then would be experimenting with various aspects of fictional texts to determine what aspects of reading group assemblages foster development of effective self-re-narration strategies.

It may be possible to apply this kind of work to specific (diagnostic) populations. For example, I envision evaluating combat trauma narratives produced by veterans who do and do not (or no longer) suffer symptoms of PTSD to determine whether there are systematic narrative differences between them. Again, the next step would be to experiment with literary engagements that foster those particular narrative elements found in non-PTSD narratives.

### **Bibliotherapy.**

I have resisted application of the term bibliotherapy to this project for two reasons. First, the breadth of its application renders the term imprecise beyond helpfulness. It is used to refer to any use in a clinical (or educational) setting of any printed material, and some include songs and film in this category as well (Duffy, 2010; Cohen, 1994). Second, specific therapeutic outcomes are explicit in reading prescriptions

(McArdle, 2001), even if some of those outcomes are broadly conceived in terms of personal growth. An instrumental approach to literature is not in keeping with my perspective here. I have described the open-ended and unpredictable nature of the narrative transformations that may be seen in reading and discussion, and so I am reticent to identify particular therapeutic outcomes for such a group. However, the current project is obviously germane to bibliotherapy, and the current research may fruitfully dialog with other empirical and theoretical work in this field, particularly the relatively smaller branch of the practice that employs works of fiction .

Bibliotherapy with fictional texts has been informed primarily by psychoanalytic theory (Cohen, 1994). The difference between a psychoanalytic perspective on literature and the rhizomic, Deleuzian point of view presented here presents ground for potentially fruitful friction regarding literary interpretation and therapeutic use. It seems to me that the psychoanalytic focus on the constructs of individual psyches (intrapsychic dynamics) necessarily occludes dynamic transformations (becomings) happening (among diverse components of a reading assemblage) in real time, so to speak, during the reading and discussion of fictional works. Bachelard decried the instrumentalism of a psychoanalytic approach to poetics and literary imagination, writing that the psychoanalyst, whom he called a victim of his own method,

inevitably intellectualizes the image, losing the reverberations in his effort to untangle the skein of his interpretations.... For the psychoanalyst, the poetic image always has a context. When he interprets it, however, he translates it into a language that is different from the poetic logos. (Bachelard, 1958/1994, p. xxiv)

Rather than attending to the transsubjective, "pure sublimation" of the productive

imagination, the ego psychologist seeks antecedents in the poet's history that explain her productions or else in the reader's history that explain his reactions in terms of ego defenses, in either case, according to Bachelard, explaining "the flower by the fertilizer" (p. xxx). The image and the text are merely tools for the discovery of unconscious conflict on the part of writer or reader. They are afforded little merit of their own. The Deleuzian (and Bachelardian) perspective offered here places the text and its images, characters and themes on equal, if virtual, footing with readers and authors and attends to the reading assemblage as a playground for unpredictable becomings and transformations, the likes of which we have seen in this study. This perspective on textual assemblages may offer a fresh direction for practice and research in the field of fictional bibliotherapy. All that said, the bibliotherapeutic works cited here present thoughtful, insightful approaches to clinical uses of fiction and to its investigation--Cohen from a phenomenological and Duffy from a Jungian perspective. I am hopeful that my work will enter into dialog with theirs and with other representatives of the best work in bibliotherapy.

### **Narrative therapy.**

I have made numerous references throughout this report to the theoretical underpinnings and the goals and techniques of narrative therapies of the type advanced by White and Epston (1990). I envision enacting further research and practice in the literary mode reported here in concert with narrative therapy practices because I perceive the two to have compatible goals. The aim of the therapeutic tools that comprise narrative therapy is to assist persons in identifying various narratives or storylines in their lives—the heretofore dominant ones that contribute to the formation and maintenance of

problems as well as alternative and subjugated ones that present possibilities for alternative and preferable ways of living (White & Epston, 1990; Madigan, 2011). This therapeutic aim accords with mine in this project—enhanced capacity for re-imagining and re-narrating oneself and one's circumstances through engagement with poetic texts.

I share an affinity for the narrative and textual metaphor that White and Epston chose for their controlling metaphor for human experience. My emphasis leans more heavily to the literary and imaginal, but White and Epston relied on literary theory along with poststructural and other theoretical backgrounds in advancing their theory and practices, which include a vital role for imaginative work on the part of the narrative therapist (1990, p. 16). Madigan (2011) notes that the original title for *Narrative means to therapeutic* ends was to be *Literary means...* and Michael White has described his practices as working toward "therapies of literary merit" (1990, p. 17). White and Epston close their book with a quote from Bruner extolling the virtue and power of literature to open us to the range of possible worlds, and as an instrument of freedom, lightness, and imagination (p. 217). Madigan even uses the term "literary critic" to describe the role of one who would integrate narrative theory, research and practice, though he designates cultural behavior as the text to be analyzed (p. 140) (which opens my project to the accusation that it is an ironically literal-minded answer to his call).

Narrative therapy is presented as set of corrective therapeutic tools against a background of unsatisfactory mental health assumptions and practices. Chief among these are the formalization and categorization of persons through clinical language and writing and the construction of persons as atomistic individuals subject to the authoritative master discourses including those of mental health and illness (White &



Epston, 1990; Madigan, 2011). My analysis has demonstrated that literary engagement undercuts these very elements of mental health discourse through the novelizing (vernacularizing) influences of literary imagination and language.

From the preceding discussion it is clear that I envision incorporating the kind of imaginal, literature based work of this study into future research and clinical work in conjunction with more traditional narrative therapy aims. The anti-individualistic perspective espoused by narrative therapy practitioners informs their efforts to cultivate "communities of concern" that offer persons a relational and multiperspectival context within which to re-understand and re-story problems (Madigan, 2011, p. 70). Reading groups also support the goal of community building and they do so in a way that subverts the well-accepted but problematic dictum within psychotherapy that interventions are always for the sake of the patient. This seeming truism has been called into question in ongoing disputes over what to call recipient of services—patient, client, consumer, etc—the ones for whose sake we act as therapists. The therapist as reading group facilitator is not one who is responsible for curing or healing a sick patient. Rather the mental health practitioner is a community story-gatherer and story teller whose value to the community has more to do with perspective and *attitude*, than with theory or technique.

Perhaps this is just another among many (*many*) metaphors for the therapist. This one certainly challenges established theoretical understandings and presents a potential upending of traditional dominance hierarchies and power relations among patients and practitioners. It will appear threatening to some traditional practitioners because it deflates the power and importance of therapist by elevating other voices to authoritative status. And, the therapist-as-critic still adopts a privileged vantage point (point of view)—

in a sense he is a professional point-of-view-taker—but the power differential is substantially different because authority is exercised on different planes. The therapist-as-critic comments not on individual "clients" but on assemblages and becomings.

Reading groups may be thought of as a part of or adjacent to individual or group narrative therapy designed specifically to aid in the production of preferable self-stories. But the groups do not have this as their primary purpose or aim. Their primary function is learning of the type fostered by poetic imagination and the cultivation of *communitas* through mutual endeavor. This research has been for my sake every bit as much as for the sake of other group participants (and not just in the production of a doctoral dissertation). I have gained from new perspectives on mental illness and its operation in families and communities, social stigmatization, race, racism and personal responsibility, among other topics. I have learned through my participation with the group and the stories we read.

The present study represents the early collection a body of local literary criticism—mythology—that will be of direct use to present and future community members. I imagine future participants producing their own texts—commentary on read stories as well as stories of their own lives that will form a local canon for future poetic engagement. As readers we are, as Murray tells it, apprenticed in a workshop produced by and whose products include "the whole range of human possibility and endeavor," and whose products are given ultimately back to the world as boons that will, hopefully, "enable [us] to avoid confusion and destruction, but also will enhance [our] own existence as well as that of human beings everywhere" (1973, pp. 22-3). Thus we act from and for the sake of the world.



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## Appendix A

### Recruitment Instructions

Instructions to Treatment Team members regarding subject recruitment and participation in research study, Gathering around the text, principal researcher, Rodney Teague, MA

Dear Mental Health Treatment Team members,

Please consider recommending that your clients, as you deem appropriate, participate in a new reading group and research study forming soon here at the Clinic Central Mental Health. I hope the group will be a good recreation and socialization opportunity for mental health consumers, and the research project will provide data for the completion of my doctoral dissertation.

Appropriate participants will be MH clients (consumers) who want to participate and whose level of cognitive and social functioning would, in your professional opinion, allow them to participate in a reading and discussion group. Diagnosis is less important than level of impairment here. Serious mental illness should not exclude a client from consideration, although cognitively disabled consumers who are unable to give appropriate consent for the study should not be invited or recommended for participation.

The following is a suggested transcript for describing the project to potential participants:

“Would you like to participate in a reading group and research project that will be starting soon in our clinic? The point of the research is to find out what, if any, benefit people may gain by reading together and talking about what they have read. The group will decide together what to read—probably short stories or plays. You may have the opportunity to read aloud in the group but you will not be required to do so. If you are interested, let me know and I will put you in contact with the person who will facilitate the groups. You will have an opportunity to learn more about the project, ask questions, and then to decide whether or not to participate. If you do decide to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. At no time will you ever be forced to participate in the project. Even should you give consent to participate, you will have the option to withdraw that consent and quit the group at any time without penalty.”

Please note that participants will be asked to sign a document giving their informed consent to participate in the study. The consent form (attached for your information) indicates that participation in the study will not involve risks greater than those present in their everyday lives. However, the form does note that something they read or hear discussed in the group could be disturbing and that if participants find themselves so troubled, they should consult with their regular therapist or with MH Clinical Director, Name. The consent form also indicates that, even after having given consent, participants may withdraw from the study at any time and without penalty. If you feel that a participant is experiencing undue emotional distress as a result of participation in the study, please bring your concern to the attention to myself and to MH Clinical Director, Carol Booker.

Thanks very much for your assistance and support in initiating this project!

Warmly,

Rodney C. Teague, MA

Doctoral Candidate in Clinical Psychology

Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA

Psychology Faculty, Tuskegee University

Office phone: 334-727-8136, Cell: 412-657-7504

email: [teaguer@DUQ.edu](mailto:teaguer@DUQ.edu) or [teaguer@tuskegee.edu](mailto:teaguer@tuskegee.edu)



**Appendix B**  
**Consent Form**

**D**UQUESNE **U**NIVERSITY

600 FORBES AVENUE ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282  
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

**TITLE:** Gathering around the text: Therapeutic elements in a nontherapeutic group setting

**INVESTIGATOR:** Rodney C. Teague, M.A.  
Duquesne University Department of Psychology  
600 Forbes Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15282  
412-657-7504, cell

**ADVISOR:** Eva-Marie Simms, Ph.D.  
Professor, Psychology Department  
412-396-6515

**SOURCE OF SUPPORT:** This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at Duquesne University

**PURPOSE:** You are invited to participate in a research project that seeks to determine what, if any, benefit may come from participation in a small literature reading and discussion group (6-12 participants) to meet once weekly for a total of six 90 minute sessions. Specifically I want to compare the ways we will talk about mental health and illness with the ways we will talk about the stories we read and discuss together. Once the group begins to meet, we will decide together what to read and exactly how to proceed. In addition, I will ask to interview you at the conclusion of the study about your experience of the group. Reading group sessions and interviews will be videotaped and transcribed, then analyzed. Finally, I will ask to share study results with you after its completion. This session will not be recorded.

These are the only requests that will be made of you.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** The risks of participation are generally no greater than those encountered in your everyday life. However, you may read, hear, or discuss some things that upset you. If you become upset, please talk to Clinical Director Carol Booker, your regular therapist or another Treatment Team member. Also, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Benefits of participation include opportunities to socialize with community members. In addition, I believe that

as we get involved in other people's stories we improve our abilities to tell and retell our own.

**COMPENSATION:**

Participants will not be monetarily compensated. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you. An envelope is provided for return of your response to the investigator.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

I am requesting your permission to access your institutional records regarding demographic and diagnostic information. No identifying information will be used in reporting the results of this research. Only de-identified data will be reported, and only for the purposes described in this consent form. All written materials, consent forms, and video tapes/files will be stored in a locked file in the principal researcher's home, accessible only to the principal researcher and dissertation advisor. Participant records will be maintained as such for up to two years after the completion of the research and will then be destroyed by fire.

**RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:**

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free, at any time, to withdraw your consent to participate as well as any data you have provided. There will be no penalty for withdrawal from the research study.

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS:**

A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT:**

I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Rodney Teague (412-657-7504), Eva-Marie Simms (412-396-6505), and/or Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board 412-396-6326.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Appendix C**

**Research/Transcription Assistant Confidentiality Pledge**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge that in my capacities as a research/transcription assistant for the qualitative research project, Gathering around the text: Therapeutic elements in a nontherapeutic group setting, principal researcher, Rodney Teague, M.A., I will adhere to all institutional guidelines and good faith principles regarding privacy of research participants and confidentiality of research data. I will not reveal any information regarding research participants to anyone outside of the research team. This pledge pertains to the time I am involved in the project and extends beyond that involvement in perpetuity.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Research/Transcription Assistant Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rodney C. Teague, M.A., Principal Researcher                      Date

## Appendix D

### Transcription Guide

Transcription Guide:

- Document & page heading:  
rtgathering:session#:yourinitials:dd.mm.2011  
page # of #
- Refer to R Teague as “Int” (interviewer)
- Group members referred to by first initial
- Use following transcription conventions (Drew 2004):
  - pause
    - (.) too short to time
    - (..) less than 5 seconds
    - (...) more than 5 seconds
  - Overlapping utterances enclosed in square brackets [like this]
  - Period indicates full stop with falling intonation “.”
  - Question mark indicates rising inflection (not necessarily a question) “?”
  - Stretched-out words or sounds indicated by colons (“:”) with the number of colons indicating the degree of stretching
  - Breathing
    - Inhalation = “.h” Length indicated by number of h’s
    - Exhalation = “.h.” length indicated by number of h’s
    - Audible aspiration indicated by “(hh)” within the speech in which they occur
  - Degree symbols (“°”) for softly or quietly spoken speech
  - Sound stress indicated by underlining stressed portions
  - Heavy emphasis indicated by CAPITALIZING
  - Marked pitch changes indicated by slashes as follows:
    - / - forward slash = rising intonation
    - \ - backward slash = falling intonation
  - Unclear speech placed (in parentheses). If speech cannot be made out at all, indicate by “(unclear mm:ss)” where “mm:ss” reflects duration of indiscernible speech.
  - Your observations & notes in {squiggly brackets}

Brief example:

00:01:00

Int

(2) WELCOME, everyone, to our first reading group session. (.05) Did everyone get a muffin [who wanted] one?

G

[I didn’t see muffins.] I’M HU:::NGRY. {smiling, laughing from other group members}

## Appendix E

### Session Transcripts

#### 1 **Session One**

2 00:00:00

3

4 {Daphne, Sophie, Rod; television (“Price is Right”) playing in background (waiting room) audible  
5 through open door of conference room. This room is for staff meetings and psychiatry conferences  
6 scheduled every few months. These conferences are likely the only times participants have  
7 gathered in this room until now. }

8

9 Int- make sure this is workin (...) tryin to make sure all this technology is workin out [for us]

10

11 Daphne & Sophie- {[tentative laughter]}

12

13 Int- still got this microphone cord in the way...but we’ll deal with that. {sits} So, ah guess Jackie  
14 went to [get some of the others from the back.]

15

16 Daphne & Sophie- [mmhm]

17

18 Rod- Oh, **please**, help yourself, there are some blueberry muffins my wife made last [night] and  
19 sent with [me], so please help yourself.

20

21 Daphne- [huh!]

22

23 Rod- I didn’t manage to make it in with a cup a pot of coffee this mornin, but, uh, got some  
24 muffins anyway.

25

26 (...)

27

28 Sophie- thank you

29

30 Rod- you’re we’-come

31

32 {Ben enters}

33

34 Rod- hey Ben, how are ya? Good to see you. Good mornin.

35

36 (...)

37

38 Rod- come on in

39

40 Daphne- good morning

41

42 Ben- (inaud)

43

44 Rod- { to Connie} c’mon in. have a seat, have a seat. Help yourself to a grab a muffin over here if  
45 you wish. Blueberry muffins

46

47 Connie- (inaud)

48

49 Rod- little mornin snack

50

51 Sandra-haiy hai  
52  
53 Rod- good mornin good mornin  
54  
55 Sandra- good mornin  
56  
57 Rod-how's everybody?(/)  
58  
59 Sandra- alright (/)  
60  
61 Rod- good?  
62  
63 Sandra- mmhmm  
64  
65 Rod- good. Please have a seat around the table this way. Um. yeah, watch that microphone cord. I  
66 hope that wont get in your way too much.  
67  
68 Sandra- (inaud.)  
69  
70 Rod- okay  
71  
72 Sandra- {sits and grunts}  
73  
74 Rod- Betty, how are ya this mornin?  
75  
76 Betty- (..) I'm doin' fine. How're you doin?  
77  
78 Rod- doin [fine thanks]  
79  
80 Betty- [that's good]  
81  
82 Rod- did you get you a muffin? Please help yourselve. Grab a a blueberry muffins over there.  
83  
84 Betty-you know I ha some fresh blueberries at home.  
85  
86 Rod- oh yeah? We got some from, well, kind of a neighbor—somebody that lives down the road  
87 from us there [in near] Notasulga.  
88  
89 Betty- [yeah?] I put em in my freez in my fridgerator  
90  
91 Rod-[that's] what we did. [Yeah we]  
92  
93 Betty- [I love em.] [I got a (gallon) bag]  
94  
95 Rod- [yeah I love bein able to just pull em outa there]. We gt a big ol gallon bag of em too. It's  
96 great. Especially when you go but them in the store and they're so expensive [there.] I felt good  
97 havin em in the freezer.  
98  
99 Betty- [yeah yeah, right!]  
100  
101 Connie- {to Daphne} [there's a crumb on your mouth] {gestures}  
102  
103 Daphne- {wipes mouth}  
104 Rod- you get it? Okay.  
105  
106 (...)

107  
108 Sandra- awright!  
109  
110 Rod-is that gonna be very much in your way? That cord?  
111  
112 Sandra-sir?  
113  
114 Rod-the cord?  
115  
116 Sandra- {looking around} is the cord? Lemee see. Um, no sir, unless it...  
117  
118 Rod-as long as it's not in your way its fine.  
119  
120 Sandra-okay  
121  
122 Rod-as long as its not in your way.  
123  
124 Rod-well, let's see, who else? I know randy's not gonna be with us today. And did, ok, I guess we  
125 should. [Everybody, everybody signed a consent form, right? Everybody]...has a copy of that  
126 form, right?  
127  
128 [{confirming nods and vocalizations from group}]  
129  
130 Rod-everybody has a copy of that form, right?  
131  
132 Betty- {to sandra} Sandra, did you sign this?  
133  
134 Sandra-oh...  
135  
136 Rod- you don't need to have it, you don't need to have it with you. Did you do one with me?(//)  
137  
138 Sandra-umm.. not her, she wasn't with us that day.  
139  
140 Betty- I ff, I ff, but I did one. I filled it out.  
141  
142 Rod-yeah, you got it.  
143  
144 Sandra- ok she did hurs  
145  
146 Rod-yeah, there's Sandra's  
147  
148 Sandra-[okay, okay there] she is  
149  
150 Rod- [okay good] (..) okay. So um, [Hey Virgil]. What's goin on?  
151  
152 Virgil-(hey not much)  
153  
154 Rod- okay I guess this is us. I think Randy was gonna be out...  
155  
156 Betty (oh I found my) papers  
157  
158 Sandra-(you signed your papers? You signed your papers?)  
159  
160 Rod- yeah everybody, I think everybody did. So **welcome!**  
161  
162 Sandra- we'come [we'come we'come!]

163  
164 Rod- [I'm excited to get started ] {to Virgil} didja gettcha a muffin?  
165  
166 Virgil- no, I don't want one  
167  
168 Rod-oh, okay. Well, you guys help yourself.  
169  
170 Sandra-you didn't come last week didja?  
171  
172 Rod-nope, nope, this is this is a [this is number one.]  
173  
174 Sandra- [oh, okay, oh okay]  
175  
176 Rod cause last Monday was, um, the 5<sup>th</sup>, kindof the Fourth of July Holiday.  
177  
178 Group- uhmmhm  
179  
180 Rod- so uh, yall kinda know eho I am, but I'd linda like to start by in, in introducing ourselves  
181 would that be okay? Just to sorta make sure we all know who we are just os because we're gonna  
182 be workin together a little bit and havin some conversations. You know my name's Rodney and uh  
183 I work at Tuskegee University currently and I live in Notasulga where those blueberries came  
184 from uh for about the last two years and uh I live there with my wife and two little boys. One five  
185 years old—he's gettin ready to start kindergarten in about two and a half weeks. Whihc is comin  
186 up pretty quick. {to betty} I was tellin you about that the other day.  
187  
188 Betty- yeah  
189  
190 Rod- and, uh. And the other one's two years old and we've got a little um little girl on the way  
191 [um...in November, yep yep yep] so we're excited.  
192  
193 Group members- [aww]  
194  
195 Rod-and let's see, what else do I need to tell you? When uh, some years ago when I was livin and  
196 workin in Dallas...workin for my **father** in law actually at a nonprofit educational institute...uh a  
197 place...it was like school, but not like a; a college. It was for schoolteachers and business people  
198 and just people from the community to come in and read together, poetry, philosophy, whatever.  
199 So it wasn't like a university, it was a place in the city where people came together. And we did  
200 some work with a, a community mental health institution very nearby there where we read  
201 together, just inda like we're [gonna do now.]  
202  
203 Sandra- [okay]  
204  
205 Rod- and a lot of the participants—it was just voluntary, it was just something that they did if they  
206 wanted to on a Friday and we all read together and visited and many of them said at the end of  
207 their program there... that that was really... that was something they really enjoyed doin—they really  
208 liked doin. And so this research project is a an attempt to say **why?** It it if that's beneficial, if  
209 that's helpful in some way, or if that's at least enjoyable, **how come?** So that's what I'm lookin at  
210 in doin this research. And uh, I think I mentioned to most of you that I'm tryin to finish up a  
211 clinical psychology degree which means that I'm a therapist or a clinician and that's my training  
212 anyway. But I also came to psychology because i like literature because i like to read. And i find a  
213 lot of interest and enjoyment in that (and I think and I hope) I hope maybe [we will too.]  
214  
215 Sandra- [mmhmm]  
216  
217 Rod-okay, well, that's more than you need to know really about me, and you'll learn more as [we  
218 go along.]



219  
220 Sandra- [mmhmm]  
221  
222 Rod- well, would yall mind introducing yourslef? And just say anything you want to about  
223 yourself, you don't have to tell a story, but you could if you'd like. {to Connie} would you mind  
224 startin?  
225  
226 Connie- alright. Well my name's Conniebery \_\_\_\_\_  
227  
228 Sandra- Sandra \_\_\_\_\_  
229  
230 Rod-did you want to say anything else, [Connie?]  
231  
232 Connie- {laughing} [oh, no.]  
233  
234 Rod- {laughing} okay. Awight, awight. Sandra, thank you. Alright  
235  
236 Ben- Hi I'm Ben \_\_\_\_\_ (my home, ah) is confidential. Um and I'm attending Harvard  
237 Medical School, continuing medical education right now.  
238  
239 Rod-I see [you've got]  
240  
241 Ben- [yes]  
242  
243 Rod-that um, medical encyclopedia. That is a very daunting looking book. That is a big book,  
244 right there.  
245  
246 Ben- [yes]  
247  
248 Rod- alright.  
249  
250 Ben- it's tough  
251  
252 Rod- yeah, that's tough stuff. Okay, alright Ben.  
253  
254 Virgil-my name is Virgil \_\_\_\_\_.  
255  
256 Rod- okay, thanks  
257 Betty- my name is Betty \_\_\_\_\_  
258  
259 Daphne- my name is Daphne \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a secretary.  
260  
261 Rod-alright  
262  
263 Sophie- my name is Sophie \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm attending King James School... GED.  
264  
265 Rod-oh, that's great, okay, that's great that's great. Is that here locally? Here in town?  
266  
267 Sophie- yes.  
268  
269 Rod-what's your...uh when will you complete that GED?  
270  
271 Sophie- possibly... I don't know.  
272  
273 Rod-okay. How long you been workin on it?  
274

275 Sophie-since last year  
276  
277 Rod-since last year—okay, alright, great.  
278  
279 Sophie-now it's goin into a new year.  
280  
281 Rod-yeah, alright. Well, so far as... we kinda said Monday would work for us—Monday mornin.  
282 We'll try this for now, see how it goes. We'll meet for about 90 minutes, about half an hour. The  
283 other question is then, then what should we read? And since this is our first meeting, I selected a  
284 couple of stories that we can get started with anyway. Um, and I'll tell you how I selected them in  
285 a minute. But what I want to say is that if you have some suggestion, if you have some authors  
286 that you like or a short story that you remember that you want to find or get me to find, I'm  
287 perfectly open to that. I don't have an agenda so far as what we read.  
288  
289 Betty- {pointing to Sandra} she reads a lot  
290  
291 Sandra {nods}  
292  
293 Rod-yeah, okay, well Sandra if you want to suggest a story or an author or whatever, um, we can  
294 sure talk about that. ..  
295  
296 Sandra- what I been readin? [The stuff that I been readin?]  
297  
298 Rod-[well, think about it and...]  
299  
300 Sandra-i readin about this doctor hes uh hes a doctor and hes a married to this lady but he has a he  
301 has plenty of patients and he said he really like on this on his family hes kinda like slowly he dont  
302 know he confused. He likes the patients then he married but he really likes the patients and [he]  
303  
304 Rod-[uh oh]  
305  
306 Sandra- he done already done kissed the patients [already] {laughing}.  
307 Rod- uh oh, uh oh, I see big trouble comin... {laughing}  
308  
309 Sandra- in the book he say he just lookin for love. He tryin to find love somewhere. I didn't finish  
310 all that. He say he lookin for love (...) but by her bein so by her bein a patient you know he kinda  
311 scared to be really in love with her cause you know she's she's a patient and he's thinkin about  
312 her feelins cause she's **sick** you know really a sick person.  
313  
314 Rod-okay, right  
315  
316 Sandra-but he just lookin for some **love** (^) He just lookin fa somethin someone ta **love** (^)  
317  
318 Rod-well, okay, if you think about it and you want to look for some particular story, that's fine. I  
319 picked a couple of short stories I figured short stories might be good for us to start with instead of  
320 something really long that we'd have to pick up from week to week and we might not even be able  
321 to finish. These stories, I'll go ahead and pass pass these out here. {passing} take one and pass.  
322 This one was written by Zora Neal Hurston and the reason I picked this one is she was born in  
323 Notasulga.  
324  
325 Betty-oh  
326  
327 Rod-she's an author who wrote in the middle of the last century in the 1900's and she was born in  
328 Notasulga so she lived in this area for a little while and then she was part of she went up to New  
329 York and was part of what was called the Harlem Renaissance  
330

331 Group—mmhmm {nodds}  
332  
333 Rod—you know, African American authors and artists and musicians...and so she was part of that.  
334 And then she came back she lived in Florida lived I think and then died in florida in the florida  
335 panhandle. So she wrote about the South and so I thought that was a good connection for us. The  
336 other one which we may or may not get to today, was written by Ralph Ellison—Is that name  
337 familiar to [you? Do] you know that author?  
338  
339 {one or two group members-[mmhmm]}  
340  
341 RodRalph Ellison wrote The Invisible Man and wrote about that same time uh and he was born in  
342 Oklahoma which is where I'm from. I grew up in Oklahoma City and that's where Ralph Ellison  
343 was born. But then Ralph Ellison came to school at Tuskegee so he was here for a little while  
344 before **he** went to New York and wrote as part of the same ...uh... movement. So I thought that  
345 would be a ... connection, one way to get started. ...um, well whatdo you say? Should we get  
346 started with that John Redding Goes to Sea? And and and we can start a couple different ways. I'd  
347 like for us just to read aloud (^), read out loud (^), ad we can kind of volunteer. Does anybody feel  
348 like they might want to read out loud today. I mean I'll start or you can start if you wanted to Ben.  
349 Do you want to do that?  
350  
351 Ben-ok  
352  
353 Rod- And what we can do is just read a few paragraphs maybe or read a little bit and then talk  
354 [about it]  
355  
356 Ben-[ok]  
357  
358 Rod-and see what we get from it and then go from there. Okay?  
359  
360 Ben-John Redding Goes to Sea. The villagers said that John Redding was a queer child. His  
361 mother thought he was too. She would shake her head sadly and observe to John's father: Alf, it's  
362 too bad our boy's got a spell on him. The father always met this lAment with indifference if not  
363 impatience. Aw woman, stop that talk bout conjure. That aint so no how. All done wat john to get  
364 that foolish in him. (...)  
365  
366 Rod-that's kindof hard to read right there isn't [it ben?]  
367  
368 Ben-{nodding}  
369  
370 Sandra-[it is, it is]  
371  
372 Rod-[right, I mean you did great] with it, but  
373  
374 Sandra-[(it is hard to read)]  
375  
376 Rod-what's she doin there? Why's that hard to read right there?  
377  
378 Sandra-(it's...)  
379  
380 Ben-broken English  
381  
382 Rod-its its broken. She's writing in a kind of dialect in a kind of broken English that's exactly  
383 right so it's kind of difficult on purpose. So what kind of dialect is that? What does that look like  
384 to you what does that seem like?  
385  
386 Connie-broken down English.

387  
388 Rod-yeah.  
389  
390 Ben-it's kind of southern like.  
391  
392 Rod-yeah, exactly, exactly.  
393  
394 Ben-it;ls like  
395  
396 Sandra-its like phonics  
397  
398 Betty-it's southern  
399  
400 Rod yeah, that's exactly right. So that's part of hat she's doin. So that's part of what she's doin. So  
401 it kindof looks funny and it's like, what is that word? And sometimes I [have to I'm not even  
402 sure.]  
403  
404 Sandra-[mmhmm]  
405  
406 Rod-but we'll just we can kind of work through it and see what we [what we get from it]  
407  
408 Betty-(i catch myself) sometime talkin like that cause I was [born in the country]  
409 Rod-[sure], sure  
410  
411 Betty-... country girl  
412  
413 Sandra- (..)  
414  
415 Rod-ok, good, Do you want to keep goin, Ben? Are you good to keep goin?  
416  
417 Ben- uh, yes.  
418  
419 Rod-okay.  
420  
421 Ben-Caws you allus try to know mo than me. I aint so ingnorant. I knows a heap mawself. Many  
422 and many people been drove outta they sense by conjuration of rid ta beat by witches. Aawll keep  
423 on tellin ya woman it taint so. Blieve it all ya wantto but dontcha tell maw son none of it.  
424  
425 Rod- what is she talkin about conjuration? What's whats she talkin about?  
426  
427 Connie- (inaud)  
428  
429 Virgil- act that occurs that a person things come about like spells or whatever and things like that  
430 in they mi::ind or whatever. What they summoned up or whatever.  
431  
432 Rod-right right yeah I think so and so they start out saying that John Redding is a queer child,  
433 weird kid, he's this weird little boy. Somethins weird about im. His mom sez to his dad, he's got a  
434 spell on im. Ad he's sayin to her..., dont talk to me about spells that's nonsense—dont get that  
435 nonsense in his head. That's pretty much [...]  
436  
437 Sandra-it aint violent is it? []  
438  
439 Betty-[uh huh]  
440  
441 Sandra-[okay]  
442

443 Rod-The story?  
444  
445 Sandra-uh, um, the...  
446  
447 Rod-The spells?  
448  
449 Sandra-con conj  
450  
451 Rod- conjuration?  
452  
453 Sandra-yeah  
454  
455 Rod-conjuration can be kind can be kinda some scarry stuff. Yeah I think that's part of why his  
456 father doesn't want any of that talk around. Dont talk dont talk that nonsense thats what he's sayin.  
457 ...  
458  
459 Derk- it seems as though that... the family is in some kind of cult tryin to conjure spirits and their  
460 sayin that the boy he's not in it and they's tryin to say that he's gay (..)  
461  
462 Rod-[well that's]  
463  
464 Ben[that's what I'm gettin out of it]  
465  
466 Rod-okay, alright, so that "queer" makes you think that right? [Where it says] he was a queer  
467 Child  
468  
469 Ben- [yeah]  
470  
471 Rod-[I think and (...) I'm glad you bro't that up. I think when she was writing this, was before that  
472 word had anything before that word had anything to do with gay. So what does it mean?  
473  
474 Mmhmm  
475  
476 Rod-aside from gay cause we know that meaning of it. ( ) if we describe somebody as queer, we're  
477 describing a sexual orientation. But it it aside from that, what does queer mean? Does that...  
478  
479 Ben- [would a wuld a...]  
480  
481 Betty-different  
482  
483 Connie-[differnt!]  
484  
485 Rod-[jest different(/)]  
486  
487 (other inaud.)  
488  
489 Ben- [homosexual]-i'm not gonna say gay cause gay is bein happy; hap gay is bein happy. That  
490 jus. That means happy. sayin uh homosexual that's what queer she's [sayin.]  
491  
492 Virgil-[(a fa:ag)]  
493  
494 Rod-[I don't think so] cause in the same way that gay means happy, queer just means different.  
495 Queer means weird.  
496  
497 Mmhmm  
498

499 Rod-so I don't think she's talkin about him—cause he's a kid—so he's not he's not homosexual,  
500 he's just different. So that everybody sez man the kid is different. What is it about im? That's a  
501 weird kid. Right? And his mom sed I think he's got a spell on im. Somebody put a spell on im.  
502 And his dad sez nah, he's just weird. He's just a weird kid. So I think that's where we are to begin  
503 with to begin the story. But im glad you bro't that up. Cause when we see that “queer” in there,  
504 we we got to figure out what she's talkin about [(..)]  
505  
506 Ben- [I concur]  
507  
508 Rod-okay. Ben, you want to keep on reading? Keep goin?  
509  
510 Ben-I'll pass (somebody else)  
511  
512 Rod-that's fine. Anybody else want to volunteer?  
513  
514 Virgil-I'll read. Uh, you keep on tellin me. Believe all you want to but don tell my son none of it.  
515 Perhaps John was puzzling to the simple folk there in the Florida woods for he was an (imigrant)  
516 [child]  
517  
518 Connie-[imagina, imag]  
519  
520 Others-[imaginative]  
521  
522 Virgil-imaginative child and fond on daydreams. The saint john river flow a scarce 300 feet from  
523 him back door and at its banks at this point grew numerous palms that luxerate  
524  
525 Rod-luxuriant  
526  
527 Virgil-luxuriant mangolians  
528  
529 Rod- magnolia trees  
530  
531 Virgil- magnolia trees, and bay trees with a dense undergrowth fern cat tails and rope grass. On  
532 the block boossum of the stream flowed millions of delicate colored (h:::hanakins)  
533  
534 Rod-hyacinths...flowers  
535  
536 Virgil-okay. The little brown boy loved to wander down the water edge and castin his try twigs  
537 watchin them sail away down the stream to Jackson Jacksonville and the sea. The wide world of  
538 John Redding wanted to follow them.  
539  
540 Rod-so, she says there than ten so we know john is ten years old john redding is ten years old and  
541 she says that he is puzzling to the people there in the woods.  
542  
543 Daphne-can I get some water?  
544  
545 Rod-sure please. Is there a cup or something out there that you can get some water in?  
546  
547 {Daphne leaves to get water}  
548  
549 Rod-okay. So he was strange because he was kind of this daydreaming kind of child. And thats I  
550 think what she starts out when she says he was a queer boy? I think that's what she meant just that  
551 he's kinda in his own world. He [lives in his head]  
552  
553 Virgil-[unfamiliar]  
554

555 Rod-huh? Yeah, unfamiliar to the rest of them. Yah. He's just daydreamin. He likes to go off to  
556 the river and play in the sticks and particularly what he likes to do is float these sticks down the  
557 stream and watch em sail off and he imagines them goin all the way to the ocean, right? (...) I  
558 think that's what we got. Alright Virgil, good job readin. You want to keep goin?  
559  
560 Virgil-yeah.  
561  
562 Rod-awight  
563  
564 Virgil-sometime in his dreams he was a prince ridin away in a ...g::g  
565  
566 Connie-gorge[ous]  
567  
568 Virgil-[gorgeous] carriage. Often he was a knight astride a feery charger prancing down a white  
569 shelley road that led to a distant land. Other times he was a steamboat captain, piloting his craft  
570 down the st john river to where the sky seemed to touch the water. No matter what he dreamed, or  
571 what he fantassss  
572  
573 Betty-{whisers} fantasised  
574  
575 Virgil-fantasized, himself to be, he always ended by riding away to the horizon for in his childish  
576 ignorancy, he thought this to be the farthest land. But things twigs John called his ships did not  
577 always sail away. Sometimes they would be swept in among reeds growin in the shallow water  
578 and be held there. On on, one day, his father came upon him scolding the weeds for stop his  
579 seagoing vessels. I'll stop right there.  
580  
581 Rod- okay, awright, anybody else who wants to go?  
582  
583 Daphne-I'll go.  
584  
585 Rod- okay, please.  
586  
587 Daphne-let go ma ships, you old mean wud, weeds, (john screamed and stamped impotently) they  
588 wants to go away, go away. Let em go on. Alfred lay his hand on his son's head (..) lovingly.  
589 What's matter son? Ma ships pa, the chile answered weeping. I wants em to go away off and them  
590 old weeds wont let them... well, well, do'n cry I dun tho't you wuz a grown man. Men don don  
591 don cry like babies. You mustnt take it too hard bout you ships. You gotta get uster things getting  
592 tied up. Theys lotsa folk that (ff) something that didn't catch them up and hold them. Alfred's  
593 brown face grew wistfulfor a moment and the child noticing it asked do weeds tangle up folks too  
594 pa? nah nah nah nah child, (ooo) child don be takin too much stock of what ah say. I talk in  
595 parables sometimes. Let's go on tuh supper. Alf took his son's hand and started toward the house.  
596 Soon, John broke the silence. Pa, when I gets as big as you are I'm goin farther than them ships.  
597 I'm goin to where the sky touches the ground.  
598  
599 23:39  
600  
601 Daphne-Well son when I was a boy, I wuz goin too, but here ah am. Ah hopes you have bettah  
602 luck than me.  
603  
604 Rod-it's its kinda easy to get caught up in her dialect there, right isnt it? Well, So should we stop  
605 there and say awright what's happened so far what have we got here. Good job, good readin.  
606 What's goin [on in this]  
607  
608 Daphne- [thank you]  
609  
610 Rod- little part ... that we just [read?]

611  
612 Daphne-the little boy (talkin bout ) his ships.  
613  
614 Rod- yeah, those little sticks that he floats off down the stream?  
615  
616 Daphne-yeah  
617  
618 Rod-ad some of em what happens to em?  
619  
620 Betty- get stuck  
621  
622 Rod-they get caught up in the weeds, right?  
623  
624 Ben-yeah  
625  
626 Rod-and he's kinda cryin about it right. Those mean old weeds they caught my ships up...  
627  
628 {Group laughing}  
629  
630 Rod- and his daddy's talking to him I tho't you wuz a man what're you cryin about? Little weirdo  
631 boy—right? is what he's sayin. And he says i i wanted [them to go away all the way to the sea.]  
632  
633 Sandra- mm::mmhmm::mm  
634  
635 Rod- I wanted them to go away. and his father said well son, sometimes it gets caught up like that.  
636  
637 Sandra- that old ship  
638  
639 Rod-yeah. And he and e says and John Redding sez to his father when I get big like you, daddy,  
640 I'm gonna go away. I'm goin all the way to the horizon, right?. Like in his [dreams, right.]  
641  
642 Sandra- ~~[he seem] like he may go, really, he he (inaud...doin the paragraph but he fillin the~~  
643 ~~speeches and poems) bout the ships~~  
644  
645 [He seem] lak he makin um rilly, he see he he he doin para/graph\ but he fillin his speech is in  
646 po::ems...bout tha ships  
647  
648 Rod- I think so too [right]  
649  
650 Sandra- [uh:huh (V)]  
651  
652 Rod- he's thinkin about himself goin off [to the sea]  
653  
654 Sandra- [**uh::huh**(V)]  
655  
656 Rod-and then he sez to his [daddy]  
657  
658 Sandra- [yeah]  
659  
660 Rod- now wait a minute, do those weeds catch people up in em too? Do people get caught too?  
661  
662 Sandra- [**uh::huh**(V)]  
663  
664 Rod-so we'll see what we'll see what [where that's goin]  
665  
666 Sandra- [he's still] imaginin [things]



667  
668 Rod- yeah, right  
669  
670 Sandra- In [that imagination]  
671  
672 Virgil- {quietly} [can I read?]  
673  
674 Sandra- [paragraph]  
675  
676 Rod- [you want to?]  
677  
678 Virgil- yeah  
679  
680 Rod-go for it  
681  
682 Virgil- pa, I betcha ah seen somethin in the woodlot ha aint seen. See that tallest pine tree over  
683 there, how it looks like a skull with a crown on top? Yes indeed, said the father looking toward the  
684 tree, it do look like a skull since you call ma tension to it. You imagine (looster) things nobody  
685 else ever did, son. Sometime, pa, (..) that old tree waves at me right after the sun goes down and  
686 makes me sad, scared too. Ah pec speck yall scared of the dark, (tha tha som som) sonny. When  
687 you git bigger you wont be sic of sic. Hand in hand, the two trudged across the plowed land and  
688 up to the house. The child dreamed of the day he should wander far country and the man of the  
689 days when his might have. Thus they entered the kitchen. Matty Redding, john's mother, was  
690 settin at the table for supper. She was a small weary woman with large eyes that may have been  
691 beautiful when she was a young, but too much weeping had left them watery and weak.  
692  
693  
694  
695 Virgil-Matty, Alf began as he look as he took his place at the table, dontcha know our John is  
696 different from all other child's round? He (may may) (lows) he's goin to the sea with his when he  
697 gets ris. When he gets grown. (and I reckon all of them im.) The woman turned from the stove,  
698 skillet in hand, Alf, (you aint gonna tell is you). John cant help wontin to stray off cause he got a  
699 spell on im. But you otter be ashamed to be in-coura[gin]  
700  
701 Connie- [encourage]  
702  
703 Virgil-encouragin encouagin him. Aint ah done tol you forty times not tuh talk that lowlife mess in  
704 front of mah boy? Well, if th' aint no conjure in tha world, how come mitch potts been layin on  
705 the back six months and the doctor cant do (.) no good. Answer (?) that. The very night John was  
706 done born, Granny saw old witch Judy Davis creepin outta duh yawd. You know she swor the fix  
707 me fuh marryin you way from her daughter, Edna. She put a travel dust frm dust down fuh mah  
708 child. That's what she done. Thus make him walk wy from me and even since he been able ta  
709 crawl, he been tryin tuh go. Matty, a man done never no travel dust tuh make it wanter hit de road.  
710 It just comes naturally fur a man tuh travel. They all want to go at some time or other, but they  
711 cant all get away. ah wunt mah John tuh go and see cuz ah want to go mahself. When he cum back  
712 ah can see them furen places wit his eyes. He cant help wanting (..) to go cuz he a man child.  
713  
714 Rod-should we stop there and see where we are? Again, it's easy to get caught up in this.  
715 Especially in her, in the when the mother's talkin when Matty's talkin, um its its hard to get. So  
716 they're arguin about spells again, right?  
717  
718 Virgil-talkin bout his son and stuff, he he dont want nobody to talk about his son cause you know  
719 feelin down about the way everbody keep talkin about him how how his behavior is [goin]  
720  
721 Rod- [right]  
722

723 Virgil-and then you gettin deeper and deeper into it like he got spells and witches and people  
724 leavin out the yard.  
725  
726 Rod-ye:ah, and what specifically is the spell his mom thinks is on him and his dad says **nah**, its  
727 just cause he's a man-child; just cause he's a boy. Men want to travel, right? That's what Matty  
728 sez is that he got this travelin dust that's what makes him want to [uh]  
729  
730 Betty-[to leave]  
731  
732 Others-(inaud)  
733  
734 Rod-ye::ah(Λ) sez when he gets big hes gonna go away. he's gonna go see the world. Hes gonna  
735 go off to the horizon and out to the sea, see these foreign places and his mom thinks that's a curse  
736 that was put on him by the old witch—what's her name—that wuz creepin out of the yard the  
737 same night he was born, right?  
738  
739 Group-mmhhmm  
740  
741 Rod- and his daddy sez na::aa(\\), come on Matty, that's just because he's a **man(Λ)**. Men  
742 sometimes want to [travel.]  
743  
744 Sandra-[mmhmm]  
745  
746 Virgil- [(name)]  
747  
748 Rod- he sez uh he sez I wanted to go when I wuz a young man too.  
749  
750 Sandra-that's right  
751  
752 Rod-and he sez when he come back here I'll be able to see those foreign places through his eyes.  
753 I'll be able to kind of live through him, whatever he's sees. Yeah, whatever he sees.  
754  
755 Virgil- Edna?  
756  
757 Rod-is that the witch? old witch...? {lookin at text}  
758  
759 Virgil-I think so.  
760  
761 Rod-think... oh no, Old witch Judy Davis.  
762  
763 Virgil- Judy Davis  
764  
765 Rod-ye::ah um, she swore to fix me fur marryin you way from her daughter Edna. Cuz thaht old  
766 witch Judy Davis wanted Alfred to marry her daughter, Edna, but Matty married him away from  
767 her so she put a curse on her baby is what she was sayin. S'what Matty was sayin... okay, good,  
768 Lijah, you wanta keep goin or you want [to let somebody else go?]  
769  
770 Betty- {raises hand}  
771  
772 Rod-you wan to go Betty?  
773  
774 Betty- {to Virgil} can I read?  
775  
776 Elijah- go ahead!  
777  
778 Betty-Okay, right here (beside) Mrs. Redding?

779  
780 Virgil-yeah  
781  
782 Betty-Mr. Redding promptly went off into a fit of weeping. But the man and boy ate supper  
783 unmoved. Twelve years of married life had taught Alfred that, far from being miserable when he  
784 swept, his wife was enjoying a bit of self-pity. Thus John Redding grew to be. To a manhood,  
785 playin, studying and dreamin. He attended the village school as did most of the youth about him,  
786 but he also went to high school at the county seat where none of the villagers went. His father  
787 shared his dreams and ambition but his mother could not understand why he should wish to go  
788 strange places where neither she nor his father had been. No one of their community had ever been  
789 farther away than Jacksonville. Few indeed had ever been there. There own gardens, general store,  
790 and occasional trips to the county seat, 7 miles away, suffi(...)  
791  
792 Rod-sufficed  
793  
794 Betty-sufficed for all their needs. Life was simple indeed with these folk. John was the subject of  
795 much discussion among the county folks. Why didn't he teach school instead of thinking about  
796 strange people and places? Did he think himself better than the gals theresabout that he would not  
797 go a courtin any ()? He must be fixed as his mother claimed. Else where did his queer notions  
798 come from? Well he was always queer and one could not expect a man to be diffreent from the  
799 child. They never stopped to stop work at the approach of Alfred and inquire after John's health  
800 and ask when he expected to leave.  
801  
802 Rod-okay, one second Betty. Thank you. Just a real quick pause here. Um, so what's happened  
803 here? A lot has happened in this just two paragraphs here.  
804  
805 Betty-[mmhbm (he ...)]  
806  
807 Rod-[he's grown] up, right  
808  
809 Group—mmhm  
810  
811 Rod-he's gone to school he's grown up he's not ten years old anymore, we figure eight years have  
812 gon eby—he's kindof grown. And Ben, look what's happened in here we've gotten back to she  
813 uses that word again two timesin this paragraph, "queer," and it's right after she's talkin about  
814 how he won't go courtin these [ladies.]  
815  
816 Sandra-[mmhmm]  
817  
818 Rod- All these gals like him all these girls like him but he wont go he wont go after em. So i think  
819 maybe people around the town are saying there's something wrong with [that boy]  
820  
821 Betty-[mmhhmm]  
822  
823 Rod-. He's different and it continues on he continues to be a different sort of child than everyone  
824 expects to see. ... And you know also I'd say this, maybe one way we could proceed is whenever  
825 we're reading, if anybody wants to say okay, I don't understand what's goin on or comment or  
826 somethinjust go ahead and do that. We can stop at any point and say I didn't get that sentence or  
827 what does she mean by that or anything else. But I'm sorry to interrupt, Betty, if you want to go  
828 ahead, please...  
829  
830 35:54:2  
831  
832 Betty-ok. Oh, Alfred would answer, jus as soon as his maw gets reconsilled reconciled to the  
833 notion. He mi:ghty du:iful.. (.)  
834

835 Rod-he's a mighty (/) dutiful boy(\).

836

837 Betty-he's a mighty du:uful boy, maw john is. he done wan hut her fillin. the boy had on several

838 occasions tried to reconcile his mothuh to the notion, but found it's a difficult task. Mattie alus

839 took refuge in self-pity and tears. Her son's desires were incomprehensible to her, that was all. she

840 did not want to hurt him. It was love, mother love, that made her cling so desperate to John. lawd

841 knows she wuld sigh, I nevu h wuz happy and nevah spect to be. ah from yo action, put in alfred

842 hoatly, you determined not to be. right, tha's right, alfred, go on an abuse me... you al..

843

844 Rod-you allus does (laughing) [that's hard...]

845

846 Betty-you allus does. I knows ahm (...)

847

848 Virgil-(softly) I:I'gnant

849

850 Betty-mah ignarant and all dah, but this is mah son. Ive rared and bored him. he ant help from

851 wontin to grow roving cause travel dust been put down fuh him but maybe he can cur him by

852 discouragin the idea the idea. Well hah wont mah son duh go and he wont duh go too. he's a man

853 now, Matty, an wus mus let John row his own row. If is travelin, twon be for long. He'll a come

854 back to us .. bettah than when he went off. what do you say son? mama, john began slowly, it

855 hurts me to see you so troubled over my goin away but I feel that I mus go. I was s:s

856 stregenatin(?)=

857

858 Rod-stag'nating=

859

860 Betty-stagnating here...This ins inda um...=

861

862 Virgil-indalent=

863

864 Betty-indalasin atmosphere...will stri:iive..

865

866 Rod-stifle

867

868 Betty-will stifle every bit of ambition that in me. let me go mama, please. what is there here for

869 me? Ah sometime ah get the feelin just like a lump of dirt turned over by by the plow. jus where it

870 falls there ewhere it lies. no thoughts of movin or nothin. i wanna make myself sumthin, not jus be

871 where ah wuz born. now john, it's bettah fuh you to stay here and take over the school. Why don't

872 you marry and settle down? Well missus Redding said, pursing her mouth

873

874 Rod-oh, we missed, we missed one line in there I think.. why [don't you marry] and settle down

875

876 Betty-[oh, oh] okay, I dont wunt(/) to mama(\), I want to go away. well, said miss reddin, pursing

877 her mouth tightly, you ainta goin with my consent... i'm aorry mama, that you wont consent= I am

878 goin nevertheless. Jawn, Jawn, ma ma baby, you wuld(n't) kki:ill you po: mama..wuld you(?)

879 come kiss me sone. The boy flung his arm around his muthuh and held huh closely (all turning

880 pages) closely while she sobbin on his breast. To all her pleas, however, he answered that he must

881 go. .. Ah'll stay at home this year mama, then ah'll go fuh a while but I won't be long it won't be

882 long. ah'll come back and make you and papa oh so happy. do you agree mama dear? ah reckon

883 tchu ah reckon tain nuthin ta fuh me to do else. things went on very well around the reddin home

884 for some time. durin the day John helped his father around the farm and did a great deal of reading

885 at night ... then the unespected happened. john married stella canty, a neighbor's daughter. the

886 courtship was ardent on jahns part at lest. he danced with stella at the candy pullin, walked with

887 her gome and in three weeks he declared himself. Mr {mrs} reddin declared that she was happier

888 than she has ever been... in huuh life. She therenfore indulged in a whole afternoon of weepin.

889 John's change wuz occassioned by by the fact that he that stella wuz really beautiful. He was

890 young and red-blooded and the time wuz spring.

891  
892 0:41:50.0  
893  
894 Rod-what happened there?  
895  
896 Virgil-he changed drammmatically..[..]  
897  
898 Rod- [it changed drammmatically], right(/?) {laughing}  
899  
900 Sandra-[uh:huh] (^)  
901  
902 Virgil-[he sta]rted workin around the house workin wit his fa:athuh read, readin at night an 'en ee  
903 also wen stuck went in courtship wit dis girl named...  
904  
905 Connie- [Stella]  
906  
907 Betty-[stella]  
908  
909 Rod-[Stella]  
910  
911 Sandra-Stella  
912  
913 Virgil-Stella Canty. step married=  
914  
915 Rod- mmh:hmm(/)  
916  
917 Virgil-so for ya know everythins goin good cause his mama say you know hay can {t} have her  
918 consent tuh tuh tuh get huh consent tuh le:eave  
919  
920 Sandra-[mmh:hmm] (^)  
921  
922 Virgil-so she sed=  
923  
924 Virgil- he sed he would [stay] den  
925  
926 Rod-[right]  
927  
928 Sandra-[mmh:hmm (^)]  
929  
930 Rod-right, cuz he kep sayin no mama I got to go I got to go, and then in the next breath he sed,  
931 well alright I'll stay around here this year and maybe I'll go after that. Then the next thing you  
932 know, he's workin round the house and then he gets married..what's ha:ppenin here? {laughing}  
933 he's changin his tune a little bit, huh(?)  
934  
935 mmmhhmm  
936  
937 Rod-but o'course mama's happy, right?he got married, he's doin what she sed shea wanted him to  
938 do, uhm, settlin down... a little bit. Uhm, she's funny, right?  
939  
940 Betty-mhm  
941  
942 Rod-seems like whenever she's happy she goes ta weepin.  
943  
944 Betty-mhm  
945  
946 Virgil-ri:ight

947  
 948 Rod-(.) okay Betty, you want to [keep readin] or you want somebody else ta  
 949  
 950 Virgil-(??) {hold up finger}  
 951  
 952 Betty-let somebody else  
 953  
 954 Virgil-[I'll read]  
 955  
 956 Rod [it gets a] little tiring after a while doesnt it?  
 957  
 958 Betty-he'll read {indicates Virgil}  
 959  
 960 Rod-anybosity else who hadnt read yet? no? okay go ahead Virgil.  
 961  
 962 0:43:01.6  
 963  
 964 Virgil-okay, springtime in florida is not a matter of peepin violet or burstin bulbs merely. it is a riot  
 965 of coluhs and natural blistering (green) leaves pink blue purple tellow blossoms that fairly  
 966 (stagger) in the in the the vistor front frm the north. the miles of the (hyacinths) lies in a .. what's  
 967 that?  
 968  
 969 Rod-undulating carpet  
 970  
 971 Virgil-undulating carpet surfacin the river dividing (reluctantly...) The night and white night white  
 972 night for the moon shine down in splendor or in the absebse of the godliness the sole darkness  
 973 creepin down the ladder in normal sense the heavy fragrance of magnolia mingled with the  
 974 delicate sweetness of jasmine and wild roses.  
 975  
 976 Rod-what's she what's that paragraph we just read that starts springtime in florida? whats she doin  
 977 there do you think?  
 978  
 979 Virgil-uh, per, preparin for like the seasons ta change  
 980  
 981 Rod-descri::bing [the natural world]; right  
 982  
 983 Virgil-[how the seasons change]  
 984  
 985 Rod- [right talkin about all the diferent flowers] the riot of different colors yeah [the season  
 986 changing to spring]  
 987  
 988 Virgil-[the seasons change]  
 989  
 990 sharron-[(??)]  
 991  
 992 rod-it's such a th:ick description [that you can almost [smell] it] {gestures}  
 993  
 994 virgil-[you know how you start you start [smell]0:44:27.3 {gestueres} you know i say roun you  
 995 got a lot of roses come round yoh house you start smellin yoh rose yoh bush yoh flowers, you  
 996 know start smellin the green you know all the trees come to life in the spring.  
 997  
 998 rod-right right right, okay good thanks.  
 999  
 1000 ...  
 1001  
 1002 Virgil-keep goin?

1003  
1004 rod-please! yeah  
1005  
1006 virgil-if the time or pro...  
1007  
1008 rod-propinquity  
1009  
1010 virgil-propinquity con...  
1011  
1012 rod-conquered john  
1013  
1014 virgil-conquered john, what then? these forces have overcome older men. the rapture of the first  
1015 few weeks over, john began to saunter on the grate greta gaze wistfully down the white dusty road  
1016 or wander again to the river as he had done in childhood. to be sure, he did not send forth twig  
1017 ships any longer, but his thoughts would in spite of himself, stray down the river to Jacksonville,  
1018 the sea, the wide world of poor home-tied john redding wanted to follow them. he grew  
1019 silent and pensive, hmmm  
1020  
1021 rod-pensive.. means [thoughtful]  
1022  
1023 virgil-pensive, mattie accounted for this by her ever-ready explanation in conjure. alfred sed  
1024 nothing but smoked and puffed about the barn more than ever. stella accused her husband of  
1025 indifference and made his life miserable with tears of...  
1026  
1027 connie-cousinhood  
1028  
1029 virgil-cousinhood of and howling and at last john decided to bring matters to the head of the broach  
1030 and broached the subject to his wife. stella dear, i want to go roving about the world for a spell.  
1031 would you stay here with paw and maw and wait for me to come back? john, is you crazy shonuff?  
1032 if you don't want me, say so and I can go home to mah folks. stella darling, I don't want you=  
1033  
1034 rod-i DO want you  
1035  
1036 virgil-i do want you but i do but i want to go away too. i cant i can ..have..both if you let me. you  
1037 let me. well, beets, we'll be so happy when I return. nah john, you cant rush me off on one side  
1038 like that. you did not have to marry me. they plenty of (others) that's would have been glad enough to get  
1039 me. you knowed i wasn't educated before before what that is before what?  
1040  
1041 rod-uh, i you know i wasn't educated before...[its before]  
1042  
1043 virgil-beforehand [] do not make me too conscious of my weakness. stella, i know I should never  
1044 have married with my inclination, but it is done now. no use no use talk about what is the past I  
1045 love you and I want to keep you but i cant stifle  
1046  
1047 rod-stifle  
1048  
1049 virgil-stifle okay stifle that's long that's long for the open road rolling seas for people and countries  
1050 i have never seen. i am suffering too. i am paying for my rashness in my marriage marryin before i  
1051 was ready. im not trying to shirk my duties. you'll be well-fed and cared for in the meanwhile.  
1052  
1053 0:48:41.8  
1054 rod-what is he tryin to do now?  
1055  
1056 0:48:45.3  
1057 Virgil-he sayin he want to [leave & travel]  
1058

1059 Sandra- [mm:hh:mm]  
1060  
1061 Virgil- the world. she sayin she sayin she [want]  
1062  
1063 Sandra-[cause] {expansive stretching gesture}  
1064  
1065 Virgil-she sayin if he wanna leave then she go [back to huh folks.]  
1066  
1067 Sandra-[{begin similar expansive stretching gesture}]  
1068  
1069 Rod-right, [right]  
1070  
1071 Sandra- [yeah!]  
1072  
1073 Rod-why'd you mary me in the first [place...(if you're just gonna take off like that)]  
1074  
1075 Sandra-[yeah!!] cause he still magination bout them ships...[.he still] {end stretch}  
1076  
1077 Rod-[right, right] it's funny too, that that little passage about the springtime where she describes  
1078 the spring its like the first few weeks of their [marriage]  
1079  
1080 Sandra-[mmhhmm]  
1081  
1082 Rod- everything's just beautiful [and and you can]  
1083  
1084 Sandra-[mmh::hmm]  
1085  
1086 Rod- imagine they spent a lot of time in their marriage bed [maybe]  
1087  
1088 Sandra-[mmmhh::hhmmm]  
1089  
1090 Rod- and everythings just great and then all, in not too::oo(/) long(\)...old John gets a little restless  
1091 again, right and he starts to think about traveling, gets that kind of travelin itch, he said I cant stifle  
1092 that longing for the open road, the rolling seas [fur people]  
1093  
1094 Sandra-[mmhhmm(\)]  
1095  
1096 Rod-and countries I've never seen, you know, so now he's thinkin maybe he wants to travel and he  
1097 says well now if you'll let me I can have it both ways.  
1098  
1099 Virgil-yeah.  
1100  
1101 Rod- {laughing} yeah, good luck with that one, right? [good luck john]  
1102  
1103 Virgil- [he was sayin] (he also was sayin) he was tryin to shirk his du' ties [..like]  
1104  
1105 Rod- [right]  
1106  
1107 Virgil- put em asi::ide, youknow he's married, obligated to [her]  
1108  
1109 Rod- [right]  
1110  
1111 Virgil-at the same time but he wuz doin have some ple:e'sure ti:me  
1112  
1113 Rod- right right, just sum time to im[self](\)  
1114



1115 Virgil-[yee:ah]  
 1116  
 1117 Rod-she kinda seems ta sa:y uh:h, jon i dun think u can have it both ways. you you you got me  
 1118 now, you made ur decision=  
 1119  
 1120 Virgil-right=  
 1121  
 1122 Rod-right [ 'n ahm not] gonna let u just go an have ur cake an eat it too=  
 1123  
 1124 Virgil-[see day] cee lyk bak in nem dayz day nnt just ..d-part from one another they mostly stayed  
 1125 with each other the.. full time they did travel they travel together=  
 1126  
 1127 Rod-mmhmm=  
 1128  
 1129 Virgil-the whole family went ( places) t'gether.. like day:n't go just go taw:n b'o:ut sooin world  
 1130 like on .. whatchacall dat.. comin to america, "gotta go so ma ro:al o:oats" {laughs}  
 1131  
 1132 Connie- {laughter}  
 1133  
 1134 Rod-{laughs} exactly, exactly sooin oats thats right... you do that bfore you get married, [right], is  
 1135 kinda the idea, yeah.  
 1136  
 1137 Virgil- {laughs} [RIGHT, right]  
 1138  
 1139 Rod-what about? did anyb anybody ever, a:anybody anybody have a longing for the open road  
 1140 sometimes? (..) [kinda want to travel?]  
 1141  
 1142 Connie-[smiling & nodding vigorously]  
 1143  
 1144 Betty-{raises hand} [mmhmm, I did.] If ah culd drive, ah wuld jus go.=  
 1145  
 1146 Connie- we' he(/) sed(\) dat she(/) uh makin him MIS'rble. nn heez, sheez mak him MIS'rble 'do.  
 1147  
 1148 Rod-yeah, he's feelin styfled n stagnant agin=  
 1149  
 1150 Sandra-yeah=ya no wut h wut wut he mean by, he mint by sayin he was stagnant bfore like a like a  
 1151 still pool o water [that doesn't] flow anywhere. right, that's stagnant water n'you know wut  
 1152 stagnant water's [like], right.  
 1153  
 1154 unknown-[mm::hh::mm]  
 1155  
 1156 Virgil- [sti::ill(\)] wuhter  
 1157  
 1158 Rod- reel still, what duz it git like?  
 1159  
 1160 Virgil-rotten ['n 'n..]  
 1161  
 1162 rod- {laughs} [yeah,] 'n mosquitos breed in that stagnant water and like..swamp water right? not  
 1163 like flowing [water], which is what he loved that St. John River=  
 1164  
 1165 Virgil-rig[ht]  
 1166  
 1167 Rod-[right] where he liked to let the ships sail off all the way to the sea, 'n he feels like he's  
 1168 stagnant there in his marriage. why did he decide to get married then? [why did] he do that?  
 1169  
 1170 Virgil-[cu'] see, cuz see, what it is [wuz]

1171  
1172 Betty- satis[fy his mutha] {softly}  
1173  
1174 Connie- [SATISFY HIS MUTHA]]  
1175  
1176 Rod- satisfy his muther I think=  
1177  
1178 Virgil-dat wudn't tha reeson.(/)=  
1179  
1180 Rod- why? (why do yu think)  
1181  
1182 Virgil-(..) reason wuz he jst stuck arou the story sed he stuck around the house n deci:ided to get  
1183 marrid=  
1184  
1185 Rod-mmkay, yeah, so..?  
1186  
1187 Virgil-he diin he diin his muther didnt influence him to get marrid, she tried to influence him to  
1188 stay at th' hou oh ah from leavin=  
1189  
1190 Rod-right=  
1191  
1192 Virgil-then he just came about to get marrid.  
1193  
1194 Rod-the longer he stayed, then that just seemed like the [thing to do?]  
1195  
1196 Virgil- [yeah, decid to get married]  
1197  
1198 Rod-and he rilly it seemed like maybe he rilly fell for that girl, stella, right, he rilly liked her. it sed  
1199 that he wuz pritty passionate when cort'n her. you know. he danced with er he walked er home and  
1200 [just thre w] at the candy pull, yeah, and in just three weeks he he sed ee wuz in luv with er,  
1201 yaknow. so ee so ee rilly fell for er, but then after ee got er just a little bit o time goes by and ee  
1202 gets that--you ever herd that term 'wander lust'?=  
1203  
1204 Connie-yeah=  
1205  
1206 Rod- herd that kinda wander lust, he gets that wander lust agin with the roads callin him and he  
1207 wants [to go off...]  
1208  
1209 Virgil-[he gets da notion to to do other [things] in his mind and ponder off [agin].  
1210  
1211 Rod- [right] [right] I think so.=  
1212  
1213 Virgil-kin I keep goin?  
1214  
1215 Rod- YES, please, any, er anybody else, anybody else with ah question right now er comment. [go  
1216 ahead Virgil]  
1217  
1218 Virgil- [John] John...  
1219 0:52:24.1  
1220  
1221 Virgil  
1222 john, folks allus sed you wuz queer an tol me not tuh marry you. but i jus luv you so i culdnt hep it  
1223 and now ta think you wunt ta sneek off an leave me?! but i'm comin back, dahlin, listen stella. but  
1224 tha girl wont not wuld not. mattie come came... lets see. but the girl wuld [not]  
1225  
1226 rod

1227 wuld not, wuld not listen to him, i think.  
1228  
1229 virgil  
1230 wuld not. mattie came in st an stella fell into ha arms weepin. john's mother immediately took up  
1231 arms against him. the two women kep up sech an ff=  
1232  
1233 connie  
1234 effective=  
1235  
1236 virgil  
1237 fective wah gainst him for the next few days. finally alf was forced to take his son's part... page 4?  
1238  
1239 rod  
1240 page 8...  
1241  
1242 virgil  
1243 matty let dat ar boy alone an ah tells you.. eef he wuz a ho homebuddy he be drove way by you all  
1244 racket. well, alf, dat all we po womenkind do. what wont owah husband, owah sons, john. you  
1245 wife know aint he aint aint go go i mean got no business to be talkin bout goin no nowhere. i  
1246 lowed that marryin stell wuld settle him. yazzah yazzah, dat's all wimmen study bout settlin some  
1247 man. you take all the git up outta him. just let us fellas make a motion tuh gettin somewhare and  
1248 some oh man begin ta uh ho.. holluh. stop there. where you goin? dont fuhget you belong tuh me,  
1249 my ... gawa, gawa=  
1250  
1251 rod  
1252 ma GAWD, [i think she] sed. ma GAWD, Alf.  
1253  
1254 virgil  
1255 [ma gawd] Ma GAWD, Alf, what you reckon stella gwine do? let john walk off an leave huh?  
1256 naw, git out a huh fool foolishness, and go long wit him. he'd take huh. stella aint goin. stella stella  
1257 aint got no callin ta go crazy cuz john is. she aint no woman ta be floppin round from place ta  
1258 place lak some of (?[?])  
1259  
1260 connie  
1261 [(these?)]  
1262  
1263 rod  
1264 lak some o these=  
1265  
1266 virgil  
1267 lak some o these (reps follerin' a section gang)...  
1268  
1269 0:56:00.4  
1270  
1271 rod  
1272 d..the..., what's this war about? right now, john's mother and father are havin this was, this battle,  
1273 she describes it as a war. and its back its back to the same old battle. what's it about?  
1274  
1275 virgil  
1276 leavin  
1277  
1278 0:56:11.4  
1279  
1280  
1281  
1282 rod

1283 [yeah, about] leavin or stayin right? [(...)]  
1284  
1285 DIS  
1286  
1287 virgil  
1288 [(...)] and he sayin, he sayin dat uh let tha fellahs be tha fellas  
1289  
1290 sandra  
1291 [mm:hh:mm (^)]  
1292  
1293 rod  
1294 {laughing} ri:ight.  
1295  
1296 virgil  
1297 and nen she sayin..uh she sayin I think he sayin he wunt stella ta go wid him  
1298  
1299 rod  
1300 yeah he suggests that stella should go wid hi[m]  
1301  
1302 virgil  
1303 an she say she dont wanta be floppin around...[(...)]  
1304  
1305 rod  
1306 right  
1307  
1308 virgil  
1309 lemme see wher it say that  
1310  
1311 rod  
1312 yeah, floppin round from place to [place?]  
1313  
1314 virgil  
1315 [floppin] around from place to place  
1316  
1317 rod  
1318 right(\) exactly. so its kind like, its a little of this battle o the sexes thing, right? {gestures} you and  
1319 John's father sez 'you women always wanna make a man stay put'. and she sez you men always  
1320 wanna run off and leave us and uh leave your obligations. its that kind o battle they're havin back  
1321 an forth...  
1322  
1323 virgil  
1324 keep goin?  
1325  
1326 rod  
1327 yeh, unless anybody else wants...  
1328  
1329 connie  
1330 yeah, [i'll try an (.)]  
1331  
1332 rod  
1333 [wanna pick it up?]  
1334  
1335 connie  
1336 the man turned ab'ruptly from his wife and stood in the kitchen door. a blue haze hang over tha  
1337 river and alfred alfred's attention seems fixed upon this. in reality, his thots were turned inward. he  
1338 was thinkin of numerous occasion when he and his son had sit on a fallen log on the edge of the

1339 water and talked of john's proposed travel. he had encouraged his son and given him every  
1340 advantage his own poor circumstance would permit and now ju-ohn wuz home tied. the young  
1341 man suddenly turned the corner of the house and approached his father. 'low papa,  
1342  
1343  
1344 0:58:00.6  
1345  
1346 connie  
1347 'low son. where mama and stella? the older man merely jerked his thumb toward the interior of the  
1348 house and once more gazed pens pens..ly ... toward the river. john entered the kitchen and kissed  
1349 his mother ff. fondly.  
1350  
1351 virgil  
1352 found'ly  
1353  
1354 connie  
1355 f found'ly. ... great news mama. what now? got a chance ta join the navy mama and go all around  
1356 tha wuld. aint that gran? john, you shurly aint goin uh leave me an stella is yeh? yes I think i am. i  
1357 know how both you feel but i know how i feel also. you preach to me the gospel of the self-  
1358 sacrifice for uh...uh...  
1359  
1360 virgil  
1361 tha happiness  
1362  
1363 connie  
1364 for tha happiness of others but you are a unwillin to practice any of it yourself. stella can stay here,  
1365 i am going to support her and spend all the time i can wid her. im going. tha's settled. but spend all  
1366 the time i can wid her i am goin that's settled. im goin. i want to go with your goodwill. i want to  
1367 do something worthy of a strong man. i have done w nothing so far but look to you and papa for  
1368 everything. let me learn to strive and think--in short, be a man.  
1369  
1370 1:00:00.4  
1371  
1372 connie  
1373 nah, mm jawn, awl nevuh...  
1374  
1375 rod  
1376 awl nevuh  
1377  
1378 connie  
1379 awl nevuh  
1380  
1381 virgil  
1382 give  
1383  
1384 connie  
1385 give mah... [consent]  
1386  
1387 virgil  
1388 [consent]  
1389  
1390 connie  
1391 our na, ah knows youse hard headed jus lak ya yo paw, but ef you leave this place ovuh mah ma  
1392 head, ah nevuh nevuh wants you ta come back heah ... no mo. ef ah wuz led on the coolin board  
1393 (ah don') wun you standin ovuh me young man. don even come near... come never {SNEEZE} ma  
1394 grave you you on grateful wretch. [uh]

1395  
1396 rod  
1397 [wow, so whats] what's she sayin there? im sorry connie. what's she sayin there?  
1398  
1399 sandra  
1400 [mmhhmm/]  
1401  
1402 connie  
1403 ok  
1404  
1405 sandra  
1406 [mmhhmm/]  
1407  
1408 virgil  
1409 ah, i ah picked up on som stuff. [on point] one,  
1410  
1411 connie  
1412 [ungrate, he's ungrateful]  
1413  
1414 virgil  
1415 at first, she wuz sayin he wuz a queer, now..he tha ta tha breech o the point, now she dont wunt  
1416 him ta leave ^  
1417  
1418 rod  
1419 mmhhmm  
1420  
1421 virgil  
1422 sayin he wuldnt date women an all now she sayin she dont wunt him ta leave period..  
1423  
1424 rod  
1425 yeah, she dudnt wunt him ta go [she wunts him ta (..)]  
1426  
1427 virgil  
1428 [like she dudnt wunt him ta leave period] like she attached ta him wunt ta keep him around that  
1429 house dont wunt him ta grow up ta be whut he his fantasy is=  
1430  
1431 rod  
1432 right=  
1433  
1434 virgil  
1435 what his desires are=  
1436  
1437 rod  
1438 mmm  
1439  
1440 virgil  
1441 she dont want him ta approach them in LIFE so .. now to an got to the point she tellin us she don  
1442 even wan his at his grave at huh grave.  
1443  
1444 rod  
1445 right right she sez that what wuh you gonna say Connieberly? she sez if you go now, i dont even  
1446 want you standin over me when i die. youre dead to me. I dont want you comin back round here  
1447 any more. I dont even want you around my grave, if you go. thats pretty strong language for him  
1448 to hear  
1449  
1450 1:02:00.1

1451  
1452 from his mother, idn't it? she's really, kinda turned up the pressure. she kinda ramped up the  
1453 pressure a little bit, you think sandra?  
1454  
1455 sandra  
1456 mmhhmm, yeahup/ ... but he sed they preach the gospel bout doin thangs but they dont show show  
1457 up thangs he say he but he want uh make better fuh himself  
1458  
1459 rod  
1460 he sez you mama you been he sez you you been preachin the gospel of [self-sacrifice]  
1461  
1462 sandra  
1463 [mmhhmm/. ye:ah]  
1464  
1465 rod  
1466 for the happiness of others but you wont sacrifice for [mine]  
1467  
1468 sandra  
1469 [mmhhmm]  
1470  
1471 virgil  
1472 [ye:hap]  
1473  
1474 rod  
1475 and give me your consent... but why does he need her consent?=  
1476  
1477 virgil  
1478 back in them days you (?) you know you turning loose from ya parents  
1479  
1480 rod  
1481 uh huh  
1482  
1483 virgil  
1484 you know like it aint like you just get um get nineteen and jus move out the house or whatevuh.. or  
1485 twenty, what eighteen when you get grown nineteen somepin, movin out, you know but you know  
1486 back in them days there wuz a bond and a trust that wuz part of the culture.  
1487  
1488 rod  
1489 an so he dudnt want to go against her, he wants to get [her]  
1490  
1491 virgil  
1492 [right]  
1493  
1494 rod  
1495 her goodwill as [he sez]  
1496  
1497 virgil  
1498 [her consent]  
1499  
1500 rod  
1501 right yeah, he wants to get her blessing so [to speak]  
1502  
1503 virgil  
1504 ye:ah  
1505  
1506 sandra

1507 ye:ah {nodding}  
1508  
1509 virgil  
1510 [(..?)]  
1511  
1512 sandra  
1513 he probly tired of bein round the ladies [{laughs}] yea:h  
1514  
1515 rod  
1516 [yeah right]  
1517  
1518 virgil  
1519 [but sometimes you got you have to be a certain age] when yo mama o yo daddy realiz you can  
1520 fend fo yoself, [can] can take care of yoself.  
1521  
1522 rod  
1523 [okay, right] but it's funny too though, right, he's um, he sez alright, good news mama Im gonna  
1524 go join the Navy ; she sez no ya arent, yer not goin anywhere. he sez but c'mon mama I gotta go  
1525 be a man. well what well why dudnt he jus go?  
1526  
1527 virgil  
1528 cuz he wanna get that [consent]  
1529  
1530 rod  
1531 [I guess so.] yeah.  
1532  
1533 virgil  
1534 still ha dat consent (...dat [consent])  
1535  
1536 rod  
1537 [yeah]  
1538  
1539 virgil  
1540 need huh permission ta do somethin .. with huh will that he culd be blussed by it uh whateveuh.  
1541  
1542 rod  
1543 yeah, right, okay... ok you want to keep goin connieberly?  
1544  
1545 connie  
1546 [uhh]  
1547  
1548 rod  
1549 [or you wan to] pass it off tuh somebody else?  
1550  
1551 connie  
1552 ...yeah ill pass off [somebody else]  
1553  
1554 virgil  
1555 [wheya we at?]  
1556  
1557 betty  
1558 (inaud)  
1559  
1560 virgil  
1561 (inaud) ms reddin?  
1562



1563 betty  
1564 (inaud) go ahead sandra. (inaud) sandra  
1565  
1566 virgil  
1567 mi..=  
1568  
1569 sandra  
1570 ms reddin arose  
1571  
1572 1:04:00.3  
1573  
1574 sandra  
1575 and flurried out of the room. for once she wuz too incence insense insess [to cry]  
1576  
1577 rod  
1578 [too incensed to cry] yeah  
1579  
1580 Sandra  
1581 john stood in his track gone cold and numb at his mother's pronouncement. al fred, AL'fred alfred  
1582 too wuz move moved with ms reddin banged the bedroom door violent and started [john]  
1583  
1584 ben  
1585 [(door)]  
1586  
1587 sandra  
1588 slightly. alfred looked his son arm saying softly come son son le's go down to thuh river. at the  
1589 water edge they (halted) fo a short space before see setting themselves on the log before setting  
1590 themselves on the log. the sun wuz setting in a purple cloud and hundreds of mosquito hawks  
1591 darted here and there catching gats [(and then)]  
1592  
1593 ben  
1594 [gnats]=  
1595  
1596 connie  
1597 =gnats  
1598  
1599 sandra  
1600 gnats and then themselves being caught by the lightning fast bu bullhats. john absracr abstractly  
1601 snapped in two the stalks of a slender young bon  
1602  
1603 virgil  
1604 [bamboo]  
1605  
1606 betty  
1607 [bamboo]  
1608  
1609 sandra  
1610 baboo taking no notes of what he was doin. he broke it into short lenth and tossted them singly  
1611 into the scream. the old man watched him silently for awhile but finally he sayed  
1612  
1613 1:06:00.3  
1614  
1615 sandra  
1616 oh yes mah boy, some ships get tangled in in the weeds. [{laughs}]  
1617  
1618 rod

1619 [notice what] john's doin now?  
 1620  
 1621 sandra  
 1622 what he doin?  
 1623  
 1624 rod  
 1625 [we well theyre] just [kinda settin] there after his mama has [made this pronouncement]  
 1626  
 1627 sandra  
 1628 [oh okay] [he uh] [oh okay]  
 1629  
 1630 rod  
 1631 an theyre jus settin there and he jus absent mind- hes not thinkin about it [and all of a sudden] hes  
 1632 makin those ships agin  
 1633  
 1634 sandra  
 1635 [oh okay, yes]  
 1636  
 1637 rod  
 1638 an puttin em in, puttin a little piece o bamboo in the water like ee used to do=  
 1639  
 1640 sandra  
 1641 =oh  
 1642  
 1643 rod  
 1644 when he was a boy. and his daddy sed oh yes mah boy some ships do get tangled in the weeds  
 1645  
 1646 sandra  
 1647 uh:huh  
 1648  
 1649 virgil  
 1650 in other words he tryin ta tell im some things are like this=  
 1651  
 1652 sandra  
 1653 =mm:hh:mm=  
 1654  
 1655 virgil  
 1656 =you know, some things in life get hard too when you (jes cant) cant make a accurate path, carry  
 1657 on like some (.) o the little sticks you know got tangled goin down the stream, his life gettin  
 1658 tangled up now=  
 1659  
 1660 sandra  
 1661 =yeah, he's [(like spend some time wit his) father]  
 1662  
 1663 virgil  
 1664 [(..life gettin harder now)]  
 1665  
 1666 rod  
 1667 mmhhmm  
 1668  
 1669 sandra  
 1670 mmhhmm  
 1671  
 1672 virgil  
 1673 aint like the little boy who could just wander off an go play with the little sticks an imagin em goin  
 1674 downstream. now they gettin tangled up.

1675  
1676 rod  
1677 mmhhmm  
1678  
1679 sandra  
1680 mmhhmm  
1681  
1682 rod  
1683 you want to keep reading sandra?  
1684  
1685 sandra  
1686 yeah, somebody else can go. i'm onna pass.  
1687  
1688 rod  
1689 a:ight, ya did good.  
1690  
1691 daphne  
1692 {gesturing to sophie} (you can read)  
1693  
1694 sophie  
1695 where she stop at?  
1696  
1697 rod  
1698 [alright]  
1699  
1700 connie  
1701 [taking taking] no note  
1702  
1703 sandra  
1704 (nate)  
1705  
1706 rod  
1707 {pointing to the next line} yes papa they certainly do i guess.  
1708  
1709 betty  
1710 yes papa  
1711  
1712 sandra  
1713 (nate)  
1714  
1715 rod  
1716 oh im sorry right over here.. yes papa  
1717  
1718 sophie  
1719 yes papa, they certainly do. i guess i better might as well surrender. nevuh say die, yeah nevuh ken  
1720 tell what will happen--what ken happen. i have courage enuf to make things happen but what ken i  
1721 do agaist mama? what man wantsto go on a long journey with his mother's course ringing n his  
1722 ear? she doesnt understand she doesnt understand ah will wait anothuh yeah but i am going  
1723  
1724 1:08:00.1  
1725  
1726 sophie  
1727 becuz i must. alfred threw an arm across his sons neck and drew him near but quickly removed it,  
1728 both men instantly drew apart, ashamed for having been some so demonstrative. the father looked  
1729 off to the woodlot and asked with a (ransom) smile  
1730

1731 rod  
1732 a reminiscent [smile]  
1733  
1734 sophie  
1735 [a reminiscent] smile. son do you remember showin me the tree (dat) dat looks like a skeleton  
1736 head? yes i do. its there still. i looks at it sometimes when things have become too painful for me  
1737 at the house and I ran down here .. to cool off and think an an every time I look at the .. pa papa it  
1738 laughs at me like it has some grim joke up its sleeve. you wuz alays imaginin thangs john, things  
1739 that nobody else ever thought on. you know powerful sometimes i reckon my longin to get away  
1740 make me feel this way. i feel that i am just earth, soil layin helpless to move myself but thinking i  
1741 seem to hear heard a big beast like horses and cows throwing over me and rain beating down and  
1742 wind sweeping focibly over all (acting?) upon me. but me wuz just soil. feeling but not able to  
1743 take part in it. then a soft wind  
1744  
1745 1:10:00.2  
1746  
1747 sophie  
1748 passed over and warms me and summer rain comes down like understanding a soft a soft in me.  
1749 and i pushed a blade of grass or flowers or maybe a pine tree thats growin, thinkin. plants are  
1750 growin thoughts because the soil cant move itself. whenever i see little whorls of dust whirling  
1751 down the road i alays step to tha side, i dont want to stop there on theyre shining way moving oh  
1752 yes im a dreamer. i have such wonderful complete dreams, papa, they never come true but even if  
1753 my dreams (fade,) i have others. yes son, i have the same feeling exactly, but i cant find no words  
1754 like you you lak you do. it seems like youre and me seen wide wide [(and sunny)]  
1755  
1756 rod  
1757 [see wid] the [same eyes]  
1758  
1759 sophie  
1760 [see] with the same eyes. hear wid the same ears, and even feel the same inside, only thangs you  
1761 can talk it an i cant. but anyhow you speak for me so whas the difference? the man arose without  
1762 more conversation. poss possibly they feared to trust themselves to speak. as they walked,  
1763 (leisurely) toward the house alfred remarked the freshness of the breeze. i's about time the rain set  
1764 in, added his son. the year is worin on. after a gloomy supper, john strolled out into the spacious  
1765 front yard and set himself beneath a  
1766  
1767  
1768 1:12:00.1  
1769  
1770  
1771  
1772 sophie  
1773 chin china china. berry tree. the breeze had grown to a trif strong since sunset and continued from  
1774 the southeast. matty and stella sat on the (big on the deep) front porch but alfred joined john under  
1775 the tree. the family wuz divided in two armed camps and the [hos]  
1776  
1777 rod  
1778 [hostilities]  
1779  
1780 sophie  
1781 [hostilities] had reached that stage where no quarter could be asked for and given asked for or  
1782 given. about nine oclock, the automobile came flying down the dusty white road an held at the  
1783 gate. a white man slammed the gate and hurried up the walk toward the house but stopped (adapt)..  
1784  
1785 connie  
1786 abruptly

1787  
1788 sophie  
1789 abruptly before the men beneath the china chin chinaberry. it wuz mister hawk, hill, the builder of  
1790 the new bridge that was to span the river. howdy john, howdy alf. i'm mighty glad i found you. im  
1791 in trouble. well now, mist mist hill hill hill, answered alfred slowly but pleasantly. wusn glad you  
1792 foun us too. what trouble culd you be having now? its the bridge. the weather bureau sez the rains  
1793 will be upon me in forty-eight hours. if it catches the bridge as it is now, im afrain all my work of  
1794 the past five months will be swept away... to say nothing  
1795  
1796 1:14:00.1  
1797  
1798 sophie  
1799 of the quarter of a million dollars worth of labor and material ive ive ive got all my men at work  
1800 now and i thought to get as many extra hands as ai could to help out tonight and tomorrow. we can  
1801 make her weather tight in that time if i can get about twenty more. i'll go, master hill, said john  
1802 with a great deal of energy. i dont want papa out on that bridge. it too dangerous.  
1803  
1804 rod  
1805 did you want to stop fer a second, sandra? {responds to large stretching gesture}  
1806  
1807 sandra  
1808 oh, na:h... john wuz the chile wasnt he  
1809  
1810 rod  
1811 uh, yes, thats the young man.  
1812  
1813 sandra  
1814 oh, okay  
1815  
1816 virgil  
1817 {raining had} i got somepin ta say.  
1818  
1819 rod  
1820 yeah  
1821  
1822 virgil  
1823 you see that part right here where he say on page ten hwere he say son do you remember showin  
1824 me the ss the tree that looked like a skeleton head?  
1825  
1826 rod  
1827 mmhhmm  
1828  
1829 virgil  
1830 thats the part where his mother warned him about he dont want him to leave an go because she see  
1831 death in his ey::es some kinda way. becasue evey time you talkin bout the blossom the spring an  
1832 all wa was goin on but that skeleton tree reminiscin back ta iss like like a ee:vil somthin lurkin in  
1833 him, [iss somethin]  
1834  
1835 rod  
1836 [yeah]  
1837  
1838 virgil  
1839 lurkin him evry time he think about dat an his mama tryin ta keep im from goin an she probly  
1840 know this already. cuz back in em days people wuz spiritually uplifted. you know like he say you  
1841 teach me the gospel [an all.]  
1842

1843 rod  
1844 [mmhhmm]  
1845  
1846 virgil  
1847 so she wuz probly spiritually uplifted seein things in her eyesight, (per you know) a person who  
1848 can see things.  
1849  
1850 rod  
1851 she she wuz SCA'red [for him]  
1852  
1853 virgil  
1854 [she wuz scared] for him an he sed he always see a skeleton tree a skeleton is like a dead person  
1855  
1856 rod  
1857 right  
1858  
1859 virgil  
1860 so he wuz seein visions of..i cant just say evil--something wuz warning him (ab)  
1861  
1862 {COUGH}  
1863  
1864 rod  
1865 some kind of warning there isnt there?=  
1866  
1867 virgil  
1868 some kind of warning [(inaud)]  
1869  
1870 rod  
1871 [i think youre right]..  
1872  
1873 virgil  
1874 some kind of warning  
1875  
1876 rod  
1877 right  
1878  
1879 virgil  
1880 (some warning...) and like right now, he goin to the bridge to work  
1881  
1882  
1883 1:16:00.1  
1884  
1885 virgil  
1886 he goin to the bridge to work, an theres no tellin what later on in the story might just happen cuz  
1887 hes at that accurate point of the water again  
1888  
1889 sandra  
1890 (an)=  
1891  
1892 virgil  
1893 =he tryin ta [get the crop]  
1894  
1895 rod  
1896 [thats right]  
1897  
1898 virgil

1899 uh (this) million dollah worth of crop whatevuh, what this.  
1900  
1901 rod  
1902 its the man whos buildin the new bridge, [right?]  
1903  
1904 virgil  
1905 [right]  
1906  
1907 rod  
1908 sayin the storms comin and its gonna knock out the [bridge] if we dont get you know get some  
1909 more work done on it  
1910  
1911 sandra  
1912 [yeah] so he so hes hes imaginin his father (..the story) but he say that he have dreams but his  
1913 dream doesnt come true so he does things in actions. but the father lives in his dreams.  
1914  
1915 rod  
1916 excellent. {to sophie} you wanna keep readin? you wanna pass it off?  
1917  
1918 sophie  
1919 i can continue  
1920  
1921 rod  
1922 okay  
1923  
1924 sophie  
1925 good for you john, cried the white man, now if i had a few more men of your brawn and brain i  
1926 could build an entirely new bridge in forty-eight hours, in forty-eight hours. come on and jump in  
1927 the car, im takin the men on down as i find them...{turn page}  
1928  
1929  
1930 rod  
1931 page twelve, top o page twelve  
1932  
1933 sophie  
1934 wait a minute, i must put on my blue jeans. i wont be long. john arrived arose and strode at the  
1935 house. he knew that his mother and wife had overheard everything but he.. (paused) for a moment  
1936 to speak to them. mama, i am going to work all night on the bridge. There wuz no answer. he  
1937 turned  
1938  
1939 1:18:00.2  
1940  
1941 sophie  
1942 to his wife. stella don be loesome, i will be home at daybreak. at daybreak. his wife wuz as silent  
1943 as his mother. john stood for a moment on the steps then [RES'o]  
1944  
1945 rod  
1946 [resolutely]  
1947  
1948 sophie  
1949 resolutely strode past the women and into the house. a few minutes later, he emerged clad in his  
1950 blue overalls and and [bro]  
1951  
1952 rod  
1953 [brogans]  
1954

1955 sophie  
 1956 bro  
 1957  
 1958 virgil  
 1959 [brogans]  
 1960  
 1961 rod  
 1962 [shoes]  
 1963  
 1964 sophie  
 1965 this time he said nothing to the silent figures rocking back and forth on the porch, but when he  
 1966 wuz a few feet from the steps he called back bye mama, bye stella and hurried on down the walk  
 1967 to where his father sat. so long pop, ill be home around seven. alfred roused himself and stood  
 1968 placing both hands upon his son's broad shoulders. he sed softly, please be careful care careful  
 1969 son, don fall or nuthin. i will papa. don you get into a quarrel on my account. john hurried on to  
 1970 the waiting car car and was whirled away. alfred set for a long time beneath the tree where his  
 1971 sone had left him and smoked. the women soon went indoors. on the night breeze (were born  
 1972 numerous ..[ scents])  
 1973  
 1974 rod  
 1975 were borne numerous scents  
 1976  
 1977 sophie  
 1978 scents of jas jasmine and jasmine of rose, of deep earth and of deep earth  
 1979  
 1980 virgil  
 1981 damp  
 1982  
 1983 sophie  
 1984 earth of the river, of the pine forest near, of a solitary whip por whil, sent forth his plaintive call  
 1985 from the nearby shruberry  
 1986  
 1987 rod  
 1988 shruberry  
 1989  
 1990 sophie  
 1991 shruberry. a great owl roared from the woodlot and (the calf confined in the barn would bleat and  
 1992 be answered by his mother's sympathetic moo from the pen.) moo from the pen. away down in  
 1993 lake howell, the baass  
 1994  
 1995 rod  
 1996 the basso profundo  
 1997  
 1998 sophie  
 1999 basso profundo of the alligator boomed and died, boomed and died.  
 2000  
 2001 rod  
 2002 have any of you ever lived near enough to where alligators lived to hear em at night? like big ol  
 2003 bullfrogs, they kinda they got this kinda roar {growls} I cant do it..  
 2004  
 2005 sophie  
 2006 around ten o'clock the breeze freshened, growing stiffer and stiffer until midnight when it became  
 2007 a gale.  
 2008  
 2009 virgil  
 2010 right



2011  
2012 sophie  
2013 alfred  
2014  
2015 rod  
2016 oh, yeah, sorry {to virgil, raising his hand}  
2017  
2018 virgil  
2019 right at these points right here, somethin spiritual is happenin see..  
2020  
2021 rod  
2022 whatta ya mean? how do you mean?  
2023  
2024 virgil  
2025 see right here you saw where (things how the) the wind is blowin. [(hiding forest trees)]  
2026  
2027 sandra  
2028 [uu:huh/, its true]  
2029  
2030 rod  
2031 the animals are [talkin]  
2032  
2033 virgil  
2034 [talkin]  
2035  
2036 rod  
2037 right, yeah  
2038  
2039 virgil  
2040 everythin goin on lak (uh) mothuh nature or spiritual, God or whatevuh's act taking place before  
2041 after he left his father put his hands on his broad shoulders..tellin him and then he sed, tellin him ta  
2042 be careful. you know, watch, in other words, watch yuhself, things might happen to him uh  
2043 [whatevuh]  
2044  
2045 sandra  
2046 [um:hmm^]  
2047  
2048 virgil  
2049 and then  
2050  
2051 1:22:00.1  
2052  
2053 virgil  
2054 nature is taking place now  
2055  
2056 rod  
2057 mmhhmm  
2058  
2059 virgil  
2060 whatevuh fiddn ta take place in the rest of the story we'll see.  
2061  
2062 rod  
2063 mmhhmm, [i think]  
2064  
2065 sandra  
2066 [(he sed dont fall)]

2067  
 2068 rod  
 2069 i think you're right. and we all know that animals know stuff before we can know it sometimes,  
 2070 right?  
 2071  
 2072 virgil  
 2073 [right]  
 2074  
 2075 sandra  
 2076 [careful]  
 2077  
 2078 rod  
 2079 what were you gonna say connieberly?  
 2080  
 2081 connie  
 2082 oh, nuthin, i's just listenin... yeah, somethin spiritual is gonna take place...  
 2083  
 2084 rod  
 2085 should we go on? who wants to read? you want to keep goin or..  
 2086  
 2087 sophie  
 2088 nah  
 2089  
 2090 rod  
 2091 ben you want to read? you want to let you want me to read a little bit?  
 2092  
 2093 virgil  
 2094 yeah, you read.  
 2095  
 2096 rod  
 2097 i havent read yet. okay, i give it a shot. around ten o'clock  
 2098  
 2099 (1:23:27.1)  
 2100  
 2101 rod  
 2102 around ten o'clock the breeze freshened , growing stiffer until midnight when it became a gale.  
 2103 alfred fastened the doors and bolted the wooden shutters at the windows. the three three persons  
 2104 sat around sat about a round deal table in the kitchen upon which stood a bulky kerosene lamp,  
 2105 flickering and sputtering in the wind that came in through the numerous cracks in the walls. the  
 2106 wind rushed down the chimney blowing puf puffs of ashes around the room. it banged the coking  
 2107 utensils on the walls. the drinking gourd hanging outside by the door played a weird tattoo, hollow  
 2108 and unearthly, against the thin wooden wall. the man and the wooden women sat silently. even if  
 2109 there had been no storm they would not have talked. they could not go to bed because the women  
 2110 were afraid to retire during teh storm and the man wished to stay awake and think with his son.  
 2111 thus they sat. the women hot with resentment toward the man and terrified by teh storm. the man  
 2112 hardly mindful of the tempest but eating his heart out with pity for his boy. time wore heavily on.  
 2113 and now a new element of terror was added. a screech owl alighted on the roof and shivered forth  
 2114 his doleful cry. possibly he had been blown out of his nest by the wind.  
 2115  
 2116 1:24:02.1  
 2117  
 2118 rod  
 2119 matty started up at the sound but fell back in her chair, pale and trembling. ma GAWD, she  
 2120 grasped, that's sho a sign o death. stella hurriedly thrust her hand into the salt jar and threw some  
 2121 into the lamp. the color of the flame changed from yellow to blue green but this burning of salt did  
 2122 not have the desired effect, to drive the bird from the roof. Matty slipped out of her blue calico

2123 wrapper and turned it wrong side out before replacing it. Even alfred turned ne sock. alf, said  
2124 matty, what do you reckons gonna happen from this? how do ah know matty? humph. ah wish  
2125 john hadnt went away from us here tonight. hmph. outsid ethe tempest raged. the palms rattled  
2126 dryly and the great pines groaned inside in the grip of the wind. flying leaves and pine mast filled  
2127 the air. now and then a flash of lightning disclosed a bird being blown here and there with the  
2128 wind. the prodigious roar of the thunder seemed to rock the earth. black clouds hung so low that  
2129 the tops of the pines were among them moving slowly before the and made the darkness awful. the  
2130 screech owl continued his tremulous cry. after three o'clock the wind ceased and the rain  
2131 commenced.  
2132  
2133 virgil  
2134 what page we at now?  
2135  
2136 rod page fourteen. huge drops clattered down upon the shingle roof like buckshot and ran from the  
2137 eaves in torrents. it entered the house through cracks in the walls and under the doors. it was a  
2138 deluge in volume and force but subsided before morning. the sun came up brightly on the havoc of  
2139 the wind and the rain calling forth millions of feathered creatures. the white sand everywhere was  
2140 full of tiny cups dug out by the force of the falling raindrops. the rims of the little depressions  
2141 crunched noisily underfoot. at daybreak mr. redding set out for the bridge. he was uneasy. on  
2142 arriving he found that the river had risen twelve feet during the cloudburst and was still rising. the  
2143 slow st john was swollen far beyond its banks and rushing on to sea like a mountain stream,  
2144 sweeping away houses, great blocks of earth, cattle, trees, in short anything that came within its  
2145 grasp. Even the steel framework of the new bridge was gone.  
2146  
2147 1:31:55.9 (end of reading the story)  
2148  
2149 virgil  
2150 oh I got it  
2151  
2152 sandra  
2153 okay  
2154  
2155 virgil  
2156 you know what happened?  
2157  
2158 rod  
2159 whaddaya think? what happened?  
2160  
2161 virgil  
2162 he died  
2163  
2164 {other murmuring}  
2165  
2166 rod  
2167 yeah he did  
2168  
2169 virgil  
2170 but at the same time, his mother was tryin to stop him from leavin and goin to the navy he wantin  
2171 to be on a ship anyway so in the end he still floated away on his own ship.  
2172  
2173 rod  
2174 it's it's very ironic the way he finally got his dream. his dream finally came true. he's finally  
2175 [floatin away to sea]  
2176  
2177 virgil

2178 [he was] he was saying that they sung and saying a prayer before that happened before a big uh  
2179 gig pine tree came and hit the..  
2180  
2181 rod  
2182 so here we wre we're right here at 11:30, so we've gone an hour and a half now i want to take a  
2183 couple minutes if we want to discuss this now a little but but.. its really kinda quittin time so what  
2184 we can do is pick it up with discussing this story when we come back next monday and then start  
2185 on another one--how do you feel about that? and we'll just kinda work it like that.  
2186  
2187 {general agreement among the group}  
2188  
2189 rod  
2190 now i don't want to leave i don't want to leave if there's something we need to say about john  
2191 redidng. cuz this is pretty dramatic, right?  
2192  
2193 sandra  
2194 yes it was  
2195  
2196 rod  
2197 i mean, how does this make you feel? whado you?  
2198  
2199 betty  
2200 good, good story, i felt good about it.  
2201  
2202 rod  
2203 is it sad? and its [also]  
2204  
2205 betty  
2206 [in a way,] but he also got his wish.  
2207  
2208 rod  
2209 yeah he did. its s strange kind of, i mean  
2210  
2211 sandra  
2212 he had to go through some things.  
2213  
2214 virgil  
2215 thats a natural way of life, you know some dreams you can reach only [some dreams you only can  
2216 reach by death and some dreams you can reach by natural works.]  
2217  
2218 {passing back packets}  
2219  
2220 betty  
2221 you keep that  
2222  
2223 rod  
2224 you can keep that, absolutely. yeah, tell you what, whyncha bring it back with you next week and  
2225 we'll start with this again you know cuz the way it works for me is that when i read and ill kinda  
2226 sit on it for a little while, and i'll think about it during the week and if you have a thought you want  
2227 to bring to discuss..  
2228  
2229 sandra  
2230 okay, we had a nice time  
2231  
2232 rod  
2233 hey, good, I really enjoyed it too.

2234  
2235 virgil  
2236 you know what he got in the end?  
2237  
2238 rod  
2239 what did he get  
2240  
2241 virgil  
2242 peace and (feelins)  
2243  
2244 rod  
2245 he did finally get some peace didnt he--even in that violent storm. we'll take it up next time. thanks  
2246 a lot yall. see you next monday.  
2247  
2248 1:34:06.00

1 **Session Two**

2 {Randy sits reading silently from John Redding, occasionally trying out some of the lines,  
3 dialect... ; the Price is Right blares from the TV in the waiting room; enter Virgil, Connie, Betty,  
4 Ben (with his ~~Psychiatry book~~ Medical Encyclopedia), Sandra...}  
5  
6 0:00:24.5  
7  
8 randy  
9 its like country country  
10  
11 rod  
12 yeah, her dialect is very country, [right?]  
13  
14 randy  
15 [the dia]log itself?  
16  
17 rod  
18 uh-huh, its very, RUral, [right?]  
19  
20 randy  
21 [{laughs loudly, dramatically}]  
22  
23 rod  
24 yeah, we had fun with it last week, its kinda difficult to read it [aloud]  
25  
26 randy  
27 [i see]  
28  
29 rod  
30 yeah yeah ya ya, i'll be right back.  
31  
32 randy  
33 well\  
34  
35 randy  
36 {reading} BLack (.. ) all you wants to, but dont tell mah son none of it.  
37  
38 0:02:00.8  
39  
40 randy  
41 {reading} son none of it. son none of it.  
42  
43 {the price is right is beginning in the waiting room. Randy appears unaffected. virgil, connie,  
44 betty, & ben enter}  
45  
46 rod  
47 alright, make yourself comfortable. there's some blueberry bannana zucchini bread over there on  
48 the table if you'd like.  
49  
50 betty  
51 okay  
52

53 randy  
54 i gotta get somethin to wash it down.  
55  
56 rod  
57 yeah, is there some water you can get? i didn't bring anything to drink.  
58  
59 betty  
60 laughs  
61  
62 rod  
63 yeah, getcha a cup o water if you want; now, ben, youre trying to take my seat there=  
64  
65 ben  
66 oh, your space {gets up to move}  
67  
68 rod  
69 its okay I can sit right here, you stay right where you are.  
70  
71 ben  
72 okay  
73  
74 rod  
75 your fine your fine.. yeah your fine. okay lets see, who's missin? the sisters, sophie & daphne=  
76  
77 virgil  
78 =ill go get em=  
79  
80 rod  
81 =oh are they [here?]  
82  
83 virgil  
84 ah, sandra (and em) back heah.  
85  
86 rod  
87 ah, sandra's here too, great. thank ya lijah; good; found out a little bit about=  
88  
89 betty  
90 OH I lef ma paper, can i use one of yours?  
91  
92 0:04:00.5  
93  
94 randy  
95 (..)  
96  
97 rod  
98 THAts the one from last time, it's okay cuz we'll spend some time talkin about it but i think i got  
99 an extra one [if you want to look at it again]  
100  
101 betty  
102 [okay cuz i lef my (.) at home]  
103  
104 rod  
105 yeah, thas fine. in fact let me see what ive got from las week and hen weve got some new stories  
106 and we'll and we'll read somethin new in a minute too but we can start with i wanted to see  
107 ifanybody wanted to say anything about the story from last week. there you go {passing out  
108 stories} and theres an extra one down there for virgil or whoever. {to ben} and you brought yours

109 back, thank you. we'll wait for them to come back. and we'll shut the door so we dont have to  
110 compete with the price is right {laugh}  
111  
112 betty  
113 {laughs}  
114  
115  
116 rod  
117 ..did anybody else go see family thie weekend? i heard betty did.  
118  
119 betty  
120 yeah I had to get away. i didnt get much sleep...  
121  
122 rod  
123 oh yeah? its funny idn it? when we go visit, we dont always get to rest  
124  
125 betty  
126 i rested  
127  
128 rod  
129 oh you did rest?  
130  
131 betty  
132 oh yes. i went to see ma grandchildren and they surprised me, they didnt come home till today..  
133  
134 rod  
135 well thats good you got some rest; {to virgil} did you find them?  
136  
137 virgil  
138 yeah, sandra and them sposed to be comin  
139  
140 rod  
141 okay  
142  
143 virgil  
144 {looking at story} i thot we finished this one.  
145  
146 rod  
147 we did, we were gonna look at it and see if anyone had anythin else to say uh about it. then weve  
148 got weve got some new stories we'll look at. at least one...  
149  
150 rod  
151 didja have any thots about ol john redding over the last week?  
152  
153 0:06:00.4  
154  
155 rod  
156 oh, thats right the other thing we gotta do is since randy wadnt here, we gotta fill im in we gotta  
157 fill im in on the story and let im know what what wuz happenin. here i'll [just shut the door]  
158  
159 randy  
160 [(i know he was \_ \_ \_ )]  
161  
162 betty  
163 no, he wadnt. he wasn't  
164



165 randy  
166 he wasnt?  
167  
168 betty  
169 hh-mhm... he was a queer chile, dreamin all the time bout goin to the sea ( \_ \_ ) with his own life  
170 but his mama didnt want im goin  
171  
172 ...  
173  
174 rod  
175 {from outside room} very well thanks, come on in  
176  
177 sandra  
178 awright  
179  
180 rod  
181 awright, theres some uh breakfast bread over here on the table if yall wanna get a bite to eat.  
182  
183 betty  
184 [(ill take a piece with me when I go)]  
185  
186 rod  
187 [i'll open it up]  
188  
189 rod  
190 whas that?  
191  
192 betty  
193 i say ill take me a slice when i go  
194  
195 rod  
196 take some with ya, okay. should i jus put it over here in the middle of the table or you wanna wait  
197 till later?  
198  
199 betty  
200 hm-hmh. we'll wait.  
201  
202 rod  
203 wait? awright that's fine. we'll just leave it wrapped up there [for now]. but help yourself if you  
204 want  
205  
206 betty  
207 [okay]  
208  
209 rod  
210 um awright, so we were gonna fill in randy on john redding from last time ( wanted ) to see if we  
211 had any thoughts. did we think about old john and his family and what happened? and we can let  
212 randy know what happened in that story cuz he missed it last week. so whos gonna tell randy what  
213 happened in this story.  
214  
215 ben  
216 (i say i still member a lil bit)  
217  
218 rod  
219 yeah.  
220

221 ben  
222 john lived in a small quiet like country town, his parents bother were sayin that john wuz kinda  
223 queer cuz john stayed to his self a lot kinda like daydreamin to hisself an alays had tis dream of  
224 like not really like a dream when youre asleep but like a daydream (he sit and )  
225  
226 0:08:00.0  
227  
228 ben  
229 daydream like of leavin the town and becomin successful. so his family I believe in my opinion  
230 that there was in some kind of cult cuz they wuz tryin to summon some kind of spirit to i guess  
231 kindof change johns mind about stayin in town and i guess about educatin the town or somethin  
232 like that. anyway, john wanted to leave town to go to anothuh anothuh town to to get a job, so  
233 anyway his parents they stopped him and he ended up getting married to a girl the girl and him  
234 were married for awhile and then they got into an argument. he said that he was going to john sed  
235 he was goin to the military, so his parents stopped him from goin in the military. a storm cam  
236 along in the town and john went out to like a dam or somethin or a bridge or somethin to try to  
237 stop the storm from floodin the town. anyway john came up missin and they thot he had died in  
238 the storm and i guess this is the way john escaped from the town cuz he got tied tired of his  
239 parents tellin him that he cant leave the town. they found him they found him on a raft he he  
240 floated away. i dont know wuz he dead or not. on the raft.  
241  
242 betty  
243 mmhhmm  
244  
245 randy  
246 got lost  
247  
248 rod  
249 i think he wa, yeah, i think he got killed=  
250  
251 betty  
252 =yeah he got killed, he died  
253  
254 rod  
255 ( \_ \_ ) good, thanks, ben, I appreciate it. what else wuld you add to to fill in the story? what wuz  
256 the, what did you take from it? what wuz the point ya know? what wuz important to the plot you  
257 know the storyline? was goin on there? let's see you said that he wanted tu, he was kindof a weird  
258 kid. he called she sez a couple times he wuz a queer child. remember that [first line]  
259  
260 betty  
261 [mmhhmm]  
262  
263 rod  
264 always daydreamin, keepin to himself, and what wuz it he used to do down at the river, the saint  
265 john river when he wuz a little boy and he was always playin?  
266  
267 betty  
268 sticks  
269  
270 connie  
271 u:m sticks-s  
272  
273 betty  
274 in tha watah  
275  
276 connie

277 watah  
 278  
 279 rod  
 280 yeah, he put those little [sticks and reeds and things down in the watah,] and he called em his..  
 281  
 282 {[betty and connie nod and join in (inaud)]}  
 283  
 284 connie  
 285 u:m  
 286  
 287 rod  
 288 what did he ( ) pretend like they were  
 289  
 290 connie  
 291 (bounce)  
 292  
 293 betty  
 294 ships or boats  
 295  
 296 connie  
 297 ships  
 298  
 299 rod  
 300 that's right, his ships, they were goin off to sea he would pretent that they were his ships they were  
 301 goin off to sea and he always dreamed of goin off to sea himself. he wanted to go see the world. to  
 302 go sail around the world and travel the world. and and he used to get sad when those ships, those  
 303 little sticks used to get caught up in the weeds at the edge of the river right? and how and this story  
 304 was about how he kinda got caught up in the weeds a little bit he got caught up in the town cuz his  
 305 mama wouldn't give him permission to leave and then he went ahead and got married anyway an  
 306 he wuz happy for a little while but then he felt stuck and like he wanted to go on an like he wasn't  
 307 really fulfilling his uh=  
 308  
 309 connie  
 310 =DREAMS=  
 311  
 312 betty  
 313 =dreams=  
 314  
 315 rod  
 316 =dreams, yeah, yeah thats right.. that whole part about summonin up the spirits and conjuration  
 317 that his mama used to was talkin about that wuz a funny part in this um. uh, his mama sed that he  
 318 wanted to leave town because he had a spell put on [him when he wuz born]  
 319  
 320 virgil, betty, connie  
 321 [right, right]  
 322  
 323 rod  
 324 that some like witch woman had sprinkled that travelin dust i think she sed right?  
 325  
 326 betty  
 327 (when) outside th window when he wuz born.  
 328  
 329 rod  
 330 [when he wuz born]  
 331  
 332 randy

333 [witchcraft]  
334  
335 0:11:25.8  
336  
337 rod  
338 yeah yeah some kinda it wuz some kinda witchcraft. its its a lot of kindof superstition in the story I  
339 mean [we might call]  
340  
341 connie  
342 [it is]  
343  
344 rod  
345 it superstition. (but if the) but virgil you were talkin last time about when the wind started to blow  
346 and the storm was comin and that screech owl lit on the roof of the house and everybody got kind  
347 of afraid. remember that part of it?  
348  
349 virgil  
350 {quietly} right  
351  
352 rod  
353 and you said NATure was happenin. right? and that somethin spiritual [wuz happenin]  
354  
355 virgil  
356 spirituality, yeah  
357  
358 rod  
359 (so she\_ )  
360  
361 virgil  
362 sometimes there wuz some warning signs that  
363  
364 rod  
365 yeah, okay so there were some warnings. there was quite a bit of warnins in nature wasnt there?  
366  
367 virgil  
368 yea, like when he saw the skeleton face in the tree  
369  
370 rod  
371 in the tree, right right.  
372  
373 connie  
374 mmhmm  
375  
376 rod  
377 an that always seemed to be grinnin at him or laughin at him or somethin. aright aright. and then  
378 why do you think, what do you think it was warnin im about? imean what was that/.  
379  
380 connie  
381 of his life. of his life ( \_ \_ )what he thot would happen later on in his life ( \_ warnin )..  
382  
383 rod  
384 yeah i think it (was [about) a couple a different thangs]  
385  
386 virgil  
387 [warnin im bout is life. is moms] and pops, his mom really knew that someethin wuz gonna  
388 happen to him. she wuz tryin ta protect im.

389  
390 rod  
391 mm mm mm mm by not lettin im leave=  
392  
393 virgil  
394 =[right]  
395  
396 rod  
397 [cuz] thats part of the thing of she uz afraid of what might happen [ta him]  
398  
399 virgil  
400 [(uhhuh)]  
401  
402 connie  
403 [uh huh]  
404  
405 rod  
406 if she went if he went away from her=  
407  
408 virgil  
409 =ri:ght, she was tryin ta protect him she sed she say im not gonna letcha leave with dis consent, he  
410 alays wantta tryin get huh conSENT' ta leave but id'd be like a blessin in the in the family back in  
411 the elderly days.  
412  
413 rod  
414 right right right  
415  
416 virgil  
417 so he didnt wanna he he (couldnt) leave, so he still lef in another way  
418  
419 rod  
420 right, yeah, he he he in a way he ended up gettin killed because he stayed, right?  
421  
422 betty  
423 mmhhmm  
424  
425 rod  
426 which is kind of.. its kind of a twist=  
427  
428 virgil  
429 but it wulda be vie-versa anyway cuz she (wulda) seen im die anyway you know even if he lef he  
430 probly wuz gonna die=  
431  
432 rod  
433 or he'd be dead ta her anyway, he'd be gone from her, right?  
434  
435 virgil  
436 right, right  
437  
438 betty  
439 mmhhmm  
440  
441 rod  
442 an remember she sed to im if you leave, i don even wunt you ta come back ta ma grave when ah  
443 die. you know, you'll be dead to me, if you leave me you'll be dead to me. so you're right, either  
444 way,s'like either way he us gonna be dead to his mama. That's funny\.. One question i had is that i

445 know that he wanted her blessing, you know i know that he wanted her consent and that he  
446 respected his mother and that's, we can we can understand that, but if he wanted to go so badly and  
447 explore the world, why didnt he go anyway, why didnt he just go? why couldnt he just make the  
448 decision to go?  
449  
450 connie  
451 he was [afraid] (that he\\)  
452  
453 betty  
454 [he wuz] afraid ta go  
455  
456 rod  
457 like of what do you think\  
458  
459 connie  
460 of [what might happen]  
461  
462  
463 sandra  
464 [i gue(s) caus they put em down (so much)]  
465  
466 betty  
467 mmhhmm  
468  
469 rod  
470 Huh, cuz they told im he couldnt go an they okay awright, thats interesting, like he needed [them  
471 to say its]  
472  
473 connie  
474 [(INAUD)]  
475  
476 sandra  
477 [uh-huh^]  
478  
479 betty  
480 [mmhhmm]  
481  
482 rod  
483 okay in order for him to be confident enough or courageous enough to go on and do it himself=  
484  
485 ben  
486 [some]  
487  
488 rod  
489 [that's interesting]  
490  
491 ben  
492 sometime it can cause, maybe he had it in hi mind that it can cause his parents maybe his mother  
493 some kind of severe depression or somethin like that. an maybe he dont want to see huh sick like  
494 that  
495  
496 sandra  
497 [yeah]  
498  
499 rod  
500 [awoh, like he]

501  
502 {connie rises, watched by virgil 0:14:47.1}  
503  
504 cuz she wuz pretty good at that right? at [manipulatin]  
505  
506 betty  
507 [cryin and puttin pressure]  
508  
509 rod  
510 yeah, thats right she'd get weepy all the time you know yeah she'd just get real weepy you know  
511 whenever..uhm, thank you connie {has taken a paper towel to ben who accepts and uses  
512 it..0:15:00.8}  
513 yeah, she, whenever she got upset, whenever somebody did anythin she didnt like she'd go to  
514 weepin an carryin on a little bit. do we know any mamas or grandmommas like that? [who are]  
515 real good at manipulatin  
516  
517 betty  
518 oh yeah  
519  
520 others  
521 yes {general agreement, laughter}  
522  
523 rod  
524 yeah, i guess so. and what wuz johns daddy like? what wuz what wuz his thing through the story\  
525  
526 betty  
527 he wuz more understanding to im than the mama was. he really wanted him to go.  
528  
529 rod  
530 [he]  
531  
532 betty  
533 [he wanted] his mama's consent  
534  
535 rod  
536 i think he sed at one point his daddy did sed that john you an me see with the same kinda eyes [an  
537 hear]  
538  
539 betty  
540 [mmhhmm]  
541  
542 rod  
543 wit the same kinda ears, he sed when i wuz a young man i wanted to go see the [world too]  
544  
545 betty  
546 [(he got to go to the world too)]  
547  
548 rod  
549 but what did he do instead?  
550  
551 betty  
552 stayed [there]  
553  
554 rod  
555 [stayed] there/, got married/, settled down/ had a baby/, [right/] john.  
556

557 betty  
558 [mmhhmm]  
559  
560 rod  
561 john/=

562  
563 betty  
564 john.and didnt go=  
565  
566 rod  
567 =and didnt go, right, so he wanted his son to go  
568  
569 betty  
570 =yeah he wanted him to go=  
571  
572 rod  
573 go in his place..well what else you think? you wanna say, what else you think bout it? about the  
574 story, anything?  
575  
576 randy  
577 i think its really kinda depressing  
578  
579 rod  
580 you think its kindof depressing?  
581  
582 randy  
583 its very depressing very very sad what happened to john because he had come from a very country  
584 life as we've sed (but story wanna go away so bad he goin down ta the sea)  
585  
586 rod  
587 yeah  
588  
589 betty  
590 yeah  
591  
592 randy  
593 he wanna go away so bad, its a very sad story  
594  
595 betty  
596 yeah it is  
597  
598 randy  
599 very depressing, (its a) very depressing story  
600  
601 betty  
602 mmhhmm  
603  
604 rod  
605 hey there! good morning {to daphne & sophie}  
606  
607 daphne and sophie  
608 hello, good morning  
609  
610 rod  
611 welcome welcome  
612



613 both  
614 thank you  
615  
616 rod  
617 do you have enough room there, do we all need to scootch around a bit or are you gonna be able ta  
618 find a spot?  
619  
620 sophie  
621 i think we'll be awright  
622  
623 rod  
624 good, okay thats fine; um grab yourself a bite of thats a blueberry bannana bread if you want some  
625 over there. and we are just kind of recapping a little bit. we're talkin a little more about old john  
626 redding from last week  
627  
628 sophie  
629 uh huh  
630  
631 rod  
632 and we're catching randy up on the story cuz he wadnt with us last week  
633  
634 sophie  
635 huh  
636  
637 rod  
638 so we're makin sure that he's up to making sure that he knows what we're doin, yeah speed. he was  
639 sayin that it sounds like it wuz a kindof a sad and depressin story, but its funny too right?  
640  
641 betty  
642 mmhhmm  
643  
644 rod  
645 at the very end, at the very end, now johns already, yknow the bridge washed out, they seen im on  
646 that that uh timber, he's floatin down the river and whats his mama say?..alf, thats his dad, thats  
647 johns dad, go..  
648  
649 betty  
650 time ta go  
651  
652 rod  
653 go get im. go fish im out of the river an bring im back to me. an what does his daddy say?  
654  
655 0:17:54.2  
656  
657 rod  
658 let im go  
659  
660 betty  
661 let im go  
662  
663 rod  
664 let im go, he's finally gettin ta go off to sea.  
665  
666 betty  
667 finally free  
668

669 rod  
670 {pointing to virgil} and you remember what you said at the very end last time when we were just  
671 walkin out the door about john redding? virgil do you remember last week?  
672  
673 virgil  
674 yeah  
675  
676 rod  
677 you member, i think you sed, you know what he found?  
678  
679 virgil  
680 peace and blessings  
681  
682 betty  
683 peace and [blessings]  
684  
685 rod  
686 [he seemed] to finally find. some pea[ce/]  
687  
688 betty  
689 [pea]ce/  
690  
691 rod  
692 right?  
693  
694 virgil  
695 yep  
696  
697 rod  
698 yknow only in death {laugh} and floatin down the river. thats a very, thats a vey uh odd message  
699 it seems like, right,  
700  
701 betty  
702 mmhhmm  
703  
704 rod  
705 (it seems funny), so i think you're right, its a sad story in a way randy, but i think we also get a  
706 sense of john finally finding some peace=  
707  
708 betty  
709 =peace, [mmhhmm]  
710  
711 rod  
712 in that [too]...but you know one of thethings i was thinkin about this week when i was thinkin  
713 about john is that .. one of the problems for him is that he seemed to be in between. he didnt make  
714 a decision to just go, which he could have, which he could have. he could ve said well, i wished,  
715 i'd like to have my mother's blessing, that would be ideal, i dont want to hurt her, but this is what i  
716 have to do for myself, and he couldve just gone on. OR HE could have made the decision to make  
717 a life for himself there, right/=  
718  
719 betty  
720 =yeah  
721  
722 rod

723 remember he had that little girl stella he was in love with, an he had a job, remember he was the  
724 educator in the town and he could have made a life there in the town and been happy with it, but  
725 he was kinda in between, [he waffled]  
726  
727 connie  
728 {nodding} [mmhhmm]  
729  
730 rod  
731 he kept goin back and forth and um um maybe thats what thats what kind of led to his downfall, it  
732 seems like you know? {looks at ben who has raised his hand} whatcho think?  
733  
734 19:39  
735  
736 ben  
737 see it was it was like that--his mother was tryin to live live his [life]  
738  
739 betty  
740 [his life]  
741  
742 ben  
743 like sh like sh like sh::e (wanted to want) to be him, thats like bipolar, you know, cuz she she  
744 wand da portray him be him, an it got so bad that she didn even want him ta go help ta fix tha dam  
745 fo the..um when the [storm came]  
746  
747 rod  
748 [she wanted ta hold onto im right/]  
749  
750 ben  
751 [mmhhmm]  
752  
753 rod  
754 [mmhhmm]  
755  
756 0:20:00.9  
757  
758 rod  
759 yeah, she didnt even want him to go help out even just down the street in the same town, right,  
760 yeah when that man came and sed please come help me with my bridge. yeah she wuz scared for  
761 him to go. hmm, hmm hmm hmm, thats um that can be uhm hard when we have people that we  
762 love=  
763  
764 betty  
765 ={softly} to leave=  
766  
767 0:20:20.7  
768  
769 rod  
770 we wanna hold onto em right? but in order for them to, whats that expression? if you love  
771 somethin...  
772  
773 connie  
774 um  
775  
776 virgil  
777 you let it go  
778

779 rod  
780 {laughs} you let it go, right  
781  
782 betty  
783 let it go, [let it go]  
784  
785 others {Group (chorus)}  
786 [expression of general agreement]  
787  
788 rod  
789 [do we think that's true?] i mean how do we its kinda its kinda hard we gotta we wanna hold on  
790 and protect the people that we lo:ve but but we also gotta let em live their [lives]  
791  
792 betty {grinning, gesturing}  
793 [live] their lives. ooh, i know how hat feels [is, MH MH MH]  
794  
795 rod  
796 [thats a good point] thats a good point, ben.. did you say somethin betty?  
797  
798 betty  
799 well i say i know how that dat feel  
800  
801 rod  
802 how does that how what feel?  
803  
804 betty  
805 my life somekinda like that  
806  
807 rod  
808 about between holdin on and [lettin go {gesture}?]  
809  
810 betty  
811 {gestures} lettin go, they wont let me go you know  
812  
813 rod  
814 (hh) oohh, yeah  
815  
816 betty  
817 lettin go a they wont let me go  
818  
819 rod  
820 mmhmm. they wanna hold on [an]  
821  
822 betty  
823 [wanna hold on]  
824  
825 rod  
826 keep keep you keep you doin what yer doin  
827  
828 betty  
829 mmhhmm [wont] let me go  
830  
831 randy  
832 [(my life) same] fill same way too  
833  
834 rod

835 do you?  
836  
837 randy  
838 [(i feel wanna)] let it go  
839  
840 betty  
841 [yeah I can] mmmm. wanna run away= {gesture}  
842  
843 randy  
844 =run away, [let it go]  
845  
846 betty  
847 =[GIT away]  
848  
849 randy  
850 [let] it go and git away from it all  
851  
852 betty  
853 thas tha way I feel  
854  
855 randy  
856 'cided i wannoo get outta {town} fo awhile  
857  
858 rod  
859 yeah/  
860  
861 betty  
862 just wanna go, Im free i just wanna go  
863  
864 rod  
865 mmhh/  
866  
867 betty  
868 jus keep holdin me back  
869  
870 rod  
871 hmm\  
872  
873 rod  
874 [whas]  
875  
876 randy  
877 [iss called] setback  
878  
879 rod  
880 setback  
881  
882 randy  
883 setback  
884  
885 rod  
886 whas that mean?  
887  
888 randy iss when (somethin thats holding you back) its something that keeps holding you back its  
889 keeping you uh=  
890

891 betty  
892 =here=  
893  
894 connie  
895 =here  
896  
897 randy  
898 keepin you on g, [keepin you (on God's back)]  
899  
900 connie  
901 [(tossin to and fro)] keep tossin [to and fro]  
902  
903 betty  
904 [but now how] could i get ma great [grandbaby]  
905  
906 randy  
907 [an tossin fro]  
908  
909 betty  
910 whose [mom is out there and I got custody of him]  
911  
912 connie  
913 [yeah, and to] and fro  
914  
915 betty  
916 see that's holdin me back  
917  
918 rod  
919 oh/ okay, [so you]  
920  
921 betty  
922 [i get custody of him again]  
923  
924 rod  
925 cuz you cuz you wanna=  
926  
927 betty  
928 =i wanna go im free you know but shes in trouble now i gotta get him again, reraise him again. i  
929 had im one then i let im go now i got im agin  
930  
931 rod  
932 mmhhmm  
933  
934 betty  
935 an he's eight years old, so that gone stop me.  
936  
937 rod  
938 oo:www  
939  
940 betty  
941 from goine to do what i want to because i wuz free. see that gonna stop me right in the track  
942  
943 rod  
944 so is that uh, is that uh..that really is like thats one of [those its its that]  
945  
946 betty

947 [startin all over agin]  
948  
949 rod  
950 its a LOVED one  
951  
952 betty  
953 yeah  
954  
955 rod  
956 its a loved one that you want to protect and want to help, right, but it but it keeps you from.. doin  
957 from movin on maybe, doin somethin that you would like to do otherwise  
958  
959 betty  
960 yeah  
961  
962 rod  
963 kay, uh so we can we can kind of.. [see what it's]  
964  
965 betty  
966 [relate to im]  
967  
968 rod  
969 ye[ah wh]at it feels like to get stuck in the weeds [so to speak] to have our ships get tangled in the  
970 weeds at the edge of the river  
971  
972 betty  
973 [mmhhmm] {whispers} right  
974  
975 rod  
976 a little bit...  
977  
978 0:22:52.6  
979  
980 randy  
981 its crazy, i never read the story (but \_\_\_) I feel like I jus need to let it go release it  
982  
983 betty  
984 mmm  
985  
986 randy  
987 let that let it release and let the fillins come out.  
988  
989 betty  
990 we cant. mah fililns wont come out  
991  
992 randy  
993 somehow we're gonna have to break that mold  
994  
995 betty  
996 it be anger when i bring it out and i dont like that so i just keep it within me.. and i (kindof boil  
997 wiht anger, come im full of anger??) {increasingly loud mechanical noise from outside the  
998 window during this talking about anger...}  
999  
1000 rod  
1001 that can be kindof scary=  
1002

1003 0:23:20.3  
1004  
1005 betty  
1006 =yeah i be (..) angry, so much been held in .. i jus don know how to let it go. let it out. (been  
1007 places fuh that). can't let it go.  
1008  
1009 randy  
1010 (ah always say that \_\_ ) iss lak a big giant bubble (on the balloon sometimes \_\_ ) if you stay in the  
1011 air too long you be stranded in the balloon but if you hold it in too longits gonna i had to learn ta  
1012 jus learn to just take a good big big good cry out=  
1013  
1014 betty  
1015 mmh[hmm]  
1016  
1017 rod  
1018 [mmhh]mm  
1019  
1020 randy  
1021 an sometimes i had when i had let things get the best of me lak fuh instance lak you carryin a big  
1022 giant [weight up on yuh a]  
1023  
1024 betty  
1025 [oh yeah, mmhmm]  
1026  
1027 randy  
1028 big giant weight on mah shoulders. an that tha's whas thats what my troubles carryin that big giant  
1029 weight, ( \_ ) carrying that heavy load=  
1030  
1031 rod  
1032 =mmhhmm  
1033  
1034 randy  
1035 but somehow if you learn to just learn to release um (i don wan to talk about the {off the?} wall  
1036 but) uh learn to release it and let it go=  
1037  
1038 betty  
1039 =mmm=  
1040  
1041 rod  
1042 =mm. [but that's the] trick idnit, learnin how to do that=  
1043  
1044 randy  
1045 [(thats the beautiful thing)]  
1046  
1047 betty  
1048 =(yeah i do that)  
1049  
1050 randy  
1051 sometimes i be in the woods i be like to do some chanting for a while=  
1052  
1053 rod  
1054 =mhm=  
1055  
1056 randy  
1057 =you know, you evuh do that sometimes?  
1058



1059 rod  
1060 mhm yeah i have=  
1061  
1062 randy  
1063 =is jus sing chant "Let It Go. Let It Go. Let It Go. Let It Go" {chants rhythmically, while gesturing  
1064 with his fist}  
1065  
1066 betty  
1067 mmhhmm  
1068  
1069 rod  
1070 mmhhmm  
1071  
1072 randy  
1073 {bumps table with fist} hh. {inhales} whew! see? thats how i felt better when I sed that.  
1074  
1075 betty  
1076 mm, okay  
1077  
1078 rod  
1079 you ken give yaself a pep talk [( \_ )]  
1080  
1081 virgil  
1082 bes thing da do is say ya little prayuh an be thew.  
1083  
1084 rod  
1085 mm..mm. y'know i think there are a lot of different ways to do it=  
1086  
1087 betty  
1088 =mmhhmm  
1089  
1090 rod  
1091 =different ways that work for different folks, fur shur.  
1092  
1093 randy  
1094 there something rilly feelin better after I go, go to the woods, let it go.  
1095  
1096 rod  
1097 mmhhmm  
1098  
1099 randy  
1100 i don care if you skip all over {Town} {laughing}  
1101  
1102 betty  
1103 mm  
1104  
1105 rod  
1106 [{laughs}]  
1107  
1108 randy  
1109 [call the police] ( \_ \_ locked up \_ crazy)  
1110  
1111 betty  
1112 yeah  
1113  
1114 rod

1115 well ya know one way...i i think thats one thing that stories are for. iz um like you sed betty, if we  
1116 can relate  
1117  
1118 betty  
1119 mmhhmm  
1120  
1121 rod  
1122 if we can find these stories that we can re[late to]  
1123  
1124 betty  
1125 [relate] to  
1126  
1127 rod  
1128 ss a little bit of that burden thats mine can get released thro:ugh my readin somebody else's story  
1129 or talkin about somebody elses story. lak, i ken be sad for john and sad fur john's family, and  
1130 theres some of that feel, some of thats my sadness=  
1131  
1132 betty  
1133 {nodding} =at's right  
1134  
1135 rod  
1136 [some of thats mine] cuz its funny cuz these are just words on tha page=  
1137  
1138 0:25:46.7  
1139  
1140 betty  
1141 =mmhhmm=  
1142  
1143 rod  
1144 =but these people are very real ta me now, i feel lak ah know john redding a little bit anyway and  
1145 ah know is mama and daddy you know i know somethin about that situation. yeah ive felt that way  
1146 too" about feelin held back by family by held back by by hose bonds those loving bonds right by  
1147 both wanting to be close to my loved ones but also wanting ta be my own.. person.  
1148  
1149 betty  
1150 mmhhmm  
1151  
1152 rod  
1153 an so an so that feels like a little bit of a release ta ME, ya know jus ta feel that way to feel that  
1154 connection to the.. the peeple.  
1155  
1156 randy  
1157 i think i felt very bad when mah grandma had it out. i felt very very very bad. becasue I dont know  
1158 why didnt she want to leave but she did want to leave but she didnt. she didnt want to leave but  
1159 she just cried all the way up theyuh to uh.. i don wanna bring tha story but i know that i wuz very  
1160 close to mah grandma and she raised me very well and mah mom shes gonna be tha one thas  
1161 gonna be gone and i dunno how im gonna do this. "oh god, now what the heck am i gonna do?" i  
1162 asked myself "whoa, what did i do myself that wuz so wrong?"  
1163  
1164 rod  
1165 mmhhmm  
1166  
1167 randy  
1168 did i do somethin wrong im not sposed ta be doin? what is it whats goin on?  
1169  
1170 rod

1171 sayin kinda why me? why is this happenin ta me?  
1172  
1173 randy  
1174 why is this happenin? why me? why it hafta be me? i think its because what?..  
1175  
1176 0:27:07.5  
1177  
1178 rod  
1179 right. tha's a a a a an ongoing questnions idnit? we all ask [ourselves that (from time to time)]  
1180  
1181 randy  
1182 [i wanna ask tha question] why, whad i do that was so wrong? why? why?  
1183  
1184 rod  
1185 well you know i don think we can answer that right here.  
1186  
1187 randy  
1188 only god knows  
1189  
1190 betty  
1191 yeah  
1192  
1193 rod  
1194 s'right.. but we ken figure some things out. [well whadaya think?]  
1195  
1196 randy  
1197 [but he hs a reason for everything]  
1198  
1199 rod  
1200 you wanna you wanna say more about this story or should we start another one?  
1201  
1202 connie  
1203 another one  
1204  
1205 randy  
1206 another one  
1207  
1208  
1209 rod  
1210 you wanna start a new one? alright, uhm well, lets see. theres one that uh and yall hang on to those  
1211 if you wish. you may wanna come back to it at some point. um how bout this one? {passing out  
1212 sheets} it was written by.. oh you've got it. will yall pass those along for me please? uh Ralph  
1213 Ellison.. wrote a novel called Invisible Man, anybody heard of that? Invisible Man? and he, like I  
1214 told ya there wuz kind of a local connection with the author of that last story, Zora Neal Hurston  
1215 wuz born in Notasulga and lived there for a while just up the road from us, 'fact if you go out on  
1216 14 theres a sign one of those historical markers about where she wuz born and where she hgrew  
1217 up. well, ralph ellison wuz born in oklahoma where i grew up and uh he came here to go to school  
1218 at one point before he went to new york and uh wrote a lot uh up there. this one's called Boy on a  
1219 Train, lets see what we think. .. do we wanna do the same way and take turns reading again?  
1220  
1221 Group (chorus)  
1222 yes, yeah.  
1223  
1224 rod  
1225 okay who wants to start? randy you want to since you didnt get to last time?  
1226

1227 randy  
1228 ha! {laughs} I guess so. [( \_ )]  
1229  
1230 rod  
1231 [okay, if you wish]. nobody has to, but we'll just kind of volunteer and go around if we wish  
1232  
1233 randy  
1234 the train give a long, Boy on a Train. the train give a long shrill (lonely) whistle and seemed to  
1235 gain gain speed as she rushed down the downgrade between two hills covered with trees. the trees  
1236 were covered in deep red brown and yellow leaves. the leaves fell on the side of the hill hill and  
1237 scattered scattered down to the gray rocks along ong the (opposite) tracks. when the wind blew  
1238 off steam the little boys could see white clouds scattered the (leaves) against the side of the hill.  
1239 the engine hissed and the leaves danced in the steam like leaves in a white wind. see lewid, jack  
1240 frostmade the pretty leaves. jack rost paints the leaves paints the leaves all the pretty colors. see  
1241 lewis, brown and purple and orange and yellow. the little boy pointed and paused after each  
1242 naming each color. his finger bent against the glass of the train window. the baby repea, the baby  
1243 repea, the baby repeated the colors of the of after him, look intently for jack frost. it wuz hot in the  
1244 train and the car wuz too close to the engine making it impossible to open he window. more than  
1245 once cinders had flown into the car and into the baby's eyes. the woman raised her eyes ( \_ )  
1246 from time to time to watch the boys. the car wuz filthy and part of it wuz used fo rbaggage. up  
1247 front, the pine shipping box of a casket stood in the corner. wonder whut poor soul that is in there  
1248 the woman thought. bags and bags and trunks covered the covered the floor up front and now that  
1249 now and then the butch(er) came in to pick up the candy or fruit or magazines to sell in the white  
1250 white car\_s. he would come in he would come in and a basket pick up a basket with candy go out  
1251 come back pick up a basket of fruit go out come back until an until all everything had been carried  
1252 out. then he would start all over again. he was a big fat white man with a red face and the little boy  
1253 hoped he would give them a piece of candy. after all, he had so much and mama didnt didnt have  
1254 any nickles to give them. but he never did. there the mother intentionally holdin the page in her  
1255 hand and scanned as she scanned then turned slowly. there were all the passengers in the section of  
1256 seats reserved for colored... she she turned her head looking for lookin back toward the door into  
1257 the other car. the time was for the butcher for him butcher for the butcher to return. her (brow  
1258 wrinkled annoyedly). the butcher tried to cope, cup, touch the bre, touch her brea, whOA/ touch  
1259 her breast when she and her boys first came into the car. she spat she spat in his face and tol im to  
1260 keep his dirty ... {turning page} keep his dirty  
1261  
1262 rod  
1263 page 14.. yeah, (jes flip that) [page]  
1264  
1265 randy  
1266 dirty hands where they ( \_ ) belong. the butcher has turned red (and gone hurriedly) out of the car  
1267 out of the car. (his baskets swinging violently on his arms). she hated him. why couldnt a negro  
1268 woman travel with two boys without being molested?.. the train was (past the hills now and into  
1269 fields that were divided by crooked wooden fences and that spread rolling and brown with stacks  
1270 of corn as far as the blue horizon fringed with trees. the fences reminded the boy of the crooked  
1271 man who walked a crooked mile. red birds darted swiftly past the car, ducking down into the field  
1272 then shooting up again when you looked back see the telephone poles and fields turning, and  
1273 sliding fast way from the train. the boys were having a good time of it. it was their first trip. the  
1274 countryside was bright gold with indian indian summer. way accross the field a boy was leading a  
1275 cow by the rope and the dog barkin at he cow's feet. it was a nice dog. the boy on the train thought  
1276 a collie, yes that was the kind of the dog kind of dog wuz a collie.  
1277  
1278 0:34:24.3  
1279  
1280 rod  
1281 yunna pause there fur a minute and les jes make sure we're we're we'e what's goin on here. see  
1282 where we are. what's happenin. we started the story and whats goin on wit this story? ...

1283  
1284 ben  
1285 a little boy and his mother they had uh.. the little boy and his mother they on the train an travlin  
1286 goin to another town i think his muthuh has [anothah job (in anothuh town).]  
1287  
1288 [{cell phone rings loudly in the room}]  
1289  
1290 rod  
1291 ['kay, maybe we'll see we don know jus yet why they're travelin, right right.] okay so little boy and  
1292 his mother and another little boy, right? uh, do two brothers, right  
1293  
1294 ben  
1295 yea  
1296  
1297 rod  
1298 on a train and um whats.. what else do we know what else is goin on?  
1299  
1300 virgil  
1301 bout man on na train a whi white guy on na train gettin fruit and candy baskets passin to the other  
1302 people on the train, the other passengers, uh he came back there and the little boy wanted a piece  
1303 of candy but he nevuh did ask for it but he was spuposin that the guy would be a gentleman and  
1304 give im a [piece].  
1305  
1306 rod  
1307 [right]  
1308  
1309 virgil  
1310 then his um his moth his uh he wuz with two uh little boys one boy a little little little boy and the  
1311 man touch her on the breast and she [spit in his face.]  
1312  
1313 randy  
1314 [(excuse me for a minute)] {gesturing to his phone}  
1315  
1316 rod  
1317 Im sorry? d'you need ta step out? yeah, thats fine thats fine.  
1318  
1319 {door opens and clinic staff person enters to retrieve something; randy exits the room as his cell  
1320 phone rings again loudly}  
1321  
1322 rod  
1323 hello  
1324  
1325 staff person  
1326 Hi, (i jus need to get somethin)  
1327  
1328 rod  
1329 oh, okay  
1330  
1331 rod  
1332 um, uh right yeah he she its a kind of dramatic part here. he kinda got fresh with her really  
1333 inappropriately tried to touch her and and what did she do?  
1334  
1335 {staff person exits}  
1336  
1337 Group (chorus) {virgil, betty, connie}  
1338 spit in his face

1339  
1340 rod she spat in his face and told im to keep his dirty hands where they belonged, right.  
1341  
1342 {randy re-enters}  
1343  
1344 randy  
1345 i'm sorry i (had to step out) I have to go home becasue my mom needs some help. I hate to  
1346 interrupt you.  
1347  
1348 rod  
1349 oh oh okay. I'm sorry you need to go I hope everything's okay.  
1350  
1351 randy  
1352 yeah, well, my mom is in trouble so i wont sit down.  
1353  
1354 rod  
1355 yeah, please do, of course of course  
1356  
1357 randy  
1358 i will take some bannana bread along  
1359  
1360 rod  
1361 sure. do that.  
1362  
1363 rod  
1364 why um\ he sez the car wuz too close to the engine and they couldnt open the windows cause..  
1365 why couldnt they open their windows? with the car right up next to the engine?  
1366  
1367 betty  
1368 too close to the engine.  
1369  
1370 rod  
1371 [cuz it wud be]  
1372  
1373 randy  
1374 [ill read this when i get home] sorry  
1375  
1376 rod  
1377 yeah okay/ and we'll see ya next week okay?  
1378  
1379 Group (chorus)  
1380 bye  
1381  
1382 randy  
1383 bye  
1384  
1385 rod  
1386 awright, bye. good luck, buddy.  
1387  
1388 {randy exits and staff member re-enters, retrieves another item and leaves}  
1389  
1390 rod  
1391 okay. so this car's up close to the engine and they couldnt open the windows because of the smoke  
1392 from the smokestack i a i assume, but even as it was, embers and little burning pieces would come  
1393 flying back into the car.  
1394

1395 virgil  
1396 was kinda the coluh of the leaves (he saw) [outside]  
1397  
1398 daphne  
1399 [excuse me] can i please use the restroom?  
1400  
1401 rod  
1402 of course of course / please \  
1403  
1404 virgil  
1405 coluh of the leaves ee passed by, you know he wuz puttin his finger on on the window but he  
1406 could(nt) see cuz o the smoke and all the ( \_ \_ \_ )  
1407  
1408 betty  
1409 mmhhmm  
1410  
1411 rod  
1412 yeah, right .. an theyre up in this baggage car up with the bags and the this candy and fruit an  
1413 different things like that and then theres even a a casket up there with them. why are they in this  
1414 car?  
1415  
1416 virgil  
1417 thas how they traveled back [then.]  
1418  
1419 connie  
1420 [thas how they] traveled  
1421  
1422 betty  
1423 [only for] colords  
1424  
1425 rod  
1426 yea:h thas right thas right this is so that tells ya somethin about the time period, doesn't it?  
1427  
1428 betty  
1429 mmhhmm, time period ( \_ )  
1430  
1431 rod  
1432 tells us about that were talkin about some time in the early twentieth century probly early nineteen  
1433 hundreds probably uh when the trains were segregated and there were areas for whites and areas  
1434 [for, uh.]  
1435  
1436 betty  
1437 [fuh colords]  
1438  
1439 rod  
1440 yeah, colored section, so to speak. and so these this family's traveling in that section. okay good  
1441 and yeah the little boys are doin what little boys do: lookin out the windows of the train..lookin at  
1442 the colors of the leaves  
1443  
1444 virgil  
1445 an ee saw a uh guy with a dog.  
1446  
1447 rod  
1448 [righ]t  
1449  
1450 virgil

1451 [a boy with] a dog  
1452  
1453 rod  
1454 right  
1455  
1456 virgil  
1457 a cow ( \_ \_ \_ \_ )  
1458  
1459 rod  
1460 and ee thinks thats a nice dog. i think its a collie, yeah okay. okay is that good we wanna keep on?.  
1461 who wants to read next?  
1462  
1463 betty  
1464 i'll read.  
1465  
1466 rod  
1467 good.  
1468  
1469 0:38:46.6  
1470  
1471 betty  
1472 okay. a freight was passing, going in the direction of oklahoma city passin so swiftly that its  
1473 orange and red cars seemed to streak a watercollor with gray spaces punched through. the boy felt  
1474 funny whenever he thought of oklahoma city, like he wanted to cry. pergaps they would never go  
1475 back. he wondered what frank and rc and petey were doin now. picking peaches for mr. (stewart).  
1476 a lump rose in his throat too, too bad they had to leave just when mr stewart had promised him  
1477 half of all the peaches they could pick. he sighed. the train whistle sounded very sad and  
1478 lonesome. well now they was goin to ms to m.  
1479  
1480 rod  
1481 mcalester  
1482  
1483 betty  
1484 mcalester where mama would have a nice job and enough money to pay the bills. gee mama, mus  
1485 have been a good worker for mist bollinger to send all the way to oklahoma city for her to come  
1486 work for him. mama wuz happy to go and he wuz glad fo mama to be happy. she worked so hard  
1487 now that daddy wuz gone. he closed his eyes tight trying to see the picture of daddy he must never  
1488 foget how daddy looked. he would look like that himself when he grew up. tall and kind and  
1489 always joking and reading books. well, jus wait, when he got big and carried mama and lewis back  
1490 to oklahoma city everbody would see how well he took care of mama and she would say "see  
1491 these are my two boys" and would be very proud and everybody would say see arent mrs weaver's  
1492 boys two fine mens. that was sthe way it would be. the thought made him lose some of the lump  
1493 that came into his throat when he thought of nevu evuh goin back and to turned to see who it wuz  
1494 goin through the door. a white man and a little boy came into the car and walked up front.  
1495  
1496 0:41:05.3  
1497  
1498 {daphne returns}  
1499  
1500 betty  
1501 his mother looked up then lowered her eyes to her book again. he stood up and looked over the  
1502 back of the chair trying to see what the man and boy were doin. the white boy held a tiny dog in  
1503 his arms, stroking its head. the little white boy asked the man to let him take the dog out but the  
1504 man sed no and they went rocking from side to side out of the car. the dog must have been asleep  
1505 because all the time he had made (no) sound. the little white boy dressed like a kid you see in  
1506 movies picture. did he have a bike the boy wondered. he looked out the window. there were horses



1507 now, a herds of them runnin and tossin their manes and tails and poundin the ground all (wild  
1508 when the whistle blew.) he saw himself on a white horse winging laredo, is that right? [over the]  
1509  
1510 rod  
1511 [swinging] a lariat  
1512  
1513 betty  
1514 swinging [a lariat] over the  
1515  
1516 rod  
1517 [i dunno why] its spelled like that with the dashes in between. its almost like he wants us to say L-  
1518 A-R-I-A-T [over the bronco's head]  
1519  
1520 betty  
1521 [over the]  
1522  
1523 rod  
1524 but you know what a lariat is, right? or do i jus know that cuz i grew up in oklahoma goin to  
1525 rodeos? a lariat's one a those ropes the cowboys use to rope cattle and rope horses=  
1526  
1527 betty  
1528 =yeah  
1529  
1530 rod  
1531 yeah. so he saw himself on a white horse swinging a lariat over the broncos head. so we're on 16,  
1532 [top of 16.]  
1533  
1534 betty  
1535 [okay] lariat bronc co's heads and yelling yippee yippee yippee like hoot gibson in the movies. the  
1536 horses excited lewis and he beat his hand against the window and cried .. is that giddup?  
1537  
1538 rod  
1539 giddyup giddyup  
1540  
1541 betty  
1542 giddyup giddyup. the boy smiled and looked at his mothuh. she was looking up from her page and  
1543 smiling too. lewis was cute, he thought. they stopped at a country store. mens were standing in  
1544 front of the station watching the porter throw off a bunch of newspaper. then several white mens  
1545 came into the car and one sed this must be it and pointed to the big box and the porter sed yeah  
1546 this it awright, this is it awright, iss the only one we got this trip so this must be the one. then the  
1547 porter jumped out of the car and went into the station. the men were dressed in black suits and  
1548 white shirts. they seemed very (un)comfortable in their high collars and act very solemn. They  
1549 pushed the box over gently and lift it out of side the door of the car. white men in overalls watched  
1550 them from the platform. they put the box in a wagon and the man sed giddyup to the horse horses  
1551 and they drove away. the mens in the back looking very straight and stiff. one of the mens on the  
1552 platform was pickin his teeth and spitting tobacco juice on the ground. the station wuz painted  
1553 green and a sine on the side read tube rose snuff and showed a big white flower. it didnt look like  
1554 a rose though. it wuz hot and the mens had their shirts open at the collah and wore red bandanas  
1555 around their necks. they were standing in the same position when the train pulled out starin. why,  
1556 he wondered, did white folks stare at you that way. outside of town he saw big red barn standing  
1557 red barn standing. (behind some trees). beside stood somethin he had nevuh seen before. it wuz  
1558 high and round and made out of the same kind of rock as the barn. he climbed into his seat and  
1559 pointed. what is that tall thing, mama? he sed. iss a silo, son, she sed. thass where the corn is  
1560 stored. her eyes were (strange) and distant when she turned her face back to him. the sun slanted  
1561 across her eyes and her skin was brown and clear. he eased down into his seat. silo silo almost as  
1562 tall as the colcord building in oklahoma city that daddy helped buid.

1563  
1564 0:45:46.3  
1565  
1566 rod  
1567 can i pause there for just a minute? lets make sure we lets see what we what we learned. what we  
1568 know now. one thing like you sed ben, they're goin to this other town for a job=  
1569  
1570 betty  
1571 =a job=  
1572  
1573 rod  
1574 right? mama's got a new job, and you were gonna say somethin connie  
1575  
1576 connie  
1577 um, de the soun like he wuz scared, scared o the people, [of the]  
1578  
1579 rod  
1580 [little bit]  
1581  
1582 connie  
1583 lets see, (bout) somethin {scanning the text} colored person he wuz scared to say anything  
1584  
1585 rod  
1586 mmhhmm mmhhmm. an he wuz talkin bout how how white people seem to stare at him a lot  
1587  
1588 Group (chorus)  
1589 mmhhmm  
1590  
1591 rod  
1592 yeah, why do you think?  
1593  
1594 betty  
1595 he kinda daydreamin too bout what..  
1596  
1597 rod  
1598 right, how bout, why is it mama and the two little boys? wheres daddy?  
1599  
1600 betty  
1601 he's . he aint alive  
1602  
1603 connie  
1604 he's dead  
1605  
1606 betty  
1607 he's dead  
1608  
1609 rod  
1610 it seems ( \_ \_ ) that he passed, uhhuh, yep. [but we don know what happened to im]  
1611  
1612 sandra  
1613 [(she got so much] to do since she got those boys)  
1614  
1615 rod  
1616 whats that?  
1617  
1618 sandra

1619 seems like she's got so much to do cuz she got them boys.  
1620  
1621 rod  
1622 yeah [since daddys gone]  
1623  
1624 sandra  
1625 [since daddy's gone]  
1626  
1627 rod  
1628 and she's got those boys and she's got to work hard.  
1629  
1630 sandra  
1631 yep  
1632  
1633 rod  
1634 yep, yep that's right, and she's goin to a new town and uh hes [and he]  
1635  
1636 betty  
1637 [to get a job]  
1638  
1639 0:47:08.8  
1640  
1641 rod  
1642 he's kinda sad cuz he's wondrin, he sez i wunder whut what're frank and RC and petey doin right  
1643 now? who ya figure they are?=  
1644  
1645 connie  
1646 =his friends  
1647  
1648 rod  
1649 right, his buddies back home in oklahoma city where he grew up and now he figures he may never  
1650 get back there agin. yeah, wondrin whut theyre doin. hes feelin kinda lonesome. okay good good.  
1651 you wanna keep goin betty, or you wanna give it over to somebody [else]  
1652  
1653 betty  
1654 [any]body else want to read?  
1655  
1656 rod  
1657 who wants to take over? .. anybody  
1658  
1659 daphne  
1660 (i will)  
1661  
1662 rod  
1663 yeah? please.  
1664  
1665 daphne  
1666 he jumped, startled, mama wuz callin his name with tears in her voice. he turned round to see the  
1667 look on her face. come around here james, bring lewis. he took lewis by the had and moved him to  
1668 the seat beside her. what had they done? james, son, she said, that old silo back there there's been  
1669 here a long time. it made me remember when years ago me an yuh daddy came ovuh this same ol  
1670 rock island line on owuh way tuh oklahoma city. we had we had jus been married an were very  
1671 happy goin west becasue we had heard that colored people had a chance out here. james smiled,  
1672 listening. he loved to hear mama tell bout when she an daddy were young an about what they used  
1673 to do down south. yet he felt this wuz to be somethin diferent, somethin [(in mama's voice)]  
1674

1675 betty  
 1676 [{coughs loudly}]  
 1677  
 1678 daphne  
 1679 wuz vast and high like a rainbow, yet somethin sad and deep like when the organ played in church  
 1680 wuz around mama's words. son, au wunt you tuh remember this trip, she sed. you... {all turning  
 1681 page} understood son? i wunt you tuh remember. you must you, you must you got to understand.  
 1682 james sens sensed [(something)]  
 1683  
 1684 betty  
 1685 [{cough}]  
 1686  
 1687 daphne  
 1688 tried hard to understand. he follwed and to stared into her face. tears were glis glistening in her  
 1689 eyes and he felt he would cry himself. he bit his lip. no, he wuz the man of the family and he  
 1690 couldnt act like a baby. he swallowed, listening. you remember this james, she sed. we came all  
 1691 the way from georgia on the same railroad line fourteen years ago so things would be better for  
 1692 you chidren. when you came. you must remember this james, we traveled far looking for a better  
 1693 world where things wouldn't be so hard lak they were down south. tha's what wuz, that wuz  
 1694 fourteen years ago james. now your father father's gone from us and your tha man. things are hard  
 1695 for us colored folks son and is just is jest us three alone and we have to stick together. things is  
 1696 hard and we have to fight. oh lord we have to fight. she stopped her lips pressed tight together and  
 1697 she shook her head overcome with motion emotion. james placed his arm around her neck and  
 1698 caressed her cheek. yes mama, he sed, he could not get it all, yet he understood. it was like  
 1699 understanding what music without words sed. he felt very full inside. now mama wuz pulling him  
 1700 close to her the baby rested against her other side. this wuz familiar. since daddy died, mama  
 1701 prayed with them and now she wuz beginning to pray. he bowed his head. i'll stop right there.  
 1702  
 1703 rod  
 1704 okay.. so whut's she saying to im? whats this little section about?  
 1705  
 1706 ben  
 1707 they family got ta stick togethuh.  
 1708  
 1709 Group (chorus)  
 1710 [mmhhmm]  
 1711  
 1712 ben  
 1713 (they pray for each other)  
 1714  
 1715 rod  
 1716 that silo that the the the little boy pointed out reminded jogged her memory, reminded her of when  
 1717 they first came out that way, out west=  
 1718  
 1719 Group (chorus)  
 1720 =mmhhmm  
 1721  
 1722 rod  
 1723 just after they got married an uh she tells she tells her oldest son that story=  
 1724  
 1725 Group (chorus)  
 1726 =mmhhmm  
 1727  
 1728 rod

1729 uh and sez you better keep it goin, yknow, its a fight here, keep things together. whadoes he mean  
1730 the little boy sayin he couldnt get it all but he sed it wuz like understandin what music without  
1731 words sed?  
1732  
1733 Group (chorus)  
1734 mmhhmm  
1735  
1736 rod  
1737 whatuzzat mean? like understandin what music without words sed?  
1738  
1739 virgil  
1740 what it meant wuz you know south in that periodic time you know racism wuz in and they were  
1741 workin hard. you know his father had passed and his mothuh wuz workin hard sh passed that silo  
1742 goin down route fourteen goin ta uh:uh oklahoma city agin, they passed in the in the in the past  
1743 once. and she wuz tellin the son you know things will be hard and ruff you know. summin it up.  
1744 it'll be ruff but you know things in life you gotta work for.=  
1745  
1746 rod  
1747 =mmhhmm mmhhmm. yeah, I think so.  
1748  
1749 Group (chorus)  
1750 {nodding}  
1751  
1752 virgil  
1753 yeah theyare things in life gotta work fo. thas all thas all em base-ly tellin him. you know. like  
1754 music to im an he unnerstan the music but=  
1755  
1756 rod  
1757 =yeah  
1758  
1759 virgil  
1760 at the same time, playin a different tune though.=  
1761  
1762 rod  
1763 =yeah  
1764  
1765 virgil  
1766 life plays a different tune.  
1767  
1768 rod  
1769 yeah an even if it doesnt tell you even if it doesnt have words (if it) dudnt have lyrics we can  
1770 understand the tone of the music=  
1771  
1772 virgil  
1773 =[right]  
1774  
1775 rod  
1776 [and] understand the mood of the music.=  
1777  
1778 virgil  
1779 =right. if you you play piana music fuh a church room for for a funeral then you play one for a  
1780 wed'/din\  
1781  
1782 rod  
1783 =thas RIGHT/  
1784

1785 virgil  
1786 {gesturing} =[you (gonna) differnt typa tunes.]  
1787  
1788 rod  
1789 [its got different] thas right its got a different FEEL to it=  
1790  
1791 virgil  
1792 right [right]  
1793  
1794 rod  
1795 [an he could] an he could feel the he didnt understand everything his mom had told him but he  
1796 could feel that it wuz important, right?=  
1797  
1798 virgil  
1799 =rig[ht]  
1800  
1801 rod  
1802 [ it had] a weight to it he sed it sed right after that it sez that he felt very fu:ull insi:ide  
1803  
1804 virgil  
1805 (she wuz jus) she jus wuz esplainin tuh (one wuh name), what wuh tha other li'l boy name?  
1806 [james]  
1807  
1808 rod  
1809 [lewis] is [the]  
1810  
1811 virgil  
1812 [james and lewis]  
1813  
1814 rod  
1815 the little baby I think.  
1816  
1817 virgil  
1818 right he wuh esplainin ta [james]  
1819  
1820 rod  
1821 [an james]  
1822  
1823 virgil  
1824 and james didnt want tuh cry=  
1825  
1826 rod  
1827 =right  
1828  
1829 virgil  
1830 an bit is lip, you know sin he say he gotta be tha man of the families, butchoo know, thas how.  
1831  
1832 rod  
1833 yeah, thas tuff too right, how old is he?  
1834  
1835 virgil  
1836 [little kid]  
1837  
1838 rod  
1839 [how old do we think he is?] how old wouldja say you think he probly is?  
1840

1841 virgil  
1842 bout fourteen or fifteen=  
1843  
1844 rod  
1845 =man, aa:hd think even younger than that/.  
1846  
1847 betty  
1848 [mmhhmm]  
1849  
1850 rod  
1851 [i dunno], i may be wrong but  
1852  
1853 betty  
1854 grow up ta be a (real) man lak his father wuz  
1855  
1856 rod  
1857 anyway a young=  
1858  
1859 connie  
1860 fourteen wuz bout tha um that um route they took.. the route  
1861  
1862 virgil  
1863 yeah fouteen, fourteen years ago (him and james the father)  
1864  
1865 connie  
1866 yeah fourteen  
1867  
1868 rod  
1869 oo::hh, is that right, thats good thats good to pick that out.  
1870  
1871 virgil  
1872 say they been workin in georgia fo awhile  
1873  
1874 rod  
1875 {reading} on the same railroad line fourteen years ago  
1876  
1877 ben  
1878 he wuz six when (he died lef)  
1879  
1880 0:55:07.8  
1881  
1882 rod  
1883 ...bet he wuz born not too long after that probably right. they had just been married?  
1884  
1885 betty  
1886 mmhhmm  
1887  
1888 rod  
1889 right, so you're probably right he's probably close to fourteen, could be. hmm okay, alright. alright,  
1890 so she's gonna shes gonna say this prayer that who wants to read now?... thank you [daphne]  
1891  
1892 virgil  
1893 [where we at]  
1894  
1895 rod  
1896 right [down on bottom]

1897  
1898 betty  
1899 [(down the bottom)]  
1900  
1901 rod  
1902 of eighteen, go with us and keep us lord.  
1903  
1904 virgil  
1905 (les see les see) where we at, uu:h hh  
1906  
1907 betty  
1908 at the bottom {points}  
1909  
1910 virgil  
1911 OH!go with us and keep us lord. then it wuz me an him, now iss me and his children and I'm  
1912 thankful lord, you saw fit to take him lord and its well with ma soul in thy name. i wuz happy lord,  
1913 life wuz like a mockingbird. it seem/ an all i ask now is to stay with these children to raise them  
1914 and protec them. lord till till that they old enuff to go theyah way. make them str(ong) and  
1915 unafraid. give them strength to meet the world. make them brave to go where where things is  
1916 bettuh for our people lord. james sat with his head bowed. always when mama prayed, he felt tight  
1917 and soma som  
1918  
1919 rod  
1920 smoldering  
1921  
1922 virgil  
1923 smoldering inside and he kept remembering his father face. he could(nt) remember dady ever  
1924 prayin but daddy voice had had been deep and skrong when he sang in the choir on sunday  
1925 morning=james wanted to cry but va vaguely he felt something something should be punished for  
1926 making mama cry. soemtime cruel had made her cry. he felt tightness in his throat becoming  
1927 angry. if he only knew what it wuz he would fix it. he would kill the meany mean things that  
1928 made mama felt so bad. it must have been awful because mama was strong an brave an even killed  
1929 mice with the white white woman she used to work for and raise her dress and squeal like a girl  
1930 afraid of them. if he only knew what it wuz. wuz it g g god? please keep us together if in this in  
1931 this strange town lord the road is dark and long and my sh sorry heavy but if it be thy will lord, let  
1932 me ed educate ma boys. let me raise them so theyll be better able to live this life. i do not want to  
1933 live for maself lord, jus for these boys. make them strong upright men lord let lord make them  
1934 fighters an when ma work on earth is done tae me home and thy kingdom lord safe in the arms of  
1935 jesus. he heard her voice travel off to a tortured moan behind her tremblin lips, tears stre, tears  
1936 streaming down her face. james wuz miserable. he did not like to see mama cry and turned his  
1937 eyes to the window as she began weep wip wiping away the tears. he ..{turning page} wuz glad  
1938 she wuz through now 'cuz the butcher would be comin back into the car in a few minutes. he did  
1939 not want a white man to see mama cry. the were crossin. they wuz crossin a river now, the uh uh  
1940 the slanting grids of a bridge moved slowly past the train. the river wuz muddy and red rushing  
1941 long underneath them. the train stopped and the baby wuz pointing to a cow on the bank of of the  
1942 river below. the cow stood grazing out of the water chewing her cud looking at at a cow in the  
1943 baby picture book only there were no butterflies about her head. bow bow the baby sed, a  
1944 questioning, bow wow. n now, no, lewis [( \_ \_)]  
1945  
1946 rod  
1947 [ya see what] he's sayin the baby's lookin out tha window at that cow and sez bow wow  
1948  
1949 virgil  
1950 ye/ah\  
1951  
1952 rod



1953 and then questioningly bow wow? is this a dog?  
 1954  
 1955 Group (chorus)  
 1956 {laughing}  
 1957  
 1958 rod  
 1959 no lewis, its a cow {laughing}...sorry, go head lijah  
 1960  
 1961 virgil  
 1962 no lewis, its a cow, james sed. moo. he is the cow. the baby laughed delightedly. hes wuz very  
 1963 interested. james watched the water. the train wuz movin agin and james wondered why his  
 1964 mother cried. it wasnt just that daddy wuz gone it did not sound jus that way it wuz somethin else.  
 1965 I'll kill it when I get big he thought i'll make it cry like it makin mama cry. the train wuz passin a  
 1966 on an oil field (at wuz) there were many wells in the field and the big, round tank gleemed like  
 1967 silver in the sun. one well wuz covered with boards and looked up looked like a huge indian wig  
 1968 wam against the sky:y. the wells all pointed straight up at the sky. yes I'll kill it i'll make it cry eve  
 1969 if its god i'll make god cry he thought. i'll kill him i'll kill him god and not be sorry. the train jerked  
 1970 and gained speed and the wheels began to click an ragglin rhythm to chis ears. there were many  
 1971 adversities sighs in the fields. they were rolling past all teh signs told about the same things for  
 1972 sale. one sign showed a big red bull an red bull drummer. Moo, the baby sed. james looked at her  
 1973 mother. she wuz through cryin now an an she smiled. he felt some of the tightness ebb away from  
 1974 he lemme see he felt some of the tightness ebb away. he grinned. he wanted he wanted very much  
 1975 to kiss her but he must show proper reserve of a man now. he grinned. mama was a beautiful when  
 1976 she smiled. he made a wish nevuh tuh forget what she had sed. this was nine this wu this is  
 1977 nineteen twenty-four and i'll never forget it. a whisper to him then he looked out of the window  
 1978 restin his chin on the palm of his hands wondrin how much farther they would have to ride  
 1979 {cough} how much further they would have to ride and if they were be would be any boys to play  
 1980 football in mc mcalester. that's it aint it?  
 1981  
 1982 rod  
 1983 yep, yep thats the end of that story. so what else [( )]?  
 1984  
 1985 virgil  
 1986 they wuh jes travelin jes travelin goin from a place from georgia to oklahoma.  
 1987  
 1988 rod  
 1989 well in this one now, they're goin a shorter distance, theyre jes goin from oklahoma city to  
 1990 [mcalester]  
 1991  
 1992 connie  
 1993 [( )]  
 1994  
 1995 rod  
 1996 jes from one town to another in oklahoma. imonna gu:ess that that would probly be a two hour car  
 1997 ride now so maybe a three or [four or maybe a five hour train] ride back then I would guess.  
 1998  
 1999 sandra  
 2000 [{yawn}]  
 2001  
 2002 virgil  
 2003 but noo, day nevuh did git on tha train ta go anywhere they wuh still travelin.  
 2004  
 2005 rod  
 2006 yeah they still oni the [train on their]  
 2007  
 2008 virgil

2009 [they still travelin]  
 2010  
 2011 rod  
 2012 way to mcalester to this new town theyre movin from oklahoma city to mcalester so there at the  
 2013 end hes gone back to thinkin about his old friends and wondrin if hes gonna make new friends if  
 2014 hes gonna have (any) boys ta play football with where hes goin in mcalester. so, its interesting, the  
 2015 last story we read ahh, was pretty dramatic right at least in parts, there at the end (ya get) a huge  
 2016 storm trees rushin down tha river blow out the bridge you know john redding ends up with a huge  
 2017 gash in his side bleedin you know dead floatin out ta sea. here, we get a family you know mama  
 2018 and two boys on a train ride and we jes get a little bit of their travelin and then talkin to each other.  
 2019 so, whats/ the drama here\? i mean what makes this a story, why would he write this story [I  
 2020 wonder]  
 2021  
 2022 virgil  
 2023 [life]  
 2024  
 2025 rod  
 2026 life  
 2027  
 2028 connie  
 2029 [everybody's life]  
 2030  
 2031 virgil  
 2032 [iss based on a story where da family's travelin, movin from one place [to another]  
 2033  
 2034 Group (chorus)  
 2035 [to another]  
 2036  
 2037 virgil  
 2038 in remembrance of the father that passed and (torment) turmoil and grief about how life can take a  
 2039 toll on you cuz she tellin huh son to wor to be aware of life.  
 2040  
 2041 rod  
 2042 mmhhmm  
 2043  
 2044 virgil  
 2045 an then at the same time, hes spotted shes spotted things from the past to remind huh of her and  
 2046 her her husband.  
 2047  
 2048 rod  
 2049 right  
 2050  
 2051 virgil  
 2052 so at the same time, its just a travelin jes remembrance (s'like) you jes get in tha car like go up the  
 2053 interstate maybe travel t'oklahoma ourself.  
 2054  
 2055 rod  
 2056 mmhhmm  
 2057  
 2058 virgil  
 2059 talkin ta ya wife uh yuh son or whatever. they wuz travel an essperiencin thangs.  
 2060  
 2061 rod  
 2062 mmhhmm=  
 2063  
 2064 betty

2065 =lookin at the scenery=  
 2066  
 2067 virgil  
 2068 =it wuz jes a ride tha baby lookin at the cows, [countin leaves]  
 2069  
 2070 rod  
 2071 [{laughs} mmhhmm. right]  
 2072  
 2073 virgil  
 2074 look at the dawgs, look at the white little boy. they took the coffin off the train. know they wuz  
 2075 carryin it out carefully. the the ush undertakers or whatever you know, it wuz jes a big sceneryuh  
 2076 wuh jes a big scenery.  
 2077  
 2078 rod  
 2079 do yall when yall travel if if even if its jes driving in tha car or ridin in the car er er whatever when  
 2080 you travel, is that a time when you think about things? when you think about your life or think  
 2081 about the past or think about (uh uh) I think travelin is a time when we sometimes do that um um  
 2082 we might we might pass somethin like she did passed that silo and it brought back memories or  
 2083 sometime you pass the church and ya think about the time you spent there or you pass the the you  
 2084 know park and you think about a picnic or a reunion that was there or something like that uhm so  
 2085 travelin can be a time when we bring back some memories we kind of REVISIT those times in the  
 2086 past=  
 2087  
 2088 virgil  
 2089 =or sometimes when you travel if its for a pleasurable reason you know you think have fun and  
 2090 enjoyment (but) if its a sad occasion you know you gonna (reminisce--reallymiss) [you know]  
 2091  
 2092 Group (chorus)  
 2093 [mmhhmm]  
 2094  
 2095 virgil  
 2096 (think about) sad moments uh whadevuh, missin tha person. goin to a funeral=  
 2097  
 2098 rod  
 2099 =right  
 2100  
 2101 virgil  
 2102 goin to a weddin=  
 2103  
 2104 rod  
 2105 =right=  
 2106  
 2107 virgil  
 2108 ( \_ ) [goin to] a party or a football game.  
 2109  
 2110 rod  
 2111 well what about for this reason, now we've probably all had this experience have you evuh moved  
 2112 from one house to anothuh whethuh you move from one town to anothuh across town, across the  
 2113 country whateveuh. it could be either a short ora long move, that's really a time when we start  
 2114 thinkin about where you've been and [where you're goin right?]  
 2115  
 2116 virgil  
 2117 [yeah leave behind yeah] that that ive experienced that cu I thought about some'a my classmates  
 2118  
 2119 rod  
 2120 yeah/ [right?]

2121  
2122 virgil  
2123 [when] when I wuz leavin one town and goin tuh tha nex when I wuz little ya know  
2124  
2125 rod  
2126 yeah yeah  
2127  
2128 virgil  
2129 [so that wuz]  
2130  
2131 rod  
2132 yeah right, so we've all had the experience of leavin people leavin friends behind, leavin places  
2133 behind. you get that kindof theres bitter and sweet. theres some kinda happy and sad. he starts out  
2134 kinda feelin that tight feelin in here {gesture to chest} like I'm never goin back I may never go  
2135 back to my home again I may never get ta see frank and RC and whatevuh the other names of the  
2136 other little boy's his friends back there, but he ends up the story at the very very end sayin what? i  
2137 wonder if there's gonna be some new boys in this new [town fuh me ta play football with]  
2138  
2139 virgil  
2140 [(fuh him ta play) fotball with]  
2141  
2142 rod  
2143 yeah yeah, so he's thinkin uh that. so we we we miss what's behind us but we look forward to  
2144 what's ahead [of us?]  
2145  
2146 virgil  
2147 [(you could also grasp)]  
2148  
2149 connie  
2150 [yes, yes]  
2151  
2152 Group (chorus)  
2153 {nodding}  
2154  
2155 rod  
2156 so its [kindof a mix]  
2157  
2158 virgil  
2159 [you could also] grasp his age. he wanna play football so (proably) about thwelve thirteen fourteen  
2160 [somethin lak that]  
2161  
2162 rod  
2163 [yeah I bet he's in there]  
2164  
2165 virgil  
2166 he still wanna play around  
2167  
2168 rod  
2169 yeah yeah yeah thats right he still wants to play thats right  
2170  
2171 virgil  
2172 football  
2173  
2174 rod  
2175 that's right.  
2176

2177 1:07:48.0  
 2178  
 2179 rod  
 2180 um i i i wonder about mama has this long prayer she's askin for the lords protection for them an ta  
 2181 help her raise those boys and make them unafraid and give them strength and.. james wuz really  
 2182 upset thaht his mama wuz upset and angry right?  
 2183  
 2184 connie  
 2185 right  
 2186  
 2187 sandra  
 2188 probly thinkin bout his father.  
 2189  
 2190 rod  
 2191 yeah he wuz thinkin about his father I think thats right and then he wuz thinkin about her too bout  
 2192 whatever it was that made mama cry  
 2193  
 2194 Group (chorus)  
 2195 mmhhmm, [right]  
 2196  
 2197 rod  
 2198 [(felt)] something cruel has made her cry. felt tightness in his [throat]  
 2199  
 2200 sandra  
 2201 [throat] [that oldest one]  
 2202  
 2203 rod  
 2204 [becoming anger]  
 2205  
 2206 virgil  
 2207 in life (you know people sont f) you know like when you a child you dont have fully understandin  
 2208 of what make an adult cry  
 2209  
 2210 rod  
 2211 {gesture of agreement toward virgil}  
 2212  
 2213 virgil  
 2214 pressure of the world, pressure of society, you know jus common pressure. (ya knuh cuh lak) she  
 2215 gotta take care uh de children, fightin ta have uhnuh money but mama ain gonna tell ya that=  
 2216  
 2217 rod  
 2218 =right right  
 2219  
 2220 virgil  
 2221 mama might not have enough for tha room an board uh whatevuh [whe they wuh stayin]  
 2222  
 2223 sandra  
 2224 [she cried]  
 2225  
 2226 virgil  
 2227 she cried and asked fuh the children ta be protected in the future wher (they could have further  
 2228 preparations)=  
 2229  
 2230 connie  
 2231 =bettuh life  
 2232

2233 virgil  
 2234 =bettuh life  
 2235  
 2236 rod  
 2237 right right. di di d'you an then i i love how what the child does cuz youre right you're exactly right  
 2238 he doesnt understand those pressures he didnt understand what it is thats upsetting mama so he  
 2239 sez well what IS IT? who made her cry who's making her angry? if i jus knew what it wuz, i  
 2240 would fix it. [and]  
 2241  
 2242 virgil  
 2243 [i'd] kill it too  
 2244  
 2245 rod  
 2246 i'd k i'll even kill it, right. is it god even, he goes that far, it is good makin mama cry, i'll even get  
 2247 after god y'know  
 2248  
 2249 connie  
 2250 {shakin head} no oh no.  
 2251  
 2252 rod  
 2253 right well, y'know he's got that immature [understanding]  
 2254  
 2255 connie  
 2256 {smiling} [right]  
 2257  
 2258 rod  
 2259 but i tell ya, do we ever act lak that? not ta say, not ta go that far maybe but ta say man, whatevuh  
 2260 this is thats makin me upset or upsetting my family if i jus knew whut it wuz i'd go fix it.  
 2261  
 2262 Group (chorus)  
 2263 right right  
 2264  
 2265 rod  
 2266 i wanna i wanna ACT  
 2267  
 2268 virgil  
 2269 right right  
 2270  
 2271 rod  
 2272 i wanna go fix it, when maybe its not as simple as that. right ans [its]  
 2273  
 2274 virgil  
 2275 [sometime] you know like sometime in the world ya sistuh might be wid a boy huh boyfriend or  
 2276 meet uh whadeveuh she might be upset and you ask that question "whats wrong with you" an she  
 2277 tell you you know blazay blazay you know he made me mad you might go talk to him have a  
 2278 approach wit the boyfriend or whatevuh. you might (i'm jus sayin for example).  
 2279  
 2280 rod  
 2281 yeah  
 2282  
 2283 virgil  
 2284 thats tha way it go down. but that wuz makin her upset, somethin wuz makin her upset in life and  
 2285 her son didnt understand  
 2286  
 2287 rod  
 2288 right

2289  
2290 virgil  
2291 he wuz at a age that he wanted ta try ta fix it. stop that mom from [cryin]  
2292  
2293 rod  
2294 [but] wuz there anything that he could fix wuz there anybody he could go talk to about it?  
2295  
2296 Group (chorus)  
2297 no  
2298  
2299 virgil  
2300 [she had ta ask)]  
2301  
2302 rod  
2303 [not really]  
2304  
2305 virgil  
2306 the question he coulda asked mama whatchoo cryin fuh?  
2307  
2308 betty  
2309 he wanted tuh be more respectful like a man, he didnt want ta aks huh.  
2310  
2311 virgil  
2312 he didnt wanta tuh kiss huh on tha cheek uh whatevuh  
2313  
2314 betty  
2315 mmhhmm ( \_ \_ ) back in tha day.  
2316  
2317 rod  
2318 yeah he sed he wanted to show tha proper reserve of a man at that time, righ yeah. thats right. he  
2319 wanted he wished there wuz somebody he could go talk to or go get. but there it was. do you think  
2320 he'll understand? [you think]  
2321  
2322 virgil  
2323 [he'll understand]  
2324  
2325 rod  
2326 he'll understand when he gets older?  
2327  
2328 virgil  
2329 he'll understand [(once you)]  
2330  
2331 betty  
2332 [when he's okder]  
2333  
2334 virgil  
2335 (somethin bring that pride up if it havent been strong, that fight ) fight tha pressures of the world.  
2336  
2337 rod  
2338 right  
2339  
2340 virgil  
2341 but you know, so much pressure put on you you can become weaker or you can become stronger  
2342 aftuh dat. [so]  
2343  
2344 rod

2345 [mmhhmm its]  
2346  
2347 virgil  
2348 [( \_ )]  
2349  
2350 rod  
2351 funny too that we got her prayer is for them tuh be strong tuh be fighters=  
2352  
2353 Group (chorus)  
2354 {mmhhmm}  
2355  
2356 rod  
2357 maybe tuh that little boy that sounded like to be fighters like this {holds fists in boxing posture}  
2358 right, were gonna fight somebody  
2359  
2360 Group (chorus)  
2361 {right}  
2362  
2363 rod  
2364 but really what does [she mean?]  
2365  
2366 virgil  
2367 {tapping on his temple} [fight (thinking) in tha mind]  
2368  
2369 rod  
2370 {points in agreement to virgil} she meant bein strong minded=  
2371  
2372 virgil  
2373 =right  
2374  
2375 rod  
2376 =bein strong spirited=  
2377  
2378 Group (chorus)  
2379 =right  
2380  
2381 rod  
2382 and courageous enuff ta ta handle those stomrs and [struggles]  
2383  
2384 connie  
2385 [obstacles]  
2386  
2387 rod  
2388 that life will send and obstacles, precisely, i think thats right i think thats right.. h I think i  
2389 remember reading and its .. i dont really know whether it matters one way or another i think i  
2390 remember reading that this wuz based on  
2391  
2392 daphne  
2393 {coughing} can i go get some water?  
2394  
2395 rod  
2396 of course of course do what you need to do.. uh wuz uh based on ralph ellison's own experience of  
2397 moving when he wuz a boy, of losing his father and then moving to a new town. weve all had a  
2398 similar experience to that huh? moving away anyway. well, you wanna say anything else about  
2399 that one?  
2400



2401 sandra  
2402 iss iss  
2403  
2404 rod  
2405 whaddaya think uh that one sandra, you like that?  
2406  
2407 sandra  
2408 that wuh yeah yeah. he wuz doin his duties, his duties (\_ been back)  
2409  
2410 rod  
2411 so whaddaya think should we start on another one and then we can take it up next time?  
2412  
2413 sandra  
2414 {standing up} mmhhmm  
2415  
2416 connie  
2417 yes  
2418  
2419 rod  
2420 so lets start on another one and then we can finish it up next time, can we do that?  
2421  
2422 sandra  
2423 yeah, we can do that.  
2424  
2425 rod  
2426 okay, alright, lets do that  
2427  
2428 1:12:44.5  
2429  
2430 rod  
2431 {passing out papers} pass those down there for me? heres a couple more for sophie and you and  
2432 your sister. aright and this is from another writer still. Eudora Welty. anybody heard of her? she's a  
2433 southern writer but I think she us from mississippi. she wrote a lot about the Natchez Trace. yall  
2434 know natchez, mississippi? not that far from here in natchez, mississippi. uhm. who wants to start?  
2435 this is called "a worn path".  
2436  
2437  
2438 virgil  
2439 i'll read  
2440  
2441  
2442 rod  
2443 you wanna go on or you wanna let somebody who hadnt read [yet?]  
2444  
2445 virgil  
2446 [yeah let somebody else read]  
2447  
2448 rod  
2449 lets see, anybody want to? if not thats f.  
2450  
2451 ben  
2452 {lifting one finger} I will {quietly}  
2453  
2454 rod  
2455 you want to? thats fine, go head ben, why dontchoo  
2456

2457 ben  
2458 it was december, a bright frozen day in the early mornin. far out in the country there was a old  
2459 little old woman with her head tied in red rags. coming along a path through the pine woods. her  
2460 name was phoenix jackson. she was very old, small and walked slowly in the dark pine shadows,  
2461 moving a little from side to side in her steps with the balanced heaviness and lightness of pedilium  
2462 in a grandfather clock. she carried a thin, small cane made from a umbrella and with this she kept  
2463 tapping the frozen earth in front of her. this made a grave and persistent noise in the still air that  
2464 seemed meditive like the chirping of a solitary..little bird. she wore a dark stripped  
2465  
2466 rod  
2467 striped  
2468  
2469 ben  
2470 striped dress reaching down to her shoes tops and an equally long apron of bleached sugar sacks  
2471 with a full pocket all neat and tidy, but every time she took a step she might have fallen over her  
2472 shoelaces which dragged from her unlaced shoes. she looked straight ahead, her eyes were blue  
2473 with age, her skin a pattern all uh is its own of numberless branch'ed wrinkles an though a whole  
2474 little tree stood in the middle of her forehead. but a golden coluh ran underneath the two knobs of  
2475 her cheeks were illumined by a yellow burning under the dark. From the red rag her hair came  
2476 down on her neck in the frailest of ringlets still black an the odor like copper. now and then there  
2477 was a kwer, quivering in the thicket. old phoenix se out of mene out of my way all you foxes, owl,  
2478 beetles, jack rabbits, coons and wild animals. keep out from unner these feet. little bobwhites keep  
2479 the big wild hawk outta my path. dont let none of them those come runnin mah direction. i go a  
2480 longg way. under her small black (freckled) hand her cane limber as a buggy whip would switch at  
2481 the brush as if no rouse up any hiding type things. on she went the woods were deep and still. the  
2482 sun made the pine needles almost too bright to look at. up where the wind rocked the cones  
2483 dropped as light as feathers down in teh hollow was the mourning dove it was not too late fuh him.  
2484 the path ran up a hill. seem like there were chains about mah feet. time (ah get) this fah, she said in  
2485 a voice old people kep to use with themsleves. something always take ahold a me on this hill.  
2486 pleads I should stay...  
2487  
2488 rod  
2489 you wanna pause a minute?  
2490  
2491 ben  
2492 yeah  
2493  
2494 rod  
2495 so whats goin on so far? know whats happenin here  
2496  
2497 virgil  
2498 yeah they describin huh  
2499  
2500 rod  
2501 [yeah]  
2502  
2503 virgil  
2504 [how she looks]  
2505  
2506 rod  
2507 yeah yeah, what does she look like who ( \_ \_ ) what did describe this lady  
2508  
2509 virgil  
2510 she short skinny, dark skinn[ded]  
2511  
2512 rod

2513 [yeah]  
2514  
2515 virgil  
2516 wrinkles. she wearin um, sh'got some tennis shoes on but tha laces untied  
2517  
2518 rod  
2519 [some kinda shoes anyway, yeah]  
2520  
2521 virgil  
2522 [her dress] she got a dress on with a umbrella, some(made it like a) form a umbrella.  
2523  
2524 rod  
2525 yeah a [cane]  
2526  
2527 virgil  
2528 [dark striped] dress reached down to the top of her shoes a bleached shuguh sack full pocket neatly  
2529 tied up you know she had all  
2530  
2531 rod  
2532 wearin an apron made of bleached shugar sacks so what does [that]  
2533  
2534 connie  
2535 [{groans}]  
2536  
2537 rod  
2538 who would wear that?  
2539  
2540 connie  
2541 no one  
2542  
2543 rod  
2544 ha! not anymore, right?  
2545  
2546 Group (chorus)  
2547 {laughter} back in the day  
2548  
2549 rod  
2550 not anymore, right, back in the day, sometime ago so this is probably somebody that lives in the  
2551 country, right?  
2552  
2553 Group (chorus)  
2554 yeah  
2555  
2556 rod  
2557 n she we think she probly pretty old. old phoenix jackson. cuz she wrinkled right, sed she jes  
2558 wrinkled, almos look like she sed she looked like shes got a tree right in the middle of her  
2559 forehead=  
2560  
2561 betty  
2562 =forehead  
2563  
2564 rod  
2565 right, yeah. an her eyes her eyes blue with age.  
2566  
2567 besie  
2568 mmmm

2569  
 2570 rod  
 2571 you know what  
 2572  
 2573 betty  
 2574 with age  
 2575  
 2576 rod  
 2577 you ever seen that when when people get real old the whites of their eyes almost take on a kindova  
 2578 [blueish]  
 2579  
 2580 betty  
 2581 [( \_ ) coluh]  
 2582  
 2583 rod  
 2584 tint to em jes a little bit. she's pretty old. [she's]  
 2585  
 2586 connie  
 2587 [ri:ight\  
 2588  
 2589 rod  
 2590 old. a little old lady.. okay.. do you wanna uhm do you wanna keep goin ben or do you want  
 2591  
 2592 ben  
 2593 yeah I do (one more little bit \_ path and then after she got) After she got to the top she turned and  
 2594 gave a full severe look behind her where she had come up through pines. she sed at length. now  
 2595 down through oaks. her eyes opened their widest and she stared down [gently]  
 2596  
 2597 rod  
 2598 [started down gently]  
 2599  
 2600 ben  
 2601 started down gently. but before she got to the bottom of the hill a bush caught the bottom of her  
 2602 dress. her finger were busy and intent her skirts were full and long so that before she could pull  
 2603 them free in one place they were caught in another. it was not possible to allow the dress to tear. i  
 2604 in the thorny. i in the thorny bush she sed. thorns you doin your appointed work. nevuh wunt to let  
 2605 folk pass, no sir. oh i thought you wuz a pretty little green bush. finally tremblin all over se stood  
 2606 free and after a moment dared to stoop for her cane. sun so high she cried leaning back and  
 2607 looking while the thick tears went over her eyes. the time gettin all gone here. at the foot of this  
 2608 hill was a place where a lowg wuz laid across the creek. now comes the trial sed phoenix. (putting)  
 2609 her right foot out she mounted the log and shut her eyes, lifted her skirt, and leveling her cane  
 2610 fiercely before her like a festival figure in some parade. she begin to march across an she opened  
 2611 her eyes when she wuz safe on the othuh side=  
 2612  
 2613 betty  
 2614 =mmmhh\  
 2615  
 2616 ben  
 2617 i wusnt as old as ah thought she sed but she sat down to rest. spread her skirt on teh bank around  
 2618 her and folded her hands over the her knees. up above her wuz a tree in a pearly cloud of  
 2619 mistletoe. she did not dare to close her eyes and when a little boy brought her a plate with a slice  
 2620 of marble cake on it she spoke to him. that would be acceptable she sed but when she went to take  
 2621 it there wuz jes her own hand in the air=  
 2622  
 2623 rod  
 2624 =whats what what?

2625  
2626 betty  
2627 [mmmm]  
2628  
2629 rod  
2630 [what jes] happened here? {laughs} what just happened here?  
2631  
2632 virgil  
2633 uh, what sh, what it wuz, she wuz talkin to nature, she like talkin to the bushes to trees [(say)]  
2634  
2635 rod  
2636 [okay] yeah  
2637  
2638 virgil  
2639 she say youz a little smiley green bush but she ( ) it wasnt [( \_ )]  
2640  
2641 betty  
2642 [mmhhmm]  
2643  
2644 virgil  
2645 she talked to nature as she walked along the path  
2646  
2647 rod  
2648 thats right she definitely did and then she came to a place where there wuz a log laid across the  
2649 creek and what does she do?  
2650  
2651 virgil  
2652 closed [huh [eyes]]  
2653  
2654 betty  
2655 [closed huh eyes]  
2656  
2657 rod  
2658 [{laughing} shejust closed her eyes] and went  
2659  
2660 virgil  
2661 an when she made it across she sed I realize i'm not as old as i thought she she thought she wuz  
2662 gonna [fall in]  
2663  
2664 rod  
2665 {singsongy} oh\, I/ wasnt\ as old/ as I though i wuz\, an then she sat down to rest for a minute on  
2666 the banks of that creek.. and she sat down there and she kinda closed her eyes and then what what  
2667 does it what does it mean all of a sudden=  
2668  
2669 betty  
2670 [a piece a marble cake]  
2671  
2672 rod  
2673 [a little boy] brought her a piece of.=  
2674  
2675 betty  
2676 uh! {laughs}  
2677  
2678 rod  
2679 =cake  
2680

2681 virgil  
2682 she probly wuz hungry an she wuz fantasizin=  
2683  
2684 betty  
2685 =imaginin one  
2686  
2687 virgil  
2688 [{laughing} she wanted somethin to eat]  
2689  
2690 rod  
2691 [{laughing} I think so] [I think youre right]  
2692  
2693 connie  
2694 [{laughing}]  
2695  
2696 rod  
2697 and so she's sittin there by herself in the countryside on the creekbank and she sez and here comes  
2698 this little boy ma'am, would you like a piece of marble cake? and she sez {daintily} that would be  
2699 acceptable {laughs}. she's havin a nce little daydream there  
2700  
2701 virgil  
2702 or a mirage, one.  
2703  
2704 connie  
2705 {laughs}  
2706  
2707 rod  
2708 she went to take the cake and it wuz just her own hand in the air. so she had had jes a little  
2709 imagination. yeah. okay, alright, I'm sorry... {to Ben} you wanna keep goin or you wanna  
2710  
2711 ben  
2712 I'll let someone else read it.  
2713  
2714 rod  
2715 okay who wants ta? sophie you want ta or somebody else?  
2716  
2717 sophie  
2718 [okay]  
2719  
2720 rod  
2721 if you [wish]  
2722  
2723 sophie  
2724 [so] so she left tree the tree an had to go through a barbed wire fence. there she had to creep and  
2725 crawl, spreadin her knees and stretchin her fingers like a baby tryin to climb the steps. uh she  
2726 talked loudly to herself she could not let huh dress be torn nuh now so lets in  
2727  
2728 connie  
2729 so  
2730  
2731 1:22:17.6  
2732  
2733 sophie  
2734 so late in the day and she could not pay for havin huh arm or her leg sewn off  
2735  
2736 daphne

2737 sawed  
 2738  
 2739 sophie  
 2740 sawed off off if she got caught fast where she wuz. at last she wuz she wuz safe the fence an  
 2741 through the fence and raised up out in {turns page}... clearing clearing clearing big dead trees like  
 2742 black men with one arm were standing in the purple thick  
 2743  
 2744 betty  
 2745 stalks  
 2746  
 2747 sophie  
 2748 stalks of tha white whetered with  
 2749  
 2750 betty  
 2751 withered  
 2752  
 2753 sophie  
 2754 withered cotton field. there sat a breeze who  
 2755  
 2756 rod  
 2757 there sat a buzzard  
 2758  
 2759 sophie  
 2760 there sat a buzzard. who you watchin? who you watchin? in the ferr she made her way along. glad  
 2761 this not the season fuh bulls, she sed looking sideways and the good lord made his snakes to curl  
 2762 up and sleep in the winter a pleasure i don see no headed sakes comin around that tree where its  
 2763 come once where it comes once it took a while to get by him back in summer she passed through  
 2764 her old cotton went into a field of dead corn what dead corn. it whispered and shook and was taller  
 2765 taller than her head. than her head.  
 2766  
 2767 connie  
 2768 through the...  
 2769  
 2770 sophie  
 2771 through the maze now she sed but there wuz no path then there wuz somethin tall black and  
 2772 skinny there moving before her. at first she took it fuh a man. it could have been a man dancing in  
 2773 the field but she stood still and listened and it did not make a sound. it was as silent as a ghost.  
 2774 ghost she sed sharply who be you the ghost of for I have heard of narry death death close by. but  
 2775 there wuz no answer only the regu reg ragged dancing in the wind. she shut her eyes and reached  
 2776 out her hand and touched its sleve. she found a coat and inside that ..  
 2777  
 2778 connie  
 2779 emptiness  
 2780  
 2781 sophie  
 2782 emptiness cold as ice. you scarecrow she sed here face lightening. her face lightening. i ought to  
 2783 be shut up fuh good she sed with laughter. my sense is gone. i too old. i the oldest people i e ev  
 2784 evuh known. dance only scarecrow she sed while i dancing with you. she kicked her foot over the  
 2785 furry the furry  
 2786  
 2787 rod  
 2788 the furrows  
 2789  
 2790 sophie  
 2791 the furrow and with mouth drawn down, with mouth drawn down shook her head once or twice in  
 2792 a little (shadowing)

2793  
2794 daphne  
2795 strutting  
2796  
2797 sophie  
2798 strutting way. some husky blew down and whirled in streams about the her skirts then she went on  
2799 parting her way from side to side wite with the cane through the whispering fields. at last she came  
2800 to the end to a wagon trauck where the silver grass grew between the red ruts. the qual were  
2801 walking around like pullets seeming all dainty and unseen. walk pretty she sed this the easy place.  
2802 this the easy goin. she followed the truck and swaying through the quiet bare fields through the  
2803 little strings of trees silver in their dead leaves, past cabins silver from weather, with the doors and  
2804 windows boarded shut all lke old women under a spell sittin there. i walkin in their sleep she sed  
2805 nodding her head vig vigorously. in a in a r  
2806  
2807 rod  
2808 ravine  
2809  
2810 sophie  
2811 in a ravine, she went where a spring wuz slightly flowing through a hollow log. old phoenix bent  
2812 and drink. sweet gum makes the water sweet she sed and drank more. nobody kknows who  
2813 mmade this well for it wuz her when I wuz born. the truck crossed a swampy part where he moss  
2814 hung as white as lace from every limb. sleeping sleepy on aligators and blow your bubbles. then  
2815 the truck went  
2816  
2817 daphne  
2818 track  
2819  
2820 sophie  
2821 then the track went into the road. the the road went down between the high green colored banks.  
2822 overhead the leave leave oaks  
2823  
2824 rod  
2825 the live oaks  
2826  
2827 sophie  
2828 the live oaks met and it was a dark as a cave. a black dog with a loling tongue came up out of the  
2829 woods [by the ditch by the ditch  
2830  
2831 Group (chorus)  
2832 [{laughing}]  
2833  
2834 rod  
2835 [what's funny?]  
2836  
2837 sophie  
2838 she wuz meditating and not ready and when he came at her she only hit him a little with her cane.  
2839 over she went in the ditch like a little puff of milk[weed.]  
2840  
2841 rod  
2842 [what] happened right there? just right there what sophie just read what happened?  
2843  
2844 connie  
2845 chased it. it chased it.  
2846  
2847 rod



2848 yeah, that dog like knocked her she fell over in the ditch. that dog came up out of the side of the  
2849 road and knocked her it surprised her and she fell over into the ditch. poor little old phoenix. I tell  
2850 you what we should wind we'll stop there and we'll pick it up there when we come back next  
2851 [monday]  
2852  
2853 betty  
2854 {to virgil} [( \_ \_ \_ good)]  
2855  
2856 rod  
2857 if you want^ to read ahead of course you sure can but you dont have to  
2858  
2859 betty  
2860 yeah, I wanna read ahead  
2861  
2862 rod  
2863 yeah we'll see what happens ta old phoenix when we when we come back. thanks yall i enjoyed it  
2864 again. take some bread with you if you wish. we'll be back here again at the same time and the  
2865 same place next monday...  
2866

1     **Session Three**

2     {Rod is setting up the room preparing for the session and one of the participants enters}

3

4     (00:01:00)

5

6     Randy

7     Good Morning

8

9     Rod

10    Hey what's happening?

11

12    Randy

13    I thought you was havin a meetin? (0.5) but um...

14

15    Rod

16    you thought what?

17

18    Randy - I thought you was havin a meeting [when I said what] I didn't know we was havin a

19    meeting in here

20

21    Rod

22    Yea the other room is um occupied right now

23

24    Participant- I'm in serious trouble man I'm in totally in big trouble big financial trouble I need

25    prayer and I NEED HELP

26

27    Rod

28    Alright

29

30    Participant

31    So what happened is...Uh I don't wanna tell nobody...I put a offering into one of those churches

32

33    Rod

34    "O" the one that emailed you?

35

36    Participant

37    the one that uh...sent me mail

38

39    Rod

40    YEA

41

42    Participant

43    but you know what God's gonna make a way out of no way I know dat God will make a way...

44    You know what I say I know what I done...I scuggle I didn't mean to scuggle all my money away.

45    But what it is is FAST FOOD, I suppose to pay my rent money, so I say LORD JESUS PLEASE

46    HELP ME, I say wait a min here I need sum help and I need help FAST, I say God I need help, I

47    know he won't [leave me let this check bounce]

48

49    (0:03:00)

50

51    Rod

52 “O”...HMMM has anything come of it yet? Are you just worried about what might happen, what  
53 might come  
54  
55 Participant  
56 I was kinda little little worried, but I try not to WORRY...cause all I needed was fifteen dollars.. I  
57 need fifteen dollars I need fifteen dollars I gotta come up wit fifteen dollars  
58  
59 Rod  
60 ok  
61  
62 Participant  
63 I was wonderin can you help me “.h” “.h” {laughing}  
64  
65 Rod  
66 [uh I dunno]  
67  
68 Participant -[ I will pay you back next week]  
69  
70 Rod  
71 I’m not gonna be able to, ummm, let me go gather up the rest of the troops...Yea uh uh I’m  
72 SORRY, [Randy] I’m not gonna be able to help you with that I apologize  
73  
74 {Rod leaves the room}  
75  
76 Participant  
77 You know the thing call [knock three times]  
78  
79 {Participant is now sitting in the room eating a muffin and speaking to an unknown person behind  
80 the camera. Participant is moving around a lot in his chair, continuing to wipe crumbs from his  
81 face and playing with his right ear}  
82  
83 Randy  
84 Im in trouble. Randy- why did I wrote that check?...[sent back to churches...got no  
85 business]....What you think is going on?  
86  
87 (0:05:00)  
88  
89 {Participant still waiting for the Rod to return to the room. He continues to move around a lot,  
90 breathing heavily, and playing with his hat. He also begins to rub his forehead as if he’s puzzled  
91 and worried about something}  
92  
93 {Rod reenters the room followed by four other individuals. Three females and one male}  
94  
95  
96 Rod  
97 You hanging in?  
98  
99 Randy  
100 {shrugs shoulders and nods yes}  
101  
102 Rod  
103 ok good...Alright yea were::: were in this room today because they are using the conference room  
104 for [something]  
105  
106 Betty  
107 [I need]...Anybody read?

108  
109 Connie  
110 I didn't  
111  
112 Randy  
113 I read sum of it last night  
114  
115 Betty  
116 you did?  
117  
118 (0:07:00)  
119  
120 Rod  
121 Alright ...how's everybody?  
122  
123 Group  
124 [alright, ok, yea...ok]  
125  
126 Rod  
127 Alright so Virgil will come in...he said ok..Betty that was a big sigh...that accompanied your ok  
128 [laughing...Ok] alright well that's good I'm glad you're here...Uh let's see...Virgil will be back  
129 from the shop in a minute right? And Sophie and Daphne will come...uh [we should be back in the  
130 same] usual room for next week. As far as I know, but I guess there doing conferences in there?  
131 And that's why its so crowded in here today is that right?  
132  
133 Randy  
134 um hmm  
135  
136 Betty  
137 yea they got to see the doctor=  
138  
139 Rod  
140 =they got to see the doc today ok...alright yea that's a big day... Umm alright[so will go on and  
141 get started] ...I gotta tell you, last week we had a great session I think and uh good discussion  
142 ..And I went to check the camera when it was over and what happened? ....Nothing  
143  
144 Betty  
145 nothing was on there?  
146  
147 Rod  
148 nothing on it nothing on it at all in fact I'm nervous about it now... {Walks towards the camera} I  
149 gotta make sure it's still on yea, yea it's still on So I don't know what happened... There was  
150 nothing from last week so that was very disappointing you know for me so I'm gonna ask you all  
151 [maybe we'll have a next session after we get done] To um kinda make that one up just a little bit  
152 if you all are willing? It would just be a continuation you know [just continue whatever story were  
153 reading at the time] But that's what device in the center of the table is for backup it's just a little  
154 voice recorder for in case we uh run into technical difficulties again....Um um last week very  
155 disappointing .... Help yourself to some muffins theyre apple today.  
156  
157 Betty  
158 o ok  
159  
160 Connie  
161 hmmm  
162  
163 Randy

164 there delicious  
165  
166 Rod  
167 o you like them pretty good?  
168  
169 Randy  
170 yes there delicious  
171  
172 Rod  
173 alright I'll tell here  
174  
175 Betty  
176 I want one too but I'll wait  
177  
178 Rod  
179 she's um::: Erin is um a little better than five months pregnant  
180  
181 Betty  
182 O  
183  
184 Rod  
185 and she's um she's baking  
186  
187 (0:09:00)  
188  
189  
190 Betty  
191 that's good  
192  
193 Rod  
194 she's sort of um  
195  
196 Betty  
197 keeping busy  
198  
199 Rod  
200 yea (laughing) that's right that's right  
201  
202 Betty  
203 {laughing} how many that make you?  
204  
205 Rod  
206 what's that?  
207  
208 Betty  
209 how many kids?  
210  
211 In  
212 that will be three  
213  
214 Betty  
215 O three  
216  
217 Rod  
218 God willing that will be three... It's a little girl this time  
219

220 Betty  
221 O I know you happy with that two boys?  
222  
223 Rod  
224 uh huh... yep that's right  
225  
226 Betty  
227 that's right I had two of each  
228  
229 Rod  
230 o yea  
231  
232 Betty  
233 [eight grand's and}  
234  
235 Rod  
236 a little variety  
237  
238 Betty  
239 eight grand's and one great grand and one on the way  
240  
241 Rod  
242 o/k\  
243  
244 Betty  
245 um hmm  
246  
247 Rod  
248 alright.... Who's got something they wanna tell us what do you wanna tell us. Anything happen  
249 this weekend? We got some rain  
250  
251 Betty  
252 WE DIDN'T  
253  
254 Randy  
255 I didn't go nowhere much  
256  
257 Rod  
258 you didn't get out  
259  
260 Randy  
261 Umm... nope  
262  
263 Rod  
264 pretty [much in] it was storming  
265  
266 Randy  
267 I know the dog track was closed and I said I was gonna go to the dog track [I said I don't wanna  
268 go no more] So anyway I went to um went to um I shouldn't spend any money buyin that (\_\_\_),  
269 that (still didn't cost me nothing) I stayed home watched TV watched John Wayne cowboys  
270  
271 Rod  
272 I saw that... that was on I watched just a little bit of that too. That's the one with the kids right the  
273 little kids  
274  
275 Randy

276 Yea  
277  
278 Rod  
279 uh::: uh riding the trail... Ya'll like westerns? (laugh) John Wayne movies... Yea that's kind of  
280 fun  
281  
282 Randy  
283 and I saw um Jim Carey the man that play that schizophrenic um man who always (along with)  
284 Rene Ze wella I think that movie [I don't know]  
285  
286 Rod  
287 o yea was that um was that twenty-three? Is that the one? Hey Virgil  
288  
289 Group  
290 [inaudible]  
291  
292 Randy  
293 I think Jim Carey is a funny man  
294  
295 Rod  
296 yea... You saw that movie or you saw something about him?  
297  
298 Randy  
299 the one with the band aid on it  
300  
301 Rod  
302 I think I::: I don't think I've seen it... You liked it?  
303  
304 Randy  
305 it was alright  
306  
307 Rod  
308 It was alright? well ok... What can you tell us Ben what's going on?  
309  
310 Ben  
311 uh [nothing] just trying to relax a little bit  
312  
313 randy  
314 [(inaud )]  
315  
316 (0:11:00)  
317  
318 Rod  
319 {to randy} [That is funny] {to ben} you did what?  
320  
321 Ben  
322 kinda relaxed a little bit  
323  
324 Ben  
325 tried to relax a little bit  
326  
327 Rod  
328 yea  
329  
330 Ben  
331 yea

332  
333 Rod  
334 ok feeling a little (shrugs shoulders)  
335  
336 Ben  
337 I'm feeling fine just trying to relax and all the work that I been doing its (trying to get ready fuh  
338 somethin)  
339  
340 Rod  
341 how you doing Virgil?  
342  
343 Virgil  
344 straight straight  
345  
346 Rod  
347 were um theyre doing physicians conferences I guess in the other conference room where we  
348 normally are so will um be in here for this week and we'll switch back as far as I know we'll  
349 switch back next time. I was telling them last week after we had a good session I went to check the  
350 camera.. nothing on it technical difficulties no recording so uh I've got a little back up device this  
351 week the voice recorder [put] it in the middle of the table that's all that is just in case the camera  
352 something happens to it again uh I was telling them that I hope we could kinda make up that  
353 session maybe after we get done with the regular ones maybe we could just keep meeting one  
354 more week and uh keep reading what were reading just to kind of make that up. Uh we can talk  
355 about it a little more when it comes close to the time. uh we were in the middle of... Flying Home  
356 right? Actually we were pretty close to the beginning we didn't get to far in Flying Home let's see  
357 Betty looks like you brought yours with you but, I know several of you left [gave]  
358  
359 Virgil  
360 [I gave] mine back  
361  
362 Rod  
363 you gave it back so I'd hold onto it for you ... that's right and you got yours... Ben will you pass  
364 one down to Virgil? Ummm let's see I have yours too correct? And and no you weren't here last  
365 week right alright...  
366  
367 Randy  
368 I had a dream about my sister my late sister [June]  
369  
370 Rod  
371 a dream?  
372  
373 Randy  
374 I had a dream [my sister was laying on one of those things] on top of me  
375  
376 Rod  
377 yea  
378  
379 (0:13:00)  
380  
381 Randy  
382 that one she was laying::: laying down by me  
383  
384 Rod  
385 yea  
386  
387 Randy



388 she said rest... my sister... sister was killed in a car accident you know  
389  
390 Rod  
391 Awww\ no I didn't know... know that I'm sorry  
392  
393 Randy  
394 she was she was laying beside me and I know that everything gone be alright. It just let me know  
395 that everything was gone be alright  
396  
397 Rod  
398 well that sounds like a comforting dream was that a comforting dream or something else  
399  
400 Randy  
401 it was comforting dream  
402  
403 Rod  
404 it was comforting ? for you that's good [that's great]  
405  
406 Randy  
407 she let me know that everything was gone be alright after while. It was um [I didn't really think  
408 about the dream] [inaudible]  
409  
410 rod  
411 how long ago did uh your sister pass?  
412  
413 Randy  
414 about... about twelve years ago  
415  
416 Rod  
417 twelve years ago?  
418  
419 Randy  
420 uh huh [inaudible]  
421  
422 Rod  
423 don't know where my copies are let me make sure I didn't set one in here cause I thought I had I  
424 meant we had enough last week didn't we?... um nope not here hmmm we may have to share  
425 again that will be alright? Alright let's um lets remind ourselves what we're looking at here what  
426 uh what did we get to? (Addressing Ben) Can I share with you? Can I look on with you there?  
427  
428 Ben  
429 yes  
430  
431 Rod  
432 ok uh what were we what's this story about Flying Home this was Ralph Ellison we said uh Ralph  
433 Ellison wrote the Invisible Man novel and a lot of stories so.. As well what have we gotten to?  
434  
435 (0:15:00)  
436  
437 Ben  
438 The guy I think I don't know if he's Tuskegee Airmen or what uh...but he's trying uh to fly...Pass  
439 an exam so he could go fly into uh...the war so they can uh...be in the war anyway he crashed his  
440 plane and this older guy and this young... young boy they found him and his ankle was broke and  
441 he was kinda embarrassed that he crashed the plane. And he was also...I think he was kinda  
442 embarrassed by his race for the some reason. I don't... I don't know why would somebody be  
443 embarrassed by their race because race to me is just...we all the same color underneath the skin

444 we just...its only skin and he [snuck] the little boy back into::: into town back to the airfield to tell  
445 that he crashed the plane and the older guy was there (telling him stories) he was trying to comfort  
446 him but he was kinda embarrassed about the older guy and about his race. I don't::: I don't  
447 understand why::: why was he embarrassed about his race

448  
449 Rod  
450 I think that's a really good kinda synopsis of the story what do you think what what does  
451 somebody else say. When Ben says he was kinda embarrassed about his race what would you say  
452 about that? What do you remember about it I (knew or mean) the pilots name was Todd right?  
453 He's tha pilot that's crash landed. What would you say about race in this story about why he's  
454 embarrassed? what was that about?

455  
456 Randy  
457 he knew the guy was black I think

458  
459 Rod  
460 which guy? The old man

461  
462 Randy  
463 yea the old man

464  
465 Rod  
466 the old man and the young man

467  
468 Randy  
469 [inaudible] they were black and he was white

470  
471 Rod  
472 the pilot?

473  
474 Randy  
475 no

476  
477 Rod  
478 right see the pilot.... What the pilot was black too right ? right he was one of the Tuskegee Airmen  
479 right  
480 that's exactly what you said he was training to be one of those Tuskegee Airmen so training

481  
482 (0:17:00)

483  
484 Rod  
485 just down the road at Moton field [you know what we're talking about]. The story takes place in  
486 Macon County Alabama. Right?, so he took off from the airfield that's just down the road from us  
487 here. And um crash landed in what would have been a farm...field somewhere around here right?  
488 And uh he got found by those two...the old man and either his son or grandson something like  
489 that...What did they do? What:::what was their occupation? Why were they in the field?

490  
491 Virgil  
492 I think they were sharecroppers

493  
494 Rod  
495 something like that right yea they worked there they worked the field yea they were farmers or  
496 sharecroppers and worked for the man who owned that land and whatever it was... he was right  
497 yea were talking about nine-teen forty-four I think we said right right during World War II when  
498 those pilots were training what about this issue of being embarrassed about race. Ben you said that

499 to you it seems like race isn't all that important were all pretty much the same color underneath  
500 our skin. What about I mean is there a difference in time, y'know this wus  
501  
502 Connie  
503 yes yes  
504  
505 Rod  
506 however many years ago [fifty or sixty years] what do you think? You said yes  
507  
508 Connie  
509 [yes it was eighteen century or sometime]  
510  
511 Rod  
512 What wus that?  
513  
514 Connie  
515 Eighteen, back in the eighteenth cen[tury]  
516  
517 Virgil  
518 [nine]teenth [century]  
519  
520  
521  
522 Rod  
523 well this is in nineteen yeah nineteen forty-four so uh right around the time of World War II uh but  
524 uh still a while ago o how are things different would you say  
525  
526 Connie  
527 [blacks had to be in one section] and white people [was doing they thing] in another section  
528  
529 Rod  
530 ok so segregation=  
531  
532 connie  
533 =segregation  
534  
535 Rod  
536 Wus definitely in effect. where do you think the pilot was from maybe what we should do is start  
537 again reading and then get to where we came from or get to where we stopped last time would that  
538 be smart  
539  
540 (0:19:00)  
541  
542 Rod  
543 Would that be a good thing to do that would help them get you to catch up a little bit too Sandra  
544 that would give you a chance to get in on it what if we do that would it be alright if I started  
545 reading and then we could just go from there we'll go back to the beginning and start... ok  
546  
547 Virgil  
548 where we at?  
549  
550 Rod  
551 well were gonna start at the beginning. that alright with you Virgil?  
552  
553 Virgil  
554 yea

555  
556 Rod  
557 ok.... And we'll see what we think about some of those questions think about race and figure out  
558 where's Todd from?  
559  
560 {Reading of the story}  
561  
562 Rod  
563 When Todd came to he saw two faces suspended above him and the sun so hot blinding he could  
564 not tell if they were black or white. He stirred feeling a pain that burned as though his whole body  
565 had been laid opened to the sun that glared into his eyes for a moment an old fear of being touched  
566 by white hands [ceased] him then the very sharpness of the pain began slowly to clear his head  
567 sounds came to him dimly. He downed {to ben} sorry I took yours we can read together, then the  
568 very sharpness of the pain began to slowly clear his head. Sounds came to him dimly he done  
569 come to who are they he thought. Who are they he thought? Naw he aint I could have swore he  
570 was white. Then he heard clearly you hurt bad? something within him uncoiled. it was a negro  
571 sound. he's still out he heard. give him time. say son you hurt bad? Was he? What was that awful  
572 pain\ he laid rigid hearing there breathing and trying to weave a meaning between them and him  
573 being stretched painfully across the ground? He watched them wearily his mind traveling back  
574 over a painful distance. Jagged scenes quickly unfolded as if in a movie trailer wheeled through  
575 his mind as he saw himself piloting a tail spinning plane and landing and falling from the cockpit  
576 an trying to stand.  
577  
578 (0:21:00)  
579  
580 Rod  
581 then as in a great silence he remembered the sound of crunching bone now looking up into the  
582 anxious faces of an old negro man and a boy from where he lay in the same field the memories  
583 sickened him and he wanted to remember no more. How you feel son? Todd hesitated as though  
584 the answer would be to admit an unacceptable weakness. then its my ankle he said. Which one?  
585 The left. with a sense of remoteness he watched the old man bend and remove his boot feeling the  
586 pressure ease. That any better? A lot, thank you. He had the sensation of discussing someone else  
587 that his concern was with some far more important thing which for some reason escaped him. Ya  
588 done broke it bad the old man said. We have to get you to a doctor. He felt that he'd been thrown  
589 into a tail spin. He looked at his watch--how long had he been here? He knew there was but one  
590 important thing in the world. To get the plane back to the field before his officers were displeased.  
591 Help me up he said into the ship. but its broke to bad give me your arm, but son. Clutching the old  
592 man's arm he pulled himself up using his left leg clear thinking I'd never make him understand.  
593 As the leather smooth face became parallel of his own. Now let's see. he pushed the old man back  
594 hearing the birds insistent shrill. He swayed giddily blackness washed over him like infinity you  
595 best sit down. No I'm ok. But son your just gonna make it worse. It was a fact that everything in  
596 him cried out to deny even against the flaming pain in his ankle he would have to try again. You  
597 mess with that ankle theyre gonna have to cut your foot off he heard. Holding his breath he started  
598 again the pain so badly he had to bite his lip to keep from crying out and he had to help him down  
599 with a pang of despair. Its best you take it easy. we gone get you a doctor. Of all the luck he  
600 thought of all the rotten luck now I have done it the fumes of high octane gasoline  
601  
602 (0:23:00)  
603  
604 Rod  
605 clung in the heat taunting him we can ride him down ride him into town on old Ned the boy said.  
606 Ned? he turned seeing the boy point out an ox team browsing where the buried mar of a blade  
607 marked the end of the furrough. Thoughts of himself riding on an ox through the town pass streets  
608 bold white faces down the concrete runways of the airfield made swift images of humiliation in  
609 his mind.  
610

611 Rod  
612 now here's part of that embarrassment, right Ben, that you were talking about. What's he talking  
613 about happening here? We know what happened he crash landed in a field and they wanna take  
614 him to a doctor.  
615  
616 {daphne enters}  
617  
618 Rod  
619 hey there how are you?  
620  
621 Daphne  
622 I'm doing good  
623  
624 Rod  
625 good good please come in  
626  
627 Daphne  
628 my sister's at GED school  
629  
630 Rod  
631 ok uh good for her well come on in and uh have a sit with us  
632  
633 Daphne  
634 where ya'll reading at  
635  
636 Rod  
637 we are reading um were looking at the same story we ended with last week remember Flying  
638 Home remember  
639  
640 Daphne  
641 uh huh  
642  
643 Rod  
644 maybe you could sit there and look on with Virgil I don't know where all my copies are but I'm a  
645 little short on copies so maybe Virgil will let you look on with him. Unless you brought yours  
646 with you?  
647  
648 Daphne  
649 I think I brought mine with me  
650  
651 Rod  
652 yes o great if you have it that'd be terrific... and were just um on the top of page one hundred  
653 fifty... let you get settled and find it... So what's this what's this humiliation that he's talking  
654 about? He's imagining what?  
655  
656 Virgil  
657 what is all about (tha concep i believe he's tryin uh tuh use is) he wanna achieve something in life  
658 and not be a failure by wrecking that plane gonna put or put a minimize thinking thinkin of him  
659 you know people might say you not good enough to fly  
660  
661 Rod  
662 right  
663  
664 Virgil  
665 and then you know [he] just because it was an accident that people sometimes people don't look at  
666 it that way

667  
668 Rod  
669 right  
670  
671 (0:25:00)  
672  
673 Rod  
674 instead what's he afraid people might say about him instead?  
675  
676 Virgil  
677 that::: that I didn't read the part but I I jus I jus think that uh he gone be humili::: humiliated you  
678 know tuh that he's black  
679  
680 Rod  
681 right  
682  
683 Virgil  
684 An at that day and time you don't get but a couple of chances  
685  
686 Rod  
687 right right I think that's a good that's exactly the point is that he thinks I got one shot here  
688  
689 Daphne  
690 what page we on?  
691  
692 Rod  
693 top of 150 we just kind of stopped at the very top of 150 there um I think you're right he thinks I  
694 got one shot at this  
695  
696 Virgil  
697 and he wanted to become a pilot so bad and he jus you know he fantasized about::: about all the  
698 little bad details but he never know... in the story we'll see but you never know how it might  
699 come out. They might just say you know you get a second chance or whatever  
700  
701 Rod  
702 yea I::: I think your right but I think you've got it but I think you got it but that's what he's  
703 concerned about right cause were getting a look sort of inside his head so to speak you know what  
704 I mean uh. Getting to know what he's thinking what he's worrying about... Because what do you  
705 have to be to be a pilot? How would you describe a pilot?  
706  
707 Virgil  
708 you have to be you have to be sharp  
709  
710 Rod  
711 you gotta be sharp right?  
712  
713 Virgil  
714 because it's just like [barry] borrowing your parents car and you wreck it  
715  
716 Rod  
717 (laughing)  
718  
719 Virgil  
720 you'll never borrow it again for a while or maybe you'll never borrow it again until you get your  
721 own  
722

723 Rod  
724 yea and they say well well you weren't you weren't old enough to drive you weren't mature  
725 enough to drive  
726  
727 Rod  
728 or some'mm [like that]  
729  
730 virgil  
731 [some'mm] lak that  
732  
733 Rod  
734 yea and then we'll see her lets read on just a little bit. Now Daphne did you find us? Did you did  
735 where we are?  
736  
737 Daphne  
738 150  
739  
740 Rod  
741 150... It's at its look like you got a folded news paper there like your trying to look for section e  
742 page e 5 to find the uh (laughing) to find the article you want there (laughing) that's a little bit of a  
743 trick  
744  
745 (0:27:00)  
746  
747 Rod  
748 perfect ok... with a pang he remembered his girls last letter... Todd she had written. I don't need  
749 the papers to tell me that you have to tell me you have the intelligence to fly. And I have always  
750 known you to be as brave as anyone else. The papers annoy me. Don't you be contented to prove  
751 over and over again that you're brave and skillful just because you're black? Todd I think they  
752 keep beating the dead horse because they don't want to say why you boys are not yet fighting. I'm  
753 really disappointed Todd anyone with brains can learn to fly. But, then what... what about using it  
754 and who will you use it for? I wish dear you'd write about this. I sometimes think they're playing  
755 a trick on us. its very humiliating. He wiped cold sweat from his face thinking what does she know  
756 of humiliation? She's never been down south. Now the humiliation would come when you must  
757 have them judge you. Knowing that they::: that they'd never accept your mistakes as your own,  
758 but hold it against your whole race. That was humiliation and humiliation was when you could  
759 never be simply yourself when you're always a part of this old black ignorant man. Sure he's  
760 alright nice and kind and helpful, but he's not you. Well there's one humiliation I can spare  
761 myself. so what else what else did we learn here what's that little section about? He's thinking  
762 about a letter that his girl wrote him right ? And she's talking about  
763  
764  
765 Virgil  
766 they think they trick them wit humiliation because they not letting him fight in the war  
767  
768 Rod  
769 yeah, so they've gone so far as to say o ok we can train black pilots right and we'll see how if you  
770 all remember some of the history of how that happened ok we can see cause:::cause what:::what  
771 did white America think about black people training as pilots?...it was part of that racist um  
772 attitude that you were talking about earlier Connie  
773  
774 (0:29:00)  
775  
776 Daphne  
777 excuse me  
778

779 Rod  
780 uh huh  
781  
782 Daphne  
783 can I get some water  
784  
785 Rod  
786 of course please yes yes yes  
787  
788 Rod  
789 so what did what did what was thought about black people training as pilots?  
790  
791 Virgil  
792 they wasn't good enough, (they didnt have tha [(\_)]  
793  
794 Rod  
795 [yea they wadnt] gonna be good enough or smart enough or anything like that. And so the whole,  
796 much of what's so important about the Tuskegee Airmen was... that they proved..  
797  
798 Connie  
799 That they were wrong=  
800  
801 Rod  
802 =that they're wrong/ that they were completely wrong/ that there was absolutely no basis to that  
803 idea right ? That the these:::these pilots were just as good just as smart in fact they performed so  
804 well they were commended and all that. So but she's he's talking about being right in the middle  
805 of that time when there was still an awful lot of [people]  
806  
807 virgil  
808 [racism]  
809  
810  
811  
812 rod  
813 yea yea people in the country black and white who thought black people weren't good enough to  
814 be training as pilots. So he was feeling I think a lot of pressure Virgil like you said you know you  
815 that you only get one chance to prove that you're right. He says something in here about he says  
816 something about she's never been down south? What does that make you think?  
817  
818 Virgil  
819 probably from up state some where  
820  
821 Rod  
822 right probably:::probably is he where is he from?  
823  
824 Virgil  
825 up state  
826  
827 Rod  
828 probably up state somewhere probably up north somewhere right? So there's a little bit of  
829 something going on here between north and south right. And and even this part about the old man  
830 who's helping him right the old sharecropper who's helping him. And he says humiliation was  
831 when you could never be simply yourself when you were always a part of this black old ignorant  
832 man. What's his attitude about that old man?  
833  
834 Connie



835 (he a little) he won't be able to accomplish:::accomplish things in life. Um he felt that (because)  
836 of his color he won't be able to do things. Um... white people probly could.  
837  
838 (0:31:00)  
839  
840 Rod  
841 yea and what if he what if he gets carried to town on an ox cart uh driven by this old as he called  
842 him ignorant old you know farmer man and he's gonna be looked at as  
843  
844 Betty  
845 Failure=  
846  
847 Connie  
848 =failure  
849  
850 Rod  
851 as:::as ignorant too I think you know hey see o look at that isn't that funny he tried he thought he  
852 was good enough to learn how to be a pilot and here he comes teeter, creaking along on this old ox  
853 cart with a broken foot with a broken ankle. That's I think yea the humiliation that he's that he's  
854 imagining in his mind and it's just un bearable for him...No he said I'm not gonna go on that ox  
855 cart I have orders not to leave the ship. Awwww the old man said turning to the boy Teddy now  
856 you better hustle down to Mr. Graves and get him to come. No wait he protested before he was  
857 fully aware Graves might be white. Just have him get word to the field please they'll take care of  
858 the rest. He saw the boy leave running how far does he have to go. might nigh a mile. he rested  
859 looking at the dusty face of his watch by now they know something has happened he thought in  
860 the ship there was a perfectly good radio but it was useless the old fella would never operate it .  
861 That buzzard knocked me back 100 years he thought. Irony danced within them like gnats circling  
862 the old man's head with all I've learned I'm dependent upon this peasants sense of time and space.  
863 His leg throbbled. In the plane, instead of time being measured by the rhythms of pain and a kid's  
864 legs, the instruments would have told him at a glance. Twisting upon his elbows he saw where  
865 dust had powdered the plane's fuselage  
866  
867 (0:33:00)  
868  
869 Rod  
870 feeling the lump form in his throat that was always there when he thought of flight. It's crouched  
871 there, he thought, like the abandoned shell of locust. I'm naked without it. Not a machine, a suit of  
872 clothes you wear. And with a sudden embarrassment and wonder he whispered, "It's the only  
873 dignity I have..." What's he:::he refers to the {what} he says..."with all I've learned I'm  
874 dependent on this peasants sense of time and space". What does that make you think of?  
875  
876 Connie  
877 that um he feel like he may not accomplish what he started out to do  
878  
879 Rod- and he's comparing himself a little bit with the old man and referring to the old man as a  
880 peasant a peasant is what?  
881  
882 Connie  
883 somebody you don't want to be around  
884  
885 Virgil  
886 a bum uhm, a beggar  
887  
888 Rod- kinda like kinda like a beggar or a slave even a little bit someone who works the (land) like  
889 the lowest class right? It takes us back to a time of kings and queens right and peasants were the  
890 lowest

891  
892 Connie  
893 of the lowest  
894  
895 Rod  
896 of the lowest of the lowest people who worked and who were extremely poor and relied on the  
897 kindness of the king right or of the royalty or whatever. So he refers to this old man as a peasant.  
898 Does he does he feel like he's better than=  
899  
900 Connie  
901 =yes  
902  
903 Rod  
904 =than that old man? that's what it seems like  
905  
906 Virgil  
907 What it seems to me like it's:::it's intentionally uh he's:::he's like up on himself to too much. like  
908 he he better than everybody cause he flies a plane  
909  
910 Rod  
911 ok  
912  
913 Virgil  
914 the man don't meet his standards cause he work. everybody have to labeled with a job which is a  
915 trash man all the way to the president somebody gotta do it some type of job  
916  
917 Rod  
918 right  
919  
920 Virgil  
921 so you know like, people catergorlize you today because if you have a mental illness  
922  
923 Rod  
924 yeah  
925  
926 (0:35:00)  
927  
928 Virgil  
929 to:::to:::to regular people, peoples wif a mental illness is BUms all the way from crack heads ..  
930 everybody get la'beled with a LAbel all the way to the day. And he labeled this man right here as  
931 being a peasant ..somebody that's worthless and this man actually giving him a lending hand and  
932 trying to help him off a a mission he wasn't able ta that he could:::couldn't complete cause he  
933 crashed the plane  
934  
935 Rod  
936 ight  
937  
938 Virgil  
939 and then you know why by him crashing the plane the man has offered his help cause he was hurt  
940  
941 Rod  
942 right  
943  
944 Virgil  
945 see what I'm saying  
946

947 Rod  
 948 yea I:::I do sounds like you're not too crazy about the way he's about Todd's attitude [right]  
 949  
 950 Virgil  
 951 [he got a] he got a real he got a real bad attitude  
 952  
 953 Rod  
 954 ou said he's kinda egotistical he's up on himself  
 955  
 956 Virgil  
 957 right  
 958  
 959  
 960 Rod  
 961 now this is kinda tough at this point cause, I mean I see whatcha mean and I agree with you.. Does  
 962 Todd...now think about it remember back to the time here...Does Todd have a right to be proud  
 963 of what he's accomplished? And what he's trying to do  
 964  
 965  
 966 Virgil  
 967 [right]  
 968  
 969 {Group (chorus)} Group  
 970 [right, yes]  
 971  
 972 Virgil  
 973 but at the same time a stu::: a a stumbling block came in his path [by wrecking] the plane  
 974  
 975 Rod  
 976 [ye::ah] right  
 977  
 978 Virgil  
 979 so now he's thinking all crazy and wild; what they go[ne thi]nk and say  
 980  
 981 Rod  
 982 [mmhm] right  
 983  
 984 Virgil  
 985 he said was it a white man you going to help um go get um put im on the ox cart so whoever you  
 986 know if he fail himself you got to think about how to accomplish re-accomplish again  
 987  
 988 Rod  
 989 uh huh  
 990  
 991 Virgil  
 992 but he going about it the wrong way he:::he downing people already  
 993  
 994 Rod  
 995 you know and I think related to that the very last sentence that I read there the very last sentence of  
 996 that paragraph his last thought there "it's the only dignity I have" the airplane [is what he's  
 997 talking]  
 998  
 999 Betty  
 1000 [mmhm]  
 1001  
 1002 rod

1003 about is the only dignity I have=  
1004  
1005 Randy  
1006 =I started started wondering bout that stumbling block... its tellin me he's gonna turn the stumblin  
1007 block turn steppin stones (story) its telling me he's gonna turn tha stumblin block turn ta steppin  
1008 stones  
1009  
1010 Rod  
1011 ok/ alright/ what do you mean by that?  
1012  
1013  
1014  
1015 Randy  
1016 i always remember that stumblin block i sey to maself ah say that stumblin block wuz tha rent bill  
1017 ah sed well=  
1018  
1019 rod  
1020 =ah/  
1021  
1022 randy  
1023 =tha rent bill that's a stumbling block but if I can overcome the stumbling block (ta get oveuh) the  
1024 steppin stones  
1025  
1026 (0:37:00)  
1027  
1028 Randy  
1029 it gonna take some steppin stones to find a way to pay the rent  
1030  
1031 Rod  
1032 and:::and if you had put if you put all of yourself worth on that RENT on being able to pay your  
1033 rent and then something comes along and you stumble you know right and there's a stumbling  
1034 block  
1035  
1036 Randy  
1037 stumbling block  
1038  
1039 Rod  
1040 then everything can fall apart right? [everything could fall apart]  
1041  
1042 Group (chorus)  
1043 [yeah, right]  
1044  
1045 Randy  
1046 [but I:::I say] I know had the money but I got the money but I'm gone pay it  
1047  
1048 Rod  
1049 right  
1050  
1051 Randy  
1052 but I'mma gone pay it anyway so imma turn a stumbling ta stone block this time that's why it's  
1053 very important that we need ta turn, I told Ms. Woods the other day, but I'm not talking off tha  
1054 wall, but let (me) turn some stumbling blocks into stepping stones that's what:::that's what you  
1055 know what I'm sayin? they'll turn to stum:::stumblin blocks into stepping stones I say well I  
1056 made a big mistake but I aint gone cut myself down because I'm well I'm got somehow  
1057 someway I'm gone get the money and God's will provide my need  
1058

1059 Rod  
1060 um hmmm  
1061  
1062 Randy  
1063 it's gone its gone turn into stepping stone you know he's gonna proVIDE your needs  
1064  
1065 Rod  
1066 we:::we wonder about yea we wonder  
1067  
1068 Randy  
1069 I was wondering about that story ( ) stumblin block he wreck tha plane.  
1070  
1071 Rod  
1072 it's just like because he crashed the plane and he thought he didn't have any more self worth he  
1073 didn't have any of his own dignity, [right?]  
1074  
1075 Randy  
1076 [yea^] it got something to do with racism  
1077  
1078 Rod  
1079 well I think he does have something to do with racism I think it has to do with uh  
1080  
1081 randy  
1082 i dunno, well.  
1083  
1084 rod  
1085 [you know]  
1086  
1087 Virgil  
1088 [you saw tha part] right here where he say it's the only dignity that I have  
1089  
1090 Rod  
1091 yea  
1092  
1093 Virgil  
1094 the only dignity I have he letting materialistic (idobl worshipping foul up) his own mind  
1095  
1096 Rod  
1097 and his status [right?]  
1098  
1099 Virgil  
1100 and his status [( \_ )]  
1101  
1102  
1103 Rod  
1104 [his status. .his status as a pilot]  
1105  
1106 Virgil  
1107 [you think like old] back then probably if you were a pilot you were probably living on the base  
1108 you got money you know probably got a car whatever you know back in 1940 that was that a  
1109 quarter or a dollar or ten dollars was richer than everybody you know so you know so you know  
1110 people were living pretty good and he says it's the only dignity I have it's the only means he had  
1111 to make his self feel s uh secure in his life but he was letting the small but it show you at the same  
1112 time he done wrecked and fell  
1113  
1114 (0:39:00)

1115  
1116 Virgil  
1117 so he gotta still pick himself up no matter what  
1118  
1119 Rod  
1120 um hmm  
1121  
1122 Virgil  
1123 he gotta pick his self up no matter what  
1124  
1125 Rod  
1126 um hmm...there's so many I think there are a lot of different levels here and ya'll are getting at uh  
1127 the different levels here because part of what he's frustrated about remember in that last paragraph  
1128 it says...I can't just be myself he feels the pressure of representing his race...right so you say it  
1129 has something to do with racism I think it does I think that part of this is...  
1130  
1131 Virgil  
1132 [I don't think]  
1133  
1134 Rod  
1135 [he lives] in a world he lives in a society that says black men are not as good as white men...right  
1136 and that's what the racist society has said but he's trying to argue against that by going to be a  
1137 pilot but then he gets over invested in that so that's it his only dignity you see what I mean?  
1138  
1139 Virgil  
1140 well how how I feel I don't think he trying to represent his own race cause he downing the man  
1141 the sharecropper if he if you, you suppose to uplift everybody and make a way make a way for  
1142 everybody to see better days for everybody he downing this man saying he's ignorant or what  
1143 getting along in the story we read last time he was calling them more names than that.  
1144  
1145 Rod  
1146 yea right right [got so frustrated with him]  
1147  
1148 Virgil  
1149 [so uh he] taking his frustration and problems out on [somebody else]  
1150  
1151 Randy  
1152 [better days] is coming better days is coming for us  
1153  
1154 Rod  
1155 well what's interesting too is cause were looking at this story from the perspective that we have in  
1156 the 21st century now we know that the work that the Tuskegee Airmen did...right...and along  
1157 with ya know the whole civil rights movement that came later on and the work that so many  
1158 people did have made things better right? I mean that's one of the things that's one of the points  
1159 that you made...last week [right]  
1160  
1161 randy  
1162 [mmm]  
1163  
1164 Rod  
1165 cause there's still a lot of work to do when you talk about race  
1166  
1167 Randy  
1168 yea!  
1169  
1170 Rod

1171 but things are different or are better are they? Do you think?  
1172  
1173 Group (chorus)  
1174 [yea...yes]  
1175  
1176 Connie  
1177 [o yes its gotten] better  
1178  
1179 Rod  
1180 some better?  
1181  
1182 Randy  
1183 some better but it's gonna need some improvement  
1184  
1185 Rod  
1186 needs improvement I think you're right. but we can look back and say that well let me ask this let  
1187 me ask this what you think? Did the work that these pilots did not the fictional pilots that were  
1188 reading about...  
1189  
1190 (0:41:00)  
1191  
1192 Rod  
1193 but the actual pilots right the Tuskegee Airmen...did the work that they that they did did that  
1194 improve things=  
1195  
1196 connie  
1197 =[oh yes]  
1198  
1199 rod  
1200 [for their] entire race ?  
1201  
1202 Connie  
1203 Oh yes  
1204  
1205  
1206 betty  
1207 oh yes  
1208  
1209 Connie  
1210 Oh yes  
1211  
1212 Rod  
1213 so in a way if that's right in a way what::: what Todd is thinking about here has some basis  
1214  
1215 connie  
1216 right  
1217  
1218 Rod  
1219 where he's thinking that he's representing his whole race whether or not he's going about it the  
1220 right way but I think you're right he's [downgrading you know he's downing this old man as a  
1221 peasant]  
1222  
1223 sandra  
1224 {quietly} [(restroom.. got ta use tha restroom)] {leaves}  
1225  
1226 Rod

1227 as ignorant while he's trying to  
1228  
1229 Virgil  
1230 accomplish somein  
1231  
1232 Rod  
1233 accomplish something for himself and also for his sons maybe [you know fer his whole race]  
1234  
1235 Virgil  
1236 [but he steppin] on people  
1237  
1238 rod  
1239 but he does seem to be steppin on people a little bit you're right  
1240  
1241 Randy  
1242 he stepping on some toes  
1243  
1244 Rod  
1245 stepping on some toes stepping on other peoples backs uh whatevuh  
1246  
1247 Randy  
1248 but:::but I believe that my my stumblin blocks has something to do with the past. everything that  
1249 happened in the past is (becomin) a stumbling block...so I mean had to learn to overcome the  
1250 stumbling blocks is to get over it  
1251  
1252 Rod  
1253 and make those stepping stones like you said  
1254  
1255 Randy  
1256 yea make tha steppin stones, say well, i jes have to learn to say well, maybe i hafter learn to  
1257 forgive the people who I:::I done wrong and then maybe they forgive me what I done wrong so we  
1258 made some mistakes in the past but guess what? it don't matter to me though no more though so I  
1259 say well well here we go! {expansive gesture--laying burden on the table in front of him?} Move  
1260 on!  
1261  
1262 Rod  
1263 keep moving on, right?  
1264  
1265 {virgil and Betty talking privately at other end of the table. Randy notices.}  
1266  
1267 Randy  
1268 I'm not talking off [tha wall]  
1269  
1270 betty & virgil  
1271 [{laughing}]  
1272  
1273 Rod  
1274 ok no no that's ok one of those things  
1275  
1276 Randy  
1277 I was saying I [learned to cope]  
1278  
1279 virgil betty & connie  
1280 [{private conversation;} virgil gets up  
1281  
1282 randy



1283 because I tell the people what I did, because that became a big help ta me, imean y'know  
1284  
1285 Rod  
1286 yea yea well one of the reasons that we read is that we can we can relate what we read about to the  
1287 stories in our own lives right so that's I think that's fine {that's a fine idea}  
1288  
1289 Rod  
1290 well should we should we keep going on a little bit?  
1291  
1292 Group  
1293 yes...yea we going on  
1294  
1295 Rod  
1296 ok so he says it's the only dignity I have that air plane  
1297  
1298 Virgil  
1299 see uh can I say one more thing  
1300  
1301 (0:43:00)  
1302  
1303 Rod  
1304 please  
1305  
1306 Virgil  
1307 the only thing he half right but that's the only dignity he have he should have self esteem be first  
1308 by itself but the only dignity he got is in a in a plane that's kinda like that's kinda like screwed up  
1309 that's kinda like putting uh money before your own self  
1310  
1311 Rod  
1312 right like saying um the dignity I have is bound up in the kind of car I drive or the clothes I wear  
1313 the dollar figure in my bank account or the wife or the husband that I got or the whatever it is  
1314  
1315 Virgil  
1316 yea  
1317  
1318 Rod  
1319 and:::and there's a question about then well what's if you strip off all that away whats  
1320  
1321 Connie  
1322 you have no dignity  
1323  
1324 Virgil  
1325 it's  
1326  
1327 Rod  
1328 that's where he is he feels naked and that's what he says that he's there in that field with a broken  
1329 ankle feeling naked  
1330  
1331 Betty  
1332 right  
1333  
1334 Virgil  
1335 see the way he acting and talking about people he don't have no selfdignity about his'self. he aint  
1336 even see the little shine, way he talking about the old man  
1337  
1338 Rod

1339 right  
1340  
1341 Virgil  
1342 he aint got no up bringing  
1343  
1344 Rod  
1345 so there's a what do you think about like he's down grading that old man but what::what would  
1346 you say about that old man is he a dignified character does he have some dignity?  
1347  
1348 Connie  
1349 yes!  
1350  
1351 Virgil  
1352 he tried::he tried to help him  
1353  
1354 Rod  
1355 he's a he's a helpful man  
1356  
1357 Virgil  
1358 he tried to stay on that leg he gone have to cut it off they gave him some advice  
1359  
1360 Rod  
1361 yea the first thing e did was really help him he went and took off his boot yea alright does that  
1362 help yea that helps a lot it feels a lot better right so this is a helpful old man we'll see we'll::we'll  
1363 see what what else we think about the old man as we go along. Well he Todd saw the old man  
1364 watching. His torn overalls clinging limply to him and that he he felt a sharp need to tell the old  
1365 man what he felt. But that would be meaningless if I try to explain why I need to fly back he'd  
1366 think I was simply afraid of white officers but it's more than fear, a sense of anguish clung to him  
1367 like the veil of sweat that hugged his face. He watched the old man hearing him humming snatches  
1368 of a tune as he admired the plane. he felt a further sense of resentment  
1369  
1370 (0:45:00)  
1371  
1372 Rod  
1373 such old men often came to the field to watch the pilots with childish eyes. At first it had made  
1374 him proud may have been a meaningful part of a new experience. But he soon realized they did  
1375 not understand his accomplishments and they came to shame and embarrass him, like the  
1376 distasteful praise of an idiot  
1377  
1378 Rod  
1379 so there he goes he's calling the old man an idiot now  
1380  
1381 Group (chorus)  
1382 yea uh huh  
1383  
1384 Rod  
1385 and we just made the very top of 152...catch where we are...152....A part of the meaning of  
1386 flying had gone, then and he had been able to regain it. If I were a prize-fighter I would be more  
1387 human, he thought. Not a monkey doing tricks, but a man. They were pleased simply that he was a  
1388 Negro who could fly, and that was enough. He felt cut off from them by age, understanding, by  
1389 sensibility, by technology, and by his need to measure himself against the mirror of other men's  
1390 appreciation. Somehow he felt betrayed, as he had when as a child he grew to discover that his  
1391 father was dead. Now, for him any real appreciation lay with his white officers; and with them he  
1392 could never be sure. Between ignorant black men and condescending whites his course of flight  
1393 seemed mapped by the nature of things away from all needed and natural landmarks.  
1394

1395 {Daphne coughing severely in the background}  
1396  
1397 rod  
1398 you ok did you get your water?  
1399  
1400 Daphne  
1401 yea I got it  
1402  
1403 Rod-can you get some more/?  
1404  
1405 (0:47:00)  
1406  
1407 Daphne  
1408 yea I have bronchitis real bad....yea probably need a bottle of bottle water you got any  
1409  
1410 Rod  
1411 no I don't think we have any in here o there's some bottles over there I don't know where the  
1412 cooler is?  
1413  
1414 Group  
1415 (unison)-it's outside....go outside  
1416  
1417 Rod  
1418 {yea but out there} with no cups?  
1419  
1420 Daphne  
1421 it's some cups out there  
1422  
1423 Rod  
1424 well go ahead and bring you some in here if you need to feel free yea do what you need to do  
1425  
1426 Daphne  
1427 ok  
1428  
1429 Rod  
1430 What does he mean between ignorant black man and condescending whites? Hear what he's  
1431 talking about:::about:::about how he's measuring his accomplishments?  
1432  
1433 Group  
1434 yea...Randy nods his head  
1435  
1436 Rod  
1437 so he's an ignorant black man who's that?  
1438  
1439 Betty  
1440 the old man  
1441  
1442 Rod  
1443 that's the that's the old man who's trying to help him out right?  
1444  
1445 Virgil  
1446 condescending mean you achieving things?  
1447  
1448 Rod  
1449 condescending means  
1450

1451 Virgil  
1452 mean that people that can achieve a more {gracing} pace  
1453  
1454 Rod  
1455 and but that condescending would be like uh like if well it's a little bit like those:::those white  
1456 military officers would say to him...O hey that's great I thought you could do this well so good  
1457 for you you can actually achieve more than you thought. And while there complimenting him  
1458 there's also an insult in there. Right because there saying you know you're not really as good as  
1459  
1460 Connie  
1461 the others  
1462  
1463 Rod  
1464 yea! Or as good as you know white pilots would be I guess would be the other comparison you see  
1465 what I mean? He feels stuck because he can't really there's no really true measure of his own  
1466  
1467 (Can't make out if Betty or Connie said this)- Accomplishments  
1468  
1469 Rod  
1470 his own worth yea there's no place to measure yea no way to measure his accomplishments fairly  
1471 uh...yea I think that's right  
1472  
1473 Virgil  
1474 I thank I thank I thank he uh he a little more ignorant himself  
1475  
1476 Rod  
1477 well that's I think that's really interesting that he's got some learning to do  
1478  
1479 Virgil  
1480 yea yea  
1481  
1482 Rod  
1483 right?  
1484  
1485 Virgil  
1486 maybe he young maybe he 19 20  
1487  
1488 Rod  
1489 maybe really young yea  
1490  
1491 Virgil  
1492 you never know his age  
1493  
1494 Rod  
1495 that's right  
1496  
1497 Virgil  
1498 the paper aint say his age just yet you know he a youth you think immature so  
1499  
1500 Rod  
1501 I think your right  
1502  
1503 Virgil  
1504 we get on into the story and see how maybe they'll tell his age or something  
1505  
1506 (0:49:00)

1507  
1508 Rod  
1509 maybe so I think that's a good thought lets:::lets check that out  
1510  
1511 Rod  
1512 Under some sealed orders (we're kind of right in the middle there of 152). Under some sealed  
1513 orders, couched in ever more technical and mysterious terms, his path curved swiftly away from  
1514 both the shame the old man symbolized and the cloudy terrain of white man's regard. Flying  
1515 blind, he knew but one point of landing and there he would receive wings. After that the enemy  
1516 would appreciate his skill and he would assume his deepest meaning, he thought sadly neither  
1517 from those who condescended nor from those who praised without understanding, but from the  
1518 enemy who would recognize his manhood and skill in terms of hate....  
1519  
1520 Rod  
1521 we get:::we get a picture there I think of why he wants to fight...why he wants to go to  
1522 war...because he feels like there he can prove himself and he can he can let loose some of the  
1523 anger he's feeling...does that seem right? Now what's he what's he angry about?  
1524  
1525 Virgil  
1526 {he ready to fly the plane}  
1527  
1528 Rod  
1529 well there's that what about even before that? Well I mean the whole reason he went to training  
1530 to::: to pilot training  
1531  
1532 Virgil  
1533 he better he took to uh...uh more dignified  
1534  
1535 Connie  
1536 he did a better job  
1537  
1538 Rod  
1539 who:::who was he angry at you think?  
1540  
1541 Virgil  
1542 his self  
1543  
1544 Rod-his self?  
1545  
1546 Virgil  
1547 maybe it  
1548  
1549 Rod  
1550 from of racism of the white world that he was living in? Right...yea  
1551  
1552 Group  
1553 all speaking and saying yea  
1554  
1555 Virgil  
1556 and that aint what that aint what the paper said it didn't that aint what the story was uh talking  
1557 about from:::from the point of view I'm understanding he really was carrying a conversation on  
1558 with himself mostly he thinking to himself but he had no fingers to point at no one cause he  
1559 wrecked that plane.  
1560  
1561 Rod  
1562 yea that's right and he then

1563  
1564 (0:51:00)  
1565  
1566 Rod  
1567 look at it as just his mistake and they were gonna blame this whole race they were gonna say he  
1568 crashed it because he's black right?  
1569  
1570 Virgil  
1571 right  
1572  
1573 Rod  
1574 they were gonna say he failed  
1575  
1576 Virgil  
1577 he only assume:::he only assume this he don't know what them people might say latter on in the  
1578 story they:::they might say well well well try again  
1579  
1580 Rod  
1581 right yea your right  
1582  
1583 Virgil  
1584 cause the only thing he's in a field trying to get receive some help and the only thing he assuming  
1585 about what they gonna say we they come about this about wrecking the plane  
1586  
1587 Rod  
1588 he's making a lot of assumptions here  
1589  
1590 Virgil  
1591 right  
1592  
1593 Rod  
1594 but he we do find out that he:::he wants to go to war and take out his  
1595  
1596 Virgil  
1597 enemy  
1598  
1599 Rod  
1600 yea take out his enemy right  
1601  
1602 Virgil  
1603 where they can recognize his manhood and his skills in terms {wit} hate  
1604  
1605 Rod  
1606 In terms of hate?  
1607  
1608 Virgil  
1609 hating the enemy of of uh the United States of America  
1610  
1611 Rod  
1612 ok alright...alright  
1613  
1614 Rod  
1615 he sighed, seeing the oxen making queer, prehistoric shadows against the dry brown earth. "You  
1616 just take it easy, son," the old man soothed. "That boy won't take long. Crazy as he is about  
1617 airplanes." "I can wait," he said. "What kinda airplane you call this here'n?" "An Advanced  
1618 Trainer," he said, seeing the old man smile. His fingers were like gnarled dark wood against the

1619 metal as he touched the low-slung wing. "Bout how fast can she fly?" "Over two hundred an  
1620 hour." "Lawd! That's so fast I bet it don't seem like you moving!" Holding himself rigid, Todd  
1621 opened his flying suit. The shade had gone and he lay in a ball of fire. "You mind if I take a look  
1622 inside? I was always curious to see..." "Help yourself. Just don't touch anything." He heard him  
1623 climb upon the metal wing, grunting. Now the questions would start. Well, so you don't have to  
1624 think to answer... He saw the old man looking over into the cockpit, his eyes bright as a child's.  
1625 "You must have to know a lot to work all these here things." Todd was silent, seeing him step  
1626 down and kneel beside him.  
1627  
1628 (0:53:00)  
1629  
1630 Rod  
1631 "Son, how come you want to fly way up there in the air?" Because it's the most meaningful act in  
1632 the world ...because it makes me less like you, he thought. But he said: "Because I like it, I guess.  
1633 It's as good a way to fight and die as I know." "Yeah ? I guess you right," the old man said. "But  
1634 how long you think before they gonna let you all fight?" He tensed. This was the question all  
1635 Negroes asked, put with the same timid hopefulness and longing that always opened a greater void  
1636 within him than that he had felt beneath the plane the first time he had flown. He felt light-  
1637 headed. It came to him suddenly that there was something sinister about the conversation, that he  
1638 was flying...  
1639  
1640 Virgil  
1641 hold on for a second  
1642  
1643 Rod  
1644 yea ok ....what do you take from that question so the old man asked him "Son, how come you  
1645 want to fly way up there in the air?" And what he thinks is because it's the most meaningful act in  
1646 the world because it makes me less like you.  
1647  
1648 Virgil  
1649 well he think that man is uh a ass kissuh  
1650  
1651 Rod  
1652 huh ...how come what do you mean?  
1653  
1654 Virgil  
1655 thank he just an Uncle Tom or something in a field working he got a low graded job  
1656  
1657 Rod  
1658 ok  
1659  
1660 Virgil  
1661 after he was uh beside him he would probably say a well accomplished job both on his mission on  
1662 another plane but he's talking to this man cause he have a less job that he have a status of life  
1663  
1664 Rod  
1665 so he's doing the he's flying and to keep:::keep from being he perceives to be an ignorant low  
1666 wage um peasant to:::to to be in a different status ta have a different status right? ...Ok Alright  
1667 are we together now on um 1...54? He felt light headed. It came to him suddenly that there was  
1668 something sinister about the conversation that he was flying unwillingly into unsafe and uncharted  
1669 regions. If he could only....  
1670  
1671 (0:55:00)  
1672  
1673 Rod

1674 be insulting and tell this old man trying to help him to shut up. I bet you one thing, yes, that you  
 1675 was pretty scared coming down, he did not answer. Like a dog on a trail the old man always  
 1676 seemed to smell out his fears and he felt anger bubble within him. "You sho scared me, when I  
 1677 seen you coming down that thing with it rolling and jumping it like a pitchin' hoss, I thought you  
 1678 sho was a goner. I almost had me a stroke!" He saw the old man grinning. "Everythin's been  
 1679 happening round here this morning, come to think of it." "Like what?" he asked. "Well, first thing  
 1680 I know, here come two white fellers looking for Mister Rudolph, that's Mister Graves' cousin.  
 1681 That got me worked up right away..." "Why?" "Why? 'Cause he done broke outa the crazy  
 1682 house, that's why. He liable to kill somebody," he said. "They oughta have him by now though.  
 1683 Then here you come. First I think it's one of them white boys. Then doggone if you don't fall  
 1684 outta there. Lawd, I'd done heard about you boys but I haven't never seen one o' you all. Caint tell  
 1685 you how it felt to see somebody what look like me in a airplane! The old man talked on, the sound  
 1686 streaming around Todd's thoughts like:::like air flowing over the fuselage of a flying plane. You  
 1687 were a fool, he thought, remembering how before the spin the sun had blazed, bright against the  
 1688 bill board signs beyond the town, and how a boy's blue kite had bloomed beneath him, tugging  
 1689 gently in the wind like a strange, odd-shaped flower. He had once flown such kites himself and  
 1690 tried to find the boy at the end of the invisible cord. But he had been flying too high and too fast.  
 1691 He had climbed steeply away in (exultation) ~~exhaustion~~. Too steeply, he thought. And one of the  
 1692 first rules you learn is that if the angle of thrust is too steep the plane goes into a spin. And then,  
 1693 instead of pulling out of it and going into a dive you let a buzzard panic you. A lousy buzzard!  
 1694 "Son, what made all that blood on the glass?"  
 1695  
 1696 (0:57:00)  
 1697  
 1698 Rod  
 1699 "A buzzard," he said, remembering how the blood and feathers had sprayed back against the  
 1700 hatch. It had been as though he had flown into a storm of blood and blackness. "Well I declare!  
 1701 They's lots of 'em around here. They after dead things. Don't eat nothing what's alive." "A little  
 1702 bit more and he would have made a meal out of me," Todd said grimly. "They bad luck all right.  
 1703 Teddy's got a name for 'em, calls 'em jimcrows," the old man laughed. "It's a damned good  
 1704 name." why is that funny? Is it funny?  
 1705  
 1706 Randy  
 1707 uh uh  
 1708  
 1709 Rod  
 1710 it's not funny?  
 1711  
 1712 Randy  
 1713 it's not funny!  
 1714  
 1715 Rod  
 1716 it's not funny ok I:::I know what:::what do you  
 1717  
 1718 Randy  
 1719 because:::because knowing that the guy calls them jimcrows  
 1720  
 1721 Rod  
 1722 the yea Teddy:::Teddy does the young boy right? The boy, right, the boy who's run to town to get  
 1723 him help  
 1724  
 1725 Randy  
 1726 yea  
 1727  
 1728 Rod  
 1729 to get help...calls buzzard ["jimcrows"]



1730  
1731 Betty  
1732 [uh...buzzards]  
1733  
1734 Randy  
1735 [buzz]ards yea they call em buzzards...what they call em?  
1736  
1737 Rod  
1738 you know the vultures, right  
1739  
1740 Randy  
1741 the vulchers  
1742  
1743 Rod  
1744 you know the same as vulchers we got em yea:::yea you see them around here all the time right.  
1745 And little Teddy calls em jimcrow  
1746  
1747 Randy  
1748 jimcrows  
1749  
1750 Rod  
1751 and of course Jim Crow is the name given to...  
1752  
1753 Randy  
1754 yea  
1755  
1756 Rod  
1757 those:::thoe racist segregation laws right about separate toilets and bus um seating  
1758  
1759 Randy  
1760 well {I thinking about begging the system but one say} it's you know we used to when we was  
1761 segregated period uh I think it was called segregation  
1762  
1763 Rod  
1764 uh huh  
1765  
1766 Randy  
1767 it got something to do with segregation {am I correct?} segregation  
1768  
1769 Rod  
1770 yea and they Jim Crow....Randy-when it say white only black only  
1771  
1772 Rod  
1773 yea and uh those were that was referred to uh  
1774  
1775 Randy  
1776 we can not go into those places  
1777  
1778 Rod  
1779 right right  
1780  
1781 Randy  
1782 with white only  
1783  
1784 Rod  
1785 right

1786  
1787 Randy  
1788 there were just some harsh very harsh very harsh um harsh times that we went through  
1789  
1790 Rod  
1791 [extremely]  
1792  
1793 Randy  
1794 before I was born  
1795  
1796 Rod  
1797 right right  
1798  
1799 Rod  
1800 “They the dammedest birds. Once I seen a hoss all stretched out like he was sick, you know. So I  
1801 hollers, “Gid up from there, suh!” Just to make sho! An’, doggone, son if I don’t see two old  
1802 jimcrows come flying right up outa that hoss’s insides! Yessuh!  
1803  
1804  
1805 (0:59:00)  
1806  
1807 Rod  
1808 The sun was shinin’ on em and they couldn’ta been no greasier if they’d been eating barbecue!”  
1809 Todd though he would vomit;....  
1810  
1811 Randy  
1812 o\  
1813  
1814 Rod  
1815 his stomach quivered. “You made that up,” he said. “Nawsuh! Saw him just like you.” “Well I’m  
1816 glad it was you.” “You see lots a funny things down here, son.” “No, I’ll let you see them,” he  
1817 said. “By the way, white folks round here don’t like to see you boys up there in the sky. They ever  
1818 bother you?” “No.” “Well, they’d like to.” “Someone always wants to bother someone else,” Todd  
1819 said. “How do you know?” “I just know.” “Well,” he said defensively, “no one has bothered us.”  
1820 Blood pounded in his ears as he looked away into space. He tensed, seeing a black spot in the sky,  
1821 and strained to confirm what he could not clearly see. “What does that look like to you?” he asked  
1822 excitedly. “Just another bad luck son.” Then he saw movement of wings with disappointment. It  
1823 was gliding smoothly down, wings outspread, tail feathers gripping the air, down swiftly—gone  
1824 behind the green screen of trees. It was like a bird he had imagined there, only the sloping  
1825 branches of the pines remained, sharp against the pale stretch of sky. He lay barely breathing and  
1826 stared at the point where it had disappeared, caught in a spell of loathing and admiration. Why did  
1827 they make them so disgusting and yet teach them to fly so well? It’s like when I was up in heaven,  
1828 he heard, starting. The old man was chuckling, rubbing his stubbled chin. “What did you say?”  
1829 “Sho, I died and went to heaven...maybe by time I tell you about it they be done come after you.”  
1830 “I hope so,” he said wearily. “You boys ever sit around swap lies?” “Not often. Is this going to be  
1831 one?” Well, I ain’t I ain’t so sho, on account of it took place when I was dead.”  
1832  
1833 (1:01:00)  
1834  
1835 Rod  
1836 The old man paused. “That wasn’t no lie ‘bout the buzzards though.” “All right,” he said. “Sho  
1837 you want to hear bout heaven?” “Please,” he answered, resting his head upon his arm. “Well, I  
1838 went to heaven and right away started to sproutin me some wings. Six-foot ones, they was. Just  
1839 like them the white angels had. I couldn’t hardly believe it. I was so glad that I went off on some  
1840 clouds by myself and tried em out. You know cause I didn’t want to make a fool outta myself the  
1841 first thing...” It’s an old tale, Todd thought. Told me years ago. Had forgotten. But at least it will

1842 keep him from talking about buzzards. He closed his eyes, listening. "...First thing I done was to  
 1843 git up on a low cloud and jump off. And doggone, boy if them wings didn't work! First I tried the  
 1844 right; then I tried the left; then I tried 'em both together. Then, Lawd, I started to move on out  
 1845 among the folks. I let 'em see me ..." He saw the old man gesturing flight with his arms, his face  
 1846 full of mock pride as he indicated an imaginary crowd, thinking, It'll be in the newspapers, as he  
 1847 heard, "... so I went and found me some colored angels—somehow I didn't believe I was an angel  
 1848 till I seen a real black one, ha yes! Then I was sho—but they tole me I better come down cause us  
 1849 colored folks had to wear a special kin'a harness when we flew. That was how come they wasn't  
 1850 flyin. Oh yes, an you had to be extra strong for a black man even, to fly with one of them  
 1851 harnesses ..." This is a new turn, Todd thought. What's he driving at? "So I said to myself, I ain't  
 1852 gonna be bothered with no harness! Oh naw! Cause if God let you sprout wings you oughta have  
 1853 sense enough not to let nobody make you wear something what gits in the way of flyin. So I starts  
 1854 to flyin. Hecks, son", he chuckled, his eyes twinkling, "you know I had to let eve'body know that  
 1855 old *Jefferson* could fly good as anybody else. And I could fly too, fly smooth as a bird!  
 1856  
 1857 Rod  
 1858 you got it 'ijah? Um 158  
 1859  
 1860 (1:03:00)  
 1861  
 1862 Rod  
 1863 ...down that uh just the uh little second paragraph there... What is this story he's telling what's he  
 1864 doing? What's going on?  
 1865  
 1866 Randy  
 1867 (laughing)  
 1868  
 1869 Rod  
 1870 *Jefferson*, you know that's the old man there his name was *Jefferson* we know that now. He's what  
 1871 flying around Heaven? What's he doing?  
 1872  
 1873 Virgil  
 1874 Todd lying to him not to hear him talk no more  
 1875  
 1876 Rod  
 1877 Well this is *Jefferson* this is the old man telling him the story  
 1878  
 1879 Virgil  
 1880 That's the old:::that's the young boy telling the story  
 1881  
 1882 Rod  
 1883 No no you it's the old man telling the story  
 1884  
 1885 Virgil  
 1886 the young boy telling the story  
 1887  
 1888 Rod  
 1889 no:::no it's the old man telling the story...uh the pilots listening to him tell the story about how I  
 1890 died one time I went up to Heaven and started sprouting wings and flying all over Heaven yea  
 1891  
 1892 Virgil  
 1893 you sure?  
 1894  
 1895 Rod  
 1896 yea right everybody else get that?  
 1897

1898 Virgil  
 1899 I thought he told him that that he what he said he aint wanna hear about no buzzards no more  
 1900  
 1901 Rod  
 1902 right he said uh yea I uh:::uh see let's see  
 1903  
 1904 Virgil  
 1905 he said he said he wanna tell him the story where he don't wanna hear about no buzzards  
 1906  
 1907 Betty  
 1908 yea the young pilot=  
 1909  
 1910 Virgil  
 1911 =told him told him that he was started talking about a story about buzzards he aint wanna hear  
 1912 about the story about buzzards no more  
 1913  
 1914 Rod  
 1915 um it::it yea he's talking about how the old ma's telling me a strange tell at least it would keep  
 1916 him from talking about buzzards he uh if I listen to him tell the story about sprouting wings in  
 1917 Heaven at least he's having to talk about buzzards eating horses anymore. Yea this is the story the  
 1918 old man is telling hear  
 1919  
 1920 Virgil  
 1921 ok  
 1922  
 1923 Rod  
 1924 alright... its it's strange all of a sudden he breaks into this story about flying around in Heaven and  
 1925 not only that about how there's seems to be some kind of Jim Crow Laws in this Heaven that he's  
 1926 telling the story about right cause black angles have to wear a particular kind of harness right to  
 1927 keep them from flying so high or something like that right why is he tellin this story? anyway he  
 1928 says "So I said to myself, I ain't gonna be bothered with no harness! Oh naw! Cause if God let  
 1929 you sprout wings you oughta have sense enough not to let nobody make you wear something what  
 1930 gits in the way of flyin. So I starts to flyin. Hecks, son", he chuckled, his eyes twinklin, "you  
 1931 know I had to let eve'body know that old *Jefferson* could fly good as anybody else.  
 1932  
 1933 (1:05:00)  
 1934  
 1935 Rod  
 1936 And I could too, fly smooth as a bird! I could even loop-the-loop—only I had to make sho to keep  
 1937 my long white rob don roun my ankles..." Todd felt uneasy. He wanted to laugh at the  
 1938 joke...what's the joke there?..  
 1939  
 1940 Virgil  
 1941 uh he was telling the story about people fly [and he know it was a lie]  
 1942  
 1943 Rod  
 1944 right but there's a joke right at the end there...I had to I could even loop-the-loop but I had to  
 1945 make sure to keep my white robe down roun my ankles. What's the joke? Why did he have to  
 1946 keep he robe down around his ankles? Keep:::keep from flashing everybody in Heaven (laughing)  
 1947 right to keep from...being indecent  
 1948  
 1949 Group/Rod  
 1950 wow...(laughing)  
 1951  
 1952 Rod

1953 cause if his robe came up... he might show everybody his junk... Alright so that was the joke. Todd  
 1954 felt uneasy. He wanted to laugh at the joke, but his body refused, as of an independent will. He felt  
 1955 as he had as a child when after he had chewed a sugarcoated pill which his mother had given him,  
 1956 she had laughed at his efforts to remove the terrible taste. "... Well," he heard. "I was doing all  
 1957 right till I got to speeding. Found out I could fan up a right strong breeze, I could fly so fast. I  
 1958 could do all kin'sa stunts too. I started flying up to the stars and divin' down and zooming roun'  
 1959 the moon. Man I like to scare the devil outa some ole white angels. I was raisin' hell. Not that I  
 1960 meant any harm, son. But I was just feeling good. It was so good to know I was free at last. I  
 1961 accidently knocked the tips offa some stars and they tell me I caused a storm and a coupla  
 1962 lynching's down here in Macon County—though I swear I believe them boys what said that was  
 1963 making up lies on me..." He's mocking me, Todd though angrily. He thinks it's a joke. Grinning  
 1964 down at me... His throat was dry. He looked at his watch; why the hell didn't they come? Since  
 1965 they had to, why? One day I was flying down one of them heavenly streets. You got yourself into  
 1966 it, Todd thought.  
 1967  
 1968 (1:07:00)  
 1969  
 1970 Rod-Like Jonah in the whale. Jonah in the whale you know that story right? What:::what was the  
 1971 story there?  
 1972  
 1973 Virgil  
 1974 something about a whale and {this lady} I forgot:::forgot the whole story it's been a while back  
 1975 story bout a whale and this lady on:::on a quest like  
 1976  
 1977 Rod  
 1978 but Jonah was a prophet this is an Old Testament story. Jonah was a prophet of God who refused  
 1979 to do something God told him to go to a city right go to Ninevah And he didn't want to go there  
 1980 and so he went the opposite direction hiding from God He was on a ship and God caused a storm  
 1981 to come and eventually Jonah jumped over board or had himself thrown off that ship  
 1982  
 1983 Betty  
 1984 and the whale  
 1985  
 1986 Rod/Connie  
 1987 he got swallowed up  
 1988  
 1989 Rod  
 1990 right and then he lived inside that whale for three days and three nights and during that time he  
 1991 repented right you know prayed to God and was spat back up an then went an did like God wanted  
 1992 him to do/. so what's the relationship between t, why is Todd thinking of himself as Jonah and the  
 1993 whale here i wonder?... like he somehow is doing something against God's will. I:::I wonder I'm  
 1994 not really sure why why he's thinking that I wonder what you think? I dunno maybe:::maybe we'll  
 1995 come back to it I'm not really sure what I think of that. So old Joseph goes on and he's still tellin  
 1996 – oh, *Jefferson* I mean *Jefferson* I mean is uh is the old man's name. He goes on telling the story  
 1997 about Heaven "Justa throwin feathers in eve'body's face. An ole Saint Peter called me in. Said  
 1998 *Jefferson*, tell me two things, what you doing flying without a harness; an how come you flyin so  
 1999 fast? So I tole him I was flyin without a harness cause it got in my way, but I couldn'ta been flyin  
 2000 so fast, cause I wasn't usin but one wing.  
 2001  
 2002 (1:09:00)  
 2003  
 2004 Rod  
 2005 Saint Peter said, 'You wasn't flyin' with but one wing? 'Yessuh', I says, scared—like. So he says,  
 2006 'Well, since you got sucha extra fine pair of wings you can leave off yo harness awhile. But from  
 2007 now on none of that there one-wing flyin', cause you gittin' up too damn much speed!'" this is  
 2008 how Saint Peter talks (laughing). And with one mouth full of bad teeth you're making too damned

2009 much talk, thought Todd. Why don't I send him after the boy? His body ached from the hard  
2010 ground, and seeking to shift his position he twisted his ankle and hated himself for crying out. "It  
2011 gettin worse?" "I... I twisted it," he groaned. "Try not to think about it, son. That's what I do." He  
2012 bit his lip, fighting pain with counter-pain as the voice resumed its rhythmical droning. *Jefferson*  
2013 seemed caught up in his own creation. "... After all that trouble I just floated roun heaven in slow  
2014 motion. But I forgot - like colored folks will do - and got to flyin with one wing again. This time I  
2015 was restin my ole broken arm and got to flyin fast enough to shame the devil. I was coming so  
2016 fast, Lawd, I got myself called befo ole Saint Peter agin.... Back to uh top of page 160.... He said,  
2017 Jeff, didn't I warn you bout that speedin? Yessuh, I says, but it was an accident. He looked at me  
2018 sad-like and shook his head and I knowed I was gone. He said, Jeff you and that speedin is a  
2019 danger to the heavenly community. If I was to let you keep on flyin heaven wouldn't be nothin but  
2020 uproar. Jeff you got to go! So I argued and pleaded with that old white man, but it didn't do a bit  
2021 of good. They rushed me straight to them pearly gates and gimme a parachute and a map of the  
2022 state of Alabama..." Todd heard him laughing so that he could hardly speak, making a screen  
2023

2024 (1:11:00)

2025

2026

2027 Rod  
2028 between them upon which his humiliation glowed like fire. "Maybe you'd better stop a while," he  
2029 said, his voice unreal. "Aint much more," *Jefferson* laughed. "When they gimmie the parachute  
2030 ole Saint Peter ask me if I wanted to say a few words before I went. I felt so bad I couldn't hardly  
2031 look at him, specially with all them white angels standin around. Then somebody laughed and  
2032 made me mad. So I told im 'Well, you done took 'way ma wings. And you puttin' me out. You got  
2033 charge of things so's I can't do nothin about it. But you got to admit just this: While I was up here  
2034 I was the flyin'est son-of-a-bitch what ever hit heaven!" At the burst of laughter Todd felt such an  
2035 intense humiliation that only great violence would wash it away. The laughter which shook the old  
2036 man like a boiling purge set up vibration of guilt within him which not even the intricate  
2037 machinery of the plane would have been adequate to transform and he heard himself screaming,  
2038 "Why do you laugh at me this way?" He hated himself at that moment, but he had lost control. He  
2039 saw *Jefferson's* mouth fall open. "What—?" "Answer me!" his blood pounded as though it would  
2040 surely burst his temples, and he tried to reach the old man and fell, screaming, "Can I help it  
2041 because they won't let us actually fly? Maybe we are a bunch of buzzards feeding on a dead horse,  
2042 but we can hope to be eagles, can't we? Can't we?" He fell back, exhausted, his ankle pounding.  
2043 The saliva was like straw in his mouth. If he had the strength he would strangle this old man. This  
2044 grinning gray-headed clown who made him feel as he felt when (he) watched (by) the white  
2045 officers at the field. And yet this old man had neither power, prestige, rank, nor technique.  
2046 Nothing that could rid him of this terrible feeling. He watched him, seeing his face struggle to  
2047 express a turmoil of feeling. "Whatchoo mean, son? Whatchoo talkin bout....?" "Go away. Go tell  
2048 your tales to tha white folks." "But I didn't mean nothing like that...I...I

2049

2050 (1:13:00)

2051

2052

2053 Rod  
2054 I wasn't tryin to hurt your feelings..." "Please get the hell away from me!"

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2065  
2066 Virgil  
2067 *Jefferson* giing him a story about he actually flight that he just said took place with & what in what  
2068 he's:::he's what his accomplishments was he just gii him a tale of of having angel wings and he  
2069 could really fly and achieve something in life widout this plane.  
2070  
2071 Rod  
2072 huh ok[]  
2073  
2074 Virgil  
2075 [see what I'm saying] he was telling them a tale be like he was had wings in Heaven he was  
2076 knocking over stars they kicked him out you know go might get kicked out o the military or  
2077 whatever he was jus telling em a story to t' you know to boost im up n make em feel good but he  
2078 didn't mean no harm by telling that story[]  
2079  
2080 Rod  
2081 [ok][]  
2082  
2083 Virgil  
2084 [he] was a man with wi-, for me, knowledge, wisdom and understanding []  
2085  
2086 Rod  
2087 huh [ok]  
2088  
2089 Virgil  
2090 so he:::he was very wise to me  
2091  
2092 Rod  
2093 so the point of that story from:::from *Jefferson's* point of view was that at the end of it when he  
2094 says even if what's he say? Well you may be kicking me out of Heaven now cause I was flying  
2095 around here to fast but...what's he say  
2096  
2097 Randy  
2098 I was the flyinest sonof...  
2099  
2100 Rod  
2101 yea right right um yea at least while I was up here now I was the flyn'est son of a bitch up here in  
2102 Heaven so that what:::what he would be saying to Todd is well you may get kicked out now and  
2103 they may not think yer... bu:::t...  
2104  
2105 Virgil  
2106 you was to you wuz fly, you wuz [flyin]  
2107  
2108 Rod  
2109 [you really] ac[complished a lot]  
2110  
2111 Virgil  
2112 [you gave] you [gave it a try]  
2113  
2114 Rod  
2115 [you were a pilot]; right right  
2116  
2117 Virgil  
2118 he willing to try  
2119  
2120 (1:15:00)

2121  
2122 Virgil  
2123 and he made it so far  
2124  
2125 Rod  
2126 why did Todd get so angry? Why did he...he's so angry? Like he said if he could have stood up  
2127 on his ankle he would have strangled the old man  
2128  
2129 Virgil  
2130 he disrespectful  
2131  
2132 Rod  
2133 feels like he was  
2134  
2135 Virgil  
2136 [naw] he disrespectful  
2137  
2138 Rod  
2139 Todd was disrespectful?  
2140  
2141 Virgil  
2142 yea Todd is disrespectful  
2143  
2144 Rod  
2145 ok  
2146  
2147 Virgil  
2148 he disrespectful for even thinking about hitting an old man like that and for one he's in a bad  
2149 predicament his self he::he need to receive help  
2150  
2151 Rod  
2152 yea, well anybody else can you see what why is Todd so angry why else why is he so angry at that  
2153 story? Said he thought *Jefferson* was mocking him... right. So Todd took a very different  
2154 perspective on the story [than] you and I just did  
2155  
2156 Virgil  
2157 [right], mocking mean fun pestering about it  
2158  
2159 Rod  
2160 making fun of him right? he thought he was making fun of him right? what why would he think he  
2161 was making fun of him?  
2162  
2163 Virgil-because probably just because he was an old man wadn't white and he was black not but all  
2164 the white telling the story he probably wouldntve of acted that way  
2165  
2166 Rod  
2167 ummm  
2168  
2169 Virgil  
2170 he did like he call thought he was an idiot, a peasant and he had no uh he had no uh what you  
2171 would say[?]  
2172  
2173 Connie  
2174 [dignity]  
2175  
2176 Virgil



2177 {expansive gestures} he had no he had no uh what you call that I say um(.) no favoritism for that  
 2178 man no liking for that man he thought the man was down low something like uh ol dead dog or  
 2179 sumpin 'n he, n' he tho't he couldnt take no piece of advice from that man but the man was gii'n  
 2180 him a story to uplift himself and the man said I surely didn't mean (/) that  
 2181  
 2182 Rod  
 2183 uh hmmm yea  
 2184  
 2185 Randy  
 2186 that's when he became very apologetic  
 2187  
 2188 Rod  
 2189 yea the old man said wull, I::I::I didn't mean it like that I didn't mean any harm I wasn't trying  
 2190 to make fun uh hmmm somethin like that, right?  
 2191  
 2192 Randy  
 2193 mmhh[mm]  
 2194  
 2195 Rod  
 2196 that what you mean the old man was [real apologetic all] the sudden  
 2197  
 2198 Randy  
 2199 [he was very apologetic]  
 2200  
 2201 Randy  
 2202 he was sorry  
 2203  
 2204 Rod  
 2205 yea (.) yea. uh hey he Todd called him a new name here he gets a new name for the old man, he  
 2206 called him a CLOWN [groans and laughter] [this old clown] in fact he said something about his  
 2207 um this old gray headed something, what he say?  
 2208  
 2209  
 2210 Virgil  
 2211 called im a [clown]  
 2212  
 2213 Betty- ° [like he] makin fun o himself°  
 2214  
 2215 (1:17:00)  
 2216  
 2217 Rod  
 2218 yea...and so he he thought that uh *Jefferson* in tellin this as he's telling this clownin story about  
 2219 flying around Heaven and uh lettin his robes uh trying not to let his robes fly up and show his  
 2220 show his uh, show is bum and speeding around and getting himself kicked out of Heaven that he  
 2221 was making fun of Todd who wants to be to be taken seriously right as a dignified pilot and  
 2222 military man right  
 2223  
 2224 Virgil  
 2225 but Todd had wrecked the plane  
 2226  
 2227 Rod  
 2228 and that's right yea there he was it's a it's a little bit difficult he's in this undignified position of  
 2229 laying in a field with a broken ankle[]  
 2230  
 2231 Virgil  
 2232 =who wrecked the plane

2233  
 2234 Rod  
 2235 who wrecked the plane? Todd wrecked the plane  
 2236  
 2237 Virgil  
 2238 so who fault who fault he in that position nn he should of stayed above and start, kep floating  
 2239  
 2240 Rod  
 2241 no doubt, in fact remember uh right before I guess it's right before *Jefferson* starts to regail us and  
 2242 Todd with this story of sprouting wings in Heaven he tells us a little about how the accident  
 2243 happend[]  
 2244  
 2245 Betty  
 2246 [how] it happened[]  
 2247  
 2248 Rod  
 2249 [you] remember what he said? he said he uh mean in one way he was flying too high and too fast  
 2250 what he said, that he had been excited (..) because he was thinking about that little boy who was  
 2251 flying a kite and how he had he had been a little boy who dreamed of flyin and there he was when  
 2252 he said in exultation he climbed steeply away in exultation but he had been flying too high & too  
 2253 fast , too steeply he thought and then the plane starts to go into a spin and he hit (.) [one]  
 2254  
 2255 Virgil  
 2256 [a buzzard]  
 2257  
 2258  
 2259 Rod  
 2260 one of those buzzards, right and in [the prop]  
 2261  
 2262 Randy  
 2263 [a buzzard]  
 2264  
 2265 Rod  
 2266 just came right into the propeller and that was enough to send it into into a tail spin. caused the  
 2267 crash so...he says, um, now he's looking at *Jefferson* who's become really apologetic as you said,  
 2268 Randy, he see, he said  
 2269  
 2270 (1:19:00)  
 2271  
 2272 Rod  
 2273 son I didn't mean it like that. I wadnt tryinda... no, hit from *Jefferson*'s point of view he may be  
 2274 telling the story just to pass the time right? trying to get his mind off the pain. he said to him try  
 2275 not to think about try to think about something else let me tell you a story... kinda like that. Now  
 2276 *Jefferson* says, don't let it get you down, son, the voice said pensively. He heard *Jefferson* sigh  
 2277 wearily as though he felt more than he could say. His anger ebbed, leaving only the pain. I'm  
 2278 sorry, he mumbled. You just wore out with pain was all. He saw him through a blur smiling. And  
 2279 for a second he felt the embarrassed silence of understanding flutter between them. What was you  
 2280 doing flyin over this section son? Wasn't you scared the might shoot you for a crow? Todd tensed.  
 2281 Was he being laughed at again? But before he could decide the pain shook him and a part of him  
 2282 was lying calmly behind the screen of pain that had fallen between them recalling the first time he  
 2283 had ever seen a plane. It was as though an endless series of hangers had been shaken ajar in the  
 2284 airbase of his memory and from each, like a young wasp emerging from its cell, arose the memory  
 2285 of a plane. The first time I ever saw a plane I was very small and planes were new in the world. I  
 2286 was four and a half and the only plane that I had ever seen was a model suspended from the ceiling  
 2287 of the automobile exhibit at a state fair. But I did not know that it was only a model. I did not  
 2288 know how large a real plane was, nor how expensive. To me it was a fascinating toy, complete in

2289 itself, which my mother said could only be owned by rich little white boys. I stood rigid with  
2290 admiration my head straining backward as I watched the gray little plane describing arcs above the  
2291 gleaming tops of the automobiles.  
2292  
2293 (1:21:00)  
2294  
2295 Rod  
2296 And I vowed that, rich or poor, someday I would own such a toy. My mother had to drag me out  
2297 of the exhibit and not even the merry-go-round the Ferris wheel or the racing horses could hold  
2298 my attention for the rest of the fair. I was too busy imitating the tiny drone of the plane with my  
2299 lips and imitating with my hands the motion, swift and circling, that it made in flight..... O sorry  
2300 guys were on the top just of 163. So all this in italics here where the type has changed he's he's  
2301 telling us about his first memories of ever seeing a plane and what does he tell us that he saw  
2302  
2303 Virgil  
2304 tiny airplane  
2305  
2306  
2307 Rod  
2308 a tiny airplane a model  
2309  
2310 Randy  
2311 {nods} yea  
2312  
2313 Rod  
2314 right but:::but the airplanes were new right, at that time let's see this is 44 even if he's close to  
2315 twenty years old he's four years old um yea so this was made maybe i::n 1915 1920 you know  
2316 could have been something like that maybe 1920 something um (.) when airplanes were new in the  
2317 world and uh he saw that model and he thought that was what an airplane was was a toy  
2318 {laughter} (.)  
2319  
2320 randy  
2321 mmhhmm  
2322  
2323 Rod  
2324 After that I no longer used the pieces of lumber that lay about our backyard to construct wagons  
2325 and autos...now it was used for airplanes. I built biplanes using pieces of board for wings a small  
2326 box for the fuselage another piece of wood for the rudder. The trip to the fair had brought  
2327 something new into my small world. I asked my mother repeatedly when the fair would come  
2328 back again. I'd lie in the grass and watch the sky and each fighting.. fighting bird become a  
2329 soaring plane. I wouldve been good a year just to see a plane again. I became a nuisance to  
2330 everyone with my questions about airplanes. But planes were new to the old folks too and there  
2331 was little that they could tell me. Only my uncle knew some of the answers. And better still he  
2332 could carve propellers from pieces of wood  
2333  
2334 (1:23:00)  
2335  
2336 Rod  
2337 that would whirl rapidly in the wind wobbling noisily on oiled nails . I wanted a plane more than  
2338 I'd wanted anything more than I wanted the red wagon with rubber tires more than the train that  
2339 ran on a track with its train of cars. I asked my mother over and over again. Mama? What do you  
2340 want boy? She'd say. Mama will you get mad if I ask you? I'd say. What do you want now, I aint  
2341 got time to be answering a lot of fool questions. What you want? Mama when you gonna get me  
2342 one? I'd ask. Get you one what? She'd say. You know Mama when I been asking you.. what I  
2343 been asking you... 164 now at the top {addressing those trying to find the page} "Boy," she'd say,  
2344 "if you don't want a spanking you better come on'n tell me what you talking about so I can get on

2345 with my work.” “Aw, Mama, you know...” “What I just tell you?” she’d say. “I mean when you  
2346 gonna buy me an airplane.” “AIRPLANE! Boy, is you crazy? [laughter] How many times I have  
2347 to tell you to stop that foolishness. I done told you them things cost too much. I bet I’m gon wham  
2348 the living daylight out of you if you don’t quit worrying me ‘bout them things!” But this did not  
2349 stop me, and a few days later I’d try all over again. Then one day a strange thing happened. It was  
2350 spring and for some reason I had been hot and irritable all morning. It was a beautiful spring. I  
2351 could feel it as I played barefoot in the backyard. Blossoms hung from the thorny black locust  
2352 trees like clusters of fragrant white grapes. Butterflies flickered in the sunlight above the short new  
2353 dew wet grass. I had gone in the house for bread and butter and coming out I heard a steady  
2354 unfamiliar drone. It was unlike anything I had ever heard before. I tried to place the sound. It was  
2355 no use. It was a sensation like that I had when searching for my father’s watch, heard ticking  
2356 unseen in a room. It made me feel as though I had forgotten to perform some task.....

2357

2358 (1:25:00)

2359

2360 Rod

2361 that my mother had ordered...then I located it, overhead. In the sky, flying quite low and about a  
2362 hundred yards off, was a plane! It came so slowly that it seemed barely to move. My mouth hung  
2363 wide; my bread and butter fell into the dirt. I wanted to jump up and down and cheer. And when  
2364 the idea struck I trembled with excitement: Some little white boy’s plane done flew away and all I  
2365 got to do is stretch out my hands and it’ll be mine! It was a little plane like that at the fair, flying  
2366 no higher than the eaves of our roof. Seeing it come steadily forward I felt the world grow warm  
2367 with promise. I opened the screen and climbed over it and clung there, waiting. I would catch the  
2368 plane as it came over and swing down fast and run into the house before anyone could see me.  
2369 Then no one could come to claim the plane. It droned nearer. Then when it hung like a silver cross  
2370 in the blue directly above me. I stretched out my hand and grabbed. It was like sticking my finger  
2371 through a soap bubble. The plane flew on, as though I had simply blown my breath after it. I  
2372 grabbed again, frantically, trying to catch the tail. My fingers clutched the air and disappointment  
2373 surged tight and hard in my throat. Giving one last desperate grasp, I strained forward. My fingers  
2374 ripped from the screen. I was falling. The ground burst hard against me. I drummed the earth with  
2375 my heels and when my breath returned, I lay there bawling. My mother rushed through the door.  
2376 “What’s the matter, chile! What on earth is wrong with you?” “It’s gone! It’s gone!” “What  
2377 gone?” “The airplane...” “Airplane?” “Yessum, jus like the one at the fair...I tried to stop it an’ it  
2378 kep right on going...” “When, boy?” “Just now,” I cried through my tears. “Where it go, boy,  
2379 what way? “Yonder, there...” she scanned the sky, her arms aconniebo and her checkered apron  
2380 flapping in the wind

2381

2382 (1:27:00)

2383

2384 Rod

2385 As I pointed to the fading plane. Finally she looked down at me, slowly shaking her head. 166  
2386 now. “It’s gone! It’s gone!” I cried “Boy, is you a fool?” she said. “Don’t you see that there’s a  
2387 real airplane’ stead of one of them toy ones?” “Real...?” I forgot to cry. “Real?” “Yass, real. Don’t  
2388 you know that thing you reaching for is bigger’n a auto? You here trying to reach for it and I bet  
2389 it’s flying ‘bout two-hundred miles higher’n this roof.” She was disgusted with me. “You come on  
2390 in this house before somebody else sees what a fool you done turned out to be. You must think  
2391 these here li’l ole arms of your’s it mighty long...” I was carried into the house and undressed for  
2392 bed and the doctor was called. I cried bitterly; as much from the disappointment of finding the  
2393 plane so far beyond my reach as from the pain. When the doctor came I heard my mother telling  
2394 him about the plane and asking if anything was wrong with my mind. He explained that I had had  
2395 a fever for several hours. But I was kept in bed for a week and I constantly saw the plane in my  
2396 sleep, flying just beyond my fingertips, sailing so slowly that it seemed barley to move. And each  
2397 time I’d reach out to grab it I’d miss and through each dream I’d hear my grandma warning:  
2398 “Young man, young man Yo arm’s too short To box with God...”

2399

2400 Rod

2401 what about that memory of his?  
2402  
2403 Randy  
2404 (umma) story (getting up)  
2405  
2406 Rod  
2407 wha do ya [think?]  
2408  
2409 Connie  
2410 [he was dreamin]  
2411  
2412 Rod  
2413 [what]:::what happened he was...  
2414  
2415 Connie  
2416 dreamin (...)  
2417  
2418 Rod  
2419 during that whole thing you [think was a dream?] Or is he remembering what happened when he  
2420 was a boy  
2421  
2422 Connie  
2423 ([nodding])  
2424  
2425 Group (chorus)  
2426 rememberin what happened when he was a boy  
2427  
2428 Rod  
2429 So tell e what happened it's this long description what was [it about?]  
2430  
2431 Virgil  
2432 [he went to a fair]  
2433  
2434 Rod  
2435 [he went to a fair]  
2436  
2437 Virgil  
2438 [saw a plane]  
2439  
2440 Rod  
2441 and he saw [that model right?]  
2442  
2443 Virgil  
2444 [he stawted fantasizin about planes]  
2445  
2446 Rod  
2447 right. He started fantasizin he was obsessed with planes with planes and flyin and then he saw one  
2448 in the sky one day maybe the first one I guess the first one he'd ever seen  
2449  
2450 (1:29:00)  
2451  
2452 Rod  
2453 in the sky [right?]  
2454  
2455 Virgil  
2456 [he thought] it was a model plane

2457  
2458 Rod  
2459 he thought it was a model plane  
2460  
2461 Virgil  
2462 (someone) came and told him that, his mother rather [came]  
2463  
2464 Rod- [yeah]  
2465  
2466 Virgil  
2467 and told him that it was a real model  
2468  
2469 Rod  
2470 and he tried to {gestures reaching up}  
2471  
2472 Virgil  
2473 reach up and grab [it]  
2474  
2475 Rod  
2476 [he]::he thought he was gonna be able to pick it right out of the sky  
2477  
2478 Virgil  
2479 he hurt his legs then too  
2480  
2481 Rod  
2482 and then he hurt then he fell and hurt himself and I don't know it doesn't seem like his injury was  
2483 was permanent or anything but  
2484  
2485 Randy  
2486 ( ) his was crying too  
2487  
2488 Rod  
2489 the was definitely crying he was so [disappointed]  
2490  
2491 Virgil  
2492 [he seen tha doctuh]  
2493  
2494 rod  
2495 ...he was embarrassed, his mothuh sed, boy you you a fool.  
2496  
2497  
2498 virgil  
2499 his mother asks was something wrong with his head he had a fever for two days, [but]...  
2500  
2501 Rod  
2502 [ri::ight]  
2503  
2504 Virgil  
2505 he coulda hadda a metal illness!!]  
2506  
2507 Rod  
2508 aaayea:::yea who knows... what do you mean by that? What do you think?  
2509  
2510 Virgil  
2511 I::I'm saying could have been (...) bi (..) mana depressed bipolar ; (..) obsessed (teligent???)  
2512

2513 Rod  
 2514 umm, huh (..) um.  
 2515  
 2516 Virgil  
 2517 had a mental illness, I mean I'm just sayin for example, that's not; but that's not really that's not  
 2518 really it but I'm saying the doctor came in and said he had a fever the mother asked what if  
 2519 anything was wrong with his [head]  
 2520  
 2521 Rod  
 2522 [wrong] with his mind, yea [right]  
 2523  
 2524 Virgil  
 2525 [ri:ight]  
 2526  
 2527 {Laughter from group?}  
 2528  
 2529 Rod  
 2530 ...So what did she think was wrong with his mind? You know, that's [what I'm tryin ta]  
 2531  
 2532 Ben  
 2533 [he have obsession..with planes airplanes]  
 2534  
 2535 Betty  
 2536 [obsessed]  
 2537  
 2538 Rod  
 2539 [ok, he wus obsessed, right ]  
 2540  
 2541 Rod  
 2542 yea that's right but then she/ she felt like he should have known that the plane was really you  
 2543 know it was really flying way up high in the sky and he wouldn't been able to reach it or  
 2544 something  
 2545  
 2546 Virgil  
 2547 [ri:ight]  
 2548  
 2549 Betty  
 2550 [he fantasized] so much about it  
 2551  
 2552 Rod  
 2553 right like he was so obsessed with  
 2554  
 2555 Betty  
 2556 [so obsessed with airplanes]  
 2557  
 2558 Rod  
 2559 yea that it overwhelmed his young reason or something like that  
 2560  
 2561 Ben  
 2562 he was he's putting airplanes over people's feelings –uh he's putting it over race and culture and  
 2563 he's:::he's putting airplanes like:::like it's some kind of god or something  
 2564  
 2565 Rod  
 2566 ah, that's interesting you think that his obsession carried on yea he's still obsessed with airplanes  
 2567  
 2568 Ben

2569 he said that he only dignity was to fly plane was airplanes  
2570  
2571 (1:31:00)  
2572  
2573 Ben-he crashed the plane so  
2574  
2575 Virgil-I think he got a mental illness  
2576  
2577 Group (chorus)  
2578 {laughter}  
2579  
2580 Rod  
2581 what do you think about what kind what:::what would you say about that  
2582  
2583 Virgil  
2584 like manic, a little manic. grandiose thoughts  
2585  
2586 Rod  
2587 ok kind of grandiose  
2588  
2589 Virgil  
2590 somewhere in that category  
2591  
2592 Rod  
2593 yea  
2594  
2595 Virgil  
2596 seem to be that way cau the way he treating that man the way the little story he told why he was  
2597 always obsessed with planes and trying something trying to accomplish something that he always  
2598 wanted to do...  
2599  
2600 Rod  
2601 uh hmmm uh hmmm yea it's a it's interesting that we have these two different stories set inside of  
2602 the main story right the main story is this pilot with the broken ankle and this old man he's waiting  
2603 to see what's gonna happen then we got these two other stories the one that *Jefferson* tells about  
2604 sprouting wings in Heaven and then this long you know memory from the pilot about when he was  
2605 a kid and first was learning about [flying]  
2606  
2607 betty  
2608 [( ) about flyin, yeah]  
2609  
2610 rod  
2611 yea and it's interesting to kind of compare them contrast them a little bit... Well why don't we  
2612 quit there for today? And we'll come back and we'll finish up this story next Monday ok well far  
2613 as I know we'll be in the next room um the:::the regular room yea Ben would it be ok with you if I  
2614 take this one and I'll make sure I have enough copies [for you next week]  
2615  
2616 Virgil  
2617 here go mine. pass ine down.  
2618  
2619 Rod  
2620 you want me to hang onto yours?  
2621  
2622 Virgil  
2623 yea  
2624



2625 Rod  
2626 I will do that that's fine  
2627  
2628 Betty  
2629 you won't lose it?  
2630  
2631 Rod  
2632 no I wont lose them and I'll make more copies make sure I got enough...Ok everybody thanks for  
2633 coming  
2634  
2635 Rod  
2636 {addressing Randy}- he good luck with it all  
2637  
2638 Randy  
2639 thanks  
2640  
2641 {Rod and Randy discuss his personal problem while the other participants exit the room. Ben  
2642 asked to speak with Rod for a minute after the session}  
2643

1 **Session Four**

2 00:00:00

3

4 Sophie

5 Its like my memory is not as good as it use to be. {Motions her hands around her head}

6

7 Rod

8 mhmm hmm.

9

10 sophie-

11 When you get older I guess...

12

13 Rod

14 Right, it's always a challenge as we get older right, {chuckles}

15

16 Sophie

17 {Nods} Yes

18

19 Rod

20 But ya know... uh what they say is that the more you do it,

21

22 Sophie

23 Uh huh.

24

25 Rod

26 the better

27

28 sophie

29 The better...

30

31 Rod

32 yea and you, you kind of stay sharp that way, yea working that math working that...doing some of  
33 those things to stimulate what we've forgotten is a way of really keeping younger. Of really  
34 staying younger.

35

36 Sophie

37 Yeah I've got some good grades on my math, got a hundred on some of my tests.

38

39 Rod

40 That's great...that's great. Well yea I bet ya'll pick it back up no problem!

41

42 Sophie

43 Yea

44

45 Rod

46 No problem, you will be alright.

47

48 Daphne

49 What's that?

50

51 Sophie

52 My math

53  
54 Daphne  
55 Oh...she's real good in math  
56  
57 Rod  
58 Now this time Erin made some umm...chocolate banna bread. So we will try that out & see what  
59 we think about it.  
60  
61 Daphne  
62 I ain't had no breakfast this morning, I ain't had no time to eat nothing.  
63  
64 Rod  
65 Well you're in luck, we have some breakfast here. So grab ya a piece of this.  
66  
67 Sophie  
68 Did they tell ya about our cookies we made? We made some peanut butter...  
69  
70 Daphne  
71 We made some good ol peanut butter cookies.  
72  
73 Rod  
74 Ya did make some peanut butter cookies; oh I do love some peanut butter cookies.  
75  
76 Daphne  
77 And um. We made em from just the umm package...ya know the umm the flour  
78  
79 Rod  
80 Oh yea, right?!81  
82 Daphne  
83 The flour packets.  
84  
85 Rod  
86 Yep!  
87  
88 Daphne  
89 And they came out real good.  
90  
91 Rod  
92 Good, alright. That's good to know.  
93  
94 Daphne  
95 They were so good. They were called lil umm...  
96  
97 Sophie  
98 Macaroon's  
99  
100 Daphne  
101 Macaroon's  
102  
103 Rod  
104 Macarooooos, sure that's good stuff. Alright let me see if I can gather up everybody else and Lets  
105 get to it.  
106  
107 Sophie  
108 What kinda cake is this?

109  
110 Daphne  
111 He said chocolate something.  
112  
113 Rod  
114 Chocolate banana, no nuts in that one.  
115  
116 Teague walks out room...  
117  
118 00:02:00  
119  
120 Daphne  
121 They keep it so cold in this building.  
122  
123 Sophie  
124 I happen to overheard the girl at the dentist talking about going out with her boyfriends.  
125  
126 00:04:00  
127  
128 Both women walk out...  
129  
130 Both women return...  
131  
132 00:06:00  
133  
134 A tall black male (virgil) walks in alongside medium size young black woman (connie).  
135  
136 Sophie  
137 Hi  
138  
139 Virgil  
140 Hi... {Pulls out chair and sits down}  
141  
142 Second black young male (ben) walks in.  
143  
144 Virgil  
145 What! What! What! What! {In excitement}  
146  
147 1st black male gets up, walks over to muffin table.  
148  
149 4th Black woman (sandra) walks in.  
150  
151 Teague walks in...  
152  
153 Rod  
154 Anybody seen Randy this morning?  
155  
156 Teague closes door.  
157  
158 Virgil  
159 No Randy, No Joe, No Leah, No Tom.  
160  
161 Rod  
162 Not everybody's here ok..... Now  
163  
164 Virgil

165 Mumbles with food in his mouth  
166  
167 Rod  
168 Okay, alright that's ok. We'll go along. We'll miss them but we will catch them next time.  
169 Alright, now  
170 that's um chocolate banana bread.  
171  
172 00.08.00  
173  
174 It's an experiment; tell me what you think about it. No nuts in that one. We thought we'd try one  
175 with nuts next time. Just tell me what you think. What do you think?  
176  
177 Virgil  
178 {Man drinks soda} It's straight.  
179  
180 Rod  
181 {chuckles} Oh yeah? I tell you, she's um, she really cooking a lot...baking a lot. Well, alright.  
182 How was your weekend? Pretty good?  
183  
184 Sophie  
185 It was fine  
186  
187 Rod  
188 I got to talk to Sophie a little bit about GED school and stuff.  
189 {Rod- grabs a chair}  
190  
191 Rod  
192 You're fine, you don't need to move. You are just fine.  
193 {takes a seat}  
194  
195  
196 Virgil  
197 I should have gotten my paper  
198  
199 Rod  
200 Uh yeah I got it. I made some extra copies of it so we wouldn't have to share. {Rod- chuckles}  
201 Even though it is okay to share. (Addresses Sandra) Ummm....What do you think... Want to tell us  
202 about your weekend?  
203  
204 Sandra  
205 {Mumbles and scratches head} I went to church yesterdy  
206  
207 Rod  
208 Yeah? ... Yeah? ok  
209 {Woman shakes her head}  
210  
211 Rod  
212 Did you hear anything inspiring?  
213  
214 Sandra  
215 Bout wurries..howda get ridda wurries.  
216  
217 Rod  
218 Really. Well let us know. My goodness. That's...that's really.... That's uh valuable information.  
219  
220 Sandra

221 Most of the times when you get by yourself and go talk ...and go see the birds and say a little  
222 something to the birds. It's a strange way you can get rid of it... umm hummm... then wurrries  
223  
224 00:09:12  
225  
226 rod  
227 Do anybody do that? Do anybody get outside and get by yourself and go hang out outside when  
228 you feel worried? Well, not when it's 107 degrees outside.  
229 {Crowd chuckles}  
230  
231 Rod  
232 Maybe when the weather gets cool, but I like to do that sometimes. Sit under the tree and umm I  
233 never tried talking to the birds about my problems but I am willing to try it. Do anybody ever talk  
234 to the dog?  
235  
236 virgil- {raises his hand to brush hair} Hope they don't answer back  
237  
238 rod  
239 {chuckles} hope they don't answer back. What does that mean if they answer back? {Chuckles}  
240 that is a good question. But that is the reason why some people say they like their pet, like a dog or  
241 a cat; because umm they are real good listeners and they don't talk back. They don't innerrupt you  
242 and talk back. Cat might turn its back and ignore you and the good little dog will sit there and  
243  
244 00.10.00  
245  
246 Rod  
247 At least act like they understand what you saying. And I guess trees may be good listeners  
248 although it's kinda hard to tell if they are paying attention or not. I guess....Umm {taps pen on  
249 table}  
250  
251 {Every is quiet}  
252  
253 Rod  
254 Umm what were we reading the last time? Where are we? Are we still working on "Flying  
255 Home?" Alright, I k now I got one for Virgil and who else?  
256 Slides everyone a paper.... Turns to the man in the red shirt next to Teague  
257  
258 Rod  
259 That is right. I took yours the last time to make copies. That's right. Thank you for that.  
260  
261 Virgil  
262 Where. Where were we at?  
263  
264 Rod  
265 we were umm... let's figure out where we were. I think we were way back down... What's the last  
266 thing ya'll remember from the story? And the other thing is Sophie missed out last time so we  
267 have to give her a uh... a summary right? Let's all remind ourselves where we are in the story and  
268 make sure we know what happened so what was going on, what was the last thing you remember?  
269 And who can give a kind of summary of the story so far? Uh so that we all remember what's  
270 going on, you were here, you were here two weeks ago when we started this right? So you  
271 remember some of the story. Sophie, do you want to tell us what you remember from it, would  
272 that, is that a fair question? What was this about?  
273 {Everyone is quiet}  
274  
275 Ben  
276 {Mumbles} we umm...

277  
278 virgil- {Coughs}  
279  
280 00.12.00  
281  
282 Rod  
283 We got Todd right? We meet Todd, who was Todd? Anybody?  
284  
285 Virgil  
286 He was a pilot training for the Tuskegee airmen.  
287  
288 Rod  
289 Right, Right a training pilot, training to be one of the Tuskegee airmen. Just down the street from  
290 us here in Moton field right?  
291  
292 Sandra  
293 And that's where he was (pushing Willie's) daddy  
294  
295  
296 Rod  
297 He was what? {Confused}  
298  
299 sandra  
300 He was pushing Willie's daddy, his daddy was trying to tell him things but he was, he was, umm.  
301 He was saying...he had his own words, putting it in his own words but his daddy was like, ya  
302 know, was like INVOLVED in the in the paragraph with him, was that the that para, was that the  
303 written...  
304  
305 Rod  
306 Are you thinking of the old man? Is that the same one? The old man in the field. The daddy was in  
307 there, and his daddy was umm. {Thinks to self-} what his daddy was having. Was talking with  
308 him & he was...He was a PILOT wouldn't he? Uhhh,  
309  
310 Sandra  
311 Wasn't he a pilot? An airplane pilot?  
312  
313 Rod  
314 Uh yea. Yea yea yea...he was trained to fly in the military planes right?  
315  
316 Sandra  
317 yea.  
318  
319 Rod  
320 And he was training to go fight in world war two.  
321  
322 Sandra  
323 But I don't think we finished that one.  
324  
325 Rod  
326 No, we didn't quite finish it. Still working on it.  
327  
328 Sandra  
329 Nah okay. Okay.  
330  
331 Rod  
332 Now he said his daddy died. Right?

333  
334 Rod  
335 Okay...His daddy died when he was young, but there is an old man in the story...  
336  
337 Sandra  
338 Uh huh.  
339  
340 Rod  
341 So you got the main characters, the main characters in the story are Todd, whose the pilot.  
342  
343 Sandra  
344 Uh huh.  
345  
346  
347 Rod  
348 And who's the old man? Who's that old man that's in here too? His name *Jefferson* remember?  
349  
350 Virgil  
351 He was uhh...a farmer or something.  
352  
353 Rod  
354 Yea yea, he worked on the land anyway, whether he was a farmer or sharecropper, or whatever he  
355 was doing. So Todd crash lands this plane right? Something happen, remember what happen to the  
356 plane, why did he crash?  
357  
358 Virgil  
359 He hit a buzzard.  
360  
361 00.14.00  
362  
363 Rod  
364 He hit a buzzard right, right.  
365  
366 Virgil  
367 Flying too high  
368  
369 Rod  
370 That's right! He was flying too high and too fast cause he got excited watching. Remember what  
371 he was watching? What he saw?  
372  
373 Virgil  
374 {Mumbles...}  
375  
376 Rod  
377 He saw a, he saw a umm {flips through papers} a little boy, a little boy flying a kite. Right? A  
378 little boy flying a kite & he thought about himself right? As a little boy flying a kite and he loved  
379 to think about flying airplanes and stuff, so he got excited and he was flying to high and too fast  
380 and then {snaps finger} Bang! He hit one of those buzzards right...and uh threw him into a  
381 tailspin and he came crashing down in the field.  
382  
383 Sandra  
384 Oh okay.  
385  
386 Rod



387 And uh that field would have been, could have been down that way or over this way pretty nearby  
388 somewhere here in Macon county. Crash landed in the f...so what else? What's the story? What's  
389 he trying to do? To get the old man and the young boy to do?  
390  
391  
392 Virgil  
393 {Mumbles}  
394  
395  
396 Rod  
397 Well what what happens then? So he crash lands in and so what happens next? What's the conflict  
398 in the story?  
399  
400 Virgil  
401 He was going despair able, confusion about himself, I can't say it was racist thing, I would say it's  
402 more like, he was being foolish about his occupation of being an, having a pilot job that he wanted  
403 to um, ya know be more than what he was, but he had just wrecked, it was just a plane, it was just  
404 a common accident, so he took it irrationally, the wrong way, he was fantasizing in his own mind  
405 that uh, how people would respond to the, [to the ac]cident.  
406  
407 Connie  
408 [tha acc]ident  
409  
410 Rod  
411 Yea...  
412  
413 Virgil  
414 So...  
415  
416 Rod  
417 And how did he think people were gonna, what was he worried about? What was he concerned  
418 about?  
419  
420 Virgil  
421 His umm. His umm...  
422  
423 Rod  
424 How did he think people were [gonna react?]  
425  
426 00.16.00  
427  
428 Virgil  
429 His [self-con]fidence. His confidence because he said that you only ya know you only get one  
430 chance to fly.  
431  
432 Rod  
433 Right...Right {nods head}  
434  
435 Virgil  
436 Back then ya know, you probably wreck a plane. They probably put you on the sideline, so he  
437 wrecked a plane.  
438  
439  
440  
441 Rod

442 {Shakes head in agreement} So he felt like, now you started to say it wasn't necessarily a race  
443 thing or maybe it was what was the thing about race with it?  
444  
445 Virgil  
446 It wasn't no race; it wasn't no racism in there because he was just talking to...  
447  
448 {Knock at the door}  
449  
450 Rod  
451 Hey there he is!  
452  
453 Randy  
454 Morning  
455  
456 Rod  
457 Hey Randy! How are you?  
458  
459 Randy  
460 How's everybody doing?  
461  
462 {Crowd mumbles} Good  
463  
464 {Randy closes door}  
465  
466 Rod  
467 Good, Good, were just getting started. Have a seat. Do you have your story or do you need one of  
468 these?  
469  
470 Randy  
471 Need one.  
472  
473 Rod  
474 Okay. {Reaches for story} How you doing?  
475  
476 Randy  
477 {Mumbles} good good  
478  
479 Virgil  
480 He was only talking to the two black people see.  
481  
482 {Teague passes story to Randy}  
483  
484 Randy  
485 I'm sorry I'm late; I was ohh...im sorry. I was over tending to some business.  
486  
487  
488  
489 Rod  
490 That's a l r I g h t...okay good. Well were just getting the, were just getting the summary and  
491 reminding ourselves about this story, flying home, that we've been working on.  
492  
493 Randy  
494 Oh yea.  
495  
496 Rod

497 And then we'll get back to it, so virgil you were saying that he was talking to two black people in  
498 the field, an old man.  
499  
500 Virgil  
501 [One and the boy.]  
502  
503 Rod  
504 [And the son,] yea...  
505  
506 Virgil  
507 And I don't believe there was any racism with that, (it was all consuming what they was)  
508 interpreting by themselves so ya know. It [wasn't...]  
509  
510 Rod  
511 [So he,] those two men weren't saying oh well ya know you weren't good enough to fly that  
512 plane, they weren't saying anything like that.  
513  
514 Virgil  
515 Because old man *Jefferson* was giving him a story about how he was flying in Heaven.  
516  
517 Rod  
518 {Nods head} right....  
519  
520 Virgil  
521 And trying to enlighten him that it was okay, (look he) *Jefferson* was telling him, he was telling  
522 him a story to make him feel more comfortable about wrecking the plane and you will have  
523 another opportunity to fly no matter what, now just flying a plane or whatever, you gotta soar in  
524 life [you gotta] reach another accomplishment..  
525  
526 00.18.00  
527  
528 Rod  
529 [Oh that's nice.]  
530  
531 Virgil  
532 He gotta reach another accomplishment because if you just keep at this one thing, at it just a plane  
533 ya know, you get to old you might not could fly a plane and the war over and what you still ain't  
534 gonna fly no more so he was trying to teach him ya know, you gotta fly in life. That what he was  
535 telling him in that story.  
536  
537 Rod  
538 umm, that's nice and that's uh that's uh a very different kind of interpretation, a very different way  
539 of understanding old *Jefferson* story. How did Todd take it?  
540  
541 Virgil  
542 Todd took it & thought he was being sarcastic.  
543  
544 Rod  
545 Thought he was.  
546  
547 Virgil  
548 Thought he was being funny.  
549  
550 Rod  
551 Thought he was making fun of him RIGHT?  
552

553 Virgil  
554 He wanted to, he wanted to hit the old man if he could have gotten up on his feet but see I seen  
555 like, he had a mental (il) a mental problem from tha start because of the way he was, ya know  
556 calling him an idiot and what else he called him?  
557  
558 Rod  
559 A peasant right?  
560  
561 Virgil  
562 Yea a peasant...  
563  
564 Rod  
565 {Nods head} yea.  
566  
567 Virgil  
568 And he was doing the old black man, saying I don't wanna be something like, I don't wanna be  
569 nothing like you, if not the same words but he was telling his self to his self i don't wanna be  
570 nothing like you, if you don't wanna be nothing like him, everybody got like i said last time,  
571 everybody got a job, from a janitor all the way up to the president, somebody gotta do some type  
572 of job to keep the world revolving  
573  
574 Rod  
575 umm hmm. {Nods head}  
576  
577 virgil  
578 So he was downing *Jefferson* and that led to make me think he want to hit the man that led me to  
579 think he got a mental illness.  
580  
581 Rod  
582 umm hmm. {Looks over paper}  
583  
584 virgil  
585 Cause he, He got an attitude problem.  
586  
587 Rod  
588 That's interesting, what do you mean? You think he has a mental illness. What's the difference  
589 between that and an attitude problem?  
590  
591 Virgil  
592 I think he got a mental illness.  
593  
594 Rod  
595 Like what? Like...  
596  
597 Virgil  
598 Like the way he acting ya know, he came in age; i mean a rage of anger.  
599  
600 Rod  
601 Umm hmm, he's got some anger.  
602  
603 Virgil  
604 He was already hurt with a broken ankle, and he just telling you a story just a story about, about an  
605 angel flying through heaven and you think he being sarcastic and funny. That, that's a, that's a,  
606 that's a, that's a, that's a sign of mental illness to me.  
607  
608 Rod

609 yea...  
610  
611 virgil  
612 And plus ya know, people that fly planes are more from like a borderline genius to insanity, it  
613 seem like he was very high intelligence but at the same time he was in a maniac mode.  
614  
615 Rod  
616 hmm. He was in a, he was kind of uh, whaddaya mean?  
617  
618 Virgil  
619 [hyped up]  
620  
621 Rod  
622 Hyped up  
623  
624 Virgil  
625 Hyped up. He was very hyped up after that story.  
626  
627 00.20.00  
628  
629 Rod  
630 He was very hyped up...okay. Uh, what do the rest of you think? What do you think about old  
631 Todd here? And old *Jefferson*? What do you think about Virgil was saying about his umm anger,  
632 his mental illness, his attitude problem, or however it is.  
633  
634 Virgil  
635 I think we can all agree he had an attitude problem. If it don't really rationalize back to him having  
636 a mental illness.  
637  
638 Rod  
639 Yea, he's definitely got, he's got a conflicted attitude I'd say.  
640  
641 Ben  
642 He's afraid of failure too. It's something like a phobia too, afraid of failure, we all fail but try to  
643 get back up and dust yourself off and go again at something else or at the same thing.  
644  
645 Rod  
646 And Virgil said, sounds like what your saying is that *Jefferson*'s story about flying around Heaven  
647 was trying to make that point, was trying to tell him "Hey, ya know when you have an accident or  
648 something uh an obstacle comes in your way you gotta get up and try it again and try and soar at  
649 life as you say, but uh he didn't take it that way did he?  
650  
651 Sandra  
652 Uh uh.  
653  
654 Rod  
655 I'm looking for that part, I'm looking for that part where he says uh, um, *Jefferson* asks him now  
656 he wanted to look at his plane, hey can i look at your plane? And what did Todd say? Yea you can  
657 take a look just don't touch anything. Alright...so *Jefferson* looks around the plane asks a few  
658 questions, how fast does it go? All of 200 miles a hour. Well that sure is fast and what in the world  
659 would make you wanna fly an airplane like that anyway? Do you remember what Todd thought?  
660  
661 Sandra  
662 He was probably just in his own world. {Chuckles}  
663  
664 Rod

665 It seem like he was in his own world, well he did, well he had a thought he didn't say out loud  
666 though, he thought umm... {reads through papers}  
667  
668 00.22.00  
669  
670 Sandra  
671 It was like a mental illness, it was just like he said a shimmery thing, mind thing, he had a pilot  
672 and he {yawns while talking} he was just interested in his pilot and his airplane.  
673  
674 Rod  
675 Yea, seem like it. The old man was just kind of interested in it, I mean he never seen any, he'd  
676 never been that close to an airplane before probably. Here it is. Son. Here it is on 153, Son how  
677 come you want to fly way up there in the air? And then uh Todd thinks because it's the most  
678 meaningful act in the world, because it makes me less like you he thought. But he said because I  
679 like it I guess. It's as good a way to fight and die as I know. So what, that thought there it's the  
680 most meaningful act in the world because it makes me less like you, what's he saying?  
681  
682 Virgil  
683 he's calling, he's calling, I guess lower, lower characteristics ya know  
684  
685 rod  
686 Oh yea.  
687  
688 Virgil  
689 He ain't got, He ain't got, he feel like he better than that man. That's all. And he puts the man  
690 down... in further words.  
691  
692 Rod  
693 And he's also saying remember what we said about dignity in here before, he's said the airplane  
694 was his only dignity and now that it was crash landed on the ground he felt naked without having  
695 that plane around him right? So the plane made him feel like what???

696  
697 Virgil  
698 A Superstar!  
699  
700 Rod  
701 The plane made him feel like a superstar! That's exactly right, the plane made him feel better than  
702 he felt like others and particularly where a, this is where I think race does come into it and I think  
703 and what, I think Todd is saying that flying an airplane makes me, makes him better than that old  
704 black man who was from Todd's point of view ignorant, farmer, just this kind of peasant person  
705 ya know,  
706  
707 00.24.00  
708  
709 Rod  
710 so he was so he thought that by training to be a pilot, by training to have this skill and go fight in  
711 the war, that what? He was going to become  
712  
713 sandra  
714 He could fly over and over again. Keep flying it, keep doing it over, keep continue doing it  
715 because that was his game, his game was continue to keep doing it.  
716  
717 Rod  
718 To keep flying and then there he is crash landed in the field.  
719 rod- uh hmm.  
720

721 Virgil  
722 So he could control his own things, if something happened to his plane he know how to um  
723 program it...uh hmm.  
724  
725 Rod  
726 Ok okay.  
727  
728 Sandra  
729 yep yep. He got that.  
730  
731 Rod  
732 So remember there was the old man and the young boy. Who were first there when he crash  
733 landed?  
734  
735 Virgil  
736 Then he sent the boy to get some help.  
737  
738 Rod  
739 yea he sent the boy to get some help right? to go get Mr. Graves, the guy who were gonna find  
740 out who owns the land there and what did they say they were gonna do they were gonna take him  
741 to town  
742  
743 virgil  
744 On an ox car.  
745  
746 Rod  
747 On an Ox car right and what did Todd say about that?  
748  
749 Virgil  
750 He started asking was there white on one of them.  
751  
752 Rod  
753 yea, he was concerned about white people coming around, yea! About what was he concerned  
754 about being taken into town on an Ox car? Remember?  
755  
756 Virgil  
757 He uh...He'd be embarrassed, ashamed.  
758  
759 Rod  
760 yea, he would be embarrassed or ashamed, that's right! He keeps talking about um about being  
761 humiliated right uh...  
762  
763 sandra  
764 It was a good story though.  
765  
766 Rod  
767 Well were still working on it though, it's long enough that its taking us a while to work on it, how  
768 does that feel? You're working on it over the course of a couple of weeks are you; have you  
769 thoughts about it in the mean time? You giggling about it.  
770  
771 00.26.00  
772  
773 Virgil  
774 {Giggles}  
775  
776 Rod

777 {Laughs}  
778  
779  
780  
781 Randy  
782 All I know is that that buzzard and the lil guy in the story he gets his plane crashed because of a  
783 buzzard that hits the window.  
784  
785 Rod  
786 yea. Yea. Um. Do you know what i mean when I ask is that symbolic in any way? Do you know  
787 what I mean by that, I mean it's one thing that yea in the story that a buzzard, that he actually ran  
788 into this bird and that's what caused the plane to crash but what do we know about buzzards.  
789 What's a buzzard?  
790  
791 Randy  
792 buzzards are terrible  
793  
794 Rod  
795 They're terrible whyt?  
796  
797  
798 Sophie  
799 They eat dead...  
800  
801 Rod  
802 They eat dead flesh right?! They're the birds on the side of the road,  
803  
804 Virgil  
805 Their scavengers.  
806  
807 Rod  
808 Their scavengers right.  
809  
810 Sandra  
811 They can easily find dead people, they can smell em.  
812  
813 Rod  
814 yes. Right so and remember in the old western movies there would be the buzzards flying around  
815 in the sky, you know somebody died & the buzzards are circling around so the buzzards are  
816 associated with death, rot and decay stuff like that so some..  
817  
818 randy  
819 Their gross.  
820  
821 Rod  
822 yea, their gross right? It's a bunch of gross stuff about buzzards in this story, do you remember  
823 that story that *Jefferson* told about the buzzards it was so gross, do you remember it? What did he  
824 say about it?  
825  
826 Virgil  
827 I forgot what he said but uh what Todd said Id listen to this story better than the ones about the  
828 angels.  
829  
830 Rod  
831 yea yea, well that was funny, i mean that story was funny about flying around Heaven and St.  
832 Peter was like your flying to fast *Jefferson*, slow down ya know, but the one about the buzzards



833 was gross, it was um, "They the damndest birds, once I seen a horse all stretched out like it was  
834 sick so I hollered get up from there just to make sure and dog on if I don't see two Jim crows,  
835 Teddy he calls those buzzards Jim Crows and we wondered if that was funny or not.  
836  
837 Rod  
838 Not funny, Randy thinks that is not funny at all.  
839  
840 Randy  
841 Because you don't wanna be called the Jim Crow.  
842  
843 rod- well he's calling buzzards Jim Crow  
844  
845 00.28.00  
846 Randy  
847 He's calling buzzards Jim Crow, ya know if you think about that, the person Jim Crow and we  
848 don't wanna be called Uncle Tom.  
849  
850 Rod  
851 That's right, that's right so you think it would be insulting to the buzzards to be called Jim Crow  
852 or...  
853  
854 Randy  
855 I don't know, I'm not too sure. But it would probably be insulting.  
856  
857 Rod  
858 Yea okay... but you kind of feel like it's a little bit insulting.  
859  
860 Randy  
861 {Mumbles}  
862  
863 Rod  
864 Because he's taking Jim Crow and we know what Jim Crow means those segregation racist laws  
865 right about separate waiting rooms, bathrooms, drinking fountains, back of the bus front of the bus  
866 all that is known as Jim Crow and he is using that to refer to the buzzards right?  
867 Umm so anyway. he says dog on if I don't see two ol Jim Crows flying right up out of that horses  
868 insides, like they been down in there eating it right, eating that dead horse. Yuck! Yessir the sun  
869 was shining on em' and they couldn't have been o greasier if they had been eating BBQ. Eww.  
870 And Todd said he thought he would vomit. Right! That's nasty right? That's gross.  
871  
872 {Crowd mumbles in disgust}  
873  
874 Rod  
875 That is really gross, so i mean he really makes a point of saying just how disgusting these birds  
876 are, but that's what it is that brings this plane down something associated with death and that  
877 grossness. ya know that's sort of plaguing our pilot in some way i don't know, I don't know  
878 exactly what that means but yea he's worried about, he's worried about being taken to town on an  
879 Ox cart remember, he's just on 149 thoughts of himself riding an Ox through town past streets full  
880 of white faces down the concrete runways of the air field made swift images of humiliation in his  
881 mind. Right. And why would he feel humiliated riding an Ox cart into to town back to the air  
882 field?  
883  
884 Ben  
885 He left on an aircraft, and he riding back through on an Ox, through town on an Ox and and whut  
886 wud hi superiors think.  
887  
888 00.30.00

889  
890 Rod  
891 Right, Right!  
892  
893 Virgil  
894 That's like driving a Benz one day or a Rolls Royce, and then driving a chavette the next day.  
895 Rod  
896 Or on a bicycle, ya know right? On foot walking yea...  
897  
898 Virgil  
899 Laughs yea...  
900  
901 Rod  
902 bumming a ride, or whatever it is, yea, yea, that's exactly right! He says at one point in here, i  
903 forget exactly where, he says that buzzard set me back a hundred years, like he thinks he's making  
904 progress right? Not just for himself but as he says for his whole race right? Like he's one of the  
905 first black men to train as a pilot, I mean that's what the Tuskegee airmen were doing right?  
906 Training what was gonna be pilot soldiers for the United States army and uh here all of the sudden  
907 instead of being this genius pilot right? This smart guy pilot, who has this technical skill and this  
908 great deal of dignity and esteem right he'll be laid up, broken ankle, slowly creaking into town on  
909 this old Ox cart like a peasant cargo or something like that, that's what Todd is thinking.  
910  
911 Virgil  
912 Whomp whomp, whommmp. {Chuckles} {waah waah waah – sitcom sound...}  
913  
914 Rod  
915 It's got that feel too {laughs} I think that's a nice way to sum it up.  
916  
917 Virgil  
918 Yea.  
919  
920 Rod  
921 If this was a sitcom i think that would be the noise we would hear at the end of that scene, we  
922 would see him on the Ox cart and the whomp whomp {laughs} and it would fade out at that.  
923  
924 Virgil  
925 Yea.  
926  
927 Rod  
928 And with people laughing at him, cause that's what's going on, that's the scene in his mind. Cause  
929 he's got the streets lined with white folks saying ah ha we told you no black man can fly a plane.  
930 {Nods head in agreement} And I mean that's part, that's part of what he's worried about. I TOLD  
931 you this was gonna happen. Here you are, thought you were so high and mighty flying that  
932 airplane, now look at you. That's what he's worried about...So we got a couple stories right there  
933 together, right we got *Jefferson* story about flying in Heaven and being kicked out of Heaven  
934 because he was flying too fast  
935  
936 00.32.00  
937  
938 Rod  
939 And then remember the next story we heard and this was just before we finished up last time. Just  
940 before we finished up we heard the part about, do you remember what it was? It was about...  
941  
942 Virgil  
943 He seen an old plane above his head.  
944

945 {Daphne starts coughing}  
946  
947 Rod  
948 And what was that about? When who saw a plane? That plane? Who was telling them story or  
949 thinking it really, he's not telling it to anybody, and he's telling it to us.  
950  
951 Daphne  
952 Can I get some water?  
953  
954 Rod  
955 Of course, please, yea yea. Get yourself a cup and bring it back in here so you can have it to sip  
956 on, yea so you're right Virgil, its Todd talking about when he saw that plane right? And you  
957 remember what that was about? Remembering...  
958  
959 Virgil  
960 He thought it was a model plane but his mom had to tell him it was a real plane,  
961 rod- yea, so the first plane he ever saw was a model was just kind of hanging from the ceiling and  
962 he thought that was just.  
963  
964 Virgil  
965 At the carnival  
966  
967 Rod  
968 yea at the carnival, and he just thought that was the best thing he'd ever seen. {Extends arms out to  
969 emphasize point}  
970  
971 virgil  
972 And then um he fell to the ground and hurt his knee, had to call the doctor in and the doctor told  
973 him ya know, his mother told him to check his mind something, ain't right not the proper content,  
974 had to check his mind to see if he was okay.  
975  
976  
977 Rod  
978 Why did? Why was his mom concerned about his mind? Ya'll remember? I'll tell ya what? What  
979 if we start there and read that part, we just start there and read that part about his remembering  
980 when he was a kid, is that okay with ya'll?  
981  
982 Virgil  
983 Which one?  
984  
985 Rod  
986 Well we'll start then on 162  
987  
988 {Everyone flips pages}  
989  
990 Rod  
991 162, there were turns to italics, you know there's a little break and it turns to italics there. He says  
992  
993 {Daphne walks in with cup of water...closes door.}  
994  
995 {Rod- pushes chair back and proceeds to drink some water.}  
996  
997 00.34.00  
998  
999 rod- Excuse me Daphne, now I have to get me a sip of water too. {Drinks water} Got a lil tickle in  
1000 my throat. This is the first time, ya'll found the page? You get it?

1001  
1002  
1003  
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1013  
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1048  
1049  
1050  
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1052  
1053  
1054  
1055  
1056

Virgil  
Thank you.

Rod

This was the first time I ever saw a plane, I was very small and planes were new in the world. Now he means that literally right, I mean this the time he would about that age when planes had just been invented. There weren't airplanes before that. Planes were new in the world. I was four and a half and the only plane that I'd ever seen was a model suspended from the ceiling of the automobile exhibit at the state fair. But I did not know that it was only a model I did not know how large a real plane was nor how expensive. To me it was a fascinating toy complete in itself which my mother said it could only be owned by rich little white boys. I stood rigid with admiration, my head straining backwards as I watched the grey little plane describing arch's above the gleaming automobiles and I vowed that rich or poor someday I would own such a toy. My mother had to drag me out of the exhibit not even the merry go round, Ferris wheel or the racing horses could hold my attention for the rest of the fair I was too busy imitating the tiny drone of the plane with my lips and imitating with my hands the motion swift and circling {motions arms in movement to mock the plane} that it made in flight, so we imagine this little boy completely caught up in his own world, his own world making little engine motor noises, and pretending his hand is an airplane. After that I no longer used the pieces of lumber that lay about our backyard to construct wagons and autos now it was used for airplanes. I built fly planes using pieces of board for wings a small box for the fuselage, a piece of wood for the rubber. The trip to the fair had brought something new to my small world. I asked my mother repeatedly when the fair would come back again.

00.36.00

Rod

Id lie in the grass and watch the sky and each flying bird became a soaring plane. I would have been good a year just to see a plane again I became a nuisance to everyone with my questions about airplanes but planes were new to the old folks too and there was little they could tell me. Only my uncle knew some of the answers and better still he could carve propellers from pieces of wood that roll rapidly in the wind while wobbling nosily on oiled nails. I wanted a plane more than I wanted anything, more than I wanted the red wagon with the rubber tires, more than the train that ran on track with its train of cars, I asked my mother over and over again, "Momma?" "What do you want boy? She'd say. Momma will you get mad if i ask you? I'd say. What do you want now? I ain't got time to be answering a lot of fool questions, what do you want? Momma when you gonna get me one? I'd ask. Get you one what? She'd say. You know momma, what I been asking you, boy she'd say if you don't wanna a spanking you better come on and tell me what you talking about so I can get on with my work. Awe Momma, you know. What did I just tell you? She'd say. I mean when you gonna buy me an airplane? An AIRPLANE! Boy is you crazy?! How many times I have to tell you, stop that foolishness, I done told you them things cost too much, I bet I'm gonna wham the living daylight out of you if you don't quit worrying me about them things. But this did not stop me. And a few days later, I'd try all over again. Then one day a strange thing happen it was spring and for some reason I had been hot and irritable all morning, it was a beautiful spring I could feel it as I played barefoot in the backyard blossoms hung from the thorny black locus trees like clusters of fragrant white grapes, butterfly's flickered in the sunlight of the short nude dew wet grass. I had gone in the house for bread and butter, and coming out i heard a steady unfamiliar drone. It was like, it was unlike anything I had heard before I tried to place the sound it was no use

00.38.00

Rod

It was a sensation like that when i had, when searching for my father's watch heard ticking unseen in a room it made me feel as though I had forgot some task that my mother had ordered then I

1057 located it overhead in the sky flying quite low and about a hundred yards off it was a plane it came  
1058 so slowly that it seemed barely to move, my mouth hung wide my bread and butter fell into the  
1059 dirt. I wanted to jump up and down and cheer and when the idea struck I trembled with excitement  
1060 some little white boys plane done flew away and all I had to do is stretch out my hands and it will  
1061 be mine, it was a little plane like that at the fair flying no higher the eve of our roof seeing it come  
1062 steadily forward a [couple road grew warm with pollen] I opened the screen and climbed over it  
1063 and clung there waiting, I would catch the plane as it came over and swing down fast and run in  
1064 the house before anyone could see me. Ya got it?  
1065

1066 Virgil

1067 Yea

1068

1069 Rod

1070 165, And swing down fast and run into the house before anyone could see me, then no one could  
1071 come to claim the plane, it droned near and then when it hung like a silver cross and flew directly  
1072 above me, I stretched out my hand and grabbed. It was like sticking my finger through a soap  
1073 bubble the plane flew on as though i had simply blown my breath after it. I grabbed again  
1074 frantically trying to catch the tail, my fingers clutched the air disappointment surged hard and tight  
1075 in my throat giving one last desperate grasp I strained forward. My fingers ripped from the screen i  
1076 was falling, the ground burst hard against me I drummed the earth with my heels when my breath  
1077 returned i laid there balling. My mother rushed through the door "What's the matter child what on  
1078 earth is wrong with you? "It's gone, it's gone. What gone? The airplane, Airplane! Yes em just  
1079 like the one at the fair, I tried to stop it and it kept right on going.  
1080

1080

1081 00.40.00

1082

1083 Rod

1084 When boy? Just now. I cried through my tears. Where it go boy? What way? Yonder there. She  
1085 scanned the sky, her arms akimbo and her checkered apron flapping in the wind as I pointed to the  
1086 fading plane. Finally she looked down at me, slowly shaking her head. It's gone, it's gone, I cried.  
1087 Boy is you a fool she said. Don't you see that that's a real airplane instead of one of them toy  
1088 ones. Real? I forgot to cry. Real? Yes! Real! Don't you know that thing you reaching for is bigger  
1089 than an auto, you here trying to reach for it and i bet it's flying about 200 miles higher than this  
1090 roof. She was disgusted with me. You come on in this house before somebody else see's what a  
1091 fool you done turned out to be, you must think those lil ol arms of yours is mighty long. I was  
1092 carried into the house and undressed for bed and the doctor was called. I cried bitterly as much as  
1093 from the disappointment of finding the plane was so far beyond my reach as from the pain. When  
1094 the doctor came, I heard my mother tellin him about the plane and asked him if anything was  
1095 wrong with my mind. He explained that I had had a fever for several hours and that I was kept in  
1096 bed for a week, an I constantly saw the plane in my sleep flying just beyond my fingertips sailing  
1097 so slowly but it seemed barely to move and each time Id reach out to grab it I missed and through  
1098 each dream I'd hear my grandma warning "Young man, Young man your arms too short to box  
1099 with God". So that's his memory, so ( \_ \_ ) Virgil just like you told us he saw that plane at the fair  
1100 and he ca[me kind o]f obsessed with it, yea and he was fantasizing about airplanes all the time. All  
1101 he wanted was an airplane and  
1102

1102

1103 Virgil

1104 [fantasizing]

1105

1106 00.42.00

1107

1108 Rod

1109 He thought it was a toy right? And this thing happened, one day one spring day he sees that  
1110 airplane in the sky and it looks about the size of a model right? Climbs up high to reach and grab  
1111 it.. and it was like reaching through a soap bubble and he ends up reaching too far an falling to the

1112 ground... his momma laughing at him for being a fool. And then why did she ask the doctor about  
 1113 his mind? What's that about?  
 1114  
 1115 {begin rt transcription}notes: Session 4  
 1116  
 1117 0:42:32.9  
 1118  
 1119 Rod  
 1120 why did she ask the doctor about his mind? what's that about? ...whaddaya think Sandra?  
 1121  
 1122 Randy  
 1123 she tho't she tho't ee was crazy  
 1124  
 1125 Rod  
 1126 ya think?  
 1127  
 1128 Randy  
 1129 he sed ee saw a plane. she believed ee saw a real plane..=  
 1130  
 1131 Rod  
 1132 [yeah]=  
 1133  
 1134 Randy  
 1135 [i's] gone. started cryin i's gone i's gone.  
 1136  
 1137  
 1138  
 1139 Rod  
 1140 right, now, what made her think somethin wuz wrong with his mind do ya think? what made her  
 1141 think that that he wuz actin crazy and that somethin wuz wrong wit him. whaddaya think?.. I'm  
 1142 curious about that I'm not sure what I think about it..  
 1143  
 1144 Connie  
 1145 {clears throat} (Ah..) Uh..uh..um how he came obsessed wit...um planes.  
 1146  
 1147 Rod  
 1148 okay  
 1149  
 1150 Connie  
 1151 so wuld'n lissen to is mom, ee wanne'd things HIS way.  
 1152  
 1153 Rod  
 1154 right, right, ee wasn willin to jus lissen to her when she "ay, sed jus give u[p th]at fooli[shness]-  
 1155 just let that go"=  
 1156  
 1157 Sandra  
 1158 [yup]...[sh:sh, she...she] (she...knew it) wasn't no fission {vision}, nat it wuz a re'al(^\)  
 1159 plane(^\)..[(an it)] not ta play roun with the real's things=  
 1160  
 1161 Rod  
 1162 right [(inaud)]  
 1163  
 1164 Virgil  
 1165 [that part] at the end when she she tol im in the en' (...) young man young man, yo arms too short  
 1166 to box wit God, that let im know that it wul be a challenge for im to go on in life for him to fly a

1167 plane, to have a plane and (to proceed) this in this worl you gotta have prayers and ( you know )  
1168 things in life to help you grow stronger. (he he ) had a challenge ahead of im.=  
1169  
1170 Rod  
1171 I love that you picked up on that cause this this warning in his dreams in his sleep about boxing  
1172 with [God] (...)  
1173  
1174 Virgil  
1175 [doctor did checked] im y'no wha"m sayin he he goin thru a little ('fraidness) y'know a small little  
1176 thing da wha she tol im yo arms too short ta box with God.  
1177  
1178 Rod  
1179 what is at phrase mean ta you? box with God? what is wh[at is] that bring up for you?  
1180  
1181 Virgil  
1182 [fight]  
1183  
1184 Rod  
1185 yeah, fight, yeah. somethin like fightin with God. what wuld it mean to fight with God?  
1186  
1187 Virgil  
1188 [(inaud.)]  
1189  
1190 Connie  
1191 [(wouldn't)] won't win.  
1192  
1193 Rod  
1194 you won't WIN(/) you [cant win boxing with god!] {excitedly, laughing} [Yeah.]  
1195  
1196 Virgil  
1197 [(inaud)... In other] words,youknow, he he wuldn't (want) actually be boxing with God. he sh  
1198 challenge of this world that wuld lead him unto havin a havin a challenge God would have a fight  
1199 wit him or fight against him ta order ta be able ta accomplish the goals that he wanted.  
1200  
1201 Rod  
1202 yeah, I think so. His, his his mama wuz sayin that he was tryin to outreach himself {arms gesture  
1203 upward, reaching} right? [He wuz] tryin ta do too [much, right?]  
1204  
1205 0:44:50.7  
1206  
1207 Virgil  
1208 [right]  
1209  
1210 Connie  
1211 [OUt] OUT'reach his potentials=  
1212  
1213 Rod  
1214 yeah, right, right-yo arms is too short to reach up and box t' with God, right [(to)]  
1215  
1216 0:44:57.2  
1217  
1218 Ben  
1219 [(..might be sayin)] God gotta lotta plan fa him ta be somethin else insted of a pilot sayin that you  
1220 fightin with God (inaud) real plan is fa you ta be somethin else (...)  
1221  
1222 Rod

1223 wow, yeah, mmhmm that your fightin against what God really wants you to do somethin else and  
1224 your determined to follow this obsession, this dream,right, wow, yeah.... so, we we uhm ... I feel  
1225 like we learn a lot about Todd from that little section there. that first memory. you you imagine  
1226 how that shaped him and what how that pointed him in the direction of eventually tryin to be a  
1227 pilot, I mean, ya think uh uh I mean, and we don't know this from the story--do you think he  
1228 stayed obsessed with bein a pilot or do you think he went on kinda changed his mind and went on  
1229 to try and do other things [(..)]  
1230  
1231 Virgil  
1232 [he's a pilot in'nere(/)]  
1233  
1234 Rod  
1235 he was well he was but I wonder if he stayed determined to be a pilot or to learn about air[planes]  
1236  
1237 Connie  
1238 {shakes head} [no] no he didn't  
1239  
1240 Rod  
1241 [you don't think so?]  
1242  
1243 Connie  
1244 [no]  
1245  
1246 Virgil  
1247 way i figured it, nah i gotta finish tha story ta get tha real concept [of]  
1248  
1249 rod  
1250 right  
1251  
1252 virgil  
1253 but i figure dat if he wus train ta be a pilot back then, {tapping finger on table for emphasis} he  
1254 wus given a second chance. probly wus.  
1255  
1256 rod  
1257 seem like it  
1258  
1259 virgil  
1260 i had notice whut dey sed deyah on da papuh they wus comin out ta da airfield, groun crews  
1261  
1262 rod  
1263 they were comin out, okay alright..i wonder if as a kid, after this thing happened, where he fell and  
1264 wus kep in bed and he had this dream about his grandma, er yeah about his grandma not is mama,  
1265 warnin im about boxin with god, did he um take her advice and let go of that obsession or did he  
1266 keep on with it? and then maybe as a young man, maybe he wus in college or somethin and then  
1267 he hears about suddenly there's an opportunity for black men to train as pilots and then does that  
1268 like turn him back to this obsession he had as a kid? i and we don(/) know. yknow we're not told  
1269 what happened between this memory as a young boy, whad ee say four or five years old, an then  
1270 the time when ee goes an trains as a pilot. we don know what happened  
1271  
1272 0:47:09.7  
1273  
1274 ....  
1275  
1276 0:47:24.9  
1277  
1278 virgil



1279 whadja say [nah?]  
1280  
1281 connie  
1282 [( ) it] sez its (/) come true doh, dat his dream has come (/) true.  
1283  
1284 rod  
1285 it kinda has hadn it?  
1286  
1287 connie  
1288 mmhhmm  
1289  
1290 rod  
1291 it kinda is, thats a good point connie, he is {gestures} LIVIN THAT DREAM right, he's got this  
1292 airplane he's flyin.  
1293  
1294 virgil  
1295 ef ee don fly agin he flew onetime  
1296  
1297 rod  
1298 yeah thats right thats right..but thats part of thats part of why hes so:oo .. why he's so upset about  
1299 this crash is that it may endanger this dream [it]  
1300  
1301 virgil  
1302 [right]  
1303  
1304 rod  
1305 it may endanger the future of this dream, right, cuz he's not yet a full pilot yet, right, he does get ta  
1306 fly by himself, he's in advanced training, right, but he wants to be a full pilot, right, ta go ta war, to  
1307 be a COMbat pilot, [an have all tha]  
1308  
1309 ben  
1310 [(in tha beginning)] he sed he wanted to OWN a plane rich or poor.  
1311  
1312 rod  
1313 [right right thats true]  
1314  
1315 ben  
1316 [that might be whut she talkin about], ownin a plane  
1317  
1318 rod  
1319 thats true. whaddaya think connie, you sed that that his dream did come true in that he is able to  
1320 fly planes()  
1321  
1322 connie  
1323 well, next page shows that um that whut he wunted it came true once he started flyin tha plane.  
1324 whirling bl blades of the propeller had come true.  
1325  
1326 rod  
1327 hmm mmhhmm. where is that? where are you lookin?  
1328  
1329 connie  
1330 i'm at 167 at the top of the page. he could not be sure wit that pain (tol how) horrible reoccurring  
1331 fantasy of being split in twine by the whirling blades of a propeller had come true.  
1332  
1333 rod  
1334 MMMhh!

1335  
1336 connie  
1337 see uh, he heard, he heard (see ah hope) so...  
1338  
1339 rod  
1340 so, you wanna, let's keep goin an read on through that, okay  
1341  
1342 virgil  
1343 who readin?  
1344  
1345 rod  
1346 hmm?  
1347  
1348 virgil  
1349 [who?]  
1350  
1351 connie  
1352 {to virgil} [you can go ahead]  
1353  
1354 0:49:28.6  
1355  
1356 virgil  
1357 awight. hes comin lak a bat outta hell. str straining  
1358  
1359 rod  
1360 well now lets go down lets go down right to the to the bottom of 166 right after the memory part  
1361 where he sez hey son=  
1362  
1363  
1364  
1365 virgil  
1366 =hey son. at first he did not know where he was and look look look at the old man pointing with  
1367 burning eyes. aint- that one o yall planes comin after you? after his vision cleared he saw a small  
1368 black shape above a distant field soaring through waves of heat but he could not be sure an with  
1369 the pain he feared that somehow a horrible recurring fan fantasy of being split in the twain by the  
1370 twirling blades of the propeller had come true. yous think he see you? he heard. see, i hope so. he's  
1371 comin lak a bat outta hell. straining he heard the faint- sound of a motor and hoped it would soon  
1372 be over. how you feel? lak a nightmare he sed. hey he he . hey, he done curved back tha other way.  
1373 maybe saw us he sed maybe he's goin to send out tha ambulance and ground crew and he thought  
1374 with despair maybe he did not even see us? where did you send the boy? down to mistuh graves,  
1375 *jefferson* sed, man what owns tha land. do you think the phone? *jefferson* looked at him quickly.  
1376 ah, (so). (dabney) graves as got a bad name of accounting him killin, but (him call through). whats  
1377 killin? them five fellers, aint-choo heard? he asked with surprise. no. eve.body  
1378  
1379 rod  
1380 every'body  
1381  
1382 virgil  
1383 everybody knows about dabney graves, especially tha colored. he done killed enough of us..  
1384 {turning page, then quickly} okay somebody else take ovuh.  
1385  
1386 rod  
1387 well so what what's happened just now just to make sure we know what we're doin  
1388  
1389 virgil  
1390 he enlighten im let im know that danny graves is is a killuh [( )] black folk

1391  
1392 rod  
1393 [yeah] yeah, this doesnt sound too good right?  
1394  
1395 virgil  
1396 nah  
1397  
1398 rod  
1399 an thats the guy that uh they sent teddy to go get im. he owns the land that he crash landed on. uh  
1400 oh, now we wonder whats gonna happen. okay who wants to who wants to read? [top 168].  
1401  
1402 randy  
1403 {gestures} i'll take it  
1404  
1405 rod  
1406 yeah.  
1407  
1408 randy  
1409 {clears throat} todd had the sensation of being caught in a white neighborhood after dark. what did  
1410 they do, he asked. they thought they wus men, *jefferson* sed. an some he owed money lak he do  
1411 me. why do you stay here? you black, son.. i know but you have to come by the by the white folks  
1412 too. oh:oh(^), offensive. he turned away from jeffersonn's eyes at once consoled and accused. and  
1413 i'll have to come by them by them soon. he thought with despair. closin his eyes, he heard  
1414 *jefferson's* voice as the sun burned blood red on his lids. i have got i have got nowhere to go  
1415 *jefferson* sed and theyd come after me if they did. but dab dabney graves is a funny fellow. he's  
1416 he's all the time making jokes. he can be mean as hell an and then he liable to turn around and  
1417 back the co back the colored against the white folks. ah seen him do it. but me, ah hates him more  
1418 than anythin else, cuz he jus soon jus as soon as he gits tired he'pin a man he'pin a man he don  
1419 care what happens to im. he jus leaves em stone cold and then the other white folks um is double  
1420 hard on anybody he ad helped. for him iss jus a just a joke(/). i don give a hilla beans fuh nobody  
1421 but himself. todd listened to the thread of detachment in the old man's voice. it as as though (he  
1422 held his words at arms length before him to avoid their destructive meaning.) just as soon as youd  
1423 do me a favor then turn then turn right around (and have you strung up. inaud) me i stay outta his  
1424 way cuz down here thats whut you gotta do.  
1425  
1426 rod  
1427 whadoes he mean? me, i stays outta his waycuz down heah thats whut you gotta do... stay outta  
1428 whose way? ...  
1429  
1430 randy  
1431 {low} whose way?  
1432  
1433 virgil  
1434 oh, gotta stay outta his way? gotta stay outta his way, give im is space. he aint- tha type a person ta  
1435 be dealt wit.  
1436  
1437 rod  
1438 yeah, he's talkin about graves, [right? still talkin about graves]  
1439  
1440 virgil  
1441 [he ain he ain]  
1442  
1443 randy  
1444 [graves]  
1445  
1446 virgil

1447 he ain tha person, like, tha right person ta be dealin wit. jus you know you know have bu'ness fuh  
1448 bu'ness but aint- tha tupa fellow ta have you know have as a friend.  
1449  
1450 rod  
1451 well, kay {laughs}, [yeah]  
1452  
1453 sandra  
1454 [as he] been splain mo bout his daddy than he' can ah guess, cuz he know his daddy know who  
1455 know his daddy, who hi daddy was i guess. [uuh],  
1456  
1457 rod  
1458 uuhhh  
1459  
1460 sandra  
1461 wha' hi name? tha man did ( ) he tol im how he wu:u, he used ta joke/ around/, [( )]  
1462  
1463 rod  
1464 [yeah] theyre talkin bout this man graves that owns the land, [right so]  
1465  
1466 sandra  
1467 [mmhhmm ^]  
1468  
1469 rod  
1470 an we think *jefferson* works for [im] ur somethin [like that]  
1471  
1472 sandra  
1473 [mmhhmm] [some'm like dat]  
1474  
1475 rod  
1476 yeah, and he sez down here thats whutchoo gotta do, stay outta his way. i mean theyre talkin bout  
1477 this guy's, well, sez he's pretty mean, 'n he may be responsible fur stringin up colored men, i mean  
1478 watre we TALK/IN about here? we talkin about, we talking about LYNching, is that kinda thing?  
1479 this is like uh... this is kindof a scary thing i think that the pilot's finding out about now. the  
1480 beginning of that page, the first of that page, that todd had the sensation of being caught in a white  
1481 neighborhood after dark. what does that mean? whats that whats that whats the sensation, whats he  
1482 talking about there?  
1483  
1484 connie  
1485 thats somethin that uh he ought not do, be caught out aftuh dark.  
1486  
1487 rod  
1488 right  
1489  
1490 virgil  
1491 dat's tha way thats whut prestige time wus. wuz goin on in the past, you cant be caught in a white  
1492 neighborhood after dark.  
1493  
1494 rod  
1495 right, cuz whut might happen?  
1496  
1497 virgil  
1498 [well you]  
1499  
1500 sophie  
1501 [might get lynched]  
1502

1503 virgil  
1504 might get beat, might get shot  
1505  
1506 rod  
1507 {nodding} bad stuff might happen, yeah right, ok alright. so todd's asking questions, well, whadid  
1508 those men do, and *jefferson* sez well, they thought they were men. what does that mean. an some  
1509 he owed money like he do me. an todd sez but / why / would / you stay here then? why would you  
1510 stay here? why would you stay in this in this place, an he's talkin about he's talkin about the uh jim  
1511 crow south, right? he's talkin about the south at that time. he's talkin about macon county at that  
1512 time. why do you stay here. an he say well, you have to come by the white folks too, whadoyou  
1513 think that means?  
1514  
1515 virgil  
1516 hadda come by tha white folks?  
1517  
1518 rod  
1519 yeah  
1520  
1521 virgil  
1522 hadda deal wi:i'um [cuz they own everything]  
1523  
1524  
1525 rod  
1526 [gotta deal with em] cuz they own everything, i think that is whut hes sayin there i rilly do. and  
1527 then he sez to todd, he se' i got nowhere to go. an theyd come after me if i did... an then he kinda  
1528 backs off--"but that dabney graves, you know he's a funny fellow. he can be mean as hell but then  
1529 he's turn he's liable to turn around and help ya out. ya know, it's kindof a strange little part here...  
1530 me i stays outta his way cuz down here thats whutcho gotta do....  
1531  
1532 sandra  
1533 mm mm mmhh  
1534  
1535 randy  
1536 want me ta continue?  
1537  
1538 rod  
1539 please if [you'd like to]  
1540  
1541 randy  
1542 [sorry, jus got a] little spaced out there fuh a minute.  
1543  
1544 rod  
1545 no no, that's okay we were kinda thinkin about that section.  
1546  
1547 randy  
1548 okay we're gonna continue on page 168. {quickly and fitfully, haltingly} (if ma ankle would ease  
1549 fuh a while he thought. the closer i spin toward the earth the blacker i become, flashed through his  
1550 mind/ sweat ran into his eyes and he was sure that he would never see the plane if his head  
1551 continued whirling....  
1552  
1553 ...he saw it gleaming silver as it circled and he wus seeing a burst like a ppuff of white smoke and  
1554 hearing his mother yell "come along boy, i got no time for them fool airplanes. i got no time." and  
1555 he saw it a second time, the plane flying high, and the burst appeared suddenly and fell slowly,  
1556 billowing out and sparkling like fireworks and he was watching and being hurried along as the air  
1557 was filled with a flurry of white pinwheeling cards that caught in the wind and scattered over the  
1558 rooftops and into the gutters and a woman was running and snatching a card and reading it and

1559 screaming and he darted into the shower, grabbing as in winter he grabbed for snowflakes and  
1560 bounding away at his mother's "come on here boy! come on i say!" and he was watching as she  
1561 took the card away seeing her face grow puzzled and turning taut as her voice quavered,)  
1562 "NIGGERS, stay away from the polls" WHOA. NIGGERS STAY AWAY FROM THE POLLS.  
1563 (and died to a moan of terror as he saw the eyeless sockets of a white hood staring at him from the  
1564 card and above he saw the plane spiraling gracefully, a gleam in the sun like a fiery sword/ and  
1565 seeing it soar he was caught, transfixed between a terrible horror and a horrible fascination. the  
1566 sun)  
1567  
1568 1:01:16.1  
1569  
1570 rod  
1571 lets, i'm sorry here randy, lets pause cuz this is a weird section i think. what's goin on here? do we  
1572 have an idea whats goin [on?]  
1573  
1574 virgil  
1575 [seem] like it jumped time.  
1576  
1577 rod  
1578 well yeah yeah thats right he jumped back to another memory that happened, even before he does  
1579 that when he's lyin there in the field you know and he's in tremendous pain and he's kind of  
1580 detaching, and he's kind of it almost seems like he's in and out of uh=  
1581  
1582 virgil  
1583 =like he [goin delirious]  
1584  
1585 rod  
1586 [normal consciousness]  
1587  
1588 sandra  
1589 [mmhhmm]  
1590  
1591 rod  
1592 seems like he's getting a little del(\_). what is this thing when he sez uhm, what what what he tried  
1593 to see *jefferson*, what it was that *jefferson* held in his hand. it was a little black man. another little  
1594 *jefferson*. a little black *jefferson* that shook with fits of belly laughter while the other *jefferson*  
1595 looked up, while the other *jefferson* looked on with detachment. then *jefferson* looked up from the  
1596 thing in his hand an turned to speak but todd wus far aw= WHUT is he talkin bout!?  
1597  
1598 virgil  
1599 he gettin delirious  
1600  
1601 rod  
1602 he gettin kinda he does seem to be a little delirious.  
1603  
1604 virgil  
1605 it lak ah sehd, he might have a (mental illness \_\_) buh then agin he mihgh not.  
1606  
1607 rod  
1608 who knows this seems like a little bit almost like almost like he's hallucinating right and having  
1609 this strange kind of delusion or kind of delirious from the pain or [from]  
1610  
1611 virgil  
1612 [somethin]  
1613  
1614 rod

1615 experience, [yeah]  
1616  
1617 sandra  
1618 [(puzzled)] puzzling  
1619  
1620 rod  
1621 [whad you say?]  
1622  
1623 ben  
1624 [from dehydration]  
1625  
1626 sandra  
1627 he's like he puzzled  
1628  
1629 rod  
1630 he's puzzled, yeah, maybe from dehydration, maybe from ythe heat, yeah, he sez the heat's been  
1631 really bad too. yeah and then after that, he has this memory an he sez he wus goin mysteriously  
1632 with his mother through empty streets where black faces peered from behind drawn shades. what's  
1633 this memory?=*what's goin on in this memory?*=can anybody tell?  
1634  
1635 virgil  
1636 ( ) look like .. when started out y'ow he jes started fantasizin, ligh he jump time and then ee  
1637 started thankin bout somepin a whole different situation.  
1638  
1639 rod  
1640 thinkin ( ). what wus goin on in the time he wus remembrin back to? he wus walkin with his  
1641 mother and...  
1642  
1643 virgil  
1644 it wa it wa relatin to the time frame when he sent the little doll he had in his hand.  
1645  
1646 rod  
1647 huh, [maybe so, that little *jefferson* doll]  
1648  
1649 virgil  
1650 [tha little tha little jeff, that *jefferson* had that] little doll then it switched all around to another  
1651 whole story.  
1652  
1653 rod  
1654 switched to another time.  
1655  
1656 virgil  
1657 yeah  
1658  
1659 rod  
1660 an we don know how old he wus in the memory he's havin here. an we don know where theyre  
1661 goin but people are scared, right? remember theyre seein {gestures acting this out} faces peer out  
1662 from behind curtains and people are scared. and then all of a sudden he sees this airplane, and  
1663 remember this is back when he wus a kid, he sees this airplane {gesturing} and then somethin  
1664 comes out of the airplane, comes floatin down from the airplane and its all these little white cards,  
1665 little white pieces of paper an he picks one up, and his mom takes it from him and reads, right, and  
1666 this is what it sez, right...  
1667  
1668 randy  
1669 scuse me a minute i'll be right back.  
1670

1671 rod  
1672 yeah, sure.. it's hard to read right, {low} niggers stay away from the polls is what it sez on that  
1673 piece of paper. an then he's lookin at the card and it has the eyeless sockets of a white hood staring  
1674 at him from the card. so what's that white hood on the card?  
1675  
1676 connie  
1677 uuh  
1678  
1679 ben  
1680 (inaud.)  
1681  
1682 rod  
1683 whaddaya think (inaud). apparently there's a picture on the card that besides these words saying  
1684 stay away from the polls.. there's this white hood=  
1685  
1686 connie  
1687 =( ) (say more somethin) inhis mind. (thats where) he fanntasizin  
1688  
1689 1:04:56.3  
1690  
1691 rod  
1692 think so? i mean i take this as a memory he's have, he's remembering. i know it's kinda like a  
1693 fansay cuz like he's sorta delirious [like you sed]  
1694  
1695 virgil  
1696 [it don even make sense] rilly  
1697  
1698 rod  
1699 well, what's that hood? what would that hood be? why would there be a hood on a card comin  
1700 down from a plane sayin stay away from the polls?  
1701  
1702 connie  
1703 he's ( ). he dropp from one memory to another. so it seem like he's ..  
1704  
1705 virgil  
1706 he's hurt probly  
1707  
1708 rod  
1709 he's definitely hurt  
1710  
1711 virgil  
1712 he hurt  
1713  
1714 rod  
1715 i think what he's remembering here is um the KLAN, right, the ku klux klan, tryin to keep black  
1716 people away from the polls when they wre allowed to vote..right? scarin and tryin ta rod-imidate  
1717 and scare people from voting, right? so droppin these cards sayin, theyre threatenin, right? if you  
1718 go to the polls, the klan'll get ya=that's what this white hood is right?  
1719  
1720 virgil  
1721 no/  
1722  
1723 rod  
1724 no? you don think so at all?  
1725  
1726 virgil



1727 {shaking head} nh, cuz a woman tol him ta stay away from the polls.  
1728  
1729 rod  
1730 nah nah nah nah, she's reading from the card, right? she took the card away and {now reading}  
1731 seeing her face grow puzzled then turning taut as her voice quavered. she read it.  
1732  
1733 virgil  
1734 she read it  
1735  
1736 rod  
1737 she read it off the card, right?  
1738  
1739 virgil  
1740 that hadnt had nothin ta do wit that,  
1741  
1742 rod  
1743 you don think so?  
1744  
1745 virgil  
1746 nope. she read it, it sed she read the card.  
1747  
1748 rod  
1749 she read the card. who wrote the card? thats what i'm saying.  
1750  
1751 virgil  
1752 well, / we'll / nevuh / dat  
1753  
1754 rod  
1755 well, why would it have a white hood on there?  
1756  
1757 sophie  
1758 must be somebody white that wrote it  
1759  
1760 virgil  
1761 well, what's tha hood representin?  
1762  
1763 rod  
1764 {gesturing the hood} [( )]  
1765  
1766 randy  
1767 {loudly} K K K  
1768  
1769 rod  
1770 {pointing to randy} it's the klan hood, right! that was their uniform right?  
1771  
1772 sandra  
1773 yeah  
1774  
1775 sophie  
1776 the ku klux klan=  
1777  
1778 randy  
1779 =the ku klux clan=  
1780  
1781 rod

1782 =the ku klux klan= i think so i think thats what this i think thats what he's sayin. he's a little  
1783 [unclear about it in this sort of delirious memory]  
1784  
1785 daphne  
1786 [i think it is too] [i think it is too]  
1787  
1788 virgil  
1789 [but see what im sayin]  
1790  
1791 rod  
1792 you think it is [too?]  
1793  
1794 virgil  
1795 but see what im sayin is, he just delusional /  
1796  
1797 rod  
1798 you don't think he's havin a memory about this?  
1799  
1800 virgil  
1801 nah  
1802  
1803 rod  
1804 you think he's just makin it up ^ {gesture}  
1805  
1806 virgil  
1807 he jump from one time frame time settin o min to another=  
1808  
1809 rod  
1810 =yeah=  
1811  
1812 virgil  
1813 he jus talkin bout a doll an he havin another memory so quick {snap} right behin nat talkin bout  
1814 dissy in na head bout three uh foh ( ) tha whol story is jes memory for [memory for memory]  
1815  
1816 rod  
1817 (he had) a couple a different sort uh flashbacks. well, so it may be, it may be that he's makin this  
1818 up, but it may be he's havin a memory=  
1819  
1820 connie  
1821 {sharply} of something  
1822  
1823 rod  
1824 of something that happened, right and this was a wha what he [sed]  
1825  
1826 connie  
1827 [it could] ^ be true, it could be.  
1828  
1829 rod  
1830 it could be. i think this type of thing actually happened historically, you know. the klan most  
1831 definitely tried to rod-imidate black peopl eto keep em from voting after..  
1832  
1833 connie  
1834 specially when he sed somethin about tha hood that theres somethin that (you [woul'da])  
1835  
1836 rod

1837 yeah, the eyeless sockets of a white hood staring at him from the white card.. um, seeing it soar he  
1838 sez, he was caught between a terrible horror and a horrible fascination. so here this airplane, his  
1839 fantasy, right, [is bei]  
1840  
1841 connie  
1842 [spiraling] spiraling  
1843  
1844 rod  
1845 is being used as an instrument of intimidation and terror and so he's caught in between, right. i  
1846 mean this i mean this this propaganda, these leaflets, these cards that are being dropped by the  
1847 plane this is horrible, you know, this is intimidating people, um, ah, i mean that you know but at  
1848 the same time, he's fascinated by the airplane, you know, he's continuing to be fascinated by the  
1849 airplane. it's a crazy sort of memory, or delusion, whichever it is he's havin here, i think, virgil,  
1850 whichever it is.  
1851  
1852 1:08:25.0  
1853  
1854 connie  
1855 (if it is dream would seem where like he0 brought up somethin bout tha hood starin at him from  
1856 the...from tha card and above he saw the plane spiraling gracefully and gleam in the sun's light if  
1857 fiery sword, fiery.  
1858  
1859 rod  
1860 yeah=  
1861  
1862 connie  
1863 =that that seem like somethin .. you wouldnt make up, so (he like)  
1864  
1865 rod  
1866 yeah, i dunno, i dunno. it's a it's a it's a very bizarre and very dramatic delusion either way.  
1867 ALRIGHT, well, who you you want to keep readin? who wants to keep who wants to read on?  
1868 anybody else wanna read [a little bit?]  
1869  
1870 daphne  
1871 [i'll read]  
1872  
1873 rod  
1874 okay, go ahead daphne. we're right there with um the sun was not so high now.  
1875  
1876 daphne  
1877 um, the sun was not so high now and *jefferson* was calling and and gradually he saw three figures  
1878 moving across the curving roll of the field like looked like some doctors all dressed in white and  
1879 *jefferson*, they their coming at last todd thought and he felt such a release of tension within him  
1880 that he thought he would faint-. but no sooner did he close his eyes than he was seized and he was  
1881 struggling with three white men who were for foring  
1882  
1883 rod  
1884 forcing  
1885  
1886 daphne  
1887 forcing his arms into some kind of coat. it wus too much for him. his arms were pinned to his sides  
1888 and as the pain.. [blazed]  
1889  
1890 sophie {?}  
1891 [blazed]  
1892

1893 daphne  
 1894 blazed in his eyes he realized that he it was a straight jacket. whut filthy joke wus this? that ought  
 1895 to that ought to (hold him) mister graves he heard. his total energies seemed focused in his eyes as  
 1896 he searched for the faces. that wus graves, the other two were searched for their faces, wait a  
 1897 minute, the other two wore hospital uni uniforms hospital uniforms. he wus poised between two  
 1898 poles of fear and hate as one called graves saying (he looks kinda purty in that there) suit boys, i'm  
 1899 glad you dropped by. this boy aint- crazy mistuh graves, one of the others sed, he needs sa doctor  
 1900 not us. dont see how you led us way out heah anyway, it may be a joke to you, but your cousin  
 1901 rudolph liable to kill somebody. white fol k or nig niggus, don make no difference. todd saw the  
 1902 man turn red with anger. graves looked down upon him chuckling. this nigguh belongs in a strait  
 1903 jacket too boys, i knowd it tha minute jeff's kid sed something about a nigguh flyer. you all know  
 1904 you cant let the nigguh get up that high without his goin crazy. the nigguh (brain) aint- built right  
 1905  
 1906 sophie  
 1907 nigguh brain  
 1908  
 1909 daphne  
 1910 nigguh brain aint- built right for high altitude. todd watched the drawing re  
 1911  
 1912 virgil  
 1913 drawling  
 1914  
 1915 daphne  
 1916 drawling red face, filling that all the unnamed horror and obsceneties that he had ever imagined  
 1917 stood materialized before him. let's git outta here, one of tha attendants sed. todd saw the othuh  
 1918 reach toward him, realizing for the first time that he lay upon a stretcher as he yelled dont put your  
 1919 hands on me. they ddrew back in surprise. what's that you say nigguh? whats that you say nigguh?  
 1920 asked graves. he did not answer and thought graves foot wus aimed at his head. it landed in his  
 1921 chest and he could not hardly breathe. he coughed helplessly seeing graves lips stretched out  
 1922 stretched toward stretched taut over his yellow teeth an tried to shift his head. it wus as though a  
 1923 half-dead fly {ragged claws scuttling} wus dragging slowly across.. his face and a bomb seemed  
 1924 to burst within him. a bomb seemed to burst within him. blasts of his face...aah {clears throat  
 1925 twice} a blast of hot hysterical laughter tore from his chest. {coughs loudly three times} causing  
 1926 his eyes to pop and he felt that the veins in his neck would surely burst and a part of him stood  
 1927 behind it all watching the surprise in graves' red face and his own hysteria. {coughing} he thought  
 1928 he would never stop. he would laugh himself to death. it rang in his ears like *jefferson's* laughter  
 1929 and he looked for him, centering his eyes desperately upon his face. {turning page, coughing} i  
 1930 should probly get somebody else to read (soon).  
 1931  
 1932 rod  
 1933 thanks daphne  
 1934  
 1935 daphne  
 1936 as though somehow had become his sole salvation in an insane world of outrage and humiliation.  
 1937 it brought a certain relief. he was suddenly aware that although his body was still con contorted, it  
 1938 was an echo that no longer rang in his ears. he heard *jefferson* voice with grattitude. somebody  
 1939 else can read.  
 1940  
 1941 rod  
 1942 who's up? anybody who wants ta read anybody? i will (if you wish). mistuh graves, tha army done  
 1943 tol im not ta leave is plane. nigguh, army ah no, you gettin off mah land. that airplane can stay cuz  
 1944 it wus paid for by taxpayers money. but you gettin off and dead or alive it dont make no difference  
 1945 ta me. todd wus beyond it now. lost in a world of anguish. jeff, graves sed, you and teddy come  
 1946 grab hold, i wunt you to take this heah black eagle over ta that nigguh airfield and leave im.  
 1947 *jefferson* and the boy approached him silently. he looked away, realizin and doubting at once that  
 1948 only they could release him from his overpowering sense of isolation. they bent for the stretcher.

1949 one of the attendants movved toward teddy. think you can manage it boy? i think i can suh, teddy  
 1950 sed. well you better go behind then and let you paw go ahead so's ta keep that leg elevated. he saw  
 1951 the white men walking ahead as *jefferson* and the boy carried him along in silence. then they were  
 1952 pausing and he felt a hand wiping his face and it was as though he had been lifted out of his world  
 1953 of isolation, back into the world of men. a new kind of communication flowed between the man  
 1954 the boy and himself. they moved him gently. far away he heard a mockingbird liquidly calling. he  
 1955 raised his eyes seeing a buzzard poised unmoving in space. for a moment the whole afternoon  
 1956 seemed suspended and he waited for the horror to seize him again. then, like a song within his  
 1957 head he heard the boy's soft humming and heard saw the dark bird glide into the sun and glow like  
 1958 a bird of flaming gold...  
 1959  
 1960 {with the exception of virgil, who sat back some moments ago, no longer following along with the  
 1961 text, everyone sits back and exhales--whew}  
 1962  
 1963 rod  
 1964 {gestures}  
 1965  
 1966 randy  
 1967 insulting, very insulting  
 1968  
 1969 rod  
 1970 tell me, tell me tell me.  
 1971  
 1972 randy  
 1973 insulting. gonna call somebody the N word, nigguh.  
 1974  
 1975 rod  
 1976 over and over, right?  
 1977  
 1978 randy  
 1979 that wus back in tha days when it wus .. segregation things. jim crow. insulting. its insulting story.  
 1980  
 1981 ben  
 1982 seems ta me like tha whole thing wus a delusion=  
 1983  
 1984 randy  
 1985 {toward virgil} insulting!  
 1986  
 1987 ben  
 1988 except fuh tha crash. and um the little booy an *jefferson* takin im back to town.  
 1989  
 1990 rod  
 1991 tha whole thing seemed ta be a delusion?  
 1992  
 1993 virgil  
 1994 tha only part that caught me right there when they sed they wus puttin im in a straight jacket den  
 1995 he came out of sttraight jacket back ta his uh di - not in tha right context - back ta his dignity  
 1996  
 1997 rod  
 1998 MM  
 1999  
 2000 virgil  
 2001 ya know right they where it say it would got back to is uh=  
 2002  
 2003 rod  
 2004 ={leans forward} out of is isola[tion yeah?]

2005  
2006 virgil  
2007 [his isol]ation. maybe they turned him [loose.] maybe they turned im out of the straight jacket an  
2008 let im live cus they found out he wus from tha army  
2009  
2010  
2011 rod  
2012 [(i dunno man)] maybe they did maybe they did, i dunno, but i think your right, the last part of  
2013 this.. is is horrifying, right?  
2014  
2015 virgil  
2016 and then another part is uh whats the whats the little boy's name?  
2017  
2018 rod  
2019 teddy  
2020  
2021 virgil  
2022 teddy, he tol teddy he belongs in a straight jacket too/.  
2023  
2024 rod  
2025 huh  
2026  
2027 virgil  
2028 you remember that part?  
2029  
2030 rod  
2031 no i didnt remember that [one.]  
2032  
2033 virgil  
2034 it wus back in tha story [(see)]  
2035  
2036 rod  
2037 that wus back a while ago?  
2038  
2039 1:19:57.5  
2040  
2041 virgil  
2042 and they say cuz uh cuz he put is foot in is chest.  
2043  
2044 rod  
2045 graves kicked im, right, graves kicked im. so, an randy, the whole, its hard, its hard ta read this  
2046 right, so ellison, the author, is writing about that time [right]  
2047  
2048 randy  
2049 [yeah]  
2050  
2051 rod  
2052 of of rampant racism an so we get this, we get todd who is worried about racism through the  
2053 whole story and then here at the end, it almost seemed like his worst nightmares, his worst fears,  
2054 come true=  
2055  
2056 virgil  
2057 =but you see [how]  
2058  
2059  
2060 rod

2061 [right]  
 2062  
 2063 virgil  
 2064 [(but you see how]  
 2065  
 2066 rod  
 2067 [(  
 2068  
 2069 virgil  
 2070 but djou see how indecent he wus actin toward tha start toward two black men and then he got  
 2071 treated worser by a white man.  
 2072  
 2073 rod  
 2074 much worse, [right]  
 2075  
 2076 virgil  
 2077 [much] worse cuz he got jumped on. he wanted to jump on mistuh graves, [but]  
 2078  
 2079 rod  
 2080 [thats right]  
 2081  
 2082 virgil  
 2083 he got jumped on.. by. mistuh graves himself.  
 2084  
 2085 rod  
 2086 its interesting how things turned around there, right, when when when graves comes up, and the  
 2087 two people from the hospital--do you remember early on when they sed, *jefferson* told im the men  
 2088 from the hospital were lookin for graves' cousin er somethin like that.. his crazy cousin, yeah,  
 2089 cousin rudolph, who had escaped from a mental hospital, right and who was a who wus like a  
 2090 killuh  
 2091  
 2092 virgil  
 2093 didn ah tell you dhoh, it wus all revolved around mental illness?  
 2094  
 2095 rod  
 2096 it's funny how that works, [right (uh)]  
 2097  
 2098 virgil  
 2099 [most] people in this world (that are advanced) is mostly manic depressed bipolar people on high..  
 2100 advancement in tha mind. He wuz, you gotta be you know you gotta be more intelligent than  
 2101 anything ta fly a plane cuz you got ta have accurate skills and all, elevation of tha mind, tha's why  
 2102 i knew that he wus either goin manic a little bit over to the insanity part when he crashed that  
 2103 plane, cu he wahavin too many delusional=  
 2104  
 2105 rod  
 2106 =flyin too hi[gh]  
 2107  
 2108 virgil  
 2109 [high]  
 2110  
 2111 rod  
 2112 an too fast  
 2113  
 2114 virgil  
 2115 plus he stories kep jumpin from story ta story, dat only whut he wus thankin about. an it ya know  
 2116 he wus havin. it probly got either he git hurt from that.. from that crash

2117  
2118 rod  
2119 yeah  
2120  
2121 virgil  
2122 or he wus havin episode. he coulda had a episode and crashed that plane. ya nevuh know.  
2123  
2124 rod  
2125 coulda been, you know or some combination of things. right remember what happens you know,  
2126 he's lying there hurt, finally he thinks the doctors are coming, he's gonna get rescued and the first  
2127 thing they do is put im in a straight jacket / ?  
2128  
2129 virgil  
2130 yeah  
2131  
2132 rod  
2133 right? i mean how must that've felt for him? it's [his]  
2134  
2135 randy  
2136 [( \_ )]  
2137  
2138 rod  
2139 nightmare come true. n here's this racist this bigot redneck you know spoutin this you know  
2140 profanity and kickin im in the side an you know this graves sez all those things that we talked  
2141 about. member todd wus worried about uh how white america, a lot of racist white america didnt  
2142 think a black men could fly? and thats whut mister graves you know thats what graves sez to im.  
2143 you know it you know uh {reading} his brain aint- up for it, and blah blah blah. um he wasnt good  
2144 enough.. and then so what happens ta todd? its this part daphne read for us, its as though a half  
2145 dead fly was dragging slowly across his face, a bomb seemed to burst within him. blasts of hot  
2146 hysterical laughter tore from is chest causing his eyes to pop and he felt that the veins in his neck  
2147 would surely burst. so he jus lays there laughing and laughing as though he thought he would  
2148 never stop. he thought he would laugh imself to death. what happened?  
2149  
2150 connie  
2151 it went from one story to another story. then to another story, it it was changin. story was  
2152 changing.  
2153  
2154 rod  
2155 wull, its like he lost it, right it's like it wus all too much. an he jus started laughin. have you ever  
2156 been ina situation that wus soo bad, so crazy that you just that you jus all you can do is laugh  
2157 about it. and that even seems to make lightof it. he sez he wus lost in a world of anguish. you  
2158 know all of his fears about the worst possible ything that acuold happen about being humiliated an  
2159  
2160 connie  
2161 had come true  
2162  
2163 rod  
2164 and threatened, it seemed to have come true. and his response wus to you know its this suddenly  
2165 he started ta laugh. he started ta laugh about it... and its its interesting like virgil sed, suddenly he  
2166 wus looking for the voice of *jefferson*, right, the one he had been kinda downin throughout the  
2167 whole story as this kind of ignorant peasant man, all the sudden, he wanted *jefferson* back and he  
2168 felt like he could connect with *jefferson*. an it seems like *jefferson* and teddy came to is rescue,  
2169 right?  
2170  
2171 randy  
2172 yeah



2173  
2174 rod  
2175 but they picked im up they picked im up on that stretcher and theyre gonna carry im off. they didnt  
2176 abandon him to those other men who wouldve done who knows what to im. we know that graves  
2177 is a imean he's a pretty bad dude, he's a bad guy, right?  
2178  
2179 sandra  
2180 mmhhmm  
2181  
2182 rod  
2183 i dunno. whaddaya say whaddaya think? the end of this story's pretty rough, right. you sed that it's  
2184 pretty insulting  
2185  
2186 randy  
2187 very insulting. very insulting.shouldnt have done that guy like that  
2188  
2189 rod  
2190 shouldnt have done that guy like that.  
2191  
2192 randy  
2193 you could tell that he wus what they call bipolar  
2194  
2195 rod  
2196 ya think so?  
2197  
2198 randy  
2199 i think he's bipolar  
2200  
2201 rod  
2202 which guy? graves or the pilot?  
2203  
2204 randy  
2205 i'll say the pilot [( )]  
2206  
2207 rod  
2208 [whad]dayou think about graves? so whaddayou think of him?..  
2209  
2210 randy  
2211 bipolar i guess.  
2212  
2213 rod  
2214 um... he clearly.. uh carries the.. he's a character that represents the racist attitudes of uh in a way  
2215 the racist white south at the time. even the klan we were talkin about earlier. we know he had been  
2216 involved in these killings, right? he spouted that racist talk fer sure. so i dunno, wus todd wus todd  
2217 right all along? we kinda been talkin about how he seemed ta be paranoid, he seemed ta be  
2218 delusional. but then all that seems ta come true. all o that nightmare seems to come true for im.  
2219 whaddaya think?... i dunno, everybody's pretty everybody's pretty subdued  
2220  
2221 1:26:54.2  
2222  
2223 rod  
2224 after that.  
2225  
2226 randy  
2227 i find this story ta be very insulting. very insulting.  
2228

2229 rod  
2230 why do you think he wrote it then? why do you think=  
2231  
2232 randy  
2233 =ralph ellison?  
2234  
2235 rod  
2236 yeah, why do you think he wrote it?  
2237  
2238 randy  
2239 i dont know, but you can understand a real story about um  
2240  
2241 connie  
2242 racism  
2243  
2244 randy  
2245 racism. [C]  
2246  
2247 rod  
2248 you think its very much its a story about racism, right  
2249  
2250  
2251 randy  
2252 yeah  
2253  
2254 rod  
2255 why do you think an author might write a story like this about racism? i mean it's not fun to read. i  
2256 mean parts of it are entertaining or interesting. but its a difficult story.  
2257  
2258 connie  
2259 maybe he wanted to tell how days which really were back then.  
2260  
2261 rod  
2262 i think that that makes sense, i think he's trying to let us know how things were...so what do we do  
2263 with that?  
2264  
2265 connie  
2266 it really doesnt tell you how. the story doesnt end, it just keep on an keep on. it doesnt really have  
2267 an ending.  
2268  
2269 rod  
2270 well whaddayou think happens next? thats one a tha things we can do is ask that question.  
2271 whaddayou think happens next?..  
2272  
2273 connie  
2274 thats a puzzle, thats a puzzle  
2275  
2276 rod  
2277 thats kind of a a puzzle right, but i think youre right-it doesnt have a definite ending, you know,  
2278 [(we can think about)] what happens next?  
2279  
2280 1:28:52.8  
2281  
2282 sandra  
2283 [they ju um] um they um they um whas hi name, graves and *jefferson* um they doin lotta  
2284 (escalatin) between tha while todd is there and thats not helpin todd at all noway cuz he (theyuh)

2285 doin tha illusion in his mind, and so wha happened he just gon have keep gon have tha delusion  
2286 jus goin through his mind thas tha whole story jes got it {gestures} goin (forward) the way he's  
2287 happening. he jes got it re re (written) tha's happenin through his mind. an they jes wrote tha story  
2288 jus saying whut everything that happened between tha um flyers and pilot an everything all like  
2289 that. an he jes go ahead and you know (red it)  
2290  
2291 rod  
2292 do you think that todd will keep flying? will he be well enough to keep flying?  
2293  
2294 sandra  
2295 aahh thass a part we don know [{laugh}]  
2296  
2297 rod  
2298 we DONT / know \. that's right thats right. well what what what do the rest of you think? can you  
2299 imagine that he'll go back and complete his training?  
2300  
2301 randy  
2302 huh uh  
2303  
2304 Group (chorus)  
2305 {murmurs}  
2306  
2307 rod  
2308 we don't know thats true we dont know. what would keep him from it?  
2309  
2310 connie  
2311 himself  
2312  
2313 rod  
2314 ye:ah.. well he's got a couple of problems now right? one is, remember what graves sed, you YOU  
2315 get out of here...uh, teddy and *jefferson* are gonna carry im back to the airfield, but the planes  
2316 staying here, graves sed. (cuz its a non, you know) graves obviously didnt believe that... the  
2317 tuskegee airmen should be flying planes, and uh you know [he wus one of those]  
2318  
2319 randy  
2320 [but they] did because  
2321  
2322 rod  
2323 =but they did  
2324  
2325 randy  
2326 but they did, they don ca, they don wanna be called niggers, but guess what, they did it in theyuh  
2327 o:own / way \. thass why america's so proud of those tuskegee airmen, and alabama and tuskegee  
2328 alabama is very much proud of them.  
2329  
2330 rod  
2331 =extremely proud  
2332  
2333 randy  
2334 because they honored them with a (doctoral degree) with a (merit) to show what its like that a  
2335 black perosn can fly a plane  
2336  
2337 Group (chorus)  
2338 {nodding} mmhmm  
2339  
2340 rod

2341 [i think]  
 2342  
 2343 randy  
 2344 {forcefully} [there's a lot] of history behind that!  
 2345  
 2346 rod  
 2347 mmhmm. i think that's part of the answer i think exactly whutchoo sed is part of the reason why a  
 2348 [ralph ellison]  
 2349  
 2350 randy  
 2351 [they won]  
 2352  
 2353 rod  
 2354 would have would have written this story [is to show us]  
 2355  
 2356 randy  
 2357 {loudly} the tuskegee airmen won! they won, they won their, they got their [honors (on the ?)]  
 2358  
 2359 rod  
 2360 [an whut / did / they win?]  
 2361  
 2362 randy  
 2363 {to daphne} sorry {?} {brings clenched fist to table top} they got they honors brother, i'm serious.  
 2364 they got those honors cus they deserve it. the president of the united states honored them because  
 2365 they um because they served and showed the rod-egrity and they were the first black people to  
 2366 have fought in world war two.  
 2367  
 2368 rod  
 2369 they they [won even though]  
 2370  
 2371 randy  
 2372 {loudly} [the fightin ninety-nines]  
 2373  
 2374 rod  
 2375 s'right. they won even though they had all those obstacles. even though there were so many people  
 2376 like graves=  
 2377  
 2378 randy  
 2379 =yeah  
 2380  
 2381 rod  
 2382 =who didnt think they could do it [or should do it]  
 2383  
 2384 randy  
 2385 [no' only that] no' only that, uhm, whadjer your name?  
 2386  
 2387 rod  
 2388 .ROD'ney  
 2389  
 2390 randy  
 2391 =ronnee, no'only that uh even eleanor roosevelt the pres, first lady of the president of the united  
 2392 staes doneflied (in) the plane. iss jes iss / black history / by / itself.  
 2393  
 2394 rod  
 2395 sure!  
 2396

2397 randy  
2398 black history speaks for itself. i'm sorry that's a great story but i realized that the tuskegee (airmen)  
2399 deserve that honor.  
2400  
2401 rod  
2402 mmhhmm  
2403  
2404 randy  
2405 an i know somebody who who knows about that honor, iss ma friend, \_\_\_\_\_ /. an he he tell  
2406 some great stories about how he fallin in a plane.  
2407  
2408 rod  
2409 yeah.  
2410  
2411 rod  
2412 they won, they got the honors.  
2413  
2414 rod  
2415 {nodding} i think it may be that [thats part]  
2416  
2417 randy  
2418 thats whut makes tuskegee so great.  
2419  
2420 rod  
2421 i think that may be part of why ellison wrote this story is to sh is to help show us just how hard it  
2422 wus and just what those pilots had to overcome=  
2423  
2424 randy  
2425 =an i realize there aint- nothin wrong with tuskegee.  
2426  
2427 rod  
2428 {nodding}  
2429  
2430 randy  
2431 nothin wrong with tuskegee. i lak tha town, so there you go.  
2432  
2433 rod  
2434 now, lemmee ask you this? is this a is this a hard question to ask? uh  
2435  
2436 randy  
2437 {softly} aah:oo:h  
2438  
2439 rod  
2440 are there still uhm  
2441  
2442 randy  
2443 iss a hard ending  
2444  
2445 rod  
2446 its a hard ending  
2447  
2448 randy  
2449 its a hard ending  
2450  
2451 rod

2452 its a really hard ending to the story. i mean, did todd lose it? is he is he lost his mind? i dunno. he  
 2453 kinda went hysterical at the end, is he gonna be able ta get it together an go train some more? i  
 2454 dunno /. are there still um people like graves around in macon county and tuskegee?  
 2455  
 2456 connie  
 2457 well, we don really know that one, but...it could be  
 2458  
 2459 rod  
 2460 its kinda scary ta think about idn it? i dunno.  
 2461  
 2462 randy  
 2463 lak I sed, macon county repeats speaks for itself. {drops hands on table in a gesture of finality}  
 2464 sorry to say so, but its its da truth.  
 2465  
 2466 rod  
 2467 =now lemme see if i i under[stand]  
 2468  
 2469 randy  
 2470 [(iz watched the {??})] {looking at daphne}  
 2471  
 2472 rod  
 2473 is what you mean is what you mean by that that we don't need a story like this? that ralph ellison  
 2474 didnt need to write a story like this?  
 2475  
 2476 randy  
 2477 he didn need to write a story like that, he should write somethin thas even be'tter  
 2478  
 2479 rod  
 2480 mmm  
 2481  
 2482 randy  
 2483 about tuskegee airmen, about black people, who made it famous, like you know, madame cj  
 2484 walker  
 2485  
 2486 rod  
 2487 mmhhmm  
 2488  
 2489  
 2490 randy  
 2491 like madame cj walker had great ( \_ ). madame cj walker. and also george washington carver  
 2492 who made discoveries with soybeans and peanuts.  
 2493  
 2494 rod  
 2495 right, there's lots of [good history] here.  
 2496  
 2497 randy  
 2498 [and sweet potatoes]  
 2499  
 2500 rod  
 2501 absolutely  
 2502  
 2503 randy  
 2504 and um booker t washington, how he made uh was tha founder of um tuskege, was tha president  
 2505 of tuskegee uh university. AND he would serve as the founders of the father of the tuskegee  
 2506 airmen. he founded tuskegee alabama.  
 2507

2508 rod  
2509 you know that moton field is named after the second president of tuskegee university, moton was  
2510 the [name of] a long-time president.  
2511  
2512 randy  
2513 [moton]  
2514  
2515 rod  
2516 yeah. moton field {gesturing, pointing} where the [airmen trained]  
2517  
2518 randy  
2519 [now its changed] to tuskegee airmen  
2520  
2521 rod  
2522 and now theyve got a new monument down there has anybody been down there to see it?  
2523  
2524 daphne  
2525 yeah i did.  
2526  
2527 rod  
2528 yeah, ta see the airfield, it's a [pretty] neat  
2529  
2530 daphne  
2531 iss nice /.  
2532  
2533 rod  
2534 i know, i like it a lot. im glad they [(put it in)].  
2535  
2536 randy  
2537 im gonna go there one day.  
2538  
2539 rod  
2540 yeah? ya should. should.  
2541  
2542 randy  
2543 see some good airplanes.  
2544  
2545 rod  
2546 now, you guys tell me somethin, do you think ralph ellison, i mean is he a respecer of the  
2547 tuskegee airmen?..  
2548  
2549 randy  
2550 no  
2551  
2552 rod  
2553 you don think so?  
2554  
2555 randy  
2556 i dunno. he's a author i know.  
2557  
2558 rod  
2559 right  
2560  
2561 randy  
2562 he made some good stories  
2563

2564 rod  
2565 yeah, he wrote uh invisible man and he wrote short stories. he wrote that story boy on the train  
2566  
2567 {virgil re-enters the room}  
2568  
2569 rod  
2570 that we read earlier remember when we read earlier about those two brothers on the on the uh  
2571 train?  
2572  
2573 randy  
2574 s'been delusion  
2575  
2576 rod  
2577 well thah one [wus about mama that wus changin jobs goin to a new town in oklahoma.]  
2578  
2579 [{randy and virgil discuss virgil's absence}]  
2580  
2581 rod  
2582 well this wus a difficult story i think, it wus a difficult [story an you know the language that he  
2583 uses, tha...]  
2584  
2585 [{other end of the table, continued side discussion}]  
2586  
2587 rod  
2588 alright, are we bout i guess we're about through fuh tha day. everybody, how's everybody fillin  
2589 before we quit. {members get up to leave} now hold on wait a minute, i want to make sure we're  
2590 all doin okay before we go. are we all doin okay before we go?  
2591  
2592 virgil  
2593 oh yeah  
2594  
2595 randy  
2596 nodding  
2597  
2598 {nodding and general agreement from most. no reaction from sandra?}  
2599  
2600 rod  
2601 alright well then we'll get back to it again next week. we'll see how we're fillin about this story and  
2602 we'll start another one. {to sophie} i hope that you'll be back to join us if youre off monday. enjoy  
2603 your classes otherwise.  
2604  
2605 sandra  
2606 you want us to keep these?  
2607  
2608 rod  
2609 you certainly may



1     **Session Five**

2     (00:02:00)

3     randy

4     Voice

5

6     rod

7     We:ll I'm sure she would like to hear that.

8

9     randy

10    [YE::AH]

11

12    rod

13    [Is this yours]

14

15    randy

16    No.

17

18    rod

19    Ok .. I'll move it.

20

21    randy

22    .h I have wonderful great voice myself?

23

24    rod

25    Do you sing as well as a/ct?

26

27    randy

28    Yes.

29

30    rod

31    We:ll look at that?.. I didn't know that.

32

33    randy

34    We:ll .. I sing gospel. [(uuhh)]

35

36    rod

37    [You sing gospel]

38

39    randy

40    [Gosp::el]

41

42

43    rod

44    [You sing gospel in the church.]

45

46    randy

47    [SOMETIME.. u::hm ..] gospel .. but. bututbututbututbutut . but when I'm in the place.I'm.. a

48    sing secular songs

49

50    rod

51    Yeah .. ok. “”

52

53 randy  
54 Secular songs sometimes (sumitbret)..you know.. I sing BOTH of them..but .. I don't know..( I just  
55 sing both of em different I sing OO::WWWW) {randy appears excited}  
56  
57 rod  
58 HA HA HA HA HA? . Let me go gather up the rest of them.  
59  
60 {At 00:00:41 the int walks out and randy sits quietly alone in the room until 00:01:03 when he  
61 starts talking}  
62  
63 randy  
64 I want to go to karaoke... di dup there did dup there in Auburn  
65 {daphne walks in}  
66  
67 daphne  
68 H:ey there  
69  
70 randy  
71 Hey.  
72  
73 daphne  
74 .. How are YOU this morning  
75  
76 randy  
77 I'm doing f:ine?  
78  
79 daphne  
80 That's good  
81  
82 randy  
83 I see you brought you bottle of water.  
84  
85  
86 daphne  
87 Yeah(.) uhhum ("")  
88  
89 randy  
90 M::AN  
91  
92 daphne  
93 You sleepy.  
94  
95 randy  
96 NO NO(.) (I de) I forgot that ladies' name(.) that she sung love with Diana Ross love hang:over(.)  
97 and she she has a wonderful outstanding voice  
98  
99 daphne  
100 Uh huh ("")  
101 {sophie enters the room to sit down}  
102 randy  
103 I said that girl can sandra:ANG?  
104  
105 daphne  
106 Uh huh ("")  
107  
108 randy

109 Now I don't know(.) She she SING LIKE DIANA ROSS, SHE LOOK LIKE DIANA ROSS, she  
110 look like Diana R:oss.  
111  
112 daphne  
113 Uh huh! {chuckling}  
114  
115 randy  
116 I don't know who that lady is?  
117  
118 daphne  
119 Uh huh?  
120  
121 randy  
122 But she sang(.) love(.) love hangover(..) (I un:nno) (..)  
123 {slaps the table} Im kina Im um [ok] (..) this lady got voi this lady was a nice voice I thought she  
124 had a snobby attitude BUT NO .h but this lady got as wonderful voice  
125  
126 daphne  
127 [Huh huh?] {chuckling}  
128 (02:00-4:00)  
129  
130 randy  
131 I DON'T KNOW WHERE SHE HAD COME FROM. {Hits table with excitement}  
132  
133 daphne  
134 Uh huh.  
135  
136 randy  
137 I don't.. I get the impression. I get the impression she gone (um::ga::um) gonna be on [American  
138 Idol one of these ol days]  
139  
140 daphne  
141 [Uh huh]  
142  
143 randy  
144 Hm Ha Hm[Hm Hm Hm Hm]:: {Laughing}  
145  
146 daphne  
147 [Ha Ha... Ha?]  
148  
149 {Both randy and daphne were laughing and engaging in conversation, but sophie seems  
150 uninterested in the ongoing conversation and figits with her hair and clothes}  
151  
152 randy  
153 I think she gone be on American Idol one of these days sweetheart. I don't know?  
154  
155 daphne  
156 Uh huh.  
157  
158 daphne  
159 Wher. where she at?  
160  
161 randy  
162 Where she at?. Man she in the back.. doig her i wen to her office,( ima ima ima come to her) and  
163 say Honey you got a wonderful voice  
164

165 daphne  
166 Uh Huh  
167  
168 randy  
169 Before I leave this place imma say this to het you got a wonderful voice you shocked the daylight  
170 out of me  
171  
172 daphne  
173 Uh huh  
174  
175 randy  
176 If yall excuse me i gotta get my cell pho:ne.  
177  
178 daphne  
179 Yeah  
180  
181 randy  
182 I'll be right back.. its some muffins right there you can get some  
183  
184 daphne  
185 Okay... you want some muffins?  
186  
187 sophie  
188 Uh huh  
189  
190 {daphne and sophie get up to get muffins together}  
191  
192 daphne  
193 He aint talkin bout Tuskegee no more  
194  
195 sophie  
196 Who?  
197  
198 daphne  
199 Randy  
200  
201 { daphne and sophie leave sight of the camera and utterances are heard of conversation they then  
202 sit back at the table and eat their muffins}  
203  
204 (02:57:3:06)  
205  
206 (03:07)  
207 {sophie and daphne make their way back to the table and partake in their muffins}  
208  
209 (03:39:04:00)  
210  
211 daphne  
212 Hey. {Waving at person entering the room}  
213  
214 connie  
215 H:I  
216  
217 sophie  
218 Hey  
219  
220 connie

221 Hi  
222  
223 daphne  
224 Hey CONNIE  
225  
226 connie  
227 Hey  
228  
229 daphne  
230 How you doing  
231  
232 connie  
233 Good  
234  
235 daphne  
236 Alright  
237  
238 { A few indistinct groan and chatter is made as three more additional participants make their way  
239 into the session}  
240  
241 (04:00:6:00)  
242  
243 rod  
244 Uhm We missed some between here and there. Randy was here, Eli/jah was on his way... Where  
245 is uh where is Betsy? Anybody seen Betsy?  
246  
247 {A few participants shake their head to say no}  
248  
249 rod  
250 Not today, ok  
251  
252 rod  
253 Alright  
254  
255 { randy enters the room}  
256  
257 rod  
258 Do you uhm, do you think you will be okay finding another seat or do you need Ben to switch  
259 with you?  
260  
261 randy  
262 [Im fine.] He's fine  
263  
264 rod  
265 [Okay]  
266  
267 {Ben moves to another seat}  
268  
269 rod  
270 Excuse me  
271  
272 randy  
273 Whats up yall..[ Whats up everybody]  
274  
275 Ben  
276 [Hey yall. Im fine]

277  
278 daphne  
279 We gave my father[. We] gave my father a real big birthday party this weekend. He's 85, he just  
280 turned 85  
281  
282 randy  
283 [Huh]  
284  
285 randy  
286 Your[ fat\her]. It was F/un?  
287  
288 daphne  
289 [Uh huh] Yeah  
290  
291 randy  
292 My grandma had turned[ 8/6.]  
293  
294 daphne  
295 [Uh Huh]  
296  
297 randy  
298 That's wonderful, that's wonderful, that's wonderful to turn 86.  
299  
300 daphne  
301 Uh huh  
302  
303 randy  
304 h.. got a picture of her in there to/o  
305  
306 daphne  
307 Uh Huh  
308  
309 randy  
310 She looks wel/l  
311  
312 daphne  
313 My daddy looks well to\o  
314  
315  
316 (06:00:8:00)  
317  
318 randy  
319 I'll be 45 in the next two yearsr.. in the next, in the next two years i'll be 45. Can you believe that?  
320  
321  
322 daphne  
323 Ye:a cuz im 5/0  
324  
325 randy  
326 Im 40 you know 45 and.. the next. the next few years i dont got long way to go before i turn 50  
327  
328 daphne  
329 Ha Ha Ha. Im 51  
330  
331 randy  
332 51?[.. Y]ou dont look that old?

333  
334 daphne  
335 [Yep]  
336  
337 randy  
338 YOU DONT LOOK THAT OLD?  
339  
340 daphne  
341 Turned 51 in July  
342  
343 randy  
344 You dont look that old  
345  
346 daphne  
347 That's what they say?  
348  
349 randy  
350 You kinda young for my age..[ young chubby, cute,( gorteous)]  
351  
352 daphne  
353 [ha ha ha, thank you, ha ha ]  
354  
355 randy  
356 So..I dont know about that man  
357  
358 sophie  
359 Are those your real teeth?  
360  
361 daphne  
362 Uh huh..yep  
363  
364 randy  
365 h. Ummm ..that means this gentlemen has to find himself a jo/b  
366  
367 daphne  
368 Huh  
369  
370 randy  
371 Cuz..Not to say im not a worker, im a, i just need to find something to do.. to compete. Im tryin to  
372 bring some money  
373  
374 daphne  
375 yeah... ya check, when does your check come?  
376  
377 randy  
378 On the 3rd of the month.  
379  
380 daphne  
381 On the 3rd? Mine come on the 1st  
382  
383 randy  
384 Yeah.. im suppose to get gotta get extra cuz  
385  
386 sandra  
387 [connie your friend know you're here. your friend?]  
388

389 connie  
390 yeah  
391  
392 rod  
393 [okay, ALRIGHT THANKS, Alr\ight every:body. How ya'll doin today?}  
394  
395 daphne  
396 We went to the bathroom  
397  
398 {A few participants respond saying good}  
399  
400 rod  
401 Okay good how has your week been?  
402  
403 {good}  
404  
405 rod  
406 Did you get you a muffin? They got peach and blueberry in there today ha ha .. if you're  
407 interested.  
408  
409 rod  
410 The weeks been ok randy, I know you've had a busy one\  
411  
412 randy  
413 I[ d:ɪd]  
414  
415 rod  
416 [That's what] you told me  
417  
418 randy  
419 Ye:ah busy  
420  
421 rod  
422 Anybody else had a busy week, a good we/ek  
423  
424 daphne  
425 we had, they went, they celebrated my father's 85th birthday  
426  
427 (08:00:10:00)  
428 rod  
429 Is that ri;ght? Eighty-fi:ve  
430  
431 daphne  
432 and he's in good health,[ good health]  
433  
434 rod  
435 [Well FANTASTIC]  
436  
437 daphne  
438 You'd think he's a young[ person the way] he gets around  
439  
440 rod  
441 [Is that right?]  
442  
443 daphne  
444 [he he]



445  
446 rod  
447 [Go:od, that good] Ok, was that fun a good birthday alright  
448  
449 daphne  
450 Yeah, it was real nice, uh huh, he got a whole lot of money[ and presents and everything]  
451  
452 rod  
453 AW NICE?  
454  
455 daphne  
456 He got hundreds of dollars  
457  
458 rod  
459 ha ha, i connie:now he was [ excited right]  
460  
461 daphne  
462 [yeah uh huh]  
463  
464 rod  
465 Well GOOD, that good, 85 that quite a, a milestone, i can't, i can't imagine 8\5.[ TURNING 85]  
466 {Ben sneezes in the background}  
467  
468 daphne  
469 [and my mother.]. My mother was 92.  
470  
471 rod  
472 Oh my good/ness  
473  
474 daphne  
475 He he  
476  
477 rod  
478 well..they both[ lived, lived a nice] lo:ng ti\me  
479  
480 daphne  
481 ye:ah.. UH HUH  
482  
483 rod  
484 SO FAR. Right.[ So far]  
485  
486 daphne  
487 [yeah] My mother's gone. she passed  
488  
489 rod  
490 How long ago did she pass  
491  
492 daphne  
493 She passed.. It's been two years  
494  
495 rod  
496 A couple years.. okay, well okay alright,alright well i'm glad your dad celebrated his birthday,  
497 that exciting. That's good. Th'ats good.  
498  
499 daphne  
500 Yeah

501  
502 rod  
503 Anybody else.. have something going on down this week?  
504  
505 randy  
506 Not too bad.  
507  
508 rod  
509 Not too bad? Ok  
510  
511 randy  
512 I'm, I'm kinda lonesome in the house though.  
513  
514 rod  
515 yeah  
516  
517 randy  
518 During the day i get kinda little lonesome, very lon\some  
519  
520 rod  
521 y\eah  
522  
523 randy  
524 Ion ion, my dad.. i just a... i dont feel too.. I don't know its a l\ong story. i-on-know  
525 {randy seemed a little down in spirit when mentioning this}  
526  
527 rod  
528 Well, well  
529  
530 randy  
531 Since my momma had been gone you know my mom had been gone for a while so. I got the house  
532 to myself  
533  
534 daphne  
535 So you lonesome when you're by yourself huh?  
536  
537 randy  
538 Yeah Im lonesome.  
539  
540 rod  
541 Well I'm glad you come here ha ha ha. On Mondays at least we can to sit together and .. talk and  
542 visit and READ.. and all that.  
543  
544 randy  
545 That's what I been doi\ng.  
546  
547 rod  
548 okay...um. i guess Betsy's not here today I haven't seen h\er and Virgil said he didn't want to come  
549 today..um he said that there was some, he was feeling like there was some controver\sy  
550  
551 (10:00:12:00)  
552  
553 rod  
554 ...Recent\ly. So. but. So I wanted to ask ya'll HOW HAVE YA'LL BEEN FEELING last week  
555  
556 daphne

557 Oh Go/od  
558  
559 rod  
560 Well ..Oh well [G/ood]  
561  
562  
563 randy  
564 [Well It it wa]s good the rehearsal was very very busy  
565  
566 rod  
567 Very busy..yeah ver.ok  
568  
569 randy  
570 So we're goin to. we're going to resume in January  
571  
572 rod  
573 Ok  
574  
575 randy  
576 Rehearse in [January]  
577  
578 rod  
579 [Gonna go back] to it in January  
580  
581 randy  
582 yeah  
583  
584 rod  
585 Ok  
586  
587 randy  
588 Suppose to take. suppose to take a vacation um next month but uh. i dont know something had  
589 came up i dont know what's goin on im tryin to figure out what im gonna do for. head for chicago.  
590 head for chicago for a wh\ile  
591  
592 rod  
593 Ri\ght..  
594  
595 randy  
596 Uh  
597  
598 rod  
599 Well .h.. Have yall had any thoughts about um the story we finished up last week remember we  
600 finished up [that um]  
601  
602 randy  
603 [Flying Home]  
604  
605 rod  
606 Ellison story Flying Home. That's right, yeah that's right..Well what kind of, what kind of  
607 thoughts, ya'll had any thoughts about it over. over the course of the we/ek u::h  
608  
609 randy  
610 I would say the story time to be very bigatry, very very..[very]  
611  
612 connie

613 [Its very] sad.yeah a sad a story..it kinda h\urt  
614  
615 rod  
616 A very sad st\ory  
617  
618 randy  
619 sad [st\ory]  
620  
621 rod  
622 [Tell tell] me what.. say say more Connie I I cuz I think you're right, it turns out to be a pretty sad  
623 st\ory  
624  
625 connie  
626 u:hm It St/art off er in the beginning.. You know It wasn't that sad. but uh it da um the nasty char  
627 ache ter or close to the ending things started gettin worse. you know from the beginning to the  
628 ending things started gettin worse, started off. not too b\ad.  
629  
630 rod  
631 Uh huh.. Once uh.One thos, Once those men come and find. TODD the pilot right. once the once  
632 that man uh the white man Graves comes in and he brings his hospital attendants with him and and  
633 uh he kicks him and he's  
634  
635 (12:00-14:00)  
636  
637 rod  
638 very abusive and treats him very badly the way he talks to him and the way he talks about him  
639 right.  
640  
641 connie  
642 Right  
643  
644  
645 rod  
646 Its um. it.. you know its interesting cause that that that doesn't happen until the very end of the  
647 story right thats just the last few pages the last couple two three four pages when when that all  
648 that stuff starts to happen.. ALL THAT STORY BEFORE. you got the pilot.. and he's worryin  
649 about what might happen. right. and he's there talkin with o:/ld *Jefferson* RIGHT.. the old man.  
650 and the old man is telling him stories about flying around and they're talking back and forth about  
651 this and th\at.. and he's worried that whole time and then sudden/ly. Are things as are are  
652 things..cause remember we were saying well mayb he was kinda PARANOID or maybe he was  
653 making things worse than they were, but then all of a sudden.what, do you think that what did  
654 happen was wor/se, that what he was thinking,or was it  
655  
656 {Thourght this portion daphne seems engaged in the conversation, connie seems the most  
657 responsive and actively thinking on the topic, sophie nodds her head from time to time in  
658 agreement, randy seems to be listening and thinking on the topic. I cannot tell the the reactions of  
659 ben and sandra for ben is not facing the camera and not making obvious movements and sandra is  
660 wearing shades sitting straight forward not looking at the Interviewer}  
661  
662 connie  
663 It was worse than what he was thi\inkin  
664  
665 rod  
666 All that humiliation that he was worried about happenin  
667  
668 connie

669 Right  
670  
671 rod  
672 And then. what happens They come up and they PUT HIM IN A STRAIGHT JACKET.  
673  
674 connie  
675 Right  
676  
677 randy  
678 Right  
679  
680 ben  
681 Para:noid, anxiety. I'm not gonna say that person is paranoid anxiety  
682  
683 rod  
684 ye'ah  
685  
686 ben  
687 it makes you have delusions.  
688  
689 rod  
690 And and d and we wondered about his state of mind remember we we saw that when he was a  
691 kid he had that episode where he was reachin up to try to pull that plane up out of the sky. not  
692 realizing that it was really way way far away. uhm. uhm and his mom asked the doctor,well what  
693 what's wrong with him is there something wrong with h\im, and we, we wondered if. uh.if he had  
694 some kind of problem  
695  
696 (14:00-16:00)  
697  
698 rod  
699 [ if maybe] delusions  
700  
701 connie  
702 [he had um]  
703  
704 rod  
705 What's that?  
706  
707 connie  
708 Dewlosions  
709  
710 rod  
711 Some kinda yeah we wondered maybe. you know uh and then. we think that through the story. and  
712 then... does what happen to Todd does what happen to the pilot at at the end make you  
713 reconsider..you you knowyou know what i'm asking does it make you reconsider whether he was  
714 delusional or whether he was  
715  
716 connie  
717 It make you reco/nsider..yea, yes.  
718  
719 rod  
720 Cause we were kinda thinking MAN why is this pilot why is he so..uh why is he so worr/ied  
721 about being humiliated. why is he s:o. OBSESSED with  
722  
723 connie  
724 humil\iachion

725  
726 rod  
727 YEAH with humiliation and what the white people will think and what his officers will think, and  
728 you know he seems, that there's a lot about race in when in when we get in his thoughts. right in  
729 his thoughts in the first part of that sto/ry..and then we think MAN he's kinda obsessed with this,  
730 and then that stuff happens at the end and we think WOW maybe  
731  
732 connie  
733 He wudn't really think that was was gonna happen,[ he thou]ght he was gone have a normal  
734 normal life.  
735  
736 rod  
737 Bless you {directed toward ben, he was having a sneezing episode during connie's response}  
738  
739 rod  
740 ye\ah.. ye\ah  
741  
742 connie  
743 Cuz he had that plane crash he thought. and that's when it all. and.. then he start as a world wind.  
744  
745 rod  
746 As a world [wind?]  
747  
748 connie  
749 [yeah]  
750  
751 rod  
752 All that all that stuff that happened to him when he after he crashed that plane.  
753  
754 connie  
755 uh huh  
756  
757 rod  
758 [HMMM]  
759  
760 connie  
761 [Everything start] goin down. h\ill  
762  
763 rod  
764 So that's a good, that's a really good point I think Connie. when he was up there flyin that plane.  
765 and remember we was look, he saw that kid flyin a kite and he remembered himself as a boy and  
766 how much he liked to fly kites and he was excited when he was flying that plane. he had NO idea  
767 that he was about to have a plane crash.  
768  
769 connie  
770 right  
771  
772 rod  
773 that he was about to break his ankle, and he was about to be stuck in that field and meet that old  
774 man and have all of this stuff happen to him  
775  
776 (16:00-18:00)  
777  
778 connie  
779 its all of ta sudden  
780

781 randy  
782 all of a sudden  
783  
784 rod  
785 ALL OF [A SUDDEN]  
786  
787 connie  
788 [Soso so so] sudden  
789  
790 rod  
791 Right it happened suddenly.. So im i'm not a pilot I don't know how to fly. Anybody here know  
792 how to fly an airplane?  
793  
794 {rod chuckling connie, sophie, randy, daphne, and sandra still seems unresponsive with no talking  
795 and very little movement}  
796  
797 rod  
798 Ho I never no I've never done that.  
799  
800 randy  
801 I don't want to  
802  
803 rod  
804 Don't want to yeah.yeah I don't think that. ha HA? I'm not sure. I'm not sure I'm courageous  
805 enough to LEARN {chuckling} how to fly a plane. but I. but I have had things happen sudd:enly  
806 that really changed. what I thought was gonna happen right  
807  
808 daphne  
809 [uh huh]  
810  
811 rod  
812 [I mean if nothing] so dramatic as a plane cr\ash. but do have we all had things that have  
813 happened in[ our lives] that suddenly change the course that we thought we were goin this a way  
814 and something[ happens and now all of the sudden] we are goin this way or that way or this way. I  
815 mean does that happen.  
816  
817 {randy, daphne, connie all nod in agreement}  
818  
819 connie  
820 [Yeah].[ some type a way] [yeah]  
821  
822 connie  
823 Yeah  
824  
825 daphne  
826 uh huh  
827  
828 rod  
829 Something dra\matic comes along and. it may be partly[ my doing it may be]  
830  
831 connie  
832 IT TURNS YOUR WORL UPSIDE DOWN?  
833  
834 daphne  
835 uh huh  
836

837 rod  
838 It turns the world upside. [that's a good] way to put it.. You ever heard anybody say that my life is  
839 in a tail spin.right. And they don't meant they literally are in a plane that in a tail spin. some kinda  
840 spin the plane's actually spinning right?  
841  
842 { daphne,ben, randy and connie continue to nod in agreement}  
843  
844 connie  
845 [You're right]  
846  
847 connie, daphne, ben, randy  
848 {unanimously} right  
849  
850 rod  
851 So his. when Todd was crash landin in that plane his world literally was turning upside down  
852 probably he's oin over and over and over doing rolls in a tail sp\in. We u/se that expression right?  
853  
854 connie, daphne, randy  
855 { unanimously} Right  
856  
857 rod  
858 If. if I say say if. if I had somebody close to me a family member who was YO:UNG. you know  
859 who was in an ACCI:DENTt or if I suddenly got very ILL or if you know I mean a number of  
860 things if i went through a DIVORCE or if I went through any number of things. I might say  
861 WOW I thought everything was fine i was going along this way and suddenly I feel like i'm in a  
862 tail spin you know. suddenly I feel like i'm just i'm crashing to earth and I dont know which way is  
863 U/P and I don't know what's gonna happen.  
864  
865 {silence fills the room while everyone is in thought from 17:54-18:00}  
866  
867 (18:00:20:00)  
868  
869 connie  
870 That's happens in ery I believe most of erybod in life of some point some turn some.. turns you  
871 another ta direction like a new job or . you have to accept it  
872  
873 rod  
874 Uhm.. What What makes it possible for us to accept do you th\ink. Uh what makes it possible to  
875 go on. When we thought we were going this w/ay I thought, I thought you know I thought I was  
876 gonna be doing this kind of job and have this kind of family life and all that.and and all of a  
877 sudden I'm on a what seems like a detour a different road you know[ something happened and now  
878 i'm over here.]  
879  
880 connie  
881 [I THINK uh] G/OD G/OD I you know he. you go to chucch eryday an do things for God you  
882 have something to a .be beli believe in and helps you to go on[. an to go] an to achieve more  
883 higher expectations than thought you could achieve in life  
884  
885 rod  
886 [uh huh] Wh:at do yall think it is about. u:h about goin to church and about believing in God and  
887 faith God, how do those things helps us get through uh the cut through the thethe plane crashes in  
888 our own life you know what I, you know what I mean. how does that happen  
889  
890  
891 connie



892 U:h just believin. believin you have faith. you can't do evrythang without ya faith I guess. and ya  
 893 i just say without faith in God i think we could not make it could not make it life be turned upside  
 894 down.  
 895  
 896 { daphne is coughing making connie's discussion a little difficult to interpret}  
 897  
 898 rod  
 899 uh h/uh.. SO that if if I If I have a belief in a God that's BIGGER than me right even if MY life  
 900 gets turned over there's still a.. plan.  
 901  
 902 connie  
 903 Like it da h/as in that uh I think this is a good one that was in dat uh phrase dat was in the u:h line  
 904 how your arm to short to bark (box) with God.  
 905  
 906 rod  
 907 Ha ha ha right.  
 908  
 909 (20:00:22:00)  
 910  
 911 connie  
 912 I think that was it  
 913  
 914 rod  
 915 That's right? That's right that's something that uh.. I think that Todd was having dreams of his  
 916 grandmo:ther saying th[at.]. Son your arms is too short to box with, what does that phrase mean to  
 917 y\ou. Too short to box with [God]  
 918  
 919 connie  
 920 [yeah]  
 921  
 922 connie  
 923 [God is] way bigger than he can do things mo/re than we can[.we like]. We like little [chr:dren] [to  
 924 God] y\eah like lil chrdren. God can make yo world much better. ya kno he can just can do  
 925 any/[thing.] He uh.. an/d he took F/AITH in him to fly a airplane but all a suddun somthin happun  
 926 all ta suddun its like. er uh uh in the wars today a plane crashed all da suddun they is can check  
 927 eryth[ang.] each if they can check but one mis one mis mistake can cause the life to be not no  
 928 [more] can die or anything. airp\lane  
 929  
 930 rod  
 931 [Ri\ght] [ you okay?] { rod talking to daphne who is having a coughing/ sneezing episode}  
 932  
 933  
 934 daphne  
 935 [I'll be ok]  
 936  
 937 rod  
 938 [uh huh] [uh huh] [U:HM]  
 939  
 940 rod  
 941 Or li/ke YOU said put you on a totally different path rig/ht.  
 942  
 943 connie  
 944 Ri\ght  
 945  
 946 rod

947 Sometimes. I'm I'm glad you brought that up I think that's great I I think that Todd's grandmother  
 948 was trying to say. you know sandra: on don't try to fight against what G/od has plan/ed for you,  
 949 you know. whatever that is. And U:h so do yo do you do we hear that expres/sion. where You  
 950 know when God has a PL:AN for whatever it is I dont know maybe what that pl/an is but even if  
 951 something there's something diff/icult that happens there's a plan for that there's a reason for it.  
 952 And G/od knows that reason God is bigger than me and I dont know it yet but I that's what I think.  
 953 Faith that God knows the plan, something like that.  
 954  
 955 connie  
 956 Right  
 957  
 958 daphne  
 959 [uh uh]  
 960  
 961 rod  
 962 [So here's my] question then. going forward with the story a little bit. TO/DD got to do what he  
 963 wanted to do right?  
 964  
 965 (22:00:24:00)  
 966  
 967 rod  
 968 He was a little and wanted to fly the airplanes. And no matter and uh nothing else THE ONLY  
 969 THING I WANT IN THE WORLD IS I WANT TO FLY AN AIRPLANES ri\ght. Eventually he  
 970 gets to the point where he is able to fly airplanes. So that was in God's plan right. That was in this  
 971 big plan for him.. What about this plane cr\ash. What about the time he spent in the field with a  
 972 broken ankle, what about the abuse he took at the hands of this awful Mr. Graves. This bigot  
 973 (22:27:22:29) {could not make out the speach due to daphne's constant coughing} in the story in  
 974 (the land on the way ) Is that part of God's plan too?  
 975  
 976 sophie and connie  
 977 No  
 978  
 979 rod  
 980 You don't think s/o?[ And when we don't]  
 981  
 982 connie  
 983 [Its somethin thats happen] that just uh. I dont know why it happen but God know thats a like a  
 984 person that fly a plane then all the sudden it it it crash uh. thats not somethin they wished to  
 985 happen it just somethin that happen out of the blue.  
 986  
 987 rod  
 988 Right  
 989  
 990 connie  
 991 yeah hopefully we all live but then all dont live and just we wonder why it happen thats not in  
 992 God's plan that's somethin we really cant stop.  
 993  
 994 rod  
 995 Do you thi:nk. that anything go:od can come out of this whole experience that Ellison wrote about  
 996 in [this story]  
 997  
 998 connie  
 999 [OH Y/ES] yeah  
 1000  
 1001 rod

1002 How you. You didn't even hesit/ate.[ You didn't even hesitate.] OH YES I KNOW SOMETHING  
1003 GOOD COULD COME OUT OF THAT? Tell what what do you[ what do you]  
1004  
1005 connie  
1006 [HE HE HEHE HE He] {laughing hard} [W/ell he g/ot] well he got what his wishes wishes but he  
1007 didn't complete his u:h task but uh he got his wishes tho he flew a plane the first black man first  
1008 uhm person or er uh of color to fly a plane  
1009  
1010 rod  
1011 Uh huh  
1012  
1013 (24:00:26:00)  
1014 connie  
1015 so he got his wishes but he doen wish for the plane to crash  
1016  
1017 rod  
1018 Right  
1019  
1020 connie  
1021 But he was hopin that he'd have a better life. after he flew that plane left for somethin he might be  
1022 desired i/s to fly a plane  
1023  
1024 rod  
1025 Uh huh  
1026  
1027 connie  
1028 but. things didn't go like the way he planned i\t  
1029  
1030 rod  
1031 Right right.  
1032  
1033 ben  
1034 Understand the therapeutic elements.( thats the spirit I think)  
1035  
1036 rod  
1037 How how do mean[ how do you mean the therapeutic elements]  
1038  
1039 ben  
1040 [Uh uhm] this guy at a young age. uhm his mother said that he was goin through some kind of  
1041 psychosis and and and and then when he crashed the plane. I I DON'T BELIEVE it this that  
1042 he's goin through some kind a psychosis and sayin that he's training for this or did he steal the  
1043 plane or something cause. they said a plane flew over but it didn't stop or anything. but when Mr.  
1044 Graves came this guy it was like he was goin through delusionals you know what I'm saying he  
1045 was paranoid and and and full of anxiety. He was goin through like delusions you know what I'm  
1046 sa/yin  
1047  
1048 rod  
1049 uh hum  
1050  
1051 ben  
1052 so its just like understand therapeutic elements no matter no matter u:hm.. how long say for  
1053 instant you been on you medication you need to keep takin your medication. because you still you  
1054 still can have a set back uh you know [what I'm sayin uh]  
1055  
1056 rod  
1057 uh hu'h

1058  
1059 ben  
1060 cuz the medication has you feelin feelin feelin good that's what help yo brain [ you know]  
1061  
1062 rod  
1063 Right rig\ht. They sure treated him like he was crazy right when they came upon him and that that  
1064 may be part of the part of the bigotted uhm be/liefs of the timethat Ellison was writing about do  
1065 you think Randy? Do you[ you know]  
1066  
1067 randy  
1068 I would I would say that you know to me it was a very very sad st\ory but I know that what you  
1069 said about when he said the "N" word that was very insulting  
1070  
1071 rod  
1072 Uh h/uh  
1073  
1074 randy  
1075 I found that to be very insulting cuz he was a racist.  
1076  
1077 rod  
1078 Right. I think there's no doubt about it  
1079  
1080 randy  
1081 He's raci\st  
1082  
1083 (26:00:28:00)  
1084  
1085 rod  
1086 Y/eah there's no doubt about it. he's[ he's]  
1087  
1088 randy  
1089 [That's bac]k in those days hu uh again I would say that's back in the days when segregation was  
1090 born with all that Jim Crow and everything else.  
1091  
1092 rod  
1093 uh huh  
1094  
1095 randy  
1096 It was some real hard times back in that uh back in the day before King came along  
1097  
1098 rod  
1099 right  
1100  
1101 randy  
1102 King came along after[Dr. King came along] and staightened everything out  
1103  
1104 rod  
1105 [right] We went a long way right long way we went a lo::ng way [to change]  
1106  
1107 randy  
1108 well but still racism has but still today racism has not changed since. becuase we got a black  
1109 president of the United States BARACK OBA:MA. and their and they tryin to TEAR HIM  
1110 DOWN.  
1111  
1112 rod  
1113 Did you say that racism hasn't cha/nged or has chan\ged.

1114  
1115 randy  
1116 Well Well I would say racism has changed because why is it it was one time I was in (the shower  
1117 im not tryin to go to the mall) because well. I dont really remember this but what Dr. Martin  
1118 Luther Kings said you know before his before he was ssassinated that you dont that hew could  
1119 say he been over to the mountain top.but you know what but a few years later we had a the dream  
1120 had became a bigger a became a reality that you know we had a first black president of the United  
1121 States Barack Oba\ma.  
1122  
1123 rod  
1124 uh huh  
1125  
1126 randy  
1127 and h:e won. It was a big it was a BIG win for him  
1128  
1129 rod  
1130 uh huh  
1131  
1132 randy  
1133 you know probably dont know what's gonna happen til 2012. they will probably try an figure out  
1134 how to get (um a black man thing out) but. im sure that uh.. everybody was with Barack Obama  
1135  
1136 rod  
1137 DEFINITELY.  
1138  
1139 randy  
1140 When Bush messed it up I'll neva forget the one thing that cracked me up  
1141  
1142 rod  
1143 What's that?  
1144  
1145 randy  
1146 Its that he was in a he was in I-raq at a press conference. and some man and some journalis ha ha  
1147 ha ha he threwed two shoes at h/im  
1148  
1149 rod  
1150 Yep  
1151  
1152 {Laughter fills the room from everyone}  
1153  
1154 rod  
1155 Yall remember seein the the the pictures from that. You know what impressed me about that. He  
1156 was pretty qui/ck he actually dogded them  
1157  
1158 (28:00:30:00)  
1159 rod  
1160 ha ha. its really one of the funniest thing[ I'd ever seen.]  
1161  
1162 randy  
1163 [And it kinda remind me] You know what it kinda remind me of a my grandma would a back in  
1164 the days my grandma would throw house shoes at me  
1165  
1166 {laughter again feels the room}  
1167  
1168 rod  
1169 When you would misb/ehave she'd toss a shoe at you.

1170  
1171 randy  
1172 YEAH SHE'Ben TOSS A SHOE  
1173  
1174 rod  
1175 That's fun\`ny.  
1176  
1177 randy  
1178 Its funny she'd toss house shoes at me.  
1179  
1180 rod  
1181 That's what that jour/nalist was doin. Bad President uh. Bad President that what he was do\`in  
1182  
1183 randy  
1184 Bad [President]  
1185  
1186 rod  
1187 [Randy you bring up] a re/ally interesting point let me let me try somethin here and see if yall see  
1188 what yall think of this. Here's something I wondered. Barack Obama. the first black presienet in  
1189 the United States right. uhm then I'm thinking about the first person of color you know to fly an  
1190 airplane thinking about the Tuskegee Airmen you were just talkin about that Connie  
1191  
1192 connie  
1193 Yeah  
1194  
1195 rod  
1196 But one of the thing that Todd the pilot in our story talked about. that was so difficult for him was  
1197 that he was tryin to achieve a dream right he wanted to fly but he felt like. everybody was placing  
1198 the responsibiltiy for his whole race on him remember what he said.he said everything he did he  
1199 felt responsible for his whole race.[ but he always]  
1200  
1201 connie  
1202 [All that burden on him]  
1203  
1204 rod  
1205 All that burden. Does that is there any relationship there to our presi/dent  
1206  
1207 connie  
1208 Yes  
1209  
1210 rod  
1211 [Do you think that our president has that burden in some ways as well. I wonder. I mean I would  
1212 you know I think a lot of people treat him that way you know]. Li:ke  
1213  
1214 connie  
1215 [Y:ES. Y:ES. Y:ES. Y:ES. Yes it does. yes it does.] Even ev/en Reagan not Reagan but Bush had  
1216 a lot of burden. He had a lot of burden put put on him too. That that there's some the things in the  
1217 house that passed he didnt have nothing to do [wi/th] but they passed it they passed it they it uh i  
1218 forgot what passed tbut he uh they passed something he didn't really agree with it but they passed  
1219 any[way.] like tax tax taxes high on[ taxed tax]s uhm er uh stuff like that.  
1220  
1221 rod  
1222 [It was..right] [right] [rig\`ht]  
1223  
1224 (30:00:32:00)  
1225

1226 rod  
1227 Well ther there's N:O doubt that ANY president has trememdous burden I mean that's you know  
1228 that's that's a heck of a job to have to have rig\ht  
1229  
1230 connie  
1231 To take ov/er  
1232  
1233 rod  
1234 Right to take over,I but I wonder if. Barak Obama has a particular has another burden. like our  
1235 pilot Todd talked about.about feeling that.he's repres:enting  
1236  
1237 connie  
1238 The WHOLE United [States]  
1239  
1240 rod  
1241 [His ra\ce][ you] know  
1242  
1243 connie  
1244 [Yeah]  
1245  
1246 rod  
1247 Ye/ah the people of the U. sandra... and people of color I don't kn\ow but ah ... .hhhh well[ ther  
1248 hhh.]  
1249  
1250 connie  
1251 [But he took] on the burden of the whole United[ States] just not the peoples of the color I uh  
1252 think er they lookin they lookin at him jus yeah it is color too but just takin on the whole the whole  
1253 United[ States] that's a burden that's too heavy to bear.  
1254  
1255 rod  
1256 [uh huh] [uh huh] uh huh... well Randy when you mentioned the th:e the insulting nature of the  
1257 lang/uage in here there's NO DOUBT right there's no doubt that the way Graves treated Todd the  
1258 way he spoke to Todd and th/en. we can say yes this was back in a TIME when you know that  
1259 KIND OF LANGUAGE that kind of treatment was com/mon it wasn't acce/table it doesn't make it  
1260 rig/ht but we know it was com/on we know it hap/pened.. [And]  
1261  
1262 randy  
1263 [I wanna ask] you somethin.. did you know did di did you could tell that he was bipolar whan't  
1264 he?.. was he was he very bipolar whuz he when he was very obsessed with planes  
1265  
1266 rod  
1267 Who is that. you talkin bout the pil/ot.  
1268  
1269 randy  
1270 Ye/ah  
1271  
1272 rod  
1273 Yeah. uh.. because he was obsessed with pla\nes  
1274  
1275 connie  
1276 Ye ye ye y:.....e ye/ah  
1277  
1278 randy  
1279 ye/ah  
1280  
1281 rod

1282 How do you mean? How how[ do you mean?]  
1283  
1284 randy  
1285 [I DON'T KNOW]  
1286  
1287 connie  
1288 [Uh beca/use he] he thought. he .. oh well he he he can speak but u:h I think the reason why he  
1289 was bipolars  
1290  
1291 (32:00:34:00)  
1292  
1293 connie  
1294 he was reachin tryin reach somethin he couldn't g/et [he] was thinkin that it was a toy that he  
1295 could get he he he w:ell it was kinda funny but he thought that he could just reach up and grab it  
1296 right out of the s/ky  
1297  
1298 rod  
1299 [uhm] grab it right out of the sky yeah  
1300 {Both rod and connie reach as though they are grabbing out of the sky as the pilot thought, connie  
1301 seems tickled by this}  
1302  
1303 connie  
1304 yeah  
1305  
1306 randy  
1307 that's a non sense  
1308  
1309 connie  
1310 Momma said nonsense uhm er yea[ uh] kinda set the whole.  
1311  
1312 rod  
1313 [yeah] that a. that desire to fly an airplane might be seen as kinda manic right, zoomin flyin too  
1314 high and too fa/st remember that was one of the things that he did . that he said that happened  
1315 before the accident before the. before the cra/sh. yeah I dont know.. there's a couple things we we  
1316 can sa/y.. tha.t we know that Graves this was back in you know back in the 40's uh:m you know  
1317 in a very racist Macon County you know right here. uh. and the things may be SOME diffe/rent  
1318 now. BETTER hopefu/lly. it's still disturbing to read it. in a st/ory right. and we we could we could  
1319 take it personally righ I mean that's kinda what you were saying rgiht I find this insul/ting.  
1320 insulting to read this man's words even in a fictional story. so many years later. so you know part  
1321 of part of the question part of my question is why you know why did we read it is there a point to  
1322 it is there is there something, cause a cause a lot of people say you rememeber they took a.. Mark  
1323 Twain out of the schools right. said they wanted to take take uhm uhm yo/ur book right  
1324 Huckelberry Finn the Tom Sawyer book that they wanted to take that out of the school because it  
1325 contained language and things that they said weren't appro\priate for children like the "n" w/ord[..  
1326 right]  
1327  
1328 randy  
1329 [Uh hum]  
1330  
1331 rod  
1332 So my question is, is that what we should do. should we get rid of that word in pr/int  
1333  
1334 connie  
1335 Right  
1336  
1337 (34:00:36:00)



1338  
1339 rod  
1340 O:r..  
1341  
1342 connie  
1343 Afican Ame:rcan  
1344  
1345 rod  
1346 Well right.uh I mean we definitely you know.. we we... we wouldn't use that languageuh talkin  
1347 about each other right. but is there a point to it when writing or reading a story about the past  
1348  
1349  
1350 connie  
1351 Yes. yes. It just really tellin you what happened then. and then its uhm.. I think its really the story  
1352 to tell you what happened back uh then.. that uh we accomplished things that black people  
1353 acomperish accomplished. but he didnt really think he would have that plane crash he that really  
1354 uhm... has the story uhm.. seemeded like no word no ending to the "n" word  
1355  
1356 rod  
1357 Uh huh..  
1358  
1359 connie  
1360 So yes  
1361  
1362 rod  
1363 Do you think that the author do you think that Ellison was trying to shock us a little bit. with this  
1364 story cause the ending of it it's hor/rifying right it ho/rrifying the way he gets treated  
1365  
1366 connie  
1367 Right  
1368  
1369 rod  
1370 at the end and I kin/da think that Ellison tha when he wrote the story he was kinda trying to shock  
1371 us a little bit  
1372  
1373 connie  
1374 Right  
1375  
1376 rod  
1377 When we read that word. that "N" word and we see we we we think about Graves kicking this  
1378 p/oor guy with a broken ankle who's down on the ground and he KICKS HIM IN THE SIDE aw  
1379 this is terri\ble. Uhm.I think He wants to shock us a little bit and make us think about j/ust how  
1380 awful it was.. yeah  
1381  
1382 {silent contemplation fills the room for about 14 seconds before the rod poses another question to  
1383 his group}  
1384  
1385 rod  
1386 Well what do you think are you should we should we move along or uh I mean I don't wanna I  
1387 don't wanna  
1388  
1389 (36:00:38:00)  
1390  
1391  
1392 connie  
1393 U:H move along.

1394  
1395 rod  
1396 You ready to move along to somethin else.[ o/kay alrigh]t that's fine that's fine.  
1397  
1398 randy  
1399 [Move along]  
1400  
1401 daphne  
1402 [hm hma ha]  
1403  
1404 {group seems weary of such serious talk}  
1405  
1406 rod  
1407 How bout a very very different type of story uhm.. kind of a uh... almost comic relief well we'll  
1408 see if it turns out that way. uhm. anybody ever see a cartoon back years ago uhn called rikki  
1409 tikki tavi  
1410  
1411 connie  
1412 Uhm no  
1413  
1414 rod  
1415 Haven't heard of that on/e. uh.. did I give you this one. you've got a copy already Deric okay great.  
1416 thanks. uhm.. so how bout this you'll remember this one Disney did a:: cartoon version of the  
1417 Jungle Book. you remember that one  
1418  
1419  
1420 sophie  
1421 yeah uh huh  
1422  
1423 rod  
1424 with Mogly the little boy that was raised by..you remember you remember how that story went..  
1425 he he he was the man cub raised by the wolves right. he he was he was found out in the  
1426 [wilderness] and then raised by wolves and he had a friend that was the bear and a friend that was  
1427 a panther and he had to. uh. get away from the big snake and he had to fight the tiger and all that  
1428 stuff and that was turned into a Disney cartoon called the Jungle Book. well the JUNGLE BOOK  
1429 what is it Randy  
1430  
1431 connie  
1432 [Oh yeah]  
1433  
1434 randy  
1435 you mind if I use the phone for my  
1436  
1437 rod  
1438 of coarse go ahead. The Jungle Book was actually the name of a large volume of fiction written  
1439 by I guess an Englishman named a (Rudyard) Kipling. way back when and its got n/ot just the  
1440 story of Mogly that one that was turned into the Disney cartoon but a lot of different stories about  
1441 all different kinds of animals and people and uh this is one of them Rikki Tikiki Tavi and this is  
1442 one of my favorite stories from when I was. a a kid actually s::o. uhm I thought we'd try this one  
1443 like to see how ya'll like it and um see if I had good taste.  
1444  
1445 (38:00:40:00)  
1446  
1447 rod  
1448 Le:t'ssss.. anybody wants to what if I start would that be ok and then we'll we'll split it up  
1449

1450 {Everyone nods that it is fine for the rod to start}  
1451  
1452 rod  
1453 Rikki Tikki Tavi uhm uhm {clearing throat} This is the story of the great war that Rikki Tikki  
1454 Tavi fought single-handed through bathrooms of the big bungalow in Segowlee segolee canton  
1455 ment. So and uh that says that little footnote down below says that what that means is that its a  
1456 military station in India so these are a. British people. uh living in India.. Dar/zee the TAILOR-  
1457 BIRD helped him and Chuchun\dra the muskrat who never comes out into the middle of the floor  
1458 but always creeps round by the wall gave him advice.. But Rikki Tikki did the REAL fighting. he  
1459 was a mongoose. rather like a little cat in his fur and his tail but quite like a weasel in his head  
1460 and in his habits. His eyes and the end of his restless nose were pink. He could scratch himself  
1461 anywhere he pleased with any leg front or back that he chose to use. He could fluff up his tail till  
1462 it looked like a bottle-brush. and his war-cry as he scuttled through the long grass was:  
1463 Rikkittikkittikkittikkittikkittikkittikki I'm not sure how that supposed to be read exactly but  
1464 presu/mably that's where he got his name right. he kinda makes that noise as he's goin through the  
1465 bush when he gets exci/ted. Rikkittikkittikkirikkittikki  
1466  
1467 {Faint laughter is heard in the room}  
1468  
1469 rod  
1470 One day a high summer flood washed him out of the burrow where he lived with his father and  
1471 mother a/nd carried him kicking and clucking down a roadside dit\ch. He found a little wisp of  
1472 grass floating there and clung to it till he lost his senses. when he revived. he was lying in the hot  
1473 sun. on the middle of a garden. on the middle of a garden path ver/y drag/gled indeed. and a small  
1474 boy was saying he/re's a dead mongoose. let's have a funeral {everyone flips the page}  
1475  
1476 (40:00:42:00)  
1477  
1478 rod  
1479 96 yeah uh uh {clearing throat again} N/o said his mother let's take him in and dry him perhaps  
1480 he isn't really de\ad.. They took him in/to the house and a big man picked him up between his  
1481 finger and thumb and said he was n/ot dead but half choked. sandra:o they wrapped him in cotton  
1482 wool and warmed him. and he opened his eyes and sneezed. N:OW said the big man. he was an  
1483 Englishman who had just moved into the bungalow. don't frigh/ten him and we'll see what he'll  
1484 d\o. It is the har/dest thing in the world to firghthen a mong\oose because he is ea/ten up from nose  
1485 to tail with curio/sity. The motto of A/LL the mongoose family i:s run and find out. And Rikki  
1486 Tikki was a tr:ue mongoose. He looked at the cotton wool. decided that it was not good to eat.  
1487 Ran all around the table. sat up and put his fur in order. scratched himself. and jumped on the  
1488 small boys shoulder.. Don't be frightened Teddy said his father. that' his way of making friends.  
1489 OU/CH he's tickling under my c/hin said T\eddy. Rikki Tikki looked down between the boy's  
1490 collar and neck. snuffed at his ear. and climbed down to the floor where he sat rubbing his nose..  
1491 Good graci/ous said Teddy's mother. and that's a WILD creature. I suppose he s/o tame because  
1492 we've been kind to h\im. A/l l mongooses are like that said her hus\band. If Teddy doesnt't pick  
1493 him up by the tail or try to put him in a cage he'll run in and out of the house all day long.. Let's  
1494 give him something to eat.. The gave him a little piece of raw meat. Rikki Tikki like it  
1495 imme\nsely. and when it was finished he went out into the verand a and sat in the sunshine and  
1496 fluffed up his fur to make it dry to the ro\ots. Then he felt better.. There are mor/e things to find  
1497 out about this house. he said to himself than /all my family could find out in their lives. I shall  
1498 certa/inly stay and find o\ut.. Anybody else want to read?  
1499  
1500 randy  
1501 I guess I can  
1502  
1503 rod  
1504 Sure  
1505 (42:00:44:00)

1506  
1507  
1508 randy  
1509 He spent all that day roamin that roaming oar the house. he nealy he nealy drown himself in the  
1510 bathtubs. he put his nose in the into the ink uh er the writing table. and burn it on the end of tha big  
1511 man's ciga. fa he climbed up for he climbed up in the big man's lap to see how writin was done..  
1512 At nightfall he ran into Tedd's nursery ta watch kero how kerosene lamps were lighted. And when  
1513 Teddy went to bed Rikki Tikki climb up to/o. But he was but he was a restless compamon cause  
1514 because he had to get up and attend tos noise all throught the night, and fi/nd out what and fin/d  
1515 out what mayde it Teddy's mother came out. Motha Mother and Father came i/n. the la/st thing to  
1516 look look at the boy and Rikki Tikki was wa was waiting on the pi/lflow. I DONT LIKE THAT to  
1517 his mother. I DONT LIKE THAT to his mother. said Teddy's mother i'm sorry. He might bi/te the  
1518 child. He do He'll do no such thing. said the father. Teddy's safe saf Teddy's safwit that Teddy's  
1519 safer wit that little beast. than if he had hound blood a bloodhound to watch him. UH:MM  
1520 {Clearing throat} If snake come. if snake came into. If a sna/ke came into the nursery now...but  
1521 Teddy's mother wouldn't think of wouldn't wouldn't anything so awful. Early in the morning  
1522 Rikki Tikki came out early came to early breakfast on the ver vernan ver ver vernanda ver:and:a  
1523  
1524 rod  
1525 Veranda yeah  
1526  
1527 randy  
1528 Cut off  
1529  
1530 rod  
1531 Its cut off there just a little bit on the[ edge.]  
1532  
1533 randy  
1534 [riding] on Teddy's shoulda they give him a banana and some boil egg and he sat and he sat it on  
1535 their laps one aft one after the other. because every well brel every well-brough brought up  
1536 mongoose hopes hopes to be a house mongoose  
1537  
1538 (44:00-46:00)  
1539  
1540 randy  
1541 Same day he have room to run about in. and Rikki Tikki's mother said.. Rikki Tikkii's mother.. she  
1542 used to live in the general's house at Se se se Segu.. whats that word [se se se] {trying to  
1543 pronounce the word}  
1544  
1545 daphne  
1546 [Segowlee]  
1547  
1548 rod  
1549 [Segowlee] its a place name yeah.  
1550  
1551 randy  
1552 Segowlee. Segowlee. had told Rikki Tikki told Rikki what he would do what what what to do if he  
1553 ever came across white man. .. Then Rikki Tikki went out went into the garden to see what what  
1554 to be seen. I? I was ina I was in a large gardun only half cultivated. bushes bi big as a summer  
1555 house Marshal Marshal Niel ro/ses lime and orange trees. clumps of of of bamboos and thi thicket  
1556 of high grass. Rikki Tikki liked like licked his lips. This is a splendid this is a splendid hunting  
1557 ground. he said. and his tail grew ub bu uh bu bottom bu bottle-bushy at the at the thought of it  
1558 and he scu scuttled up and down the up and down the garden. Snuffing here an an there til he  
1559 heard very sorrful voices in thorn-bush.  
1560  
1561

1562 rod  
1563 What does that mean his tail grew bottle-bushy at the thought of it.. Can you tell what he's  
1564 describing  
1565  
1566 sophie  
1567 Well flu[ffy uh yeah fluffy]  
1568  
1569  
1570 rod  
1571 [Yeah] his his tail got fluffy when he got[ excited right he fluffed up his tail you know like a cat  
1572 when it gets scared or m/ad right it fluffs up its tail] it be sorta like that he gets excited and his  
1573 tail gets all fluffy. Sorry to randy to interrupt please go ahead.  
1574  
1575 daphne  
1576 [Uh huh..yeah. uh hmm]  
1577  
1578 randy  
1579 It's alright. It was Darzee the tailor-bird and his wife. He made a. They had made a beautiful nest  
1580 by pulling two big leaves together and stitching them up stitch {sniffs then exhales} hhh. and  
1581 stitch them up the tha the edges with fibers.  
1582  
1583 (46:00:48:00)  
1584  
1585 randy  
1586 They had followed the hollow with cotton coton and down downy fluff the nes sway uh to and fro  
1587 the the uhm {clearing throat} hh. the nest sway to and fro as they sat on tha on the rim and cried.  
1588 What is the mat/ter Rikki said Rikki Tikki?  
1589 We are we are miserable said Darzee one of our babies fall out of the nest yesterday an and Nag  
1590 at/e him. H::m/m Rikki Tik said Rikki Tikki that is ve/ry sad but I am a stranger here. Who is  
1591 Nag? Darzee and his wife couw couwed down cowed coud covered down in the nest without  
1592 answerin from the from the thick grass at the foot of the bush come a low hiss. P::a/ge.. 98  
1593  
1594 rod  
1595 Uh huh  
1596  
1597 randy  
1598 horrid cold sound that Rikki Tikki jump back.jump back two clear feet. Then inch by uhm then  
1599 inch u:m...hh then inch by the by the grass rose the head and spread hood of Nag. The big the BIG  
1600 BLACK COB/RA and he was FIVE feet long from ton/gue to tail. When he had lifted his third of  
1601 his himself clear from the ground. he stay balancin to and fro exatly as a danelion-duf baances  
1602 inthe wind..as he look Rikki Tikki with his wicked snake-eyes that never change expression  
1603 whaever whatever the snake be thinkin of. Who is Nad he said. I am NAG the great god Brahm  
1604 put his mark uh upon our people when the first cobra spread his hood to keep the sun off Brahm.  
1605 as he slept. LOOK be a look be a lo/ok and be afraid. He spread out his hood more than ev/er n  
1606 Rikki Tikki saw the spec the spectacle mark on its on his back  
1607  
1608 (48:00:50:00)  
1609  
1610 randy  
1611 thats looks. that looks like exatly eye part of the hook n eye fastenin. He was afraid of the for the  
1612 minute but it was impos/sible for a mongoose to stay frightened of any length of time. an and  
1613 though Rikki Tikki had never met a live cobra bef/ore wh:oa. hi ma his mom fed him on dead ones  
1614 and he kn/ew that all mon that all grown mongoose mongoose buisness life was to fight and then  
1615 fight and eat snakes. Nag knew that knew that t'oo and at the bottom of his cold heart was afraid.  
1616 We/ll Rikki Tikki an his tail began to fluff up again. marks or no marks do you think of it as right  
1617 to you to eat the fledings out of a out of a nest?

1618  
1619 rod  
1620 Fledglings are just little baby birds right.  
1621  
1622 randy  
1623 Say that again.  
1624  
1625 rod  
1626 Uh fledglings, is it right for you to eat fledglings out of a nest? Those are[ just baby birds].  
1627  
1628 randy  
1629 [Fledglings out of the nest?] thank yo\u. Nag was thinkin to thinkin to himself watchin the lil  
1630 leas little movement in the grass behind Rikki Tikki. He knew that mongoose in the garden was  
1631 mean dea death sooner or later for him for him and his family. but he wanted to get Rikki Tikki  
1632 out of his guard. So he dropped his head a little and and put it on one side. LET US TALK. he  
1633 said. You may eat e/ggs why should I eat why should why should I not eat bir/ds? Beh/ind you  
1634 LOOK BEHIND you he said sang Darzee. Rikki Tikki knew knew better than to waste waste  
1635 time in staring. He jump in the. he jump in the air as high as he could go and jus just under him  
1636 whiz the head of Na Na na na Nagina  
1637  
1638 rod  
1639 Nag[aina]  
1640  
1641 randy  
1642 [Nagiana] nag's wicked wife. She had crept up behind him  
1643  
1644 (50:00:52:00)  
1645  
1646 randy  
1647 as he walkin as as he was talkin to make an end of him. he had never heard a sav savage hiss as  
1648 stroke missed. He came down across her back. almo he came down almost cross her back. And if  
1649 he had me a mol mol old mongoose he woulda known that then was was time to break her back  
1650 with one bi/te but he wass afraid of the terrble la:shing return-stoke of tha cobra. He bit indeed  
1651 but did not bite lone, he jump of uh whisking whiskin tai Na Na Nagina torn and angry.  
1652  
1653 rod  
1654 Ok let's take a pause here shall we. And make sure we know what's go/in what's go/in on in the  
1655 story.  
1656  
1657 Ben  
1658 It's sum a it's sum a U:::H a military fam a military family found a mongoose  
1659  
1660 rod  
1661 Right  
1662  
1663 Ben  
1664 I believe that they got so many animals in the backyard thinking his father is somethin like a  
1665 scientis maybe his mother a scientist a researcher or[ somethin like that]  
1666  
1667  
1668 rod  
1669 [H/mm ok] could be.  
1670  
1671 {others in the room nodding in agreement}  
1672  
1673 Ben

1674 And then these animals they they're fighting in the backyard already [the new] mongoose in there  
1675 and everythang  
1676  
1677 rod  
1678 [Ok]..Right NEW YOUNG mongoose right washed out of his bu\rrow almost drow\ned. alright  
1679 boy picks him up and they say O/h it's still alive so they kinda feed him and take him into the  
1680 ho:use[. No]w he's kinda in and out of the hou\se andhe went out into this back garden. He he  
1681 goes around to explore and he hears somebody cryin and what's that what's..who's cryin?  
1682  
1683 daphne  
1684 [Right]  
1685  
1686 Ben  
1687 Uhm the birds  
1688  
1689 daphne  
1690 Birds  
1691  
1692 rod  
1693 Right right[ right]  
1694  
1695 Ben  
1696 [Tailor Birds]  
1697  
1698 rod  
1699 yeah the TAILOR BIRDS right they because they. what happened..  
1700  
1701 Ben  
1702 They the snake ate one of the babies  
1703  
1704 rod  
1705 Ate one of the bab/ies yeah it fell out of the nest and got eaten by  
1706  
1707 randy  
1708 King cobra dangerous  
1709  
1710 rod  
1711 Extremely right very very frightening ve/ry scary. uhm so the the uh  
1712  
1713 (52:00:54:00)  
1714  
1715 rod  
1716 The cob/ra is NA:G right that's the male cobra.. and his wife is Nagaina right NAG and  
1717 NAGAINA and they're the wicked cobras right.. they're the mean ones.. sandra/o uh.. Rikki says  
1718 Rikki Tikki says I'm n/ew around here I don't know who Nag is uh i'm i'm sorry to hear that you  
1719 know your baby was killed but but what who's Nag and then here comes. the snake right {clears  
1720 throat} to confront him and say I am N/ag.. and u:h.. and then and then wh/at happens how does  
1721 he meet Nagaina... its kind of an ambush right, Nag says well let's talk a minute and then. you  
1722 know as as he's distracting Rikki Tikki Nagaina comes and..to[ strike] right to bite him. To bite  
1723 the mongoose but but he gets a warning. form the same tailor bird right. Be/hind y/ou LOOK  
1724 BEHIND YOU.. and then ju/mps up in the air. just in time to miss to miss that that stri\ke. o\k so  
1725 now we've got the drama set up in the backyard in the back garden. {sniffs} u:hm ... randy you  
1726 want to keep reading you want to let somebody else read?  
1727  
1728 daphne  
1729 [Uhm]

1730  
 1731 randy  
 1732 Let somebody else read  
 1733  
 1734 daphne  
 1735 Wicked. I'll read. Wicked wicked eh. Darzee eh. said Nag lashing up as high as he could reach  
 1736 toward the nest to in. in the thorn bush. but Darzee Darzee had had built it out of reach of snakes  
 1737 and it only swayed to and fro. Rikki Tikki felt his eyes growing red and hot. when a when a  
 1738 mongoose eyes  
 1739  
 1740 (54:00:56:00)  
 1741  
 1742 daphne  
 1743 grow red he's he is angry. and he sat back on his tail and hind hind legs like a little kangaroo.  
 1744 and looked all around him and chattered with rage. But Nag and Na na na Nag [Nagina] Nagaina  
 1745  
 1746 rod  
 1747 [Uh huh]  
 1748  
 1749 daphne  
 1750 had had disappeared into the grass. When a snake misses its stroke it never says anything or  
 1751 gives any sign of what it means to. to do next. Rikki Tikki did not care to follow them for he did  
 1752 not feel sure {rod Sneezes} he would. he could manage two two snakes at once. So he trotted off  
 1753 to the gravel path near the house and sat down to think. It was a serious matter for him. If you  
 1754 read the old books of natural history you will find that they. they say that that when the  
 1755 mongoose fights the snake and happens to get bitten he runs off and eats some herb that cures  
 1756 him. That's not that is not true. The victory is only a {flips page} matter of quick quickness of eye  
 1757 and quickness of foot snakes blow against mongoose jump and as no eye can follow the motion of a  
 1758 snake head  
 1759  
 1760 (56:00:58:00)  
 1761  
 1762 daphne  
 1763 when it strikes that makes things much more wonderful than any magic herb. Rikki Tikki knew  
 1764 he was a young mongoose and it. made him all the more pleased to think that he had managed to  
 1765 escape a blow from behind. It gave him confidence in himself, and when Teddy came running  
 1766 down the path, Rikki Tikki was ready to be petted. But just as Teddy was stopping something  
 1767 flinched a little in the dust and a tiny voice said be careful I am death. It was Connie/at Karat  
 1768 Karate Ka Kar  
 1769  
 1770 rod  
 1771 Karait, yeah [I dunno how to say it either]  
 1772  
 1773 daphne  
 1774 [Ka Karait yeah]  
 1775  
 1776 rod  
 1777 and if you read that note down below..it says Hindi word for krait which is a type of brightly  
 1778 ban/ded venomous snake. so this is a small snake again a poisonous snake but then not as  
 1779 dangerous as the cobra. right it's still a poisonous snake so it's right next to the path right  
 1780 where this little boy is kneeling down getting ready to pet the mongoose.  
 1781  
 1782 daphne {Skips a couple of lines}  
 1783 with. with the peculiar rocking swaying motion that he had inherited from his family. It looks very  
 1784 funny but it is so perfectly balanced a gate.[gate gate]  
 1785



1786 rod  
1787 [Uh DID WE MISS] A LITTLE BACK THERE? Di/d we...or or did I: just miss it  
1788  
1789 randy  
1790 Dont think [we missed]  
1791  
1792 sophie  
1793 Ski/pped the dusty brown  
1794  
1795 rod  
1796 Ok right. theres a right after Karait, it was Karait the dusty brown snakel/ing...  
1797  
1798 connie  
1799 Uh huh when you you di/d miss the miss.. yeah that was missed  
1800  
1801 rod  
1802 daphne can you can you back up to that part right after the[ name that says it] was Karait the dusty  
1803 brown snakeling, Tha/nk you  
1804  
1805 (58:00:60:00)  
1806  
1807 daphne  
1808 [Uh yeah]... wait Wh/ere is that at I dont see it  
1809  
1810 rod  
1811 Just the para/graph the next paragraph up from where you were I think  
1812  
1813 connie  
1814 It was Karait the dusty brown snakeling  
1815  
1816 {another female voice in the room was trying to aid daphne in finding the correct place. I was  
1817 unable to tell from whom the speaking was done}  
1818  
1819 daphne  
1820 I must not be on the right pa/ge  
1821  
1822 rod  
1823 I think you a/re[ it's]  
1824  
1825 connie  
1826 [It's a hundred] right at a hundred up top  
1827  
1828 rod  
1829 Ye:ah. It's that para/graph that starts just as[ Teddy] was sto:oping  
1830  
1831 daphne  
1832 [O/H].. But just as Teddy was stooping something flinched a little in the dust and a tiny voice said  
1833 be careful I am death.t was Kar Karate Kar Ka karate something like that Karate karrot  
1834  
1835 rod  
1836 Right Karait  
1837  
1838 daphne  
1839 and and the dusty brown snak snackeling. snakeling that lies for choice on the dusty earth and hi  
1840 his bite is as cobra. but . he is so small that nobody thinks of him and so he does the more harm to

1841 people. Rikki Tikki eyes grew red again and he danced to Karate with the peculiar rocking  
1842 swaying motion that he had inherited from his family. It looks very funny but it is so  
1843 perfectly balanced a gait that you can. you can fly off from it at any angle you please and in  
1844 dealing with snakes this is an advantage. If Rikki Tikki had only known he was doing a much more  
1845 dangerous thing than fighting Nag, for Kar Karait is so small and can turn so quickly  
1846 that unless Rikki Tikki bit Rikki Tikki. Rikki Tikki bit him  
1847  
1848 (60:00:62:00)  
1849 daphne  
1850 close to the back of his head he would get the return stroke in the eye or lip. but Rikki did  
1851 not know his eyes were all red and he rocked back and forth looking for a good place to hold. Kra  
1852 Karrot struck out. Rikki back. wait. Rikki  
1853  
1854 connie  
1855 Jumped  
1856  
1857 daphne  
1858 jumped sideways..and tried to run in but the wicked little dusty gray head lashed within a fraction  
1859 of his shoulder and he had to jump over the body..and the head followed his heels  
1860 close. Teddy shouted to the house oh look her/e our our mongo/ose is killing a snake and  
1861 Rikki Tikki heard a scream from Teddy's mother. His father ran out with a stick but by the time he  
1862 came up Ka Karait had lunged out once too far and Rikki Tikki had sprung jumped on  
1863 the snake's back dropped his head far between his fore legs bitten as high up the back of as he  
1864 could get..hold and..  
1865  
1866 rod  
1867 Rolled  
1868  
1869 daphne  
1870 dropped his head far between his fore legs bitten as high up the back of his he could get hold of  
1871 and rolled a way. The bite paralyzed  
1872  
1873 (62:00:64:00)  
1874  
1875 daphne  
1876 Ka Karait. and Rikki Tikki was just going to eat him up from the tail after the custom of his  
1877 family at dinner. connie somebody else can read  
1878  
1879 rod  
1880 Anybody else want to  
1881  
1882 sandra  
1883 when he remembered that a full meal makes a slow mongoose and if he wanted all his strength  
1884 and quickness ready he must keep himself thin. He went away for a dust bath under the castor  
1885 castor oil bush while Teddy's while Teddy's father beat the dead Ka Karait. What. what is the use  
1886 of that thought thought Rikki Tikki. I have settled it all and there. and then Teddy. mothers picked  
1887 him up from the dust and hugged him crying that he had saved Teddys from death from the death  
1888 UH:HHMM { sandra gave a dramatic moan showing her engagement into the story line} and  
1889 Teddy's father said that he was a providence  
1890  
1891 connie  
1892 A providence  
1893  
1894 sandra  
1895 a providence  
1896

1897  
 1898 rod  
 1899 Meaning wh\at. tha that Teddy's father said that he was a providence meaning the mongoose was  
 1900 a providence Rikki Tikki  
 1901  
 1902 sandra  
 1903 Providence providence  
 1904  
 1905 rod  
 1906 Meaning a a a gi/ft alright I think like a gift from God almost right providence  
 1907  
 1908 sandra  
 1909 and Teddy looked on with big. scared. eyes. Rikki Tikki was rather  
 1910  
 1911 (64:00:66:00)  
 1912  
 1913 sandra  
 1914 amused at all the fuss which of course course he did not understand. Teddy's mother. Teddy's  
 1915 mother might just as well have. have petted Teddy for playing in the dust. Tik Rikki was thro thro  
 1916 throughly enjoyin enjoyin joy joy enjoyin himself  
 1917  
 1918 rod  
 1919 Thoroughly yeah. Rikki was thoro/ughly enjoying himself  
 1920  
 1921 sandra  
 1922 ok now I gotta go to the top...ok Th/at night at din/ner wal/king walking to and fro among the  
 1923  
 1924 connie  
 1925 Fro  
 1926  
 1927 sandra  
 1928 Fro the[ wi/ne]glasses  
 1929  
 1930 rod  
 1931 [uh huh]  
 1932  
 1933 sandra  
 1934 on the. on the table he could have stuffed himself three times over with ni/ce things but he he  
 1935 remembered Nag and Nag Na Na Na Nagana and and though it was very pleasant to be patted and  
 1936 pet and petted by Teddy's m/other and so. and to si/t on Teddy shou/lder his eyes would. would get  
 1937 red from time to time and he would go off into his long war cry of rikki tikki tikki tock! he  
 1938 he ha ha ha ha {giggles after trying to make the war cry of the mongoose}  
 1939  
 1940 rod  
 1941 Ha HA Ha ha ha ha {giggling along with sandra}  
 1942  
 1943 sandra  
 1944 Gotta gone over here  
 1945  
 1946 rod  
 1947 Ha ha ha ok who else wants to  
 1948  
 1949 connie  
 1950 Rik uh. Teddy carried him off to bed and and insist on Rikki Tikki sleeping under his chin.  
 1951  
 1952 (66:00:68:00)

1953  
 1954 connie  
 1955 Rikki Tikki was too we:ll bre bred to bite to or scratch.. but as soon as Teddy was asleep he went  
 1956 off for his nightly walk round the house and in the dark he ran up against. wha/ts that  
 1957  
 1958 rod  
 1959 Chu:chun/dra. Thats it Chuchundra  
 1960  
 1961 connie  
 1962 Chuchundra an a the muskrat creeping [round by the]  
 1963  
 1964 rod  
 1965 Chuchundra. im sorry. Chuchundra is the name. yeah. the name of the musk/rat which is just  
 1966 another rodent another animal [that's in the hou\se.]  
 1967  
 1968 connie  
 1969 [Chuchundra] is a broken hearted little beast. He whimp whimpers he whimpers and cheeps.  
 1970 cheeps all the ti night trying to make up his mind to run into the middle of the room but he never  
 1971 get there. Dont kill kill me said Chu Chu:chundra almost weeping. Rikki Tikki don't. kill m/e. Do  
 1972 you think a snake killer kills musrats? said Rikki Tikki scornfully. Those who kill snakes get  
 1973 killed by snakes said Chuchun Chuchundra. more sorrowfully than ever. And how am I to be sure  
 1974 that Nag won't mistake m/e for you some dark night. There's not the least danger said Rikki Tikki.  
 1975 But Nag is in the garden and I know you don't go there. My cousin Ch:ua the rat told me said  
 1976 Chuchundra and then he stopped. Told you what? {Everyone flips page}  
 1977  
 1978 (68:00:70:00)  
 1979  
 1980 connie  
 1981 Somebody else gotta read  
 1982  
 1983 randy  
 1984 One O two {102}  
 1985  
 1986 rod  
 1987 One O two {102}  
 1988  
 1989 sandra  
 1990 Oh I see[ hush ain't it.]  
 1991  
 1992 rod  
 1993 [Uh huh yeah]  
 1994  
 1995 sandra  
 1996 Aint that where it is? I go to the bottom.. Hu/sh Nag is everywhere. Ri/kki Tikki. You should  
 1997 have talkded to Chua in the g/arden. I did not so you. I did not so you must te\ll me. Quick. Chu  
 1998 chu Chuchudra or i'/ll bite y\ou bit you. am a very very poor man he sobbed. I never had spir/it  
 1999 enough to run or run out into the middle of the ro/om. HUSH I mustnt I must not tell you  
 2000 anything. Can't not you hear Ri/kki Tikki. Rikki Tikki listeneded. The ha house was as still as as  
 2001 still but he he thought he could just catch the faint faitest scratchin scratch in the world. a noise as  
 2002 faint as that of a a waps walkin on a window pad  
 2003  
 2004 connie  
 2005 Pane  
 2006  
 2007 sandra  
 2008 Pane. The dry scratch of a snakes scales on brick wood

2009  
2010 connie  
2011 Brick  
2012  
2013 sandra  
2014 Brick wood. Th/at's N:ag or Naganna he said to hi/mself and he is crawling into the ba/throom sli  
2015 slice. You are ri/ght Cha Cha Chuchundra i should have  
2016  
2017 (70:00:72:00)  
2018  
2019 sandra  
2020 talkded to Cha Cha Chu Chua. He he stole off. off to Teddy bathr\oom. but there there was na  
2021 nothing there and then to there was a brick pulled out to make a slice for the bath water and as  
2022 Rikki Tikki whispering together outside in the moonlight.  
2023  
2024 rod  
2025 I think we skipped a line  
2026  
2027 sandra  
2028 Did I skip some?  
2029  
2030 rod  
2031 Go back to he stole off to Teddy's bathroom  
2032  
2033 sandra  
2034 bathroom lets see O/k..but theres was nothing there and then. and then.then to. then to Teddy's  
2035 mother bathroom  
2036  
2037 rod  
2038 Right  
2039  
2040 sandra  
2041 That's where[ i'm a/t?]  
2042  
2043 rod  
2044 [Uh huh]  
2045  
2046 sandra  
2047 bathroom. At the bottom of the smoothe plaster wall there was a brick pulled out to make a sluice  
2048 for the bath wa\ter and as Rikki Tikki stole in by the. Rikki Tikki was a brick pulled out to make a  
2049 sluice for the bath water and as Rikki Tikki sto/le in by the by the masontee masonry cu curb  
2050 where the bath is put he hea he heard Nag and Nagan Naganna whispering together outside in the  
2051 mo/onlight. When the house is empty of people said Naganna to her hu/sband he will have to go  
2052 away and then the garden will be  
2053  
2054 (72:00:74:00)  
2055  
2056 sandra  
2057 ar our own again. Go in qui quietly and remember that the big man who killed Karait is the. is the  
2058 first one to Then is the first one to bite. Then come out and and tell me and we will hunt for Rikki  
2059 Tikki together.  
2060  
2061 rod  
2062 But are you siure.. I/m sorry you go on go on I apologize you go ahead go aheas  
2063  
2064 sandra

2065 ok. ok. But are you sure that there is everything anything to be gained by killing the peoples said  
 2066 Nag? Everyth/ing. When. there were no people insa bun bunga bungalow  
 2067  
 2068 rod  
 2069 Bungalow  
 2070  
 2071 sandra  
 2072 Bungalows. Did w/e ha\ve have any mon:goose in the g:arde. So long as the bug bung bung bung  
 2073 a lu is empty we are kings and queen of the garde and remember that as soon as our eggs in the  
 2074 melon me/lon in the [me::Lo bed]  
 2075  
 2076 rod  
 2077 [Melon-Bed]  
 2078  
 2079 sandra  
 2080 hatch as they may to tomor tomorrow our children will need room and quiet. Then I had not  
 2081 thought of th/at said Nag. I had not thought of that said Nag. I will g/o but there is no need that.  
 2082 we should hunt for Rikki Tikki afterward. I will kill the big man and his wife and the childre and  
 2083 the child if I c/an. and come away quietly. Then the bung bungalu no will be  
 2084  
 2085 (74:00:76:00)  
 2086  
 2087 sandra  
 2088 empty a:nd Rikki Tikki will g/o. [ Rik]  
 2089  
 2090 rod  
 2091 Pause there for just a minute if you would. Th/ank You.  
 2092 {Everyone seems to readjust ready to discuss, sandra laughs after what she has just read}  
 2093  
 2094 rod  
 2095 I know WHAT'sandra WHAT'sandra WHAT'sandra what's going on. Wh/at are they planning.  
 2096 What wh:at's what are we hea\ring in there now.  
 2097  
 2098 {it takes a moment for someone to speak up then Ben brakes the silence with his thoughts}  
 2099  
 2100 Ben  
 2101 I had an idea that the they are planning to kill the ma/n and the woma/n.. somethin about I don't  
 2102 know what a slu/ice is. but you know Rikki Tikki is in[ there,] cobra sticking their head  
 2103  
 2104 rod  
 2105 [Ok]..right. what were you going to say sophie {sandra is yawning during this segment of  
 2106 speech}  
 2107  
 2108 sophie  
 2109 They was tryin to get rid of em {unclear speech sounds very muiffled}  
 2110  
 2111 rod  
 2112 Yeah right same yeah trying to get rid. and and wh/y are they planning to kill the peop:le?  
 2113  
 2114 sandra  
 2115 I take a respon to that.. Uh  
 2116  
 2117 {times passes as everyone silently deliberates on the answer}  
 2118  
 2119 Ben

2120 They wanted to be [king and queen] of the[ garden] and they don't want that mongoose in the  
 2121 garden  
 2122  
 2123 sandra  
 2124 [ye::ah]  
 2125  
 2126 rod  
 2127 [right] .. YE/AH to get rid of the mong/oose. Ri/ght. Tha/t's Ri/ght. The[ mongoose is a  
 2128 REA]randy threat to[ them right] right. They recognized. a Rikki Tikki as a real threat to [them]  
 2129 A::ND we learned something else too. Nag and Nagaina also.. what else? They've got something  
 2130 else hidden in the melon-b\ed. Back in the gar\den  
 2131  
 2132 sandra  
 2133 [ooo:h] [h h h h.] [U:H H:UH] [uh huh] {Starts yawning}  
 2134  
 2135 sandra  
 2136 Is it Nagain?. Somethin like that? Nagin  
 2137  
 2138 rod  
 2139 Nag and Nagaina and Nagaina says. that. and REMEMBER that as soon as our eg/gs in the melon-  
 2140 bed hatch as they may tomorrow our children will need room and [quiet so that] there's a. a ne/st  
 2141 ri\ght. There's a clutch of e/ggs that are gonna hatch too so there's gonna be little ba/by cobras  
 2142 around as we/ll. and so  
 2143  
 2144 sandra  
 2145 [Uh huh]  
 2146  
 2147 (76:00:78:00)  
 2148  
 2149 rod  
 2150 The other thing that's funny here is that N/ag is the. the ki/ng of the garden. but w/ho's making  
 2151 these plans and tellin N/ag what to do?  
 2152  
 2153 connie  
 2154 Chundra  
 2155  
 2156 rod  
 2157 No Chuchundra's that little[ ah muskrat] he's the one that kinda warned Rikki Tikki that they were  
 2158 comin in the[ house rig/ht.]  
 2159  
 2160 connie  
 2161 [O:h]  
 2162  
 2163 sandra  
 2164 [Oh.] the M/omma?  
 2165  
 2166 rod  
 2167 Ye/ah the momma right. Nagaina's the one tellin Nag o/k. This is what we're gonna do. Here's the  
 2168 plan. You go in and kill these people and them we'll hunt for the mongoose together. And Nag's  
 2169 sayin ARE YOU SU/RE do we have to kill the people? and she's tellin him lo/ok. listen to me  
 2170 alright I know what I'm talkin about.. That slu/ice thing {talking directly to Ben} yeah i'm not  
 2171 quite sure what that is either but my thou/ght is. that. it's so/me kind of opening ob\viously from  
 2172 the out/side to the insi/de? I think it's probably this is n/ot a house with modern plumbing? I think  
 2173 it's probably a. an opening where they can have a a wash space and then they can just open that  
 2174 and let the water drains straight out outside. So it's an opening where. u:hm ah. where the snakes

2175 could could get in the hou\se. I think that's what's goin o\n. Alright do you want keep on you  
2176 wanna pass[ it pass it o\n.] Anybody else or should I go or?  
2177  
2178 sandra  
2179 [Somebody else can read.]  
2180  
2181 rod  
2182 connie. Rikki Tikki tingled all over with rage and hatred at this and then Nag's head came through  
2183 the sluice. and his five feet of co/ld body followed it. Angry as he wa/s Rikki Tikki was very  
2184 frightened as he saw the size of the big cobra. Nag coiled himself up. raised his head and looked  
2185 into the bath.. ah the bath. in the dark and Rikki could see his eyes glitter. Now if I kill him here  
2186 Nagaina will know. and if I fight him on open floor the odds are in his fa/vor. What am I to do?  
2187 said Rikki Tikki. Nag wav/ed to and fro and then Rikki Tikki heard him drinking from the biggest  
2188 water jar that was used to fill the bath. That is good sa:id th:e sn:ake..  
2189  
2190 (78:00:80:00)  
2191  
2192 rod  
2193 NOW when Karait was killed the big man had a stick. He MAY have the stick still but when he  
2194 come in to ba/the in the morning he will n/ot have the stick. I shall wait here until he com/es.  
2195 Nagai/na do you hear me? I will wait here in the cool until daytime.. There was no answer from  
2196 outside so Rikki Tikki knew Nagaina had gone away. Nag coi/led himself down coil by coil  
2197 around the bulge at the bottom of the water jar. and Rikki Tikki stayed st:ill as death. After an  
2198 hour he began to move muscle by muscle toward the ja\r. Nag was asleep. Rikki Tikki looked at  
2199 his big back wondering which would be the best. place for a good hold. If i don't break his back at  
2200 the first jump said Rikki Tikki hae can still fight. and if he fight O:OO Rikki. He looked at the  
2201 thickness of the neck below the hood but th/at was too much for him. and a bite near the tail would  
2202 only make Nag a savage. I tmust be the head he said at last. The head above the hood.and when I  
2203 am once th/ere I must not let go. Then he jumped. The head was laying a little clear of the water  
2204 jar up under the curve of it. and as his teeth met Rikki braced his back against the. the bowl of the  
2205 red earthenware to hold down the head. This gave him just one seconds purchase as he made the  
2206 most of i\t. The/n he was battered to and fro like a rat is shaken by a dog. to and fro on the floor.  
2207 up and down round in gre/at circles. but his ey/es were red and he held on as the body cartwhipped  
2208 all over the floor upsetting the tin dipper and the soap dish and the fle:sh br/ew as and banged  
2209 against the tin side of the bat\h. As he he/ld he closed his eyes tighter and tighter. or he closed his  
2210 teeth tighter and tighter for he made sure that he would be banged to dea/th and win the honor of  
2211 his family he preferred to be found with his teeth locked.  
2212  
2213 (80:00:82:00)  
2214  
2215 rod  
2216 This was dizzying. he was dizzy, aching and felt shaken to pieces when something went off like a  
2217 thunderclap just behind him. A hot wind knocked him senseless and red fire singed his fur. The  
2218 the big man had been wakened by the noise and had fired both barrels of a shot gun into Nag just  
2219 behind the hood. {turns page}  
2220  
2221 rod  
2222 page 104... Rikki Tikki held on with his eyes shut for now he was quite sure he was dead. but the  
2223 head did not move. and the big man picked him up and said it's the mongoose again. Ali/ce the  
2224 little chap has saved ou/r lives now. Then Teddy's mother came in with a very white face and saw  
2225 what was left of Nag. and Rikki Tikki dragged himself to Teddy's bedroom and spent half the rest  
2226 of the night shaking himself tenderly to find out whether he was broken into forty pieces as he had  
2227 fancied. When morning came he was very stiff but well pleased with his doings. NOW I have  
2228 Nagaina to settle with and she will be worse than fi/ve Na/gs. and there's no knowing when the  
2229 eggs she spoke of will hatch. Good/ness I must go and see Darzee he said.. Without waiting for  
2230 breakfast Rikki Tikki ran into thorn bush were Darzee was singing a song of tri/umph at the top of



2231 his voice. The news of Nag's death was all over the garden for the sweeper had thrown the body  
 2232 on the rubbish heap. O:OH you stupid tuft of feathers said Rikki Tikki angrily. Is this the time to  
 2233 sing? Na/g is dead. is dead. is dead sang Darzee. THE VALIANT Rikki Tikki caught him by the  
 2234 head and held fast. The big man brought the bang stick and Nag fell in two pieces. he will  
 2235 NEVER eat my babies again. All that's true enough but where's Nagaina said Rikki Tikki  
 2236 looking carefully around him. Nagaina came to the bathroom sluice and called for Nag Darzee  
 2237 went on. and Nag came out on the end of a stick. the sweeper picked him up on the end of a stick  
 2238 and  
 2239  
 2240 (82:00:84:00)  
 2241  
 2242 rod  
 2243 threw him on the rubbish heap. Let us sing about the gre/at red eyed Rikki Tikki.and Darzee  
 2244 fi/lled his throat and sang. If I could get up to your nest I'd roll out a/l/ your babies said Rikki  
 2245 Tikki. You don't know when to do the right thing at the right time. YOU'RE safe enough in you  
 2246 nest th\ere but its far worse for me. No. but its wa/r down here for me stop singing a minute  
 2247 Dar/zee. For the great. the beautiful Rikki Tikki's sake I will stop said Dar'zee. What is it . O  
 2248 killer of the terrible Na'g. WHERE IS NAGAINA for the thi/rd time. On the rubb/ish heap by the  
 2249 [stables mou/rning for Nag.]  
 2250  
 2251 daphne  
 2252 [ Can I use. Can I go to the bathroom.] {daphne goes to the restroom}  
 2253  
 2254 rod  
 2255 Please. Of cou/rse go ahead please.. on the rubbish heap by the stables mourning for Nag. Great  
 2256 is Rikki Tikki with the white teeth. Ha Darzee won't shut up singing Rikki Tikki's praises..  
 2257 Bo/ther my white teeth. Have you ev/er heard where she keeps her eg/gs? In the melon bed on  
 2258 the end nearest the wall where the su/n strikes nearly all day. She ha/d them there three weeks  
 2259 ago. And you never throught it worth while to tell m/e? The end nearest the wa/ll you said. Rikki  
 2260 Tikki you are not going to eat her eggs. Not e/at exactly. no. Darzee if you have a grain of sense  
 2261 you will fly off to the stables and pretend that your wing is broken and let Nagaina chase you  
 2262 away to this bush. I MUST get to the melon bed. and if I went there now she'd see me. Dar/zee  
 2263 was a fea/ther brained little fellow who could never hold more than one idea at a time in his head.  
 2264 and just because he knew that Nagaina's children were born in eggs like his own. he didn'tthink at  
 2265 first that it was fair to kill them. But his wi/fe was a sensible bird. and she knew that cobra's eggs  
 2266 meant young cobras later on. So she flew off from the nest and left Darzee to keep the babies  
 2267 warm and continue his song about the death of Nag. Dar/zee was very like a man in some wa\ys.  
 2268 She fluttered in front of Nagaina by the  
 2269  
 2270  
 2271 (84:00:86:00)  
 2272  
 2273 rod  
 2274 rubbish heap and cried out. O:H MY WING IS BROKEN? The boy in the house threw a sto/ne at  
 2275 me and broke it. Then she flutt\ered more desperately than ever. Naga\ina lifted up her head and  
 2276 hissed. YO/U warned Rikki. Rikki Tikki when I would have killed him. In/deed and truly you've  
 2277 chosed a bad place to be lame in. And she moved toward Darzee's wife. slipping along over the  
 2278 dust. The bo:y broke it with a stone shrieked Darzee's wife. We:ll it may be some consolation to  
 2279 you when you're dead to know that I shall settle accounts with the b/oy. Myb hus/band lies on the  
 2280 rubbish heap this morning. but before night the boy in the house will lie very sti\ll. What is the  
 2281 use of running away? I am sure to catch you. little fool look at m/e.. Darzee's wife knew bet/ter  
 2282 than to do that. for a b:ird who looks at a snakes eyes gets s:o frightened that she cannot move.  
 2283 Darzee's wife flut\tered on piping sorrowfully and never leaving the ground. and Nagaina  
 2284 quickened her pace. Rikki Ti/kki heard them going up the path from the stables and he ra/ced for  
 2285 the end of the melon patch near the wall. The:re in the warm litter about the melons very  
 2286 cunningly hidden he found twenty-five eggs. about the size of a bantum's eggs but with whitish

2287 skin instead of shell {daphne returns from the restroom} We ju/st finished 105 and are movin on  
2288 to 106. {daphne catching up and everyone is flipping to the next page}  
2289  
2290 daphne  
2291 Ok  
2292  
2293 rod  
2294 So Darzee's wife has created a diversion right?. She's pretended to be hu/rt so that Nagaina wil  
2295 chase h/er and she's lea/ding Nag/aina away from the ne/st and the eg/gs so Rikkii Tikki can g/o  
2296 and get those cobra eggs. I was not a day too soon he said. For he could se/e the baby cobras  
2297 curled up inside the skin. and he kn/ew that the minute they were hatched they could EACH kill a  
2298 man or a mongoose. He bit off  
2299  
2300 (86:00:87:49.3)  
2301  
2302 rod  
2303 the tops of the eggs as fast as he could taking care to crush the young cobras. and turned over the  
2304 litter from time to time to see whether he had missed any. At la/st. there were only three legs eggs  
2305 left. and Rikki Tikki bewgan to chuckle to himself when he heard Darzee's wife screaming.. I had  
2306 just no/ticed that it's 11:30 so uh uh you all want to continue a little or should be quit for now and  
2307 we'll finish this up when we meet aga\in.  
2308  
2309 randy  
2310 Finish up.  
2311  
2312 rod  
2313 Finish up ne/xt time?.. ok  
2314  
2315 sandra  
2316 I read some of it at the hou/se.  
2317  
2318 rod  
2319 What's that?  
2320  
2321 sandra  
2322 I said I read so/me of this [at the house.]  
2323  
2324 rod  
2325 [No that's fi/ne] you wanna take them with y/ou and you can finish reading it and then we can  
2326 come back together and read. NOW next mon/day. LABOR DAY. alrighht its a holiday  
2327 sandra:OO. yeah. there won't be anybody here and the bulding won't be open so let's meet the  
2328 following monday and. and we'll make that our last session. a/t lea/st our last session with the  
2329 cameras and we can all discuss it in one meeting sometimes and keep reading or talking something  
2330 else. outside of the research project [o/k.] So we'll we'll do that next time that'll be not next  
2331 monday but the following[ monday]. Ok gre/at meeting I enjo/yed it ya'll.. See you ne/xt time.  
2332 Now if any of you want me to hang on to your papers I can do that or you wanna take them with  
2333 you?  
2334 daphne  
2335 [ok]  
2336  
2337 daphne and sophie  
2338 [ok]  
2339  
2340 daphne  
2341 Your wife made to it?  
2342

2343 rod  
2344 Ye/ah she did.. oh yeah sure was.  
2345  
2346 daphne  
2347 Ok we'll see you.  
2348  
2349 rod  
2350 Alri/ght se/e you th/en.  
2351  
2352 daphne  
2353 ok  
2354

1 **Session Six**

2 0:00:21.2

3

4 {we hear the television blaring from the waiting room. Advertisements and dramatic news  
5 programming while facilitator arranges items in the room in preparation for this final session of  
6 the reading group.}

7

8 0:02:20.5

9 {Randy enters room dressed in red t-shirt, light blue denim overalls and a white ballcap. he sets a  
10 styrofoam cup on the table and sits quietly in a chair.}

11

12 0:06:24.9

13 ben, connie, sandra enter, exchange pleasantries, smalltalk. Ben has his medical/psychiatric  
14 dictionary with him again today. Discuss and sign ECMH consent forms to release information to  
15 me.

16

17 0:13:25.9

18

19 rod

20 betty's not here today. Virgil's outside. and we'll let daphne and sophie come on in when they get  
21 here. well, so lets see, where were we? we were lookin at uh.. yall remember the story from last  
22 week?

23

24 sandra

25 I think (\_ \_)

26

27 rod

28 you remember anything about it?

29

30 sandra

31 i forgots mine

32

33 rod

34 i've got em i think i collected them from most everybody so lets hand em back=

35

36 randy

37 =oh rikki tikki tikki

38

39 rod

40 yeah, that funny little mongoose that made all that noise. well, no I dont have all of em. i know  
41 youve got yours is that right ben?

42

43 ben

44 yeah

45

46 rod

47 so i'll take that back from you. thank you.

48

49 sandra

50 architects

51

52 rod

53 do you have one randy  
54  
55 randy  
56 no  
57  
58 rod  
59 and do you have one down there?  
60  
61 connie  
62 no  
63  
64 randy  
65 mine's at home  
66  
67 rod  
68 so heres one and heres one and do i have another one?...well I'll look on with somebody. Ben can i  
69 look on with you? will that be alright?  
70  
71 ben  
72 yeah  
73  
74 rod  
75 okay {change seats}. alright so what was this story? what was this story. {to ben} thank you very  
76 much for that. do you remember what was goin on in here? this one is different from the other  
77 stories we read in one major way {laughs}. why is it different than the others do you think?  
78  
79 connie  
80 its talk about animals  
81  
82 rod  
83 right, the main characters are not people, though there's some people in the story, right?  
84  
85 connie  
86 right  
87  
88 rod  
89 they're kind of, secondary. they're not as important to the story. so who are the main characters?  
90  
91 connie  
92 animals  
93  
94 rod  
95 yeah, what kind of animal?  
96  
97 randy  
98 mongoose  
99  
100 connie  
101 mongoose  
102  
103 randy  
104 and the cobra  
105  
106 rod  
107 the mongoose and the cobras, thats the main thing and whats goin on with the mongoose and the  
108 cobras?

109  
110 connie  
111 they dislike each other  
112  
113 rod  
114 yeah, right. so do we remember what happened from the beginning of the story? how did the  
115 mongoose meet the cobras? whats the deal?what was?  
116  
117 sandra  
118 well  
119  
120 connie  
121 uhm  
122  
123 ben  
124 ( ) backyard  
125  
126 rod  
127 yeah, in somebody's backyard, this is in India, in some peoples' garden, in their backyard you're  
128 right and rikki rikki tikki tavi was a kindof an orpahn right? he got washed out of his home in a  
129 flood i think it sez an he wuz all kinda alomost half drowned.  
130  
131 0:16:24.7  
132 {daphne and sophie enter}  
133  
134 rod  
135 good mornin  
136  
137 sophie  
138 good mornin  
139  
140 randy  
141 good mornin  
142  
143 rod  
144 howre you ladies?  
145  
146 daphne & sophie  
147 good  
148  
149 rod  
150 good, welcome...get ya somethin ta drink and some getcha a piece of bread if you wish and then,  
151 ooh, did yall bring yer stories by any chance?  
152  
153 daphne  
154 [i dont have mine]  
155  
156 sophie  
157 [i've got mine]  
158  
159 rod  
160 you did bring one, well maybe yall can share, would you be willin  
161  
162 sophie  
163 sure  
164

165 rod  
166 okay great, shoulda made more copies ta bring. i had anuff to begin with but i should bring copies  
167 the second time too i guess...so [yall remember]  
168  
169 sophie  
170 [anybody sittin here?]  
171  
172 rod  
173 no, thats you. you you get the throne.  
174  
175 sophie  
176 {laughs}  
177  
178 rod  
179 {laughs} uhm, so we we're we're tryin to remember where we were in the story. we made it almost  
180 through rikki tikki tavi. you member rikki tikki.. what was that noi, why does he have that name?  
181 ...  
182  
183 ben  
184 because he made a funny noise when he (walks in [the room])  
185  
186 rod  
187 because he makes that funny noise right and we were all tryin to tryin ta make that noise. Rikki  
188 tikk tchk tchkkkk {makes noise and laughs}  
189  
190 chorus  
191 {laughs}  
192  
193 connie  
194 its hard  
195  
196 rod  
197 it is, i dont know how to make that noise. i dunno dunno how ta be a mongoose.  
198  
199 sandra  
200 and thats a favorite book you sed you liked?  
201  
202 rod  
203 well when i wuz when i wuz little i liked this story. this wuz a story i liked yeah when i wuz  
204 younger when i wuz younger i remember likin this story and so i i i like to pull it out and read it  
205 every once in a while. yeah  
206  
207 sandra  
208 oh, alright  
209  
210 rod  
211 so alright we've got rikki tikki and rikki's a mongoose right, he was this orphaned mongoose. right,  
212 almost drowned in a flood and then he found himself in these peoples' backyard and theres some  
213 birds and other critters in the yad and all these animals talk to each other, right?  
214  
215 connie  
216 right  
217  
218 rod  
219 and nobody thinks thats odd, right?  
220

221 connie  
222 yes  
223  
224 rod  
225 {laughs} i wonder if the people can hear them talking or not.. i i guess maybe not, maybe they  
226 dont know the animals talk to each other, do you think that the animals actually talk to each other  
227 when we're not aware?  
228  
229 connie  
230 {smiling} yes  
231  
232 rod  
233 you think so? i kinda think they do too. that what we hear as chirp chirp chirp chirp chirp from the  
234 birds i think they maybe they're talking to each other and we jes don understand what theyre  
235 sayin.. uhm, where did we end? what had happened, yall remember? weve got nag and nagina  
236  
237 connie  
238 i thought we left of on 106  
239  
240  
241 rod  
242 yeah? ( \_ \_ )  
243  
244 0:19:07.2  
245  
246  
247 rod  
248 left off on 106 maybe? uhm, so... rikki's makin the rounds in the garden, he's meeting people right  
249 and that he meets the tailor bird darzee and darzees wife and then she w warns im that the cobras  
250 gonna strike im and he jumps outta the way and lets see he killed that little smake uh ki kirait  
251 kirait or somethin like that, that little snake  
252  
253 connie  
254 mmhhmm  
255  
256 rod  
257 and so the people really like him cause he wuz protecting the kid, little teddy was it? yeah, little  
258 teddy.. but i think where we were, lets see, he had already i think rikki killed nag who was the  
259 male cobra, right in the bathroom. that cobra wuz trying to come into the bathroom to kill the  
260 people in the house... yeah^ {reading} nag is ded as ded as ded sang darzee, the valient rikki tikki  
261 caught him by the head and held fast, and then the man shot him thats right with the shotgun. but  
262 whats what wuz tha other problem besides the two cobras they were gonna have babies, right?  
263  
264 connie  
265 mmhhmm/  
266  
267 rod  
268 cuz there wuz a nest of eggs somewhere and rikki wuz gonna try and find those [eggs]  
269  
270 connie  
271 [eggs]  
272  
273 rod  
274 did he find them? ye::ah/  
275  
276 connie



277 I think [he did]  
 278  
 279 rod  
 280 [look at] the bottom of 105, rikki tikki heard them goin up the path from the stables and he raced  
 281 to the end of the melon patch near the wall. there in the warm litter about the melons, very  
 282 cunningly hidden he found twenty-five eggs about the size of a bantam's eggs, of a of a hen's eggs  
 283 but with whitish skin instead of a shell. i wuz not a day too soon he sed, for he could see the baby  
 284 cobras curled up inside the skin and he knoew that the moment they were hatched they could each  
 285 kill a man or a mongoose. he bit off the tops of the eggs as fast as he could taking care to crush the  
 286 young cobras and turned over the litter from time to time to see whether he had missed any. at last  
 287 there were only three eggs left and rikki tikki began to chuckle to himself when he heard darzee's  
 288 wife screaming. rikki tikki, i led nagina toward the house and she has gone into the veranda and  
 289 oh, come quickly she means killing. rikki tikki smashed two eggs and tumbled backward down the  
 290 melon bed, the third egg in his mouth, and scuttled to the veranda as hard as he could put foot to  
 291 the ground. teddy and his mother and father were there at early breakfast. rilkki tikki saw that they  
 292 were not eating anything. they sat stone still and their faces were white. nagina was coiled up on  
 293 the matting by teddy's chair, within easy striking distance of teddy's bare leg and was swaying to  
 294 and fro and singing a song of triumph. son of the big man that killed nag, she hissed. stay still, i  
 295 am not ready yet. wait a little. keep very still all of you three. if you move i strike and if you do  
 296 not move i strike. oh foolish people who killed my nag. she's out for revenge, huh?  
 297  
 298 randy  
 299 hmm  
 300  
 301 connie  
 302 hmm  
 303  
 304 0:22:42.0  
 305  
 306 rod  
 307 teddy's eyes were fixed on his father and all his father could do was whisper sit still sit still teddy.  
 308 you mustnt move, teddy sit still. then rikki tikki came up and cried turn round nagina, turn and  
 309 fight. all in good time sed she without moving her eyes. i will settle my account with you  
 310 presently. look at your friends, rikki tikki. they are still and white. they are afraid. they dare not  
 311 move. and if you come a step closer, i strike. look at your eggs sed rikki tikki in the melon bed  
 312 near the wall. go and look nagina, the big snake half turned half around and saw the egg on the  
 313 veranda. aaghh, give it to me, she sed. rikki tikki put his paws one on each side of the egg, and his  
 314 eyes grew blood red. what price for a snake's egg? for a young cobra? for a young king cobra? for  
 315 the last, the very last of the brood. the ants are eating all the others down by the melon bed. nagina  
 316 spun clear round forgetting everything that the snake..forgetting everything for the sake of the one  
 317 egg, and rikki tikki saw teddy's father shoot out a big hand, catch teddy by the shoulder and drag  
 318 him across the little table with the teacups, safe and out of reach of nagina. tricked, tricked,  
 319 tricked. rikki tchk tchk, whatever that noise is, chuckled rikki tikki, the boy is safe and it wuz i, i  
 320 that caught nag by the hood last night in the bathroom. then he began to jump up and down all four  
 321 feet together, his head close to the floor. he threw me to and fro but he could not shake me off. he  
 322 was dead befoe the big man blew him in two. i did it. rikki tikki tch. come then nagina, come and  
 323 fight with me. you shall not be a widow long. nagina saw that she had lost her chance at killing  
 324 teddy and the egg lay betwene rikki tikki's paws. give me the egg, rikki tikki. give me the last of  
 325 my eggs and I will go away and never come back, she sed, lowering her hood. yes! you will go  
 326 away and never come back. for you will go to the rubbish heap with nag. fight, widow, the big  
 327 man has gone for his gun, fight. rikki tikki wus bounding all around nagina, keeping just out of  
 328 reach of her stroke, his little eyes like hot coals. nagina gathered herself together and flung out at  
 329 him. rikki tikki jumped up and backward again and again and again she struck and each time her  
 330 head came within, with a whack on the matting of the veranda. when she gathered herself together  
 331 like a watch spring. then rikki tikki danced in a circle to get behind her and nagina spun around to  
 332 keep her head to his head so that the rustle of her tail on the matting sounded like dry leaves blown

333 along by the wind. he had forgotten the egg. it still lay on the veranda and nagina came nearer and  
334 nearer to it till at last while rikki tikki was drawing breath, she caught it in her mouth, turned to the  
335 veranda steps and flew like an arrow down the path with rikki tikki behind her. when the cobra  
336 runs for her life, she goes like a whiplash fl flicked across a horse's neck. rikki tikki knew that he  
337 must catch her or all the trouble would begin again. she headed straight for the long grass by the  
338 thornbush. as he wuz running, rikki tikki heard darzee still singing his foolish little song of  
339 triumph. but darzee's wife was wiser. she flew off her nest as nagina came along and flapped her  
340 wings about nagina's head. that's pretty brave. {turning page} if darzee had helped, they might  
341 have turned her. nagina only lowered her hood and went on. still, the instant's delay brought rikki  
342 tikki up to her and as she plunged into the rat hole where she and nag used to live, his little white  
343 teeth were clenched on her tail and he went down with her and very few mongooses, however wise  
344 and old they may be, care to follow a cobra into its hole. it was dark in the hole and rikki tikki  
345 never knew when it might open out and give nagina room to turn and strike. He held on savagely  
346 and stuck out his four feet to act as brakes on the dark slope of the hot, moist earth. then the grass  
347 at the mouth of the hole stopped waving and darzee sed it is all over with rikki tikki. we must sing  
348 his death song, valiant rikki tikki is dead for nagina will surely kill him underground. so he sang a  
349 very mournful song that he made up on the spur of the moment. and just as he got to the most  
350 touching part, the grass quivered again and rikki tikki, covered with dirt, backed himself out of the  
351 hole leg by leg, licking his whiskers. darzee stopped with a little shout. rikki tikki shook some of  
352 the dust off his fur and sneezed. it is all over, he sed. the widow will never come out again, and the  
353 red ants that live between the grass stems heard him and began to troop down one after another to  
354 see if he had spoken the truth. rikki tikki curled himself up in the grass and slept where he was.  
355 slept and slept till it was late in the afternoon, for he had done a hard day's work. now, he sed,  
356 when he awoke, i will go back to the house. tell the coppersmith darzee and he will tell the garden  
357 that nagina is dead. the coppersmith is a bird who makes a noise exactly like the beating of a little  
358 hammer on a copper pot. and the reason he is always making it is because he is the town crier in  
359 every Indian garden. he tells all the news to everybody who cares to listen. as rikki tikki went up  
360 the path, he heard his attention notes like a tiny dinner gong, and then the steady ding/ dong\ tack  
361 tock nag is dead dong nagina is dead ding dong tock that set all the birds in the garden singing and  
362 the frogs croaking for nag and nagina used to eat frogs as well as little birds. when rikki got to the  
363 house, teddy and teddy's mother- she looked very white still for she had been fainting-and teddy's  
364 father came out and almost cried over him and that night he ate all that was given and until he  
365 could eat no more and went to bed on teddy's shoulder where teddy's mother saw him when she  
366 came to look at night. he saved our lives and teddy's life she sed to her husband, just think, he  
367 saved all our lives. rikki tikki woke up with a jump, for all the mongooses are light sleepers. oh/  
368 its you\, he sed, what are you bothering for? all the cobras are dead and if they werent, I'm here.  
369 rikki tikki had a right to be proud of himself, though he did not grow too proud. and he kept that  
370 guardedness as a mongoose should keep it, with tooth and jump and spring and bite, till never a  
371 cobra dared to show its head inside the walls....

372

373 0:29:14.8

374

375 rod

376 so, so whadju think? dju like my little story or not terribly

377

378 {randy shakes his head "no"}

379

380 rod

381 nobody seems very impressed/ {laughs}

382

383 connie

384 ( \_ ) {laughs}

385

386

387 rod

388 well, thats okay, you dont like it?

389  
390 randy  
391 ( \_ \_ ) well, i dunno {laughing skeptically I would say} (rikki tikki \_ )  
392  
393 rod  
394 you dont know about rikki tikki, huh?  
395  
396 randy  
397 {shaking head} I dont know about rikki tikki  
398  
399 rod  
400 okay alright  
401  
402 sandra  
403 (gushy gushy gush)  
404  
405 rod  
406 youve got/ it\  
407  
408 sandra  
409 rikki tikki, he's somethin though.. he's a thing though, he plays he plays with everything. is a  
410 sound though. ever time he say rikki tikki iss like a a uh huh.  
411  
412 rod  
413 yeah. do you think this is uh. why write this story? why do you think the author.. wrote it?.. who's  
414 it for, lets put it that way. yall don seem to like it very much, can you imagine anybody who would  
415 like it? {laughs}  
416  
417 randy  
418 i have no idea  
419  
420 rod  
421 nah, you jus don think its a very good story, huh?  
422  
423 randy  
424 i jus don think its a very good story  
425  
426 rod  
427 okay, alright [any]  
428  
429 randy  
430 [i dont] think so  
431  
432 rod  
433 anybody else?  
434  
435 ben  
436 some animals, not all animals are at your life, some animals can save your life.  
437  
438 rod  
439 hmm, okay. yeah.. so its funny cuz uh the author kinda makes this out to be a hero story, right?  
440 rikki tikki s is the hero of the story.  
441  
442 connie  
443 the mongoose, youre saying?  
444

445 rod  
446 mmhmm yeah, do you think thats right? is he a hero in this story?  
447  
448 connie  
449 mmmm/ {skeptically considers}..yes, i would say. he tried to keep the snakes away from the  
450  
451 rod  
452 from the from the people and from the birds  
453  
454 connie  
455 birds  
456  
457 rod  
458 and the [frogs]  
459  
460 connie  
461 [(an the other animals)]  
462  
463 rod  
464 so he certainly, yeah the way the story goes  
465  
466 randy  
467 hes not a hero. don like that story. {maybe to daphne?}  
468  
469 connie  
470 hes very brave  
471  
472 daphne  
473 {to randy} do i like the story?  
474  
475 randy  
476 {nods "yes"}  
477  
478 daphne  
479 yeah, it wuz nice, yeah.  
480  
481 rod  
482 {laughs} he seemed to be brave. and certainly little darzee singing his praises as though hes a  
483 hero; saved everybody in the garden saved everybody in the house. but i guess my question is uh  
484 wuz he just doin what mongooses do? i mean wuz he really a hero or wuz he jus doin what ..  
485 mongooses do? [or whats the difference?]  
486  
487 connie  
488 [□]  
489  
490 0:32:07.2  
491  
492 {connie, daphne and sandra laugh}  
493  
494 rod  
495 right, whats the difference? when do we call a person a hero? when is a person a hero?  
496  
497 sophie  
498 when they save someone  
499  
500 connie

501 save someone  
502  
503 rod  
504 alright, when they save somebody, [alright]  
505  
506 connie  
507 a pet can become a hero too. a person dog when a dog save someone they call him a hero.  
508  
509 rod  
510 a dog can be a hero, okay alright and that dogs just doin what it does.right, its jus bein a dog,  
511 right?  
512  
513 connie  
514 right  
515  
516 rod  
517 but it can still be a hero. okay/ alright so maybe a mongoose could be a hero too, he wuz a pet like  
518 that right, jus like a dog I guess though hes a little wilder than a dog i guess.  
519  
520 connie  
521 not vicious, not vicious  
522  
523 rod  
524 yeah, he wadnt too vicious with the i guess he wuz vicious with cobras but not vicious with tha  
525 little boy  
526  
527 connie  
528 ohhh  
529  
530 rod  
531 or the other animals, right?  
532  
533 connie  
534 right  
535  
536 rod  
537 ALRIGHT, well that wuz an experiment, i thought wed have an animal story and it didnt go over  
538 very well {laughing, others laugh}. and thats okay, we had a story not everybody liked very much.  
539 thats alright i guess, i uh now we know. now we know, we dont like animal stories [as much.]  
540  
541 connie  
542 [i do.]  
543  
544 rod  
545 you do? (okay \_).  
546  
547 connie  
548 yeah  
549  
550 randy  
551 its okay  
552  
553 rod  
554 okay, thanks {laughing}  
555  
556 0:33:23.6

557  
558 rod  
559 uhm, well, what about another one, what about a story thats not about animals what about a story  
560 thats about people again? what about a story thats thats thats gonna be familiar to some of us,  
561 right? you know the story of mo:ses?  
562  
563 chorus  
564 mmhhmm  
565  
566 rod  
567 alright, whado we know abot mozes and um the is'raelite people?  
568  
569 sophie  
570 he led the people to the promised land  
571  
572 rod  
573 right! and out of/  
574  
575 sophie  
576 out of  
577  
578 connie  
579 bondage  
580  
581 sophie  
582 out of bondage  
583  
584 rod  
585 out of bondage in what nation? they were in bondage in/ ya remember?  
586  
587 sophie  
588 (wadn it in) egyptian  
589  
590 rod  
591 egypt, yeah, thats exactly right thats exactly right. {to ben} wouldja pass those down fuh me?  
592 please. and yall can do the same over here please... so this/ is\ a version of that story about mozes  
593 uh leadin the people the israel israelites, children of israel, the jewish people, the hebrews at the  
594 time, um out of egypt. an it wuz written by the same woman that wrote um a number of the stories  
595 we've already read. remember john redding goes to sea, the very first story that we read  
596  
597 randy  
598 right  
599  
600 rod  
601 bout the young man who floated those little boats on the river and wanted to go away but never  
602 made it until he gotknocked offa that bridge in that storm. that was written by zora neal hurstson/  
603 who is a woman who wrote in the early part of the twentieth century and she was from notasulga,  
604 right, she was from right up the road here. and she spent time here in macon county. um, she wrote  
605 this story and its her version of the mozes story. i though it would be this one would be interesting  
606 to read. lets see what you think about it. um, should i start out and then we'll trade around or how  
607 do you wanna do? somebody else want to start out? {whispers} everybody's being very quiet  
608 today {laughs}.  
609  
610 connie  
611 you start it out  
612

613 rod  
614 alright i will i will. escape from pharaoh. I dunno what that means {pointing to epigraph} [maybe  
615 we'll]  
616  
617 randy  
618 [i'll start]  
619  
620 rod  
621 figure it out. oh, you wanna start?  
622  
623 randy  
624 yeah  
625  
626 rod  
627 that's fine. whadaya think that means "africa has her mouth on moses"? i dunno maybe we'll come  
628 back. you dunno?  
629  
630 randy  
631 i dunno  
632  
633 rod  
634 alright, randy you start.  
635  
636 randy  
637 night came walkin through egypt swishing her black dress. the palace was ples and the peasants  
638 slept. pharaoh and the servants of pharaoh had assured the egyptians that the terrors of moses were  
639 ended. he had sed moses must cease and the word of pharaoh wuz enuff. so the nation slept slept  
640 its sleep untroubled.  
641  
642 rod  
643 alright let me pause here, i know you just started, but I wanna make sure we know whats goin on  
644 here so far. first of all, that last story we had a mongoose as a character, whado we have here?  
645 night came walking through egypt swishing her black dress? what does that mean? night came  
646 walking?  
647  
648 connie  
649 a lady  
650  
651 sophie  
652 lady came walking, black dress  
653  
654 rod  
655 right right it seems like the author hurston is is she talking literally about a lady or is she  
656 describing nighttime  
657  
658 connie  
659 as [though]  
660  
661 rod  
662 [as] though she's a lady  
663  
664 sophie  
665 [( \_ )]  
666  
667 rod

668 i thin that's what shes doin, right? so she's saying, huh {laughs}, this is an artistic way of saying "it  
669 was nighttime" or "it was dark outside" but instead of sayin that she sez "night came walking  
670 through egypt swishing her black dress" {gestures}. you get the idea of, as night [walks along]  
671  
672 connie  
673 [as she was a ghost]  
674  
675 rod  
676 as almost as though she was a ghost, right and as her as her the the flowing fabric of her dress  
677 comes through the streets of the of the country it becomes dark like its night. thats kind of a cool  
678 way of putting that I thought. so, and then what does it mean um pharaoh and we know pharaoh is  
679 the king right? pharaoh's the king of egypt right? and he sez  
680  
681 randy  
682 he was a hard hearted person.  
683  
684 rod  
685 a hard hearted person exactly from the story.  
686  
687 randy  
688 a hard hearted person.  
689  
690 rod  
691 hard hearted person. exactly. the pharaoh had assured the egyptians that the terrors of moses had  
692 ended, whats he whats he talkin about?  
693  
694 connie  
695 the (rage)  
696  
697 rod  
698 the what?  
699  
700 connie  
701 the um.. (\_uproar)  
702  
703 rod  
704 okay and what was that uproar? remember what that was? [what happened]  
705  
706 connie  
707 [want be king]  
708  
709 rod  
710 what had moses brought to the egyptians?  
711  
712 ben  
713 slaves  
714  
715 rod  
716 okay, yeah, the hebrews had been slaves to the egyptians and moses, you remember his story? how  
717 did he start out? what was what was his story from the beginning? you remember how that went?  
718 that he was born a hebrew,  
719  
720 sophie  
721 (\_ \_)  
722  
723 ben



724 um  
725  
726 rod  
727 and his mother  
728  
729 connie  
730 sent him down the [nile]  
731  
732 sophie  
733 [put him down in the basket]  
734  
735 daphne  
736 [in the basket]  
737  
738 rod  
739 {nodding} put im in the river, thats right, in a basket and who found him?  
740  
741 connie  
742 egyptian  
743  
744 sophie  
745 egyptian women  
746  
747 rod  
748 yeah, and not just any egyptian women, but  
749  
750 randy  
751 egyptian woman  
752  
753 rod  
754 yeah, some egyptian women, it was the queen right? a princess or the queen that found him.  
755  
756 connie  
757 right  
758  
759 rod  
760 and so she raised him as an egyptian prince, so he went from being born to these enslaved people  
761 to bein=  
762  
763 connie  
764 =to bein king!  
765  
766 rod  
767 to being like a king, to being a prince of egypt. but then when he got a little bit older, he uh, what  
768 was it he tried to save a hebrew woman who was bein beaten by an egyptian slave master, right?  
769  
770 chorus  
771 right  
772  
773 rod  
774 and when he did that he killed the egyptian, trying to protect this hebrew woman. and then he ran  
775 away because he was gonna be arrested, right, he was gonna be arrested. so he ran into the desert  
776 and while he was there in the desert,  
777  
778 sophie  
779 the lord spoke to him

780  
781 rod  
782 thats right, the lord called him and sed essentially, what?  
783  
784 sophie  
785 that he would be  
786  
787 connie  
788 that he would be king, of the egyptian peiople  
789  
790 sophie  
791 king  
792  
793 rod  
794 of the hebew people and that he needed to lead the people out [of egypt]  
795  
796 connie  
797 [of egypt]  
798  
799 rod  
800 right, and that he needed to free the people and lead them out of egypt, thats exactly right. and  
801 moses, you know, he didnt want to do that. he went back and forth about it a little bit, but he did  
802 what god commanded him , right, did what the lord told him to do and so that means that he went  
803 back to pharaoh, right, went back to this hard hearted king, who was, for the egyptian people, not  
804 just a king, but they thought of him as a god, remember, he was thought of as being as powerful as  
805 a god. so moses goes back to pharaoh and he sez famously in the way we remember it "let my  
806 people go."  
807  
808 chorus  
809 right  
810  
811 rod  
812 he sez the lord sez let my people go. its time for the hebrews to leave, theyre not gonna be your  
813 laborers any more. its time for you to let them go. and pharaoh being a hard hearted person sed  
814  
815 connie  
816 NO  
817  
818 rod  
819 forget/ it\ . get outta here, watre you talkin about? and then do you remember what the lord did  
820 through moses after that?  
821  
822 randy  
823 right  
824  
825 rod  
826 you member?  
827  
828 chorus  
829 mmhhmm  
830  
831 rod  
832 the plagues/.  
833  
834 randy  
835 the plagues, (did somepin terrible, he put somepin on him, put some) on pharaoh

836  
837 rod  
838 yeah, he put some'mm on pharaoh, you remember what some of the plagues were? [i wuz tryin to  
839 rem]  
840  
841 randy  
842 i think iss a water turnin to blood.  
843  
844 rod  
845 that was one of em. thats right, the water turned to blood.  
846  
847 sophie  
848 flies  
849  
850 daphne  
851 flies  
852  
853 randy  
854 then some hail came  
855  
856 rod  
857 {noddinng} hailstones, right  
858  
859 sophie  
860 frogs  
861  
862 rod  
863 frogs was another one  
864  
865 randy  
866 snakes=  
867  
868 connie  
869 =snakes!  
870  
871 rod  
872 was snakes one of em too?  
873  
874 connie  
875 yeah, snakes, it turned into a snake.  
876  
877 rod  
878 ooh, he turned his snake into a stick didnt he?  
879  
880 randy  
881 turned his staf into a snake  
882  
883 rod  
884 his staff into a snake and then back again. pestilence was one of em which would be like a bad  
885 illness  
886  
887 randy  
888 yeah  
889  
890 rod

891 and boils on the skin, right, so some pretty nasty stuff. and thats what shes referring to when she  
892 sez the pharaoh had assured the egyptians that the terrors of moses had ended.so from the point of  
893 view of the egyptians  
894  
895 randy  
896 then [after that they had all]  
897  
898 rod  
899 [moses was awful]  
900  
901 randy  
902 got all those people who were slaves (bout the slaves) moses told em sed let my people go  
903  
904 rod  
905 right, and if you dont, god's gonna do some terrible things to you. do you remember what the very  
906 last one wa, the heart, pharaoh's heart  
907  
908 connie  
909 was [hard]  
910  
911 rod  
912 [was still] hardened, [even after all those plagues]  
913  
914 connie  
915 [even after all those plagues]  
916  
917 rod  
918 you member what the last plague was, the final one? cuz we're about to get it, thats kidof where  
919 the story starts is with the last one. the last plague, do you remember what it was?  
920  
921 connie  
922 people (rot fleshed? they rot their flesh? wadnt it bout the flesh?)  
923  
924 rod  
925 no, it was about the first born,  
926  
927 chorus  
928 ohh  
929  
930 rod  
931 it was about the first born children  
932  
933 sophie  
934 were killed  
935  
936 rod  
937 were all gonna be killed, thats right. the first born would die. so thats kinda where we start here.  
938 im sorry i took a long time {laughs} interruptin you  
939  
940 randy  
941 dont worry about it.  
942  
943 rod  
944 you wanna keep goin and thats where we'll start?  
945  
946 randy

947 thats alright. thats fine cuz we discussed things about mozes and pharaoh, what he went through.  
948  
949 rod  
950 right, thats right  
951  
952 randy  
953 so i guess we'll continue folks. {laughing}  
954  
955 rod  
956 ha ha yeah  
957  
958 0:43:34.0  
959  
960 randy  
961 In goshen, the blind-eyed {laughing} the blind-eyed goddess of night huddled close. and family  
962 stayed inside their houses and waited. a bloody bunch of hyssop had swished agaisnt every door.  
963 in goshen three times. (once in the middle of the door facing and the inside). then people had gone  
964 inside and set behind the blood as mozes had oredred. the new god had chosen them through  
965 mozes was going to fight pharaoh for own for their sake. he had asked the sign of the three bloody  
966 marks on the door. remember this?  
967  
968 rod  
969 {nods}  
970  
971 randy  
972 and um and the door have (um) and the people had done their part. (the rest was for mozes and god  
973 were to do). so in the stillness (of darkness) they kept waiting. the lamb has been sacrificed in  
974 every house in the lamb, and (sina) blood in the dark doors. the night went on its way.  
975  
976 rod  
977 now what did you mean randy, sorry to interrupt you again, that you remember this, you  
978 remember somethin, what did you remember?  
979  
980 randy  
981 the blood on the doors.  
982  
983 rod  
984 thats what god asked  
985  
986 randy  
987 to keep death out, [out]  
988  
989 connie  
990 [out] from the people  
991  
992 rod  
993 so the people were asked to acrifice a lamb  
994  
995 randy  
996 {gesturing to me but talking to daphne? quietly, mumbling} (don be talkin bout that, don get me  
997 started now.)  
998  
999 rod  
1000 the people were asked, the hebrews were asked to sacrifice a lamb, and spread the blood of the  
1001 lamb on the [doorposts]  
1002

1003 connie  
1004 [on the doorposts]  
1005  
1006 rod  
1007 so that  
1008  
1009 connie  
1010 would protect the people.  
1011  
1012 rod  
1013 so that it would protect them, so that when the angel of death came to kill the first born, she would  
1014 pass over those houses where she found the blood on the door. but for those houses where there  
1015 was no blood on the door, she'd go in and do that work of killing the firstborn, right  
1016  
1017 chorus  
1018 right  
1019  
1020 rod  
1021 yeah so thats right thats exactly what theyre talkin about and that all the people, even though it  
1022 was dark and still and quiet, it wasnt cause people were sleeping, it was cuz they were quietly  
1023 waiting, knowing that something extremely dramatic was happening, right  
1024  
1025 randy  
1026 you remember the movie called ten commandments?  
1027  
1028 rod  
1029 mmhhmm  
1030  
1031 randy  
1032 used to come on abc every easter  
1033  
1034 rod  
1035 every easter, it still does i think  
1036  
1037 chorus  
1038 yeah, mmhhmm  
1039  
1040 rod  
1041 it comes on some channel, yeah somebody plays it  
1042  
1043 randy  
1044 (iss on) videotaped it. you can see it though. if yall remember tha uh ten commandments, that was  
1045 a great epic movie. cecil b demille had made it so great. and (i dunno) charlton heston played a  
1046 wonderful great role of moses, yul bryner was pharaoh and he was a BAD guy.  
1047  
1048 rod  
1049 {laughing} definitely a bad guy  
1050  
1051 randy  
1052 a BAD BAD guy, his heart was so hard that he that god put some'mm on him ( ) white on rice.  
1053  
1054 rod  
1055 mmhmm, right  
1056  
1057 sophie  
1058 took his sone too.

1059  
1060 rod  
1061 [thats right]  
1062  
1063 randy  
1064 [right, took his son,] bout to get into that right now.  
1065  
1066 rod  
1067 yep yep, think yer right.  
1068  
1069 randy  
1070 darkness (balanced up on) midnight looking (b ways) for day. then cried and died. (it was the great  
1071 cry that had issued first from the throat of israel years before and spread to the rim bones of the  
1072 world and come come back again. Now it was poured out through the mouths of the egyptian  
1073 nation. it was such a cry there none like it since the morning stars sang together and never shall  
1074 there be another like it as long as heaven is happy. hmmm. egypt cried out for the death of the first  
1075 born. every house in egypt was bloody. blood on the outside door in goshen, blood inside every  
1076 other house in egypt. pharaoh looked upon his first son and wept. his son was dead and the son of  
1077 sorrow was dead in his own blood. . there were snorts and bellows from the stables from the smell  
1078 of animal blood. so pharaoh cried inside for his dead with all of his voice. every house in egypt  
1079 strained its voice trying to express its bereavement. the noise of it struck the sky and came back to  
1080 the Nile and ran with it to the sea, the egyptian chorus of sorrow indoors. Outside, the paths and  
1081 pavements were full of soft, swift feet fleeing into goshen with its listening ears. these were the  
1082 sounds of the night, sounds without words. with the sunrise, princes and people sed this is the  
1083 hand, the right hand of moses. they lifetd their ded from beds and sed in awe, moses and the god  
1084 of the israelites. they rolled their ded from straw mats and pallets and sed moses and his right  
1085 hand. they crowded in and arond the palace and shouted get moses and the hebrews out of egypt. if  
1086 you dont, everybody in egypt will be ded. so pharaoh sent for moses to dismiss him, his god and  
1087 his people from egypt. he was no longer proud pharaoh with the masklike face. he was a man  
1088 whose son was dead. but moses refused to go see pharaoh all that day. burials went on and burials  
1089 went out from houses all day in long lines and solemn weeping, and all egypt was in tears.)  
1090  
1091 sophie  
1092 mmm  
1093  
1094 randy  
1095 (pharaoh sent messengers to moses again, telling him not that the hebrews might go, but that they  
1096 must go.)  
1097  
1098 0:49:42.5  
1099  
1100 rod  
1101 see you get the difference there right? he's not saying oh, okay I changed my mind, you can go  
1102  
1103 sandra  
1104 mmm  
1105  
1106 rod  
1107 he's saying GET OUT. hes saying GET OUT, moses you take yur people and get out of here. we  
1108 dont want you here ny more. alright. you want to keep goin randy, or you want somebody else?  
1109  
1110 randy  
1111 {laughing} i feel somebody else need to read that line.  
1112  
1113 rod  
1114 which line?

1115  
1116 randy  
1117 this is a interesting story  
1118  
1119 rod  
1120 you like this one better?  
1121  
1122 randy  
1123 yeah  
1124  
1125 rod  
1126 okay good.  
1127  
1128 randy  
1129 [so]  
1130  
1131 rod  
1132 [anyone] else want to?..  
1133  
1134 sophie  
1135 (I'll read)  
1136  
1137 rod  
1138 you want to sophie, sure.  
1139  
1140 sophie  
1141 moses heard the message sittin in his house, but he didnt say a word right then.the news was too  
1142 big to speak all at once. he had to sit with his feelins for a while. afterwards he called his leaders to  
1143 him and told them your slavery is over, your pharaoh pharaoh has broken at {turning page} ..  
1144 (would have doubt in house what I)..  
1145  
1146 0:50:45.1  
1147  
1148 rod  
1149 wait wait wait, top of 180.  
1150  
1151 sophie  
1152 181?  
1153  
1154 rod  
1155 180  
1156  
1157 sophie  
1158 i don have 180, i have 181  
1159  
1160 {connie helps sophie find the page}  
1161  
1162 rod  
1163 its printed front and back so you have to either fold it over and flip it or some'mm like that.  
1164  
1165 sophie  
1166 last. we march out of egypt with a free people. we march out with a high hand. the people cried  
1167 when moses told them. he had expected wild clamour and sound of cymbals and exalted singing  
1168 and dancin but the people wept out of their eyes. goshen was very still, no songs and shouts. free  
1169 at last free at last thank god almighty im free at last. no more toting stack sand and mixing mortar.  
1170 no more taking rocks and building things for pharaoh. no more weeping and bloody backs. no



1171 more slavery from cant see in the mornin till cant see at night. free free so free till im foolish. they  
1172 jes sat with centuries in their eyes and cried and few could express themselves like that. (but the  
1173 majority jes sat in the doors of their dwellings staring out at life.) but mozes put a stop to it all  
1174  
1175 0:52:42.7  
1176  
1177 sophie  
1178 that, all of it, all of that. you wont be free fuh long if you keep that up. stop that shouting and stop  
1179 that sitting. people, get everything you got to get together and lets go and that quick. why mozes?  
1180 some of them asked, we're free now and we can take our time about everything. you people been  
1181 round pharaoh all this time and don know him no better than that. he is scared today and so he sez  
1182 you can go. tomorrow or next day he will realize that you are realize what he lost and send his  
1183 army into goshen to put you back to work. grab up your things right now. tonight we leave egypt  
1184 for ever. but  
1185  
1186 connie  
1187 good  
1188  
1189 sophie  
1190 good gracious, somebody grumbled, i wuz figuring on goin i wuz figuring on goin fishing  
1191 tomorrow morning. i don want to be bothered with no packing up today. it is too much like work  
1192 and i jes got free this morning. thats the heaven's truth too, plenty of others chimed in. look like  
1193 we done wep  
1194  
1195 rod  
1196 swapped  
1197  
1198 sophie  
1199 swapped one boss man for another, one for another one. i don wan nobody givin me no orders no  
1200 more. but it was mozes that got us free, joshua tol them. if it hadnt been fo him, we would be haul  
1201 haul  
1202  
1203 rod  
1204 [hauling], yeah  
1205  
1206 sophie  
1207 [hauling]  
1208  
1209 0:54:45.1  
1210  
1211 sophie  
1212 hauling rocks right this minute. oh, i dont know about that, this god that done chose us would have  
1213 got us free anyhow. i nevuh did much care fo this mozes like some of you all. what's the matter  
1214 with mozes, he got us free alright. oh, i have every confidence in the man, i jes don trust him.  
1215  
1216 rod  
1217 so whatre the people, sorry to interrupt you here, whatre the people sayin?  
1218  
1219 sophie  
1220 (they don [ \_ \_ \_ ])  
1221  
1222 connie  
1223 [they dont trust him ( \_ \_ \_ )]  
1224  
1225 sophie  
1226 don have confidence in him.

1227  
1228 rod  
1229 yeah, so he's um, he told them that that okay we're pharaoh told us to go. we're free now. we're  
1230 gonna leave here we're gonna march out of egypt. and he's expectin, what did he expect their  
1231 reaction to be?  
1232  
1233 connie  
1234 (to go along with him)  
1235  
1236 rod  
1237 yeah an he expected them to be very excited, right? he thought theyd be celebrating, dancing, what  
1238 are you kiddin were free, WOO/HOO\. you know, lets have a party. but instead, the people were  
1239 kinda somber, alright, they cried, thay sat and stared, they kinda sat with it and let it tried to let it  
1240 sink in a little bit. i mean the hebews had been in bondage in israel for generations, for hundreds of  
1241 years. so that all of the people all of these people wouldve been born there. i mean they were all  
1242 BORN in egypt as slaves in egypt. so um, uh, it was a little, it was a pretty dramatic thing to think  
1243 about hey we're free now, we're leaving, right. some of em sed, what is that, [free at last free at  
1244 last] thank god almighty i'm free at last?  
1245  
1246 chorus  
1247 yeah, yeah  
1248  
1249 rod  
1250 whats that remind you of?  
1251  
1252 sophie  
1253 martin luther king  
1254  
1255 connie  
1256 king  
1257  
1258 rod  
1259 doctor king, thats right, thats exactly right, and his  
1260  
1261 0:56:41.8  
1262  
1263 rod  
1264 "i have a dream speech," right? its interesting, why does she put that line right there?  
1265  
1266 connie  
1267 because she thought they would be free, (all the \_ world) when she went back and thought about  
1268 what whats happening when martin luther king, um  
1269  
1270 rod  
1271 whut wuz she, whats she doin do you think by putting that line there? . i mean shes makin us, shes  
1272 wanting us to think about about king, right? about civil rights? about freedom in that way?  
1273  
1274 connie  
1275 right  
1276  
1277 rod  
1278 she seems to want to make a connection for us between the situation of .. black americans or  
1279 african americans in the united states and the situation of the hebrew people in egypt, right? she  
1280 seems to make that connection here. which of course doctor king did as well. right? talkin bout  
1281 goin to the mountain, uhm... but moses expected the people to be happy and excited and many of  
1282 them werent. and he sez hey we cant be sittin around waitin, we got to go. get packed, right? its

1283 time to go, we better get outta here before that hard hearted pharaoh changes his mind, cuz he  
1284 bound to do it right? hes gonna realize what he's losin an he's gonna come after us. an they say,  
1285 well man! you sure are bossy! you jes told me I'm free, i wuz gonna go fishin tomorrow, FREE?  
1286 now i gotta pack up plannin to leave here forever? ta leave the only home ive ever known? right?  
1287 so he gets this reaction from people that he was not expecting...  
1288  
1289 sophie {?}   
1290 mmm {softly}   
1291  
1292 0:58:41.4  
1293  
1294 rod  
1295 and then they're sayin theyre not sure they have too much confidence in him. its interesting to see  
1296 what the author, cuz obviously we dont find these things in the old testament story right of the  
1297 exodus. we dont find people complaining to mozes that they want to go fishing the next day, or  
1298 they dont want to pack up and leave, right. so this is her version of the story. this is her fictional  
1299 account of what people might have sed or thought and we get a little bit different version of mozes  
1300 than we usually do, right?  
1301  
1302 sophie  
1303 why do people talk like they did back then?  
1304  
1305 rod  
1306 why did?  
1307  
1308 sophie  
1309 why did they talk, ya know,  
1310  
1311 rod  
1312 like [how]  
1313  
1314 sophie  
1315 [they] accent ( \_ \_ ) they talk. they [inherited that] or what?  
1316  
1317 rod  
1318 [how did they talk?] Um, which accents? whadda you mean, the way she's writing?  
1319  
1320 sophie  
1321 tha way theyre talkin  
1322  
1323 rod  
1324 the way theyre talking in the in her stories?  
1325  
1326 sophie  
1327 uh huh  
1328  
1329 rod  
1330 why do you think? why do you think? she, well, um, she writes, and remember in some of her  
1331 earlier stories we had a hard time reading some of her dialect, its a very, we sed that she wrote the  
1332 conversations of i think country people like where she wuz from like from  
1333  
1334 sophie  
1335 oh, [they were country?]  
1336  
1337 rod

1338 [her rural home.] well thats whats interesting, shes writing um the the dialog in this story the same  
1339 as she writes it in other stories that are about the rural south in the twentieth century  
1340  
1341 sophie  
1342 probly ( ) from slavery huh?  
1343  
1344 rod  
1345 uh huh  
1346  
1347 sophie  
1348 probly they (didnt learn to read back there [in slavery])  
1349  
1350 rod  
1351 i think thats right i think thats right, so shes again shes making a connection between her own  
1352 people and the hebrew people way back when, so she writes the same dialog=  
1353  
1354 1:00:50.1  
1355  
1356 rod  
1357 =in the same accents even though we know the hebrews would have been speaking a different  
1358 language and we dont know what their speech woulda sounded like cuz nobody nobody wuz  
1359 around back then. so shes again she using her imagination. this is how she imagines it to be. thats  
1360 a good question, you know, why is she writing you know the speech like that? uhm.. do you think  
1361 that shes even making a statement about people of her time, you know, and their reactions to bein  
1362 free and wondrin what does it mean to be free. i mean, swappin one bossman for another?  
1363 whadoes at make you think of, anything?  
1364  
1365 sophie  
1366 in moses moses an ems days, i didnt know they you know talked in nat kinda speech.  
1367  
1368 rod  
1369 right, and i think they probably didnt. i think they probably didnt but when she's writing this story,  
1370 she chooses to have them speaking like that. yeah, i agree its a funny its a funny thing, it doesnt. i  
1371 mean this is not we dont read this in the king james bible, right? it dudnt sound [anything like that]  
1372  
1373 chorus  
1374 no, no  
1375  
1376 rod  
1377 in the bible. so she's trying to make the story more familiar i think to try and get us in mind of the  
1378 well, what [might it have been like]  
1379  
1380 sophie  
1381 [she did a good job in writing the story though]  
1382  
1383 rod  
1384 i think so too, its, i think so too, it really does give us a different feeling about it. um, i think shes  
1385 asking what might it have been like to actually be there. what would it have been like if moses  
1386 came to you and sed okay, you know, we've been here for three generations now, it's time for ua to  
1387 leave. might we go, what? i dont know. i dont know if i want to follow this guy. um.  
1388  
1389 sophie  
1390 i would want to know where we wuh goin.  
1391  
1392 1:02:41.1  
1393

1394 rod  
1395 yeah, where am i goin? thats right. that question comes up a little bit later in here. somebody asks  
1396 hey, does anybody know where we're goin? ha ha. because the first objective is GET OUT of  
1397 bondage. right, get out of this country of egypt, get out of the nation of egypt, but then suddenly  
1398 people are thinkin, well, where are we goin? cuz we're goin into the wilderness, right? and you  
1399 member, they were wanderin around out [there for]  
1400  
1401 sophie  
1402 [they were complainin and complainin]  
1403  
1404 rod  
1405 complainin and complaining. well, they went from bondage in egypt to wanderin in the  
1406 wilderness for how long, do you remember? forty years?.. i think forty years they wandered in the  
1407 wilderness. now that's a long time ta be, campin. y'know ta be nomads and ta be campin out.  
1408 maybe some of them were maybe we were thinkin we'd a been better off  
1409  
1410 sophie  
1411 they did, they did  
1412  
1413 rod  
1414 stayin in egypt, right  
1415  
1416 sophie  
1417 it mentioned that  
1418  
1419 rod  
1420 mmhmm, grumbled and complained, right, thats right. thats exactly right.  
1421  
1422 connie  
1423 then its very much an uproar with the people very much  
1424  
1425 rod  
1426 they were sayin hey you you know freedom isnt freedom isnt so great all the sudden. you led us  
1427 out here into the wilderness to die. do we wan to be free er do we wun to [(be taken care of)]  
1428  
1429 sophie  
1430 [didn some of em die too?]  
1431  
1432 rod  
1433 i think a lot of em did i think that was part of the point of wandrin in the wilderness for forty years  
1434 was that that whole generation of people who grumbled and complained, didnt see the promised  
1435 land.  
1436  
1437 sophie  
1438 but i think they the ones that died they got to didnt they get to make it to heaven? cus they went  
1439 like he tol em to do?  
1440  
1441 rod  
1442 i think that sounds right i think i remember that i remember that bein part of the story as well. well  
1443 tell me this, do we ever do we ever find ouselves in a similar situation? i mean, for generations the  
1444 hebrews here have been looking for freedom. what they wunt is to be freed from their bondage.  
1445 and then when it comes(^), for one thing they don know whut to do with themsleves, right, they  
1446 just dazed.. but then in the aftermath, as we sed, they find themselves in the wilderness. they  
1447 don(/) know(\) where(\) theyre(\) goin(\). and so then they begin to think wo:ow, i really wanted  
1448 freedom, now ive got it .. is it what i wunted? is it actually whut i wunted? is it whut i thought it

1449 wus gunna be? i mean have you ever found yerself in a situation like that? where somethin  
1450 thatchoo really wunted, by the time you got it.. it felt different.  
1451  
1452 randy  
1453 {nods}  
1454  
1455 connie  
1456 yes  
1457  
1458 1:05:13.4  
1459  
1460 connie  
1461 yep, yeah, i understand whut yer sayin.  
1462  
1463 rod  
1464 well, how bout this one, you member bein a kid an wuntin to be grown? you member when you  
1465 were a kid an you wunted to be older? [whether]  
1466  
1467 connie  
1468 [(inaud)]  
1469  
1470 rod  
1471 you were in elementary school and you wanted {gesture} to be in middle school. you know you  
1472 thought those kids were so big an grown up and then youre in middle school, "oh man, if only, if  
1473 JUST(/) i wuz in high school(\). yaknow, fi could just be a high school senior, i wish iza. oh i wish  
1474 i wuz eighteen years old i could move outta tha house, make my own decisions or whutever it  
1475 wuz, right?  
1476  
1477 chorus  
1478 {nodding}  
1479  
1480 rod  
1481 n, did you ever look back at those times an say oh ma:an oh man i wish i wuz a ki:id(/). dont have  
1482 a care in the world. don have to pay bills, [don have to do all the stuff that adults have to do.]  
1483  
1484 chorus  
1485 {laughter}  
1486  
1487 rod  
1488 i think that's a situation that many of us have had where we wa':anted some'thin.right, we wanted.  
1489 i wannna be responble, right/ i wanna make my own decisions. an then we GET there.. that wasn  
1490 as much fun as i thought it wuz gonna be. you know?  
1491  
1492 chorus  
1493 mmhhmm  
1494  
1495 rod  
1496 i had it pretty good when somebody else wuz takin care of me an makin decisions for me, now its  
1497 you know all on me. you know that type of thing. so maybe we all go through some somewhat...  
1498 do you do you have do you know children or teenagers who want to be older? do you know any  
1499 right now? do you know any children or teenagers who wunt to be who wish they were older?  
1500  
1501 chorus  
1502 {some nodding}  
1503  
1504 rod

1505 have you ever heard yourself saying to them, uh, dont be in such a hurry, you know to grow up.  
1506 {laughs}. don be in such a hrry.  
1507  
1508 sophie  
1509 ma little niece don hardly wanna take a nap sometime, ma little niece, you know. an i seh she gon  
1510 be wishin she had take that nap when she get bigguh.=  
1511  
1512 rod  
1513 =dontch wish? i wish i had napttime every day! {laughs}  
1514  
1515 chorus  
1516 {laughs}  
1517  
1518 sophie  
1519 she won have no nap then, she'll wish she had it {laughs}  
1520  
1521 rod  
1522 right, that's a real good example, it's a real good example.yeah, kids that "i dont wun to take a nap,  
1523 i'm big enuf i don need to take a nap." uuhh(/) take advantage of it now, n'enjoy it  
1524  
1525 1:07:23.8  
1526  
1527 rod  
1528 we don get napttime as adults, right? er we have to take it, make it arselves. alright, that's a long  
1529 enuf digression on my part. i apologize, sophie you wanna keep on?  
1530  
1531 sophie  
1532 (sure) But mozes, himself, moved from place to place, urgering. hurry and everybody unwilling s  
1533 or not.  
1534  
1535 daphne  
1536 {coughing} {quietly, to rod} scuse me, can i go get some water?  
1537  
1538 rod  
1539 uh course, please  
1540  
1541 {daphne departs the room}  
1542  
1543 sophie  
1544 willing ah not, did whut he sed. the women tol miriam's commit that tehy jus couldnt get ready  
1545 becuase it wuz baking day. we got done  
1546  
1547 rod  
1548 dough  
1549  
1550 sophie  
1551 (we got dough) to rise, we kaint 'stub it or it wont be light. miiriam went back an tol mozes whut  
1552 they sed an he went to see about it himself. make dough mozes tol them but don put your seasonin  
1553 in it so it wont spoil an while you are at an while you are at it, mix enuf foh a week an that is jus  
1554 part of whut i want done. everybody roast a lamb so that evevrybody in goshen can have a full  
1555 meal with some greens to settle the stomach. we got a long hard march in front of us tonight.  
1556 finally mozes got them ready in the spirit, for everyone in goshen, the people were sayin "tonight."  
1557  
1558 {daphne returns}  
1559  
1560 sophie

1561 everybody sed it according to their thought and their feelins. some talked it wit the edge of their  
1562 lips. some rolled it deep in their throats. some throbbd it inside their hearts and let their bodies  
1563 move wit the rhythm. some sed it with their eyes, with a gleam, with future-searching gaze. some  
1564 sed it with a question, "tonight?" they fixed and they did ar and they did around and they got  
1565 ready. nothin wuz still. nothin wuz still. children hunn'ed tha bitter erbs. men slaughtered beasts  
1566 and tried bundles, tied bundles. women mixed dough an cooked, an all the time, everybody  
1567 thought back over the years an every now an then they breathed "tonight." (moses had inspired  
1568 them for the journey and they were goin.) the god od the two (herindons)  
1569  
1570 rod  
1571 horizons  
1572  
1573 sophie  
1574 horizons.. the god of the two horizons took flight beyond the western line an the frezzled  
1575  
1576 rod  
1577 frenzied  
1578  
1579 sophie  
1580 frenzid. frenzi, frenzied hurry of the day took shape. flocks and herds gathered and ready. bundles  
1581 tied and every group had met its leader and been told. now, moses sed to a group of men under  
1582 nun, so quickly to the to tomb of joseph and bring me back casket with his bones {turning page}...  
1583 what page we on now?  
1584  
1585 connie  
1586 one [eighty-two]  
1587  
1588 rod  
1589 [one eighty]-two, yeah  
1590  
1591 sophie  
1592 he bought ... he bought israel into egypt and israel must take him out of a land that is no longer fit  
1593 for his dust. hurry. the gracious cave..the gracious  
1594  
1595 connie  
1596 the gor'geous  
1597  
1598 sophie  
1599 the gorgeous carv'ed [print]  
1600  
1601 connie  
1602 [carved]  
1603  
1604 sophie  
1605 carved and print casket of joseph rest on a pedestal before the house of moses and its bearers were  
1606 appointed so moses told everybody to eat in haste leaving nothing to eat behind them when they  
1607 were ready to go. they sang a song. now that they were ready to go and going, it was triumph  
1608 triumph  
1609  
1610 rod  
1611 triumphant!  
1612  
1613 sophie  
1614 triumphant, but it wuz sad. it wus a long time since israel had done any singing much and they had  
1615 forgotten how to shout. moses noticed that their glad notes broke on wails, wals. israel was used to  
1616 wailing now. they had used to wailin now. they had forgotten how to lowd



1617  
 1618 rod  
 1619 to laud, [which] means to priase, like to sing praises.  
 1620  
 1621 sophie  
 1622 [laud]. his heart hurt for them, so he sed to himself that they should see glory mountains and shiny  
 1623 valleys and they should learn to sing. he led them out of goshen with a high hand. out and out and  
 1624 out the tread of the tribes behind him. a great horde of mixed-blooded people grabbed up their  
 1625 things and joined the hosts of israel. let us be free too, they begged and moses sed yes to them. his  
 1626 fighting men in front and behind with joshua's volunteer boys in the center to give aid and  
 1627 assistance to women and children out and out and out he led. people cried and died and stayed  
 1628 where they fell [aged]  
 1629  
 1630 sandra  
 1631 [{laugh}]  
 1632  
 1633 sophie  
 1634 aged ones hobbled and were partly carried. old ones crippled by generation behind them and blind  
 1635 by the looks ahead grasped and clutched at young shoulders and gasped dont leave me behind.  
 1636 babies borned themselves and joined the pro..  
 1637  
 1638 rod  
 1639 procession  
 1640  
 1641 sophie  
 1642 procession. out. out wuz sech a big word [in egypt to the hebrews which wuz moses]  
 1643  
 1644 sandra  
 1645 [mmhhmm]  
 1646  
 1647 sophie  
 1648 egypt [to the hebrews]  
 1649  
 1650 sandra  
 1651 [hh {heavy sigh, loudly putts down paper, clears her throat, and drinnks from styrofoam cup. rod  
 1652 looks over at her}]  
 1653  
 1654 rod  
 1655 sandra, {then, to sophie} sorry, one second; sandra what wuz funny?[(you were tickled)]  
 1656  
 1657 sandra  
 1658 [(i:ize just about ta go to sleep. but i:ize laughin)] bout one of them sences she wz readinwhen she  
 1659 wus um readin it  
 1660  
 1661 rod  
 1662 uh huh. about about peopl ecried and died and stayed where they fell.  
 1663  
 1664 sandra  
 1665 yeah, uh huh. an i wuz fallin asleep too. {laughs}  
 1666  
 1667 rod  
 1668 were fallin asleep too? {laughs}. think about this scene, this is thousands and thousands, maybe  
 1669 hun'dreds and hudrends of thousands of people leaving uh  
 1670  
 1671 connie  
 1672 earth

1673  
1674 1:14:35.0  
1675  
1676 rod  
1677 well leaving egypt, leaving egypt, on foot right? or on mules or in carts or with whatever they  
1678 could carry or drag and whatever else an old people and young people and flocks of sheep and  
1679 goats an uh just thousands and thousands and thousands of people and some of em died along the  
1680 way and um babies were bein born. an just the whole of life goes on except this whole show is on  
1681 the road, right? quite a scene if you think about it. you wanna keep goin sophie, er you wan  
1682 someone else?  
1683  
1684 sophie  
1685 (nah, someone else)  
1686  
1687 rod  
1688 your throat gettin sore nwo? i'm sure. anybody else want to?..  
1689  
1690 sandra  
1691 can i go get some water? {she departs}  
1692  
1693 rod  
1694 sure  
1695  
1696 daphne  
1697 (where are we)  
1698  
1699 rod  
1700 right at "which way mooses?" down toward the bottom of 182, which way mooses?  
1701  
1702 daphne  
1703 i'll start readin  
1704  
1705 rod  
1706 okay  
1707  
1708 daphne  
1709 which way mooses? aaron asked by the wilderness of the red sea. its a whole heap shorter through  
1710 the land of the philistines. i know aaron, but our people are leavin slavery. it takes free men and su  
1711 fuh fightin. the philistines let us through  
1712  
1713 rod  
1714 [might] let us through  
1715  
1716 daphne  
1717 [might] let us through. might let us through without fighting but its too much of a risk. if these  
1718 people see the an army right now, they would turn right around and run back to goshen. so lets hed  
1719 them fuh the red sea. (the soft murmur of sandals and bare feet kept up in the night ) as mooses and  
1720 his hosts moved on.  
1721  
1722 1:16:28.6  
1723  
1724 daphne  
1725 on ( ) at last. aaron sed happily to nun..after four hundred and thirty years to the day, it seems  
1726 like it aint so to me aaron aint but one thing i'm sorry about. what what is that nun, i cant imagine  
1727 any sorrows connected with the thing. i sure hate to miss seeing those egyptians doing our work in  
1728 all of that hot sun. i hadnt thought oof that nun, but it sure would be a lovely sight. i never want to

1729 ever see another brick again. not even a brick house to live in. my, me neither. where were going  
1730 now? out nun out. i dont mean that i mean jus exactly where we goin to (live permanent when we  
1731 get out?) mozes may not mozes may know, but if he does, he he aint tol nobody yet=  
1732  
1733 rod  
1734 =theres that question we were talkin about right? we knew it wuz comin--well, where are we  
1735 goin(/)? well OUT. were jest, we're leavin, we're leavin egypt. well, yeah, i understand but where  
1736 are we gonna live permanent, he sed. where are we gunna go? well(/), if mozes knows, ee aint tol  
1737 nobody yet. awright, daphne.  
1738  
1739 daphne  
1740 you reckon is awright ta ask him. i guess so. you can ask im if you want to to. where is he now? he  
1741 wuz just ahead of us a few minutes ago. the two men looked up and became conscious of a  
1742 changed rhythm in the multiudes around them and aro behind them. it wuz a sor sort of  
1743 spontaneous mass mass halt that and they saw the reason why..the reason right away. ahead of  
1744 them a short distance wuz a column of fire. what it consumed wuz hard to unerstand, for it tour.  
1745  
1746 rod  
1747 towered  
1748  
1749 daphne  
1750 ..t.t  
1751  
1752 rod  
1753 {gestures} towered [up steady]  
1754  
1755 daphne  
1756 [towered] up steady an solid as no flame they had ever seen. it wuz like an illumination that  
1757 glowed but nevuuh flamed. it brightened the countryside but nevuuh grew mo'uh uh less. what is  
1758 that, asked nun in fear. it must be where mozes is. you think he you think it is his right to hand  
1759 shining like that?.. you think it is right his rihght hand shining like that? it could be. is nothing  
1760 impossible with mozes? le's go ahead to see what it is.  
1761  
1762 1:20:04.2  
1763  
1764 daphne  
1765 the two leaders marching ahead of the host hurried nearer the fiery column and stopped. it wuz  
1766 (moving) ahead as if it were borne, but nothing wuz holding it up. it is as if its been colored like  
1767 lights just move along ahead of mozes like a vertical beam. mozes, mozes, aaron asked, what is  
1768 that? {turning page}..  
1769  
1770 rod  
1771 does everybody remember learnin about the pillar of fire and the column of . cloud back in uh  
1772 sunday school, [bible school?]  
1773  
1774 sandra  
1775 [mmhhmm]  
1776  
1777 rod  
1778 [that wuz]  
1779  
1780 sophie  
1781 seems we jes had that  
1782  
1783 rod  
1784 oh, did you, [just now, just recently?]

1785  
1786 sophie  
1787 [(that and about the)] burning bush  
1788  
1789 rod  
1790 right, right [right]  
1791  
1792 sophie  
1793 [( \_ \_ )]  
1794  
1795 randy  
1796 [( \_ )] last week  
1797  
1798 daphne  
1799 somebody else can read  
1800  
1801 rod  
1802 somebody else can read? ok, who wants to?  
1803  
1804 ben  
1805 i'll read some  
1806  
1807 rod  
1808 okay, go ahead ben.  
1809  
1810 ben  
1811 the pillar of fire that will always go in front of us at night. it is a sign of the presence. in the  
1812 daytime it will be a cloud. go tell the people not to be afraid. when the fiery sign. the people  
1813 marched all night and camped next day far from the city of ramese  
1814  
1815  
1816 rod  
1817 RAM'se:es  
1818  
1819 ben  
1820 in..  
1821  
1822 rod  
1823 i have no idea how to say that word  
1824  
1825 ben  
1826 ( \_ )  
1827  
1828 rod  
1829 mmhhmm  
1830  
1831 ben  
1832 on the shore of the sea to rest and eat. moses gaze across the water and exulted. next mornin  
1833 pharoah woke up and looked out the window on the city, new and fine, its towers, its parks and  
1834 streets which the hebrews had built for his father and him. he had a strange feelin of newness as if  
1835 he had not seen these sights for a long time. as if he had awakened among familiar surroundin  
1836 after a long horrid dream. then he noticed somethin no work wus goin on around the half finished  
1837 public buildin near the palace grounds. he called a servant right away and asked about it. the  
1838 servant didnt know.. well go find out pharoah snapped and ordered his breakfast. After a while, the  
1839 servant came back an sed that no hebrews had been seen that morning by anybody except a very  
1840 sick old hebrew found by the road by some fishermen. no work had been done for two whole

1841 days.. two days, you must be wrowng. send to goshen and find out whats the matter. some more  
1842 foolishness out of that moses i reckon. if it is, i'm through playin with that man. he dies today, him  
1843 and all his magic. i don see why i stood him as long as i did. the word came back. a great song was  
1844 heard then the whole host of the israelite was seen marching out, driving their flocks and herds  
1845 two days ago. nobody has heard from them since. oh that worship they were talkin about. i did say  
1846 that they could go. i wus too worried about the funeral of the first born to notice things. it is a ha  
1847 terrible thing to lose a son. then pharoah became alarmed. (do you suppose) those hebrews have  
1848 run away? a lot of people are saying the same thing and they wunt their work done and (they arent  
1849 ) getting a bit done today. pharoah thought a minute and his blood jumped salty. he wus angry  
1850 with himself. he could have killed moses and saved himself this trouble, but he had yearned to  
1851 humble the man first, to outwit him and shame him. then would have come death for moses. but  
1852 the man had made a fool of him instead, before the whole nation and now he wus gone with the  
1853 hebrews as he had threatened. pharoah wus resolved on his death. if he could lay hands on him  
1854 now. he rose up with a great scwowl on his face.. thats my trouble he sed, i'm too good natured.  
1855 thats right, you certainly are, all the servants and (courtiers) agreed.

1856  
1857 1:24:20.2

1858  
1859 ben  
1860 ..i mus have been out of ma hed to let moses people go off and now we have nobody to work for  
1861 us. that is, i mean that just because i wuz grieved down at the death of ma son and ma grandson  
1862 and the firstborn of all the other people and sed things, this man moses takes advan of ma good  
1863 nature and runs off with aw hebrews. an wha should we let them stop workin fo us and go off lak  
1864 that, one of the courters assed. its a sin and a shame when you come to think of it. them hebrews  
1865 off doin nothing an owah wuk goin undone.an worse than that, one of the othuh agreed, an they  
1866 could be stopped you know. they couldnt be very far by now an them on foot too. get me ma war  
1867 chariots, pharoah shouted. six hundred war chariots and me'en to feel them an have them reddy in  
1868 haf an hour. i'm goin aftuh those hebrews an i'm goin tuh bring them back. as far as moses is  
1869 concerned, i need to keel him wit ma bare hands. that rascal has been imposin on me fuh thirty odd  
1870 years. always some trick up his sleeve. git me ma fighting chariot and do it now (\). people began  
1871 to scurry in every direction and pharoah began to bless {dress} himself fuh wa'uh. my finest sword  
1872 and javelin. i am a man of war today an it is the happiest day of ma life. i have been tricked and  
1873 tricked and tricked and made a fool of ba moses ever since he wus waned from his... {turns page}  
1874 his his nurse. he is facing me today fuh the last time=

1875  
1876 rod  
1877 =186, top of 186

1878  
1879 ben  
1880 ..where are ma chariots an men? with a with a kill-mad cry, the six hundred chariots with pharoah  
1881 at the lead thundered out of the city before a cloud of road dust, and raced down the road to way  
1882 off. it wus late afternoon of the second day when moses came down to the sea. he ordered rest for  
1883 the night and plenty cooking and eating to keep up the strength of the hosts. some people  
1884 grumbled about sore feet and some missed their beds an houses. mo moses let the elders take care  
1885 of that. he went down to look at the sea. he studied the wind and the sky and looked at the sea and  
1886 beyond. that wus the way things were when joshua came running an shouting pharoah, the  
1887 egyptians, they are coming down behind us. chariots. moses hurried back to the israelites. by now  
1888 the thunder of hoofs and the gro of chariot wheels were easy to hear. women screamed in open  
1889 mouthed terror and whimpered in fear. men cursed cried out and (milled about in great whorls).  
1890 some tried to run away to the woods to hide. others jus stood or squatted on the ground in dumb  
1891 fear. when they saw moses come among them they crowded about him. some clung to him while  
1892 others screamed at him. he hook them off roughly and kept marching toward the rear. i alus tol ma  
1893 husband not to bother with this mess, one woman sobbed. i tried to tell him we wus gettin along  
1894 alright in goshen but he wus so hard headed he had to go an get mixed up in it. voices broke out  
1895 everywhere and all (sprung) with fear. the war chariots of pharoah were in plain view now, though  
1896 though distance on the plain. moses could hear many things as he (shoved) through the camp.

1897 couldnt that man find graves enuf in egypt to bury us all without dragging us out here in the  
1898 wilderness to die?  
1899  
1900 1:28:09.5  
1901  
1902 ben  
1903 then i sed all along that mozes wus some fake prophet, that god he made up out of his own hed.  
1904 did ah alays tell you all that them egyptian wus nice people tuh wuk fuh. you couldnt fin bettuh  
1905 bossman nowhey'uh. the idea of comin an foolin people off from home an leavin em with no  
1906 protection, i mean to tell pharoah just how it wus. didnt ah alus say we were better off in slavery  
1907 than we would be wandrin all over thu wildaness, followin after some strange man that nobody  
1908 dont know anything ab no no nothin about. tell the truth, didnt ah alays say that? i tol you all a  
1909 long time ago that we had enuf gods in egypt without messin with some fool religion that nobody  
1910 don know nothin about but mozes. you all jus let him make a fool out of you. ah always knowed it  
1911 wus some trick in that. that man is a (pure egyptian) and pharoah is his brother. he jes tol us off so  
1912 his brother could butcher us in the wilde=i tol you also. you heard me at the meeting distinctly  
1913 telling the man to leave us alone and let us serve out egyptian master in peace, didn you. we wuh  
1914 gettin along fine. plenty tuh eat an a place tuh sleep an everythang. we wouldn be in the fix we in  
1915 now ef that mozes had uh let us alone. who aksed him to butt in nohow? our business didn concern  
1916 him did it? it wus our back they wus beatin, it wus none of his an ef (we wus satisfied, he  
1917 shoulduh been tickled ta def. now pharoah is goin tuh kill us all. great ra, great horus, great thoth,  
1918 great isis, and the forty-two gods of the double justice, save us. slowed down by the weight of the  
1919 chariots over the rough ground, the horses were comin in a walk. mozes reached the rear of his  
1920 great huddle of trembling humanity and took his stand between danger and his charges. again he  
1921 wus one against all egypt. (listening and) thinking back it wus hard to keep his fillins from flyin to  
1922 his hed, he had but to step aside and leave them to pharoah and his servants but pharoah himself  
1923 wus drivin the first chariot as the cavalcade approached and he wann'ed to face him and beat him  
1924 one last time. he laughed to himself as he thought, pharoah thinks he's pursuin me but its the  
1925 other way around {turning page}..  
1926  
1927 rod  
1928 188 now. top  
1929  
1930 1:30:53.0  
1931  
1932 ben  
1933 but iss the othuh way round. i been on his trail fuh thirty years an now i got.. the old coon at last,  
1934 as jericho would say. let me fuddle him up fuh a night and then i will raise mah hand. first and  
1935 last, im showin him mah ugly laugh. as chariots drew near the panic grew in israel.they committed  
1936 every kind of folly an showed their inside weakness. then mozes showed his power again. he  
1937 turned his back on the egyptian horde and spoke to his own people. spoke to them in their own  
1938 dialect as one of them....  
1939  
1940 {reads remainder of story, ending at 1:42:38.9}  
1941  
1942 rod  
1943 hmm...whadaya say, whadaya think?  
1944  
1945 randy  
1946 same story just like i told ya jus like in the movie.  
1947  
1948 rod  
1949 from the it wus like tha story in the movie {laughs} and like in sunday school and like in [church,]  
1950  
1951 randy  
1952 [sunday school]

1953  
 1954 rod  
 1955 we hear the mooses story right? is this a this is a little bit different version of it right? this is a little  
 1956 bit different. this is her version of it, zora neal e hurston's version and and sophie you really hit on  
 1957 somethin one of the differences in in the language, right  
 1958  
 1959 sophie  
 1960 (yes)  
 1961  
 1962 rod  
 1963 in the language of the every day people(^) that we hear speaking to one another and speaking to  
 1964 mooses and complainin about mooses and then bein happy when mooses wins right? and  
 1965  
 1966 sandra  
 1967 mmhmm  
 1968  
 1969 rod  
 1970 an then right there at the very end you get somethin very interesting too, mooses sits down on a  
 1971 rock after all the chariots of pharoah have been you know drown in the red sea after they crossed  
 1972 over, that miraculous crossing, and WHAT (/) does he think about? .. there jus right there at the  
 1973 very end, what you just finished readin ben--thanks for readin by the way everybody--... he sat  
 1974 there thinking hey, he sed this little voice in his hed sez hey mooses, you could go back to egypt  
 1975 and be king. remember this is a man who grew up in the palace of pharoah, he wus a prince of  
 1976 egypt and now pharoah's ded and the armies that were loyal to pharoah were ded, he sez i could go  
 1977 back to egypt and be king. so he's got this, its almost like the devil on one shoulder and an angel  
 1978 on the other shoulder. one of em's tellin im to follow the voice of the lord who called him in the  
 1979 wilderness to be the leader of the nation of israel and the other voice sayin.. hey(\) maybe you  
 1980 could do somethin else. think about yerself, think about all that power an glory you could have.  
 1981 that's kindof interesting. i don think we get that in uhm the old testament story, right, we dont get  
 1982 mooses questioning himself, questioning his mission by considering going back to egypt and being  
 1983 king, trying to be king. its just interesting i think that she puts that part in there, that she puts those  
 1984 thoughts in his head... do you like that? do you like the way she wrote that story? [i mean]  
 1985  
 1986 chorus  
 1987 {nodding, general agreement} [yeah, yes]  
 1988  
 1989 rod  
 1990 it's like reading a bible story but it's also a little bit more [entertaining]  
 1991  
 1992 ben  
 1993 [yeah]  
 1994  
 1995 sophie  
 1996 [an all] that an she ( ) uh, about tha way they .talk an everything  
 1997  
 1998 rod  
 1999 right  
 2000  
 2001 sophie  
 2002 they got out whut they really wunted to get across they got it out  
 2003  
 2004 rod  
 2005 thats right, yeah, i think so. i think youre right, [they rght it out]  
 2006  
 2007 sophie  
 2008 [(i didnt)] know if they [talked] that way.

2009  
2010 rod  
2011 [yeah they]  
2012  
2013 sophie  
2014 they mightve talked that way  
2015  
2016 rod  
2017 right right...an i think it helped..i think it helps...it gives me a different perspective on the story,  
2018 anyway, i think about the the individual [people.]  
2019  
2020 sandra  
2021 [peoples] really direckin tha people buh' i think he (laked tha goo' lord bettuh than he lakded  
2022 anything). he lakded tha lord.  
2023  
2024 rod  
2025 well he made that choice at the [end] didnt he?  
2026  
2027 sandra  
2028 [mmhhmm]  
2029  
2030 rod  
2031 at the end of the [story]  
2032  
2033 sandra  
2034 [mmhhmm]  
2035  
2036 rod  
2037 he sed alright lord, which way am i to take em? y'know im gonna do whut you asked me ta do, im  
2038 gonna lead these people.  
2039  
2040 sandra  
2041 yep  
2042  
2043 rod  
2044 yeah, thats right...the next story thats in there and yall take this with you if you wish an then the  
2045 next one the tablets of the law is more about the moses story, the ten commandments story as a  
2046 matter of fact. so you can read that one on your own if you wish. ahm, uh, lemme ask you the the  
2047 like i sed this is our last official meeting you know to do to do the research, that is our last official  
2048 meeting with the cameras an tha recorder while we're reading together. theres another part, which  
2049 is that i sed in teh consent form early on that i'd like ta sit down with each of you individually for  
2050 just (/) a few minutes, i;m thinkin maybe ten fifteen twenty minutes at the most, an just talk a little  
2051 bit about what it was like, so like a little interview. like a little interview just one on one. an if its  
2052 alright, we can jus schedule that individually and do that in the next couple of weeks maybe, jus  
2053 sometime when you're here anyway and we can sit down and  
2054  
2055 randy  
2056 how many weeks was it?  
2057  
2058 rod  
2059 what?  
2060  
2061 randy  
2062 how many weeks was it?  
2063  
2064 rod



2065 we did six, well we did six  
2066  
2067 randy  
2068 weeks  
2069  
2070 rod  
2071 sessions and then we did one more cause one of em didnt cause one of em didnt work, so [we  
2072 really]  
2073  
2074 randy  
2075 oo:oh  
2076  
2077 rod  
2078 so we really did seven, seven sessions  
2079  
2080 randy  
2081 okay  
2082  
2083 rod  
2084 yeah  
2085  
2086 randy  
2087 (so ths's) tha last one, we have ta say goodbye=  
2088  
2089 rod  
2090 =yeah i know, what about that?  
2091  
2092 randy  
2093 oo:oh (/) oo:oh (\)  
2094  
2095 rod  
2096 whaddaya think about that?  
2097  
2098 sophie  
2099 oh, {gesturing} this is ending up today.{?}  
2100  
2101 randy  
2102 [iss vey interesting]  
2103  
2104 rod  
2105 [yeah, this is our last like i sed official session [where]  
2106  
2107 sophie  
2108 mmm  
2109  
2110 randy  
2111 oh right  
2112  
2113 rod  
2114 with the cameras and stuff like that. one thing i have in mind is, and i want to ask you about it too,  
2115 although i interrupted you randy, what were you about ta say?  
2116  
2117 randy  
2118 oh nuthing  
2119  
2120 rod

2121 okay, well, come back to it if you wish, is that we might be able to keep doin this if you want to,  
2122 just without the cameras. it wouldn't be part of a research study, but if we're enjoy'ing this  
2123  
2124 sophie  
2125 mmm  
2126  
2127 rod  
2128 it's maybe somethin we could keep doin. you know, if we like doin it, its maybe somethin we  
2129 could keep doin. and so i'd like you ta maybe think about that and let me know maybe when we do  
2130 sit down and talk for this last interview  
2131  
2132 connie  
2133 for us to keep doin it if we'd like?  
2134  
2135 rod  
2136 yes, if we'd like to keep doin it somehow, and if that's the case, then I can speak with uh, whoever  
2137 i need to, which means maybe the therapists and maybe jennifer here and maybe carol booker the  
2138 clinical director who you all know about how we could do that. if we want to do that, how we  
2139 could do that and when we could do it and that type o thing. so be thinkin about it a little bit if you  
2140 would.  
2141  
2142 randy  
2143 ='kay  
2144  
2145 rod  
2146 then i'll just get with you i've got all your phone numbers, is it okay if i just give you a call to try  
2147 and schedule it?  
2148  
2149 chorus  
2150 {nodding, general agreement} yes, yeah  
2151  
2152 {connie passes story packet toward rod}  
2153  
2154 rod  
2155 you keep it if you wish, or you can give it back to me, either way  
2156  
2157 connie  
2158 i'll keep this one  
2159  
2160 rod  
2161 okay keep that one that's fine, alright, well, do you want to say anything else about the story or  
2162 about the sessions or do we need to say goodbye, I mean that's kinda weird right?  
2163  
2164 randy  
2165 i enjoyed everything.  
2166  
2167 rod  
2168 i have been enjoyin it too  
2169  
2170 sophie  
2171 i have enjoyed it. very interesting stories.  
2172  
2173 randy  
2174 very interesting stories  
2175  
2176 rod

2177 well good I'm glad, i i really have enjoyed  
2178  
2179 randy  
2180 have enjoyed things  
2181  
2182 rod  
2183 have enjoyed talkin with yall.  
2184  
2185 randy  
2186 an the hospitality wuz great.  
2187  
2188 rod  
2189 {laughs} well, i know erin has enjoyed baking some things, i know thats part of what youre  
2190 talking about right, havin some goodies in the morning when we meet.  
2191  
2192 sophie  
2193 very inspiring  
2194  
2195 rod  
2196 well thank you for being a part of this  
2197  
2198 sandra  
2199 thank your wife for baking things  
2200  
2201 randy  
2202 she bake all that?  
2203  
2204 rod  
2205 yep, she did  
2206  
2207 randy  
2208 she's a good cook  
2209  
2210 rod  
2211 idn't she? I'm a lucky guy arent I? she is a good cook....  
2212  
2213 1:49:09.7  
2214  
2215 {group departs; sophie and daphne remain behind to discuss, sign supplementary consent forms  
2216 discuss interviewing schedule}