

AS SWEET AS THAT

When she was in a good mood because my dad had
come home early for supper and told her
her biscuits and honey tasted as good
as his mother's or because he'd said
he'd take us to see "Forever Amber"
the movie she'd been wanting to see
she would sing while we did dishes
her washing me drying
and she would whistle too and
I'd get embarrassed.
"Why don't you ever sing?" she'd ask me.
And I'd answer "I don't know," and
she'd tell me about being young like me, but
a little older and how she used to meet my father
at the town square after she'd done the dishes
and all of them would sing and dance
while my father and some of the others
played the guitar and they'd do the
jig and the shuffle and my father
would lay down his guitar and do a tap dance careful
not to get his white shoes and white trousers dirty
and when the sun went down they'd all sit
in the park and watch the fireflies
flitting in the cottonwood trees. And
I'd think to myself putting away
the dinner plates
how I'd never be able to sing as
sweet as that.

-- Joan Smith

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THE DRAMA

you are upset by your mother. you are afraid she is
no longer a virgin. this worries you since she has
never been out of your sight for more than a few
moments. you are fashioning something for her which
will put your heart at ease. it is shaped like a
sparrow. you hope it will fit.