

AUNT ESTER: I didn't know that window was still open up there. No wonder I'm cold.

(Citizen is startled. He doesn't know what to do.)

CITIZEN: I ain't gonna harm nobody.

AUNT ESTER: Eli gone out. He ain't coming back for a while. Black Mary gone shopping. Are you hungry? She got them pigfeet on but they ain't done yet. She gonna make up a pot of soup when she come back.

CITIZEN: I ain't no robber. You said to come back Tuesday. I can't wait till Tuesday. I can't wait. I have to see you now. They say you can help me. They say you wash people's souls.

AUNT ESTER: God the only one can wash people's souls. God got big forgiveness.

CITIZEN: The people say, "Go see Aunt Ester."

AUNT ESTER: You remind me of my Junebug. He was a nice-looking man like you. Had big hands. Do they call you Junebug? What's your name? My name is Ester Tyler. Some people call me Aunt Ester. What they call you?

CITIZEN: Citizen. They call me Citizen Barlow.

AUNT ESTER: Were you looking for money, Mr. Citizen? I'd give you two dollars if I had my purse. Go in that room and get my purse and I'll give you two dollars. In the room there on the nightstand. You can go and get it and I'll give you two dollars.

CITIZEN: I ain't looking for no money. I ain't no robber. I come to see you.

AUNT ESTER: You remind me of my Junebug he was the only one of my boys that caused me trouble. But I do believe he was a good boy. Just a rascal of a man. Is you a rascal, Mr. Citizen? I believes you is. Come sit down and keep me company. I get lonely sometimes. Do you ever get lonely? Being lonely is hard when there so many people around. I told myself I'm gonna die from loneliness. There was a man who ran and jumped in the river. They say he stole a bucket of

nails. Did you hear about that? He died a lonely death. Wasn't nobody but him. All them people standing around watching and he was the only one who died.

CITIZEN: He could have come out the river.

AUNT ESTER: That's the only way he had to say he was innocent. It must have meant an awful lot for him to say that. He was willing to die to say that.

CITIZEN: I was standing there. I seen him. I thought he was gonna come out. I told myself he was gonna come out. The people was telling him to come on out then he just sunk down in the water. He kept saying he didn't steal the bucket of nails. Everything they say to him he just say he didn't steal the bucket of nails.

AUNT ESTER: Jesus Christ was falsely accused. He died a bitter death on the cross. This man was like Jesus. He say he would rather die innocent than to live guilty. You can go ahead and eat your bread, Mr. Citizen. Black Mary be back in a minute. I'll have her make up a pot of soup and some cornbread. You like cornbread? You look like you can eat a whole pan yourself.

CITIZEN: I like cornbread. Yeah.

AUNT ESTER: What you like best cornbread or biscuits? I can never make up my mind.

CITIZEN: I like cornbread but I like biscuits better. **!**

AUNT ESTER: That was like my Junebug. I lost my Junebug, Mr. Citizen. Oh that was a sad time. The darkest day I ever did see was the day I lost my Junebug. You ever looked at a piece of rope, Mr. Citizen? God made that rope. It come right out the ground. You twist and weave it all together and you get a rope. Rope can help you do a lot of things. You tie it around a bucket and you can get water out of a well. You can tie things together with a piece of rope. God made the rope. It's man who sometimes gets in the way of God's creation and turns it over to the devil. Did you ever have love, Mr. Citizen? I've seen people have love and didn't know it. I had love and didn't know it. It's like money you can't ever have