

5-1-2020

## Their Eyes Were Watching God

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### Recommended Citation

Horst, Robin (2020) "Their Eyes Were Watching God," *Forces*: Vol. 2020 , Article 61.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces/vol2020/iss1/61>

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at each other when I made eye contact with them. I felt uneasy, remembering stories my dad would tell me of awful neighborhoods in cities he visited, and tales of hearing gunshots outside while conducting his business. Minutes felt like hours and all I could focus on outside of conversation with my cousin were the cracked tile floors littered with crumbs; not to mention the overflowing, dilapidated trash cans. I wish I had some cards or a Nintendo like Jake did to make me feel more at home. But no, I sat there, bored and intimidated by my surroundings. I remember thinking of home and the mornings where I would put my clothes in the dryer to warm them up before braving the chilly walk to the bus stop. I thought to myself, "There are no subdivisions here. There are no 10 high schools to a school district; the people here lived a harder life." I was coming to the realization that I didn't really live in the real world.

"Come on boys, let's get out of here," Dad said, startling me. We walked the same path on cracked sidewalks back to the train, then up a narrow set of stairs to the station itself. As we turned toward the platform we came across some lockers.

Bang! Bang! Bang! I tensed up, and adrenaline chilled my spine and neck. A muscular man in a tattered hoodie and sweatpants stood in our path, punching a set of lockers with his bare hands as if he was Apollo Creed pummeling Rocky Balboa in the early rounds of their second fight. The sweat glistened off his forehead, and blood had been smeared on this particular locker as the skin on his knuckles wore away. I couldn't begin to imagine what drove this man to do what he was doing. Who in their sane mind, mindlessly

pummels a set of lockers in a train station during the dead of night? The scene was raw and visceral; I definitely lost innocence in this moment. Who knew 30 seconds in a train station would change my perspective so drastically? Despite this we moved past him, and boarded a train back to Chicago. I sat in a seat, separate from my father and cousin, and thought once more about my home and what I just witnessed. It was humbling to say the least. There were moments of awe and terror, but I gained valuable perspective from the experiences. Perspective that I could not have gained elsewhere.

The train gained momentum and took us through a tunnel. When we came out the other side, my eyes were fixed through the window, where the buildings grew nicer and taller once again.



**Their Eyes Were Watching God** Robin Horst