

5-1-2014

Bloom White Flower

Faren Manuel

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Recommended Citation

Manuel, Faren (2014) "Bloom White Flower," *Forces*: Vol. 2014 , Article 22.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces/vol2014/iss1/22>

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“...leave those cares.”

They had not spoken in close to thirty years. The younger woman was middle aged now. Her hair was white, but her voice was the same. Peering into her face, Helen envisioned the thin blond Willie had been and saw her again in Tom’s arms in that darkened dance hall.

Helen shook her head, but the scene re-played itself in her mind/ Willie laughing as Tom whirled her around the dance hall and kissed her.

Willie’s sobbing interrupted the scene in Helen’s mind. “I don’t know what else to say, but I’m sorry, so sorry.” Willie’s voice broke.

Helen looked at her, and the pain of remembering the scene; the confirmation of Tom’s adultery flooded her with anger just as it had then. Again tears streamed down Helen’s flushed cheeks.

Willie took her hand. “I had to come, Helen. I had to. I know it was a long time ago, and I don’t know how to tell you, but Tom made me, skinny ol’ me, feel beautiful. I know it was wrong. But, only after I was married did I understand what I had done to you. I had to come today. I have to tell you how sorry, how very sorry I’ve been all these years. Please, forgive me, Helen. Please.”

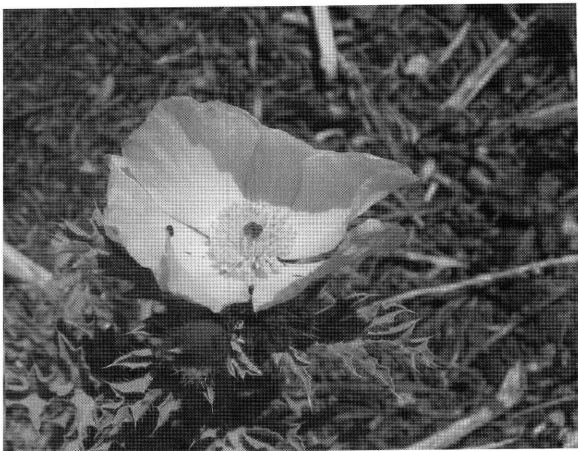
Looking past Willie, Helen saw the banner on a wreath of red roses, Texas A&M Choir-- more of Rhona’s friends.

Then she searched Willie’s tear-stained face and squeezed her hand. “Forgive you? Willie, you were eighteen - a child compared to Tom. It was wartime—so long ago. But...” She paused searching for words, “I’m, I’m glad you came. I’m glad someone who knew Tom came.”

Looking around, she pulled Willie’s hand. “Come, let’s sit here and talk. We only have a minute. I’ve read about Jackie’s basketball success and now she’s the coach



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