

from *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) By Zora Neale Hurston (United States)

Line 5 Janie starched and ironed her face and came set
in the funeral behind her veil. It was like a wall of
stone and steel. The funeral was going on outside.
All things concerning death and burial were said
and done. Finish. End. Nevermore. Darkness. Deep
hole. Dissolution. Eternity. Weeping and wailing
outside. Inside the expensive black folds were resur-
rection and life. She did not reach outside for any-
10 thing, nor did the things of death reach inside to
disturb her calm. She sent her face to Joe's funeral,
and herself went rollicking with the springtime
across the world. After a while the people finished
their celebration and Janie went on home.

15 Before she slept that night she burnt up every
one of her head rags and went about the house next
morning with her hair in one thick braid swinging
well below her waist. That was the only change
people saw in her. She kept the store in the same
way except of evenings she sat on the porch and
20 listened and sent Hezekiah in to wait on late cus-
tom. She saw no reason to rush at changing things
around. She would have the rest of her life to do as
she pleased.

25 Most of the day she was at the store, but at
night she was there in the big house and sometimes
it creaked and cried all night under the weight of
loneliness. Then she'd lie awake in bed asking
loneliness some questions. She asked if she
wanted to leave and go back where she had come
30 from and try to find her mother. Maybe tend her
grandmother's grave. Sort of look over the old
stamping ground generally. Digging around inside
of herself like that she found that she had no inter-
est in that seldomseen mother at all. She hated her
35 grandmother and had hidden it from herself all
these years under a cloak of pity. She had been get-
ting ready for her great journey to the horizons in
search of *people*; it was important to all the world
that she should find them and they find her. But
40 she had been whipped like a cur dog, and run off
down a back road after *things*. It was all according
to the way you see things. Some people could look
at a mud-puddle and see an ocean with ships. But

45 Nanny belonged to that other kind that loved to
deal in scraps. Here Nanny had taken the biggest
thing God had ever made, the horizon—for no matter
how far a person can go the horizon is still way
beyond you—and pinched it in to such a little bit
50 of a thing that she could tie it about her grand-
daughter's neck tight enough to choke her. She
hated the old woman who had twisted her so in
the name of love. Most humans didn't love one
another nohow, and this mis-love was so strong
55 that even common blood couldn't overcome it all
the time. She had found a jewel down inside herself
and she had wanted to walk where people could see
her and gleam it around. But she had been set in
the market-place to sell. Been set for still-bait.
60 When God had made The Man, he made him out
of stuff that sung all the time and glittered all over.
Then after that some angels got jealous and
chopped him into millions of pieces, but still he glit-
tered and hummed. So they beat him down to
nothing but sparks but each little spark had a shine
65 and a song. So they covered each one over with
mud. And the lonesomeness in the sparks make
them hunt for one another, but the mud is deaf and
dumb. Like all the other tumbling mud-balls, Janie
had tried to show her shine.

70 Janie found out very soon that her widowhood
and property was a great challenge in South Flor-
ida. Before Jody had been dead a month, she
noticed how often men who had never been inti-
mates of Joe drove considerable distances to ask
75 after her welfare and offer their services as advisor.

Janie laughed at all these well-wishers because
she knew that they knew plenty of women alone;
that she was not the first one they had ever seen.
But most of the others were poor. Besides she liked
80 being lonesome for a change.