



Come Sunday

by Nura Yingling

The former queen of Bebop
is making a comeback in Gospel,
and the host of the jazz radio show
who once caught her act with Charlie Parker
can't get her to tell any jook joint stories
or even play *Lookie, here comes Cookie*
without changing the words to fit Jesus.
*Those days before I was saved, she says,
were the days of the devil.* Clearly,
there's nowhere for the interview to go,
so the host plays a piano solo: *Come Sunday*
by Duke Ellington. It *is* Sunday, and though
I am making spiced black beans, carnival rice,
and peach pie for supper, I stop and weep
at the cutting board, having never heard this tune
before—not as a girl crouched close by my father
beside the living room RCA as he sat, tipped
all the way back in his lounging chair, eyes closed,
clinking golden drink in hand, the smoke
of his cigarette rising thinly, up to the ceiling,
then curling away like the last notes at the end
of the songs. *Solitude, Missed the Saturday Dance,
Sentimental Journey, Mood Indigo.*
I knew even then that only love
or grief could invent those melodies,
the shadowed beauty of such minor keys.
Now, when the final spiral sound
of longing dissolves clean into silence,
I pick up the knife, resume cooking.
As the guest intones her "Praise The Lord's,"
my heart bears the old, familiar pain
the way a church organ bears the weight
of morning sunlight in the sanctuary,
the resolving chord of the closing hymn.

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