

THREE BREEZES

Jimmy Jones dreamed while following Lula, the gray female mule, down the long furrows.

He had wanted to go fishing in the leafy woods he was now headed to. But the moment he got off the school bus, his mother appeared at the front door of their farm-house.

"Jimmy, Mr. Hemby's a wanting you to spell him whilst he goes to the grocer station," she yelled across the distance before retreating into the house.

"You mean," Jimmy spoke to himself, "Mr. Hemby would like for me to relieve him for awhile." At 16, Jimmy had been disturbed to realize his mother's manner of speech and the rasping sound of her voice irritated him.

Now, at 17, the first vague feeling of guilt at disliking his mother, whom he had tried to tell himself he should feel sorry for, no longer entered his thoughts. The guilt had passed into a state of rebellion - things he expressed to himself.

He no longer bothered to respond to neighbors who seemed to get sordid pleasure in reminding him what a good soul his mama was, carrying on like a man after that worthless Alfred Jones had put his white cap on one day and simply walked forever out of their lives.

At first, Jimmy had been stunned. He had loved his daddy's soft laughter and the gypsy light in his eyes, his quietness and funny way of hugging Jimmy, smiling, saying nothing, but smiling sadly. "Someday you'll be a man son, "he used to say at such times. "When you are grown up, remember keep yourself free."

Those first two years after Jimmy's father went away one June mid-day, Jimmy raged silently if anyone told him he looked like his father. But no longer. One of his secret pleasures was gazing at his image in the mirror - delighted and surprised to see the likeness of his father growing more noticeable, like a prophecy coming true.

Virginia, the young white mule, stopped suddenly, spread her legs and released a long torrent of golden urine that foamed and splattered on the ground.

Jerry Raynor

Unfinished Melody