Alabama

by Nick Young (December 2024)

Did the Bear Sit Under the Tree? (Benny Andrews, 1969)

It was over. The family had departed. So had the handful of dignitaries and the knot of reporters hanging at the fringes of the crowd. All that remained was the stubborn morning fog that clung in among the cemetery's oaks.

John Thomas sat in his rental car and watched as the sexton moved four or five sprays of flowers, rolled up the sheets of bright green faux grass laid around the perimeter of the grave and with some effort, pulled the casket-lowering device, its bright aluminum frame dulled by the mist, out of the way.

Then he climbed aboard a small backhoe. Its engine coughed to life with loud complaint and a gust of black smoke. He maneuvered the tractor into position and began clawing with the steel bucket at the mound of red clay to one side of the grave. The sexton worked efficiently. *How many have you planted?* John Thomas asked himself. He reclined the seat a few inches and leaned his head back, allowing the memories that crowded his mind to settle into some sort of equilibrium.

As he had so many times since the news of the death had reached him, he thought of those first encounters he'd had with Frederick Tate. Both young boys but from vastly different worlds. He was a white kid from a comfortable Chicago suburb; Frederick grew up in segregated Birmingham, the son of a single mother who made her way in the service of the well-to-do. And that's how their paths had crossed.

Frederick's mother worked as a cook and maid for John's aunt and uncle. Edward Norris was the president of a successful medical supply company while Dolly was a bright butterfly in Birmingham's social scene. In the mid-fifties, when white folk would still become misty-eyed with antebellum yearning, that meant rounds of teas, garden parties and cotillions. This was the world Bess Tate—Miss Bessie to the family—moved in during long days and into many evenings, often bringing Frederick with her when he was still too young to be left on his own.

The Thomas' trips to Birmingham were infrequent. It wasn't that John's mother Sheila didn't enjoy visiting her only sister, but the family had a sprawling vacation home in Wisconsin overlooking Lake Michigan, so much of their free time over the summer was spent there.

John cast his memory back to the first trip south he could remember, one that he had made with his mother. It was late July, 1954. He was six, and Aunt Dolly allowed him the run of her big house. So, while the sisters were occupied catching up with each other's lives, he would go exploring, searching

empty rooms. He liked them because they were quiet, save for the rhythm of a ticking clock or the gentle whisper of a slowly turning fan in the ceiling above. At certain hours, when the sun slanted in just so, he watched tiny dust motes that he stirred with the brush of his hand along a bedspread drift languorously through the warm air.

One day, growing more curious, young John decided he would venture downstairs, below the main floor; and when he did, he discovered a whole new world, filled with pipes and ducts and storerooms. Here, there was no comforting sunshine or the breath of a fresh breeze. All was shadow, the air musty and close. John's heartbeat quickened, but what fear he felt nudging him was overtaken by the thrill of new adventure.

At the bottom of the stairs, a short distance away, he spied a glow at the end of a long passageway. He crept closer and found, sitting on the floor of a pantry in the dim light thrown down by a bare bulb, a black boy about his age, reading from a picture book. John remembered that he had looked at the boy for a long moment; never had he been that close to another person his size with skin so dark. He inadvertently moved a foot, startling the other boy, whose head jerked up at the sound.

"Hello," John said in a soft voice. The boy made no reply, only staring wide-eyed. "What's your name?" Still, the boy said nothing. "I'm John. Want some candy?" There was a moment's pause.

"Okay."

John reached into the pocket of his shorts and brought out two pieces of saltwater taffee and handed one to the boy.

"My name is Frederick," he said as they unwrapped the candy, popping it into their mouths, giggling as their teeth stuck together while they chewed.

It had begun just that way. A shared piece of candy.

When John told his mother about discovering his new friend, Aunt Dolly seemed somewhat flummoxed and she grew more so when her sister implored her to let the two boys play together. She finally relented on the condition that they stayed on the large screened porch at the back of the house, away from the curious eyes of neighbors.

“Some things are … frowned upon,” Dolly had said by way of explanation. Little John had not comprehended the meaning behind those words, nor had he understood an incident that took place at a downtown department store the day before he and his mother left to go back north.

As she browsed among the racks of dresses, he grew thirsty and asked for a drink of water.

“This way, Johnny,”!his mother said, leading him toward a drinking fountain near a pair of elevator doors. In actuality, the were two fountains, each with a sign above that John could not read. But when he dashed ahead of his mother toward one of the fountains, she called out to him: “No, no. Not that one. The other one. Here, let me hold you up.”

As he finished taking his drink, the elevator doors glided open and among the small group of people who emerged was Bess Tate holding Frederick’s hand. The two boys smiled, Frederick a bit shyly, while the women greeted each other somewhat awkwardly.

“Why, hello, Miss Bessie,” John’s mother said. “How are you? And how is Frederick today?”

“Fine,” the little boy answered, nervous.

“And how are you all, ma’am?” Bess inquired.

“Oh, we’re just fine. Poking around the dresses. Thought I might pick something up for the trip home.”

“Yes. Tomorrow. You’re leaving tomorrow?”

“First thing after breakfast.”

“Well, we sure have enjoyed having you down here.”

“Thank you, Miss Bessie.”

This polite banter was of absolutely no interest to the two boys, who fidgeted. John twisted left and right until his eye caught sight of the lunch counter nearby where a girl seated with her father was being served up a tall strawberry ice cream soda. John tugged at his mother’s skirt. At first, she ignored it, but he was so insistent, she finally turned and looked down at him rather crossly.

“Young man … mind your manners. Now, what is it that you want?”

“Ice cream, like that girl over there.” His little finger pointed toward the soda fountain. “Take us, Mommy—me and Frederick.” His mother thought for a brief moment before smiling down at her son. “Well, Johnny, I think that’s a fine idea. Why not? Miss Bessie, may I treat you and your son?” Frederick broke into a grin and looked up hopefully at his mother. Her eyes darted away quickly, then back.

“That’s real nice of you, ma’am, but we can’t,” Bess said sheepishly.

“Please, Momma,” little Frederick implored.

“Why a cone or a small dish won’t hurt, will it?” John’s mother pressed.

“Really, ma’am, I do appreciate the offer, but we can’t,” replied Bess, casting here gaze toward the lunch counter. “We’re not allowed.”

John had not understood those words then any more than he had

grasped the meaning of the twin drinking fountains. That comprehension would come in time.

As these memories arose, John reclined the seat a little more and let his head fall back. He closed his eyes as a crow's call echoed over the hills. He remained still, allowing the rhythm of the end loader to lull him back through time.

There had been no more family trips to Birmingham. Within a few months, Aunt Dolly would be dead of a cancer incomprehensible to the young boy. His parents left him in the care of a nanny while they flew south for the funeral. As time passed, that chapter in his life with its fleeting friendship, receded.

It returned in startling fashion a few years later. As was the custom in John's house, when the family gathered for dinner, the television was on, set to the evening news. His father especially was a keen follower of current events; and, that summer, the summer of 1963, James Thomas was troubled by the violence surrounding the civil rights movement which had been reinvigorated by Martin Luther King's electrifying speech on the Washington Mall. It had been two years since the Freedom Riders had gone south, meeting strong resistence, even brutality at the hands of white mobs while police looked the other way. Or worse, the authorities took a direct hand in the repression. Nowhere had this played out more starkly than in Alabama, especially Birmingham, where Bull Connor held sway as public safety commissioner. But with the passage of time, the bloodshed and fear had not subsided. Just the month before, Medgar Evers had been gunned down outside his own home in Mississippi. To John's father and millions more, there was a deep anxiety that the social fabric of the country was in danger of being torn apart.

In the midst of this came a news report one evening of arrests at a Birmingham department store as several young black men defied Jim Crow by taking seats at the lunch counter and

refusing to leave.

“Isn’’t that Teitelman’s?” James Thomas asked with some surprise. His wife craned for a better look at the television.

“Why, yes. Yes it is,” she replied. As the reporter described what was happening, he named the men under arrest. One of them was “seventeen-year-old Frederick Tate.” John stopped eating and turned in his chair to face the TV.

The scene shifted to outside the store, with the young men in handcuffs being led to waiting police cars. As he passed in front of the camera, Frederick Tate shouted out, his face filled with defiance.

“We shall *not* be moved! We shall fight on! *We shall overcome!”*

“That’s *him,”* John exclaimed. “That’s Frederick.”

And so it was they all agreed.

It was as if a switch had been thrown in John. Until that moment he had paid only passing attention to the events of the day. There was too much going on in his young world—getting ready for summer vacation, his part-time job as a caddy at his parents’ country club and trying desperately to win back the affections of his erstwhile steady. But what he had seen in Frederick’s face and heard in his voice moved John. He began to gather up scraps of memory—the signs above the water fountains, the sometimes-abrupt way his aunt had addressed Miss Bessie and her sad declaration that she and Frederick weren’t allowed service at the lunch counter. Over time, when he had asked his mother why, her reply was vague and unsatisfying: “Well, John, that’s the way it’s done in the South.” When he pressed for a deeper reason, she answered blandly: “It’s always been so.” It had been accepted as such by his parents. After all, it was only a concern “down there,” far from the comforting white delusion of the placid northern suburbs.

But it ate at John. He could not explain it exactly, but something within him sensed an injustice, so he began to take heed of the racial ferment. He followed the reports on television and the stories in the daily papers and newsmagazines he scoured in the local library. And the more his awareness grew, so his sense of outrage smouldered. He often recalled the images of Frederick, first as an innocent playmate, then older, his face implacable, being led away from Teitelman's Department Store for a crime that was no crime, save for the color of his skin.

More time passed; more horrors accumulated—church bombings, lynchings, the murders of civil rights volunteers, young people from the North not much older than John, and with the same white skin. National revulsion grew and with it shame and guilt, goading the people's tribunes in Congress into passing historic laws. The actions were hailed, and the country believed its sins had been expiated.

Of course, they were not.

Those with souls hollowed by hatred found new ways to keep black folks in their place and those who refused to step and fetch it, especially in the North, pushed back with growing militancy.

For John, it became a time when his awakening deepened. Now a third-year law student at Northwestern University, he found comfort and stimulation in Evanston's bookshops, particularly one devoted to leftist political writing. The proprietor was an intense, dark-skinned Hispanic in his early thirties who went by the name of Latigo. Favoring wire-rims, army fatigues and faded jeans, he seemed always on edge, keen for any remark, however mundane, that could spur him into a denunciation of "our oppressors." It was true that Latigo was sometimes over-the-top; but as he browsed the shelves, John also absorbed a great deal from listening to his passionate engagement in the dialectic with those willing to accept the

challenge. And John also relied on Latigo for reading recommendations drawn not only from his encyclopedic knowledge of the leftist canon but what was most current.

It was on a September afternoon visit in 1968 that the paths of past and present intersected again for John.

Not finding anything that piqued his interest on the shelves, John approached the counter where Latigo was opening a cardboard box.

“What’s the word, my friend?” Latigo said, brushing some tendrils of long black hair back off his face.

“Too damned much work in my criminal justice course.”

“Well,” Latigo said without missing a beat, “I hope your professors aren’t ignoring the systematic criminality loosed on this country’s indigenous peoples.” John replied with a slight smirk.

“Not top-of-the-list, I’m afraid.”

“Then you’re only getting half an education,” Latigo replied.

“That’s why I come here, man,” John said, laughing. “Got anything new for me?”

“Timing is perfect,” replied Latigo, reaching into the cardboard box and pulling out a slender hardcover. The dustjacket was done in the red, black and green stripes of the black liberation flag. In the center was a large fist thrust defiantly upward and emblazoned with the words “*Ushindi wa Shujaa!*” This was arresting enough to John’s eye, but what was more startling was the name of the author: Frederick Tate. “This is heavy-duty,” Latigo continued. “This brother tells it like it is—the whole sick fucking story, man. He puts it all together. And people are going to pay attention, the same way they stood up and took notice with Cleaver and Malcolm, you dig?”

John couldn’t disbelieve. There was no mistaking the picture on the back cover. It was Frederick, now twenty-two, his face angular and intense, sparse mustache and goatee with piercing eyes that dared refutation. Atop his head was perched a black beret, completing his attire of black turtleneck and leather jacket.

“He’s a Panther now,” John said, not a question, a recognition.

“That’s right. Oakland. And he’s going to be in town next week.”

“Here?”

“Invited by the Illinois chapter. You interested?”

“Yeah, I’m interested,” John replied, then paused. Latigo sensed some deeper recognition in John’s reaction.

“You have a connection with the brother?”

“Yeah. Long story, long time ago.”

“Maybe this will be a chance to get caught up.” John’s half-smile was wistful. “But you better get here early because I think we’re going to have a big crowd.”

John bought the book and spent the rest of the day immersed in it. The title, Frederick explained in the introduction, was derived from Swahili—“victory of the warrior.” He wrote that as an adolescent, through reading on his own, which had been encouraged by his mother, he had drawn his early strength and purpose from the pan-Africanism of Marcus Garvey and the unswerving witness of his namesake, Frederick Douglass.

As he read, John was impressed by the power of the writing, the sharpness of the critique. It was clear that Frederick wanted nothing to do with joining hands and singing “kumbaya.” He had no taste for accommodation. It was his demand that the

system be upended, the scales rebalanced. “Fuck your forty acres and a mule!” he declared at one point. John read that sentence and recalled the defiance he saw in Frederick’s face outside Teitelman’s years before. The rhetoric matched.

While John was intent on attending Frederick’s bookstore appearance, he was at the same time gripped by apprehension. So many years had passed, so much water under the bridge. Perhaps Frederick would want nothing to do with him. Perhaps he wouldn’t even remember.

On the Sunday afternoon of the event, John arrived an hour early. Latigo’s advice had been worth heeding; the room filled quickly. There was a smattering of white faces, but mainly the space was crowded with afros and men and women clad in Panther black. John took a seat near the back, spending the time waiting by catching snatches of conversation around him and re-reading several passages from the book.

A little past six there was a stir from the area in the rear of the store where Latigo had his office. He emerged, leading Frederick and a striking-looking black woman into the room. They were greeted by a muted staccato of hand-clapping. In response, both Frederick and his companion raised clenched fists. The introduction was brief, with Latigo praising Frederick as “a brother who knows where it’s at,” a voice for the people tired of “the Man’s boot on the backs of their necks.” The buildup was effective; the audience was primed and Frederick didn’t disappoint.

For the better part of an hour he discoursed on the history of black oppression in the United States, Washington’s imperialist policies abroad and capitalist exploitation at home. He paused several times to acknowledge bursts of applause or the shouts of “right on, brother!”

When he finished, a wave of excited chatter rippled through the crowd, a testament to the powerful impression Frederick

had made. Quickly, people formed a queue to meet him and have him sign a copy of his book. John took his place in line, and as he inched closer his apprehension grew over how Frederick would react to seeing him. When it was his turn, John stepped to the small table where Frederick and the woman were sitting side by side and laid his copy of the book down. Frederick, pen poised, continued to look down, taking no particular notice of who was standing before him.

"What's your name, man?" he asked, opening the book's cover. John made no reply but reached into the pocket of his jacket and withdrew a piece of saltwater taffee and laid it on the open page of the book.

And so it began anew. This time the innocence of childhood was gone. This time they were two young men and both understood how far they had come. John did not have to be told that Frederick had traveled a distance much greater, but for Frederick there was an imperative. And he made the explication of his journey plain to John in personal terms as they sat over espressos the next morning.

His mother had named him after Frederick Douglass for a reason; she had worked long days smiling and serving white people to get him the books she had never been able to study, to ensure that he had the education denied her. Before she died when Frederick was barely nineteen, she had inculcated him with a sense of pride and purpose, which he was fulfilling through his writing and his work with the Panthers. The age of colonial oppression was over, he declared, the days of Jim Crow were numbered. There would be no turning back.

For his part, John said his childhood experiences in Birmingham had planted a seed that had germinated suddenly the day he saw Frederick on the news being led away to a police car.

"After that, I couldn't shake it, man," he said. "I knew that

as a white man I had to assume a special responsibility."

"We're not asking to be patronized," Frederick shot back, eyes narrowing.

"No, no—I'm not implying that. What I mean is that my responsibility was to re-examine my assumptions, take an honest look at the privilege I took for granted simply based on this," John replied, gesturing toward his white skin. Frederick's face relaxed into a thin smile.

"Then you're miles ahead of the crowd," he said, casting a glance around the coffee shop. "Miles ahead, brother."

When the time came for Frederick to leave, the two men pledged they would stay in touch with each other. And so they did, exchanging letters and an occasional phone call. For John, the relationship often had the character of teacher and pupil, as Frederick sharpened his understanding of history and the hobbling injustices that remained in the system. Frederick was only too happy to provide the education, drawing satisfaction that perhaps all was not lost with the white race, at least not with this one man.

The war in Vietnam was a constant backdrop, but with the benefit of a student deferment and then a high lottery number, John escaped the draft, got his degree and joined a small practice in the city specializing in criminal law for the indigent, rejecting the siren song of the big firms with fat corporate clients. His decision put him at odds with his parents, especially his father, who believed that his son was sacrificing social standing as well as the likelihood of a very ample bank account. John felt his father was basically a decent man, but like many of his generation he was blindered to the truth of America. There had been acrimonious scenes between them, and John knew his old man was genuinely exasperated. John didn'tlove him any less, but there was no way he would press ahead with his own life the way his father

envisioned it.

While John was preoccupied with finishing his education and setting off down the road of his career, Frederick plunged into his work with the Panthers in the Bay area. Increasingly, that took the form of social organizing and implementing programs to benefit the community. Frederick felt deeply that building solid foundations was the ultimate key to advancement for his people. He understood Malcolm X's dictum "by any means necessary," but he viewed it as a defensive posture and not as a central operating principle of aggression. He found himself in the minority, and it worried him, writing to John:

> *There are too many voices among us raising a hue and cry for blood, and it grows harder by the day to be heard with any other message that is not denounced as a sellout. I fear there* will *be blood spilled, brother, and it will be ours.*

His fear was justified.

In quick succession, there were escalating confrontations with the authorities. A few were violent encounters that left Panthers dead, in Oakland and in a South Side neighborhood John knew well in Chicago. The Panthers as an organization were shaken. For Frederick, it was the breaking point, and he … disappeared. Melted away, a phantom in the night.

John heard no more from him. He often wondered what became of his friend, suspecting that with the help of those in the radical underground, Frederick had managed to slip out of the country, perhaps to Canada.

In time, he thought less about Frederick as he settled into

his life—getting married and starting a family. He also immersed himself in his work which, despite the obstacles often thrown in his clients' way by the system, he found very rewarding. He took on a fair share *of pro bono* cases and lent his talents to community organizing campaigns.

And so his life played out. Year upon year, one decade following the next. His work, both as a defense attorney and activist brought him a high profile around the city and, from time to time, a measure of national exposure. More than once he had been pressed to run for office, but each time he demurred. Political ambitions were for others.

By the time 2020 arrived, the country had endured a series of numbing racial traumas—the killing of black people at the hands of armed vigilantes and, especially, the police. One of these murders, in Minneapolis, cast the darkest shadow of all, provoking a waves of national revulsion that cut across all demographic lines, flaring in big cities and small towns, driving home the message that black lives *do* matter. But these protests carried their own cost—clashes with racist counter-protesters and, more often, cops. John himself got caught up in several testy standoffs in Chicago. At seventy, fueled by an upwelling of outrage, he had cast off the dispiritedness and fatigue that sometimes hung over him. His polestar remained the long-ago image of Frederick, defiant as he was taken away from Teitelman' Department Store in handcuffs.

But that memory was soon supplanted by another picture, one that was current and horrific.

It began when a young black man was walking his a small dog in the evening at the edge of one of Birmingham's affluent, lily-white enclaves. The dog slipped its collar and dashed off deeper into the neighborhood. The man pursued, calling his pet's name, breaking into a trot once or twice when he spotted the little animal. The commotion aroused a middle-aged couple

living in one of the large homes. Their immediate reaction was not to inquire what the trouble was or to offer their help. Instead, gripped by inchoate fear at the mere sight of an African-American man in their midst, they called the police. Quickly enough, a squad car was on the scene with the two white officers confronting the man, who identified himself as Jamal Kendall. He tried to explain what had happened, but the white couple kept insisting to the police that he had no business in their neighborhood, that they had seen him running, that he must have been up to no good. Kendall protested his innocence and began to grow agitated in the face of skepticism by the cops. They warned him to calm down, but this only heightened the tensions. There was a quick exchange of bitter words. Jamal Kendall raised the dog leash angrily, waving it first in the direction of the white couple, then at the officers, prompting one of them to panic, draw his gun and fire five shots into the young man's chest. He was dead before he hit the ground. It had happened that quickly.

All of it had been recorded by the cameras worn by the officers and one mounted on the dashboard of their patrol car. Although the police department tried to sit on the footage, arguing "ongoing investigation," pressure from news organizations and an outspoken attorney representing Kendall's family forced the city's hand, and the recordings were made public.

What people saw was what amounted to the summary execution of a young African-American. The outcry led to four nights of demonstrations in Birmingham, growing each day in size, with frustration and anger boiling over into confrontations with police and episodes of vandalism.

The upheaval made national headlines and prompted condemnation by political leaders only too happy to stoke racial passions when it suited them. In turn, it emboldened armed white supremacists, the ugly stepchildren of the Klan nightriders of the past. The nation was fast becoming a tinderbox.

Community leaders in Birmingham urged calm, calling for a "March For Justice and Healing" ten days after the killing. It began without trouble, though tensions were high as a thousand people gathered at the church where Jamal Kendall worshipped to march downtown for a noontime rally. As the demonstrators moved through the streets, they were separated by a cordon of uniformed police, including a detachment of officers on horseback, from a jeering band of white extremists, many clad in camo, some bearing guns, Despite the often-obscene catcalls hurled at them, the marchers kept to their purpose, walking slowly while raising their voices—*Justice for Jamal! No justice, no peace!*

Then it happened, the spark that set the fire.

Two smoke bomb canisters came arcing through the air, over the police line and landed amidst the crowd near the front of the march. As the thick clouds billowed, some in the crowd reacted with panic, pushing to try to get out of the acrid smoke. This, in turn, caused a section of the police cordon to give way, allowing a few of the white supremacists to surge through and begin beating the marchers. In the erupting chaos, one of the police horses was spooked, shying away from the drifting smoke, rearing, and jumping forward into the front ranks of the marchers. In the process, several people who had been walking with arms linked were knocked to the street. Two elderly African-American men were trampled by the horse. Both were badly injured. A day later one of them died.

The cellphone videos taken by onlookers and the footage shot by local television stations went viral, played in endless loops across the cable news channels, driving a new level of revulsion. In Chicago, the horror struck John Thomas with a special poignancy, for the victim of the trampling had been identified as Frederick Toussaint Tate, professor emeritus of African-American studies at Birmingham's Bessamer College. He read with sorrow a short piece in the *Chicago Defender* that included a brief summary of Frederick's life:

“Professor Tate’s involvement in the civil rights struggle began in Birmingham when he was a teenager in the early 1960s. For a time, he was a member of the Black Panther Party before moving to France for several years. Upon his return to the United States in the late 1970s, he resumed his academic studies, at Morehouse College and Howard University, where he earned his doctorate in 1981. He joined the faculty of Bessamer College in 1984. His 1990 book, ‘Eyes Still On the Prize’, written under the pen name ‘Frederick Toussaint,’ remains a touchstone among civil rights activists.

“Professor Tate lived quietly near Birmingham with his wife of thirty-five years. Until his retirement from the Bessamer College faculty in 2016, he was a reluctant activist, choosing instead to teach and write occasional essays for scholarly journals. But the death of Jamal Kendall compelled him to re-enter the fray. A friend of many years, William Crown, recounts that Tate told him in the wake of the Kendall killing that he felt a sense of outrage unlike any other he had experienced since the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ‘I cannot sit idly by,’ Crown recalled Tate saying. ‘I must again cry out, put my body back into the street.’

“And so he had done, joining an outpouring in the memory of a young man and as an act of defiance against a system that continued to insist on the devaluation of black lives.”

John understood now—or believed he did—how the fire of youth had been damped down, transformed. The commitment to the struggle had remained, but the violence, the deaths of friends so close to him as a Panther, had altered the trajectory of his life, pushing him to find a new way forward.

Yet, in the end, the struggle for justice was undiminished, and Frederick realized he had no choice but to engage one more time.

That is what Frederick must have felt his debt to be—to his

past, to the struggle. To his mother. And John understood the bill that *he* owed, payable to the legacy of that little boy met so long ago, for so brief a moment.

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The endloader had fallen silent after mounding fresh earth over the grave. John opened his eyes, blinking against the sudden brightness. Tranquility again lay upon the rolling countryside. The fog was lifting, giving way to the sun's insistence. *It's time*, John said to himself. He turned the key, started the car, and eased away down the narrow road that wound among the ancient trees offering their shaded comfort to those beneath the carved and weathered stones.

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Nick Young is a retired award-winning CBS News Correspondent. His writing has appeared in more than thirty publications including the *Pennsylvania Literary Journal, The Garland Lake Review, The Remington Review, The San Antonio Review, The Best of CaféLit 11* and Vols. I and II of the Writer Shed Stories anthologies. His first novel, *Deadline,* was published in September. He lives outside Chicago.

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