

Raising Gentle Men:
Lives at the Orphanage Edge

By Jay Sullivan

November 2012

Sept. 21, 1988

My dear Jay,

Just a few hurried lines, but I know you will be anxious to hear our news after the pompous visit of hurricane Gilbert. You just missed it boy!

Thank God we all came out of it without a scratch. When we heard the warning, my brother Louis spent all the evening & part of the night – nailing doors & windows & barring everywhere – which was quite a good thing. The boys & all of us stayed at Junior Home Dormitory. It's only meant to sleep 96 and we had all 250 boys there! Louis & I and a couple of boys stayed on the verandah watching everything, until the Junior Home Hall's roof came flying by with terrific speed & screeching. Then we ran into the dormitory. It was awful.

When we came out after the storm, it was desolation everywhere you look. We lost the roofs on part of the Senior Home Dormitory, the tailor shop, and Father's house. The convent – the part facing the entrance – lost all the roof & part of the verandahs. Most of the sisters had to abandon their rooms – as everything – clothes, bed, etc., was soaking wet. Now they are scattered all over putting beds in some dry corners. What is very hard is the damage done to the electricity. Just to fix the lights outside on the compound it is going to cost us \$40,800, and then all the wiring inside has to be changed.

Most of the mango trees were destroyed.

We were lucky to have a water pipe at the back still working.

We just heard on the news that another storm has started in Africa & by Sunday we will know its course. Louis says it must be Sullivan – if it comes we will have Gilbert & Sullivan. I prefer Jay! Joking apart, I do not think that we could take another one so soon. I know God will spare us.

I must stop now, as I want to write to Irene. I would go on writing pages – but no time to do it.

The storm was bad, but it didn't scare me as much as the fire did. After the last incident, I've become quite afraid of fire.

Our Sister Provincial has come down from Cincinnati for four days & is leaving tomorrow – so she offered to mail our letters for us, that is how you got this letter. Do please give my love to your Mom & all at home. You know you have mine always.

God bless you dear.

Sr. Magdalen.

September 1985 (three years earlier)
Chapter 1 – Fire & Air

Morris Mathers wasn't afraid of fire. He wasn't afraid of getting caught, or catching a beating, or going hungry for a while. At ten years old, he understood how to live on the street. He took care of himself, mostly by reading other people. He knew that everyone acted only in his or her own best interest, and that constant gave him structure and security.

The woman at the food stall at the intersection of Vineyard and South Camp roads squatted on a small wooden stool in front of a fire burning inside a wheel rim. The fire occasionally flared up through the metal grate that lay across the opening, lending an eerie glow to the darkening sky. The woman's ample behind hung off each side of the stool, which was completely hidden under her long skirt, making her seem planted in the spot. Her shoulders swayed gently in rhythm with the tune she was humming. On the grate, five scrawny chicken legs sizzled in a frying pan. The smoke, infused with thyme and hot peppers, didn't waft gently upward as much as it smacked you in the face as you drew close to the stall.

"Here now! What you want?" the woman said to Morris as he stood a few feet away from the stall, clutching a blue plastic bag and staring at the woman.

"Me beg you some chicken," he nodded at the woman.

"Me *sell* you some," she offered.

"Me not have any money," he replied indignantly, slapping the torn pockets of his shorts.

"Den not tonight now boy. Me got me own ti feed." She nodded toward the side of the shack where two young girls sat in the dirt playing. "Git along now, boy."

Morris started to move by the stall. Just as he was passing in front of the fire, one of the young girls smacked her sister, who screamed and started to cry. The woman turned her head and shifted her body toward them. Morris stuck his hand into the hot smoky pan, grabbed a chicken leg and ran.

The woman couldn't do much more than yell after him. It would take her too long to hoist herself from the stool. Morris would be too far away to catch.

Morris couldn't juggle the hot chicken leg while running, so he dropped it into the plastic bag with the orange he had stolen earlier that evening. He sprinted around the corner, and, knowing he wasn't being pursued, slowed to a walk as soon as he was out of sight. Fifty yards further on, he sat down in a narrow grassy area between the busy street and the deep concrete gully that carried water from the city during the deluges of the rainy season. A low wall ran the length of the gully to keep goats and people from falling in. With his back against the wall, Morris could keep an eye out for any threats, and no one could approach him from behind. He scraped what meat he could from the chicken leg and then peeled the orange, tossing the rind on the ground. The evening breeze was picking up, and when he let go of the thin plastic bag it floated up in the air and over the gully. Morris headed south to the central market. There was more food there, and more people, and at night, there was safety in numbers.

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"Plunkett!"

Desmond Plunkett was afraid of everything. He was afraid he would go hungry. He was afraid he wouldn't have a safe place to sleep. He was afraid of another beating. He was afraid of Sister Ignatius and that she wouldn't be happy with him as an "office boy." But mostly, he was afraid he would be separated from Wayne. His younger brother was only ten, and was his only

connection to his life before the orphanage, and he needed that tie to his past, and to his former and true self.

“Plunkett!” Sister Ignatius called again from the porch railing of the convent.

“Yes, sista! Right ‘ere, sista!” Plunkett dashed from his bench on the verandah below the convent porch to where Sister Ignatius could see him, and craned his neck up to the porch above. “What can I do for...?”

Before he could finish his sentence, Ignatius started, “Bring these keys to Mr. Guardman at the gate. He will need them to lock up properly tonight.” She tossed him the keys.

“Yes, sista. Right away, sista.” Plunkett darted off to the main gate, about thirty yards down the driveway from the convent and office.

Plunkett had arrived at Alpha Boys School more than two years earlier. For many months he had kept track of how long it had been since his last beating, his last split lip, his last kick in the back. But on his 14th birthday last month, he realized he had stopped keeping track. He wanted to put behind him those dark days before Alpha. That he had lost track of the time frame told him he would eventually let go of his former life. Now, keeping Sister Ignatius happy was, he thought, the best way to make that separation permanent.

The tall open-mesh fence that surrounded Alpha had only one gate to the street, manned until midnight by Mr. Guardman during the week, and one of the older boys on the weekend. The driveway off the street led over a short narrow bridge that crossed the gully. The gully acted as a moat between the school and the street, keeping intruders out, and the boys in. Plunkett handed the keys to Mr. Guardman; he looked out at the light traffic on South Camp Road. In between the buses, the cabs, and the occasional private car, he could see a smaller boy, about Wayne’s age, scamper quickly down the road, in the direction of Kingston’s central market. He knew that many kids lived by their wits on the street, and he knew he and Wayne wouldn’t last long if they tried. As Desmond walked back to the office, he was conscious of how the night breeze cooled the thin layer of sweat on his forehead, the first comfortable moment of the day. As he looked up into the sky to say a quick prayer to God for keeping him safe tonight, he spotted a lone plastic bag flying over Alpha’s fence, landing in the vegetable garden by Junior Home.

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In the morning, Q walked barefoot down the row of banana trees, just a step behind Richard, and a step in front of O’Brien. The three boys were part of a line of ten from the Junior Home, each balancing a gallon canister of water on his head. Q liked the feel of the cool ground on his feet in the morning and the drops of dew that would brush off on his arms as he walked between the towering plants. It took half an hour for the boys to water the rows of scallions and yams in their section of the Junior Home gardens. While their cans were full, they kept their heads straight and their eyes on the shoulder of the boy in front of them. After they emptied their cans, they scanned the ground around them for any treasure that might have landed in the garden overnight. The evening breezes often picked up bits of trash from across the gully and a torn piece of cardboard, or length of string could prove an invaluable play thing. It was September and the stronger fall breezes would start soon. The ninety-six boys in Junior Home needed to gather supplies to build their kites, and Q and Richard and O’Brien, the smallest boys in the place, did not want to be left out of the fun.

Q spotted a blue bit of something on the ground poking out from under the wide fallen frond of a banana tree a few yards away. Probably a strip of plastic from a shopping bag, he thought, maybe long enough to be a panel on the kite he, Richard and O'Brien were building. His eyes darted side to side to see if anyone else had noticed it yet. He bent over as if to scratch his leg, and when the rest of the boys in line passed him, he dashed to the side and pulled it from under the frond. An entire bag, intact! A tremendous find! O'Brien saw him break ranks and Q turned to show him the bag, holding it as high as he could. They both beamed. Just then, an older boy stepped up behind Q and grabbed at the bag. Q quickly stuffed it in the pocket of his shorts, "It mine. G'way!" he flicked his wrist at him.

The older boy smacked Q sharply in the head, then looked around quickly, "Mi a git you yet, Q. Sista cannot always be watching."

Q hissed at him, rubbing his head as the older boy walked off.

Just then, Samuel, the Senior Home boy in charge that morning, came over shouting, "You dere! What you doing?" as he whacked at some branches with the thin dowel he always carried. Q, only eight, had been at Alpha for four years already, and knew that Samuel wouldn't strike him. Although Q had suffered his lumps from some other boys, he had never been beaten by a staff member. He knew the threat of violence kept most of the boys in line, and he liked, and needed, that. He just wished Samuel had arrived a few moments earlier, which would have saved him being hassled by the other boy. Q ran back into place and got in line to refill his can.

By the end of morning chores, O'Brien had found a few lengths of string, but Richard hadn't found any scraps to contribute to the boys' project. Richard always feared losing his place with his friends if he couldn't produce, but Q and O'Brien didn't care – they liked Richard. Besides, they needed him. The three stuck together to defend themselves from the older boys at Junior Home. As soon as afternoon playtime began, Richard snuck off to the alley between the boys' dormitory and the gully on the edge of South Camp Road. Although he didn't find any trash, he collected as many sticks as he could, so they could start building the kite's frame. When he heard Samuel approaching him and calling his name, he panicked. Unlike Q, Richard remembered all too well the feel of a beating. He dashed away, bursting around the other end of the dormitory, and ran to find his two friends.

Later that afternoon, after the sun passed over the open plaza in front of Junior Home, the boys sat cross-legged in shorts and t-shirts in the shade on the floor of the verandah, flattening their bare legs out sideways to take advantage of the coolness of the tile. They added the sticks Richard found that morning to a stash they had already collected, and spread the pile in front of them, arranging them in a web, and tying the joints together with small bits of string. Q worked quietly, his nimble fingers carefully forming knots. O'Brien and Richard kept moving the sticks around, suggesting different patterns, trying to make the kite frame as large as possible. When the three boys finished, they stood the frame on end. Q's intricate pattern of small triangles and squares supported the larger spaces Richard and O'Brien had crafted. The whole work was taller than Q himself, not a difficult feat, but a cause of pride and laughter for the boys. They carefully laid the frame on the verandah and Q ran into the dormitory. He pulled back the thin mattress on his bed and quickly gathered the plastic bags they had collected. He pulled from his pocket the prize he found that morning, and using a sharp rock, split the bag along the seam. Once splayed out flat, it covered almost a quarter of the kite. The boys added a few more twigs for support, and their work was complete. They stood proudly by it.

"Let's fly it now!" O'Brien said.

Richard readily agreed.

Q shook his head. "We can't."

"Yes we can," O'Brien insisted. "There's still time before da bell rings for supper."

Again, Richard was on board.

"No," Q said. "We used all the string to tie the sticks together. We don't have any left to fly de kite." It would take them weeks to gather enough string to get the kite airborne. O'Brien kicked at the ground with disgust. Richard followed his lead. Q, however, was already thinking about where he could get more string. He could think of three sources: Sister Magdalen, Mr. Solomon and Miss Irene.

Chapter 2 - Bedtime

“And now it’s time for bed.” I closed the battered brown volume of children’s stories and scanned the young faces before me. On the tile floor surrounding the old Adirondack chair with its peeling paint and splintered arms sat twenty-five boys between the ages of seven and twelve.

“De train story next, Mr. Solomon! De train story!”

“No, Waldemar. No more stories tonight. It’s getting late. Some of the other boys are trying to sleep. Please put this away for me.” I handed him the book, and his three-foot self became very important as he hugged the large volume to his chest and walked to the glass-enclosed bookcase.

As Waldemar placed the book back on its shelf, the boys started to get up. Their soft thank-you’s drifted back over their shoulders as their calloused feet carried them down dark rows of cots, past already-sleeping brothers. Each would pull back his thin mattress and check his cache of worldly possessions: string, buttons or bottle-caps, a picture from a magazine, a prayer card given him by one of the nuns. Under their mattress was their only private space where they could keep their valuables safe from each other. In the morning, most of their trinkets would get stuffed in their pockets and carried with them all day. The youngest boys and the bed-wetters slept on tarps stretched across empty bed frames. Inevitably some boy’s tarp would tear and he would spend the night curled up on the hard floor.

The last to bed was Anthony, a waif of a seven-year-old who acted more like he was four. Anthony looked over each shoulder cautiously, to make sure no one was standing close by. He had a very important question that he didn’t want anyone else to hear. Anthony had an important question every night.

“Mr. Solomon,” he started, “tomorrow in de game room, mi can get de puzzle wit de kittens on it?” Anthony’s Jamaican patois had a country lilt to it that made him stand out from the boys from Kingston.

“Anthony, you know you can always get a puzzle if you come to the game room.”

“And you build it wit me, Mr. Solomon?”

“Sure, Anthony. We’ll build it together. Anything else?”

“No, Mr. Solomon.” He stood still in front of my chair.

“All right, Anthony. Come on.” I pulled myself up from my chair, tucked him under my arm like a football and charged the length of the dormitory before plopping him on his bed, with him laughing and shrieking the entire way. I loved his laugh, and didn’t hear it enough before Anthony left Alpha, only to be replaced by Morris Mathers, who was only to be replaced by someone else.

The Junior Home dorm was one large room housing the ninety-six boys in eight rows of twelve cots. Dented metal louvers on the windows let in a slight breeze and, on weekends, the pulsating beat of reggae from a bar down the street. The air flow made sleeping easier, unless it blew from the direction of the outdoor bathroom. The dorm itself had cinderblock walls, concrete pillars and a low poured-concrete roof. It was much sturdier than the wood-frame Senior Home dorm, which had a peaked roof of tin sheaths. Many years earlier the original Junior Home building had been destroyed in a hurricane that killed two boys and seriously

injured one nun. The sisters rebuilt Junior Home as the storm shelter, and during subsequent storms, the Senior Home boys were shepherded up to the Junior Home for safety.

The walls were painted a faded orange to about four feet high and a brighter yellow above that. The whole place was sorely in need of a paint job. A lone bulb over my chair was the only light left on at night.

As the boys shuffled off to bed, I turned on the tape deck. Tonight, some baroque piano solos – Christmas music, even though it was early October.

As I read to them in the evenings, I realized that they carried with them to bed all of the fears and anxieties of the day. Bedtime is sacred. It's the hour when we reflect on our day and amplify the hurts and the victories; it's when we dream big or stew in our anger. When I noticed Sister Magdalen's tape deck in the corner one evening, it reminded me of my own bedtime as a child. My mother would come into the room I shared with my much younger brother, sit on the side of his bed, and sing to him "Lovely Lady Dressed in Blue," her favorite lullaby. She would then kiss us goodnight, say, "Sweet dreams," and leave the bedroom door ajar so the light from the hall would keep us from complete darkness.

When I began visiting Alpha, before I moved in, I had struggled to find something substantial to do for the boys. My salary as a teacher at a local Kingston high school didn't provide me the means to buy them anything that would make a difference. I couldn't give the boys their mothers' love. I couldn't wrap them in the total sense of security and protection my parents had provided me. I couldn't change their reality, but I hoped to at least affect their mood. I hoped I could literally give them sweet dreams. And I hoped those dreams would help them grow into confident men, and their lives would flow as smoothly as the gentle breeze through the dormitory on those early fall nights. I hoped a lot in those days.

While the piano music played softly in one corner of the room, I slowly made my way up the rows, stopping beside each boy who was still awake.

"Mr. Solomon," Jomo whispered, extending an arm and flexing his thumb, challenging me to a thumb-wrestling match. Picking scallions and calaloo, a spinach-like green, gave the boys hands of manual laborers – large and tougher than mine. Jomo and I hooked fingers, thumbs pointed to the ceiling. On the count of three, our thumbs bobbed and flexed until one pinned the other.

While our hands were locked in combat, Jomo boasted, "Sista say I can try out for the band this year, Mr. Solomon."

"That's great, Jomo. Do you know what instrument you want to play?"

"Yes sir. The drums, sir."

If the boys each had their way, Alpha's band would have fifteen drummers and no one else. As each boy prepared to move from the Junior Home to the Senior Home, just across the play field, he was assigned to a trade, depending on his abilities and interest. The boys might work in the carpentry shop, the print shop, the tailor shop or the band. The band was the school's pride and joy and its best fund-raising tool. It played at school events, and was often asked to perform for official government receptions. More significantly, the musicians were often sought out by the Jamaican army band – an enormous relief to the older boys, whose greatest worry was where they would go after they left Alpha.

As I reached the end of the first row, the music from the tape deck grew faint. Its luxury seemed incongruous in such spare surroundings. The boys were fed, but not enough. (Growing boys can never be fed enough.) They were clothed, but simply. And like all children without a home, they were starved for attention. They had, by the standards I grew up with, nothing. And yet on those nights, the breeze through the dormitory carried the richest music ever composed: Tchaikovsky, Vivaldi, Mozart. The boys' lives were haphazard. The music was immortal.

I had visited Alpha frequently during the 1984-85 school year, my first year in Kingston, reading to the boys three or four nights each week. The boys soon became accustomed to the story hour and thumb wrestling. But now that I had moved in, it was different. They expected me to read to them every night, and so far, I was o.k. with that.

As I walked up and down the rows, from each bed an arm would raise, sometimes thrust in challenge, sometimes meekly proffered, searching only to be held. What I thought of at the time as gentleness on their part, I later recognized as desperation, their longing for the only chance that day for a soothing touch, for the kind of physical contact with a parent that most kids take for granted

As I drew close to Francis, he unwrapped himself from his tattered gray sheet and held it up to me. "Mr. Solomon, tomorrow can I please get the book you gave Waldemar? Please?" The big Richard Scarry picture dictionary was the most popular piece of literature in the place and any boy lucky enough to secure it for an afternoon or an evening could easily trade it, attention spans being what they are, for a few measures of kite string or some rubber bands.

"Yes, Francis. Remind me tomorrow," I assured him, taking the sheet from him. He fidgeted, settled into a fetal position with his thumb in his mouth, and closed his eyes extra tight. I laid the sheet over him and tucked it in around the edges as he squirmed and giggled and settled again. At ten, Francis had the mind and body of a younger boy. He had been undernourished before coming to Alpha and was now in a class with other slow learners.

The breeze picked up the strains of Pachelbel's Canon, and I crossed the aisle to see Silent Malcolm. Nine or ten years old, Malcolm was one of the gentlest, and therefore, most vulnerable creatures I had ever met. In the two years I worked at Alpha, I never heard him speak. He was alert, and got into a line or out of the way appropriately. He smiled in response to a smile and frowned in response to a frown. He was present, but couldn't participate. He didn't seem to understand language at all. If you asked him to sit down, he would stand there and stare at you. If you gestured to the bench, he would sit. Occasionally in the afternoon, if I was standing on the verandah talking with someone, Malcolm would stand close by and gaze across the dusty field at the boys playing soccer. If we tried to interest him in even a simple game of patty-cake, his attention would drift back to the field. But at night he always wanted to thumb wrestle. He couldn't count to three to begin the match, and he didn't understand the game; but that didn't matter. He would stare into my eyes as his thumb moved randomly until I gave in and surrendered my thumb under his. He would lie back with a smile on his face. Even I, with an unlimited ability to believe that everything would turn out well, had limited hope that life would be anything but cruel to Malcolm.

The stroll up and down the rows took about half-an-hour. At the end, I turned the music lower and returned to my chair under the light. The chair was just outside the door to Sister Magdalen's office and bedroom. At the bedtime hour she was down at the convent with Sister Ignatius and Sister Marie Therese. She would come up to her room at Junior Home by nine o'clock for the night, every night. Sister Magdalen was the Gibraltar in the boys' lives.

Leaning back in the Adirondack, I was just high enough to gaze across the sea of beds before me. It was an odd life I had created for myself at the age of twenty-three. There are very few benefits to being the only man at the convent. I had no role models and no defined job, so I made up each day as it came. At times, that served me well, but at other times, it left me floundering. I had been lonely before, having moved from school to school as a child, and knew I would be lonely at times here too. But I could stave off the loneliness if I stayed busy. Busy is better than bored, and loneliness can be a sacrifice offered up to God. But how often can you tell yourself that before it sounds flat? I needed to feel productive. I needed a calling – a role of my own. Four years as an English major at Boston College had taught me that putting language around events and feelings would help me understand them, and quantify them, and use them to grow. I needed a name for who I was, and a title to define my purpose.

My contemplation was broken by Q's gentle whisper. His bed was closest to the chair, and he was leaning over the side of the metal frame waving, trying hard not to attract the attention of the other boys. "Mr. Solomon," he breathed loudly.

I leaned forward in the chair, "What is it, Q?"

"Mr. Solomon, O'Brien and Richard and I need string for de kite. Do you have any, please?" The sparkle in his eye and the smirk on his face told me he knew what a pushover I was.

"I'll find some for you tomorrow, Q," I smiled back.

"Tank you, sir," he said, as he rolled back onto his bed smiling broadly.

I sank back into my chair wondering if "Storyteller" and "Provider of String" were job titles with which I could be satisfied this year.

When the music stopped, I took the tape and said goodnight to Benjamin, the Senior Home boy who was assigned to watch the younger ones until Magdalen returned from the convent. The screen door squeaked as I swung it open, which caused Patches, the mangy orange-and-white watch dog, to lift her head. She slept in front of the door at one end of the dormitory, and Yappy, the younger black Labrador mix, slept at the other end. Between the two, they provided adequate alarm if any strangers should approach the dorm. Given the number of boys and the assorted adults who belonged there, I never understood how the dogs could recognize a stranger. But that was their calling, and they did it well. (They were lucky dogs in that regard.)

The path from the Junior Home to the Senior Home and the convent and my room changed without reason from paved path to gravel and back again numerous times. But whether you were walking on concrete or gravel, you couldn't walk twenty feet at Alpha without kicking up dust, even at night.

The chirping of the katydids in the bushes, the sound of the band practicing in the Senior Home refectory, the distant barking of a dog, the pulsing music from the bar down the street, the rumble of a bus heading up South Camp Road just over the fence and across the gully all blended together into the night symphony. Across the playing fields, the full moon sat just off the end of Long Mountain, the eastern boundary of the city. I could see the slope of the hill and pictured where it meets the Caribbean just outside Kingston Harbor. The navy blue sky, the deep green hill and the sparse brown playfield, even in the limited light of the moon, were each clearly defined. If only everything that year had been as clear as that evening sky. I had come to Jamaica for a quick adventure, a fun interlude between college and law school. I hadn't planned to stay a second year. Now, only a month into living at Alpha, my life didn't make practical

sense. At times I had considered becoming a priest – but I never anticipated I would live in a convent. I had come from a loving and stable home – and now lived among orphans. I had grown up in a community where the one black family in town had almost celebrity status – and now I was the minority. And the ironies were only beginning.

Still, one thing was clear. I knew every night, as I walked back to my room at the convent, that I was being given a gift by being here - the people I met, the stories I heard, the days, whether ordinary, absurd, or terrifying – all were gifts, to be held and cherished. I didn't know then that gifts often come with a price. I didn't know that when you insert yourself into other people's lives you lose parts of your own.

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That night, no one read stories to Morris Mathers. He heard no strains of classical music. Instead, Morris curled himself into the deep doorway of a storefront just off the central market square in Kingston. He had stolen and eaten enough food that night that he actually felt full, and the feeling made him sleepy. In his dream, he stood in front of a street higgler at her stall, eyeing the small piles of fruit stretched out on the tarp at her feet. She welcomed him to help himself and he reached for a large orange in the pile closest to him. But then someone grabbed his arm and twisted it behind him, causing him to drop the fruit.

He awoke abruptly to the heavy breath of rum in his face. A fat drunk man had Morris' arm pinned behind him. He forced the boy's head into the corner of the doorway, pinning his chin to the concrete slab, so he couldn't open his mouth to yell, and couldn't turn to bite his assailant. Morris kicked at the man as hard as he could, but he was a scrawny ten year old and no match for the weight on top of him. As the man pulled the boy's shorts off him, Morris knew the pain he was about to suffer, and he knew the humiliation he would feel afterward. He concentrated instead on the pain in his head every time the man's thrusts jammed his forehead into the wall. Morris hated to cry but could feel the tears on his face as the assault continued.

When the man was done and started to stand, Morris tried to kick at him, but he was too exhausted. He cursed instead, and the man kicked him sharply in the side as a warning not to follow him. Morris pulled his shorts back on, knowing he would have to either steal another pair or find a way to fix the new tears in these. He stumbled a few blocks away to where he knew a water pipe stood in an alley. He washed himself, trying to get rid of the man's stink. The cold water stung his skin, and the tears on his backside. Once he felt clean, and covered, he knew he needed to look for a new doorway. He picked up a broken brick at the base of the water pipe. He wanted to find the drunk and smash his head with the brick. Instead, Morris returned to the doorway where the attack had happened. He slammed the brick against the grill covering the storefront. He slammed it again and again, until the glass door behind the grill smashed. Then he went in search of a new doorway. He knew he wouldn't sleep this time, and he knew he wouldn't dream again.