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# Forty-seven Years

JOHN CANTEY KNIGHT

Busy as we were, I had a lot of time to think. The rains that flooded south Georgia and wet July feet deep had come and gone. Weather turned fair, sky tranquil, puffs of clouds rested on blue. August, cooler than it'd ever been, slumbered in sunning snakes. She brought clothes folded neatly in a paper sack. Absently, she talked about the forty-seven years they'd been together. How a tie choked him, how he never needed a suit. I looked across bottom land where Autumn haze rolls thick along creek banks and blends into sky. Sun glinted on window glass on the way in. The long ride was slower than it'd ever been till the next day coming back. That night, I saw faces I didn't know and realized that if you live all your life in the place you die, everyone knows you. "People in small towns come out," my wife said. Outside, fireflies flicker darkness and the mountains seem nearer. It's almost as if nothing has changed, that his world and generation linger not much longer. As boys, the preacher remembers they roamed the woodlands together. It was so long ago yesterday when selecting the coffin that the funeral director had said that they'd put in a crematorium for the folks from Florida as a convenience. Pallbearers lifted the casket to the hearse. My wife comforted her mother as forty-seven years moved down highway to church and grave. Sun shined brightly as the headlights, one-by-one, darkened, and people hesitated by parked cars and waited.