

Oral History

Imagine, hot, and not just warm, I mean hot and sticky, like, once you get out of the shower: you're already sweating. That's how hot today is. The summers here are never an easy thing, but today I feel like my bones are gonna melt into the pavement. I walk over to turn on some music when the little runts come trailing in.

"Hey momma, can we get some ice cream? The man is here and he says we need money."

"Girl, you gotta be kidding me. Does it look like I got money to buy ice cream?"

She starts to cry and I take her close and wipe them away. I hate it when my little ones cry.

"All right, here's a dime, now get, and bring me back something too, you know what momma likes, and don't drop it, I hate it when you kids drop it. Then I gotta buy two."

As they run back down the street, I hear yelling again next door. Dumb old Sam getting loaded again, beating on his wife. That pore woman takes so much from that nasty old man and all she gets in return is bruises. I ain't ever seen that man work a day in his life, and he still beats up on his old lady. Shoot, if my man ever beat up on me, that'd be the last day he'd ever take a breath. I'd have his life in the dark at the drop of a hat.

"Here you go momma, I have a penny for you."

Damn, I love my little ones. Not always the best ones on the block, but the smartest. She even gave me change.

As the little ones slurp up the ice cream that's running down there hands faster than they can eat it, I start cleaning up the kitchen, ya know, washing pots and pans, forks and knives. When all of a sudden, BANG!

Addie, the littlest one, starts crying.

"Momma what was that?" Layla, the older one, asks.

"I dunno girls, but be quiet, we don't want to upset whoever is making all that damn racket."

As I walk over to the front door, I see mean old Sam being dragged out by his wife. Shoot, that woman finally grew some balls!

I tell the girls it'll be all right as they walk over and give me hugs and kisses, when BANG! another shot goes off. This time, it hits someone.