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Among the spring flowers and manicured gardens, I walk over a bridge crossing a stream flowing from the river. I watch the leaves caught in its currents. The leaves swirl and toss, caught in the currents of the water. In a sudden moment, the clear blue sky shatters into a million pieces. Birds' wings fill the air in a simultaneous rush. A bride luminescent like an angel bursts out of the dark entrance of an old church building, holding her groom's hand and several flowers in the other. If only I could have one of those flowers for Benjy and Miss Quentin. Is she escaping from the family, from its decay and from a tumultuous childhood in that dark and cursed house? But I could never escape. I may be far from Jefferson, I may wander from place to place, but torrents of my early years come rushing in regardless.

I find myself walking into the cathedral, perhaps wishing to purify my soul or to revisit the past that still lives within me. I envision myself on my wedding day. Did I have the shining brightness of the bride in the white veil and wedding dress?

*I look at myself in the mirror. I don't look like myself in this white dress. Leaving the house after the wedding, I do not look back. I could not bring myself to do so. I could not watch Benjy's soft eyes grow ever more despondent as he sees me. Herbert cannot know about Dalton Ames. Do I love him? What is love anyway? I have to leave to fix the situation that I've created. Yet I am torn having to leave my family in order to save their pride and dignity. But this way the family's pride will be saved. The family will be provided for financially when Herbert gives Jason the job as he promised.*

*Sold Benjy's pasture for Quentin's education. Quentin did promise. I made him promise. Look after Benjy and Father. Don't let Jason send Benjy away. My dear Quentin. How my life has raced to this event. I cannot stop time. But my life has become entangled in time. Hence I look only into the future, lamenting the rest. My poor Quentin, I had to leave you with a burden that only you would bear.*

Little Quentin. Are you like me. Would Benjy remember me and think you are like Caddy. I see a young girl keenly watching the bride and groom, anticipating. I can see it on her face. Is my daughter looking for me is Benjy looking for me with anticipation through the worn out gate of my childhood? Time may have erased me and washed me away. Quentin do you feel my brother Benjy. I feel my heart constrict from missing you. But I could never see you and bring more shame to the family. Already, I have abandoned all constraints of moral tradition and integrity, estranging myself from Jefferson. Father might have wanted me to return, but he is no longer. I feel free now but remain tied to the things that still attach me to you to Jefferson. Somehow I don't trust Jason to be a good guardian. My fifty dollar payments of atonement. I miss you little Quentin, always.

I am not free from my past but in fact burdened by it. These old Parisian avenues and churches are so foreign but so old, just like the old South, like Jefferson. They resemble shadows of their former selves. It is like the decay and destruction in my family, sick with cruelty and apathy. Full of anguish and torment, weary and deafened as the years passed.

*My mother, always sick in bed. Mother needs to get out of bed. What of her leaving daughter, her lost sons. Is she content with the prospect of Herbert as her daughter's husband? I could hear Benjy bellowing and scratching his fingers across the window. I see T.P. trying to hush him. He feels me going away. As I walk toward them in my veil, he starts again. He knows*

*without words. He does not understand but he feels. He could smell my perfume. I feel his fury roaring out in his bellows.*

I suddenly open my eyes, returning to the present with a shout. When I hush, the sound leaves the air, without a sign that it was ever there. I find myself standing alone in front of the church. Hurriedly, I turn and retrace my steps. Back over the stream's unbroken currents that carry away all of the sound and fury into the perpetually running water. I need to somehow rescue Benjy and Quentin from Jason. But how could I rescue Quentin when I could not be rescued myself?

I know Benjy is waiting for me. A medley of things in his mind – the smell of perfume, flowers, and trees. Does Benjy still have my slipper? Quentin's turmoil, quieted now. Quentin, reawakened. In my mind, I rush toward them, toward their island in the middle of the currents and the strife. If I only could come and save them. But none of us can be saved.

On the other side of the bridge, I sit on a wooden bench, watching the sky grow red as the sun sets in the west. A gust of wind comes. The red leaves swirl and eddy in the brown water. I watch as they sink until I can no longer see them, disappearing into obscurity, signifying nothing.