Jazz

Patti Burns
Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/calliope

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/calliope/vol4/iss2/27

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the English at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Calliope (1954-2001) by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.
About a month before the wedding, Sam came into the grocery store. I hardly recognized him. He was actually thin. He had a shave and he was wearing about three hundred bucks worth of clothes on his back.


"Please." His face had pained look “How about calling me Sam?”

"Sure thing. Can’t say I blame you. What’s doing?”

"Besides getting married, not much. Listen, I’ve got a proposition for you."

His deal was simple, but it just about bowled me over. Sam never had much of a head for business and he was afraid that his father-in-law was going to find that out very quickly. This partnership could prove extremely painful, unless he could rely on someone with some business experience. By someone, he meant me. I was to start off the same way he did, namely pushing a cart. Since I had some brains, I would get ahead quickly. Also, since Natalie was getting married, someone would have to pick up the boss. This someone was Sarah, Natalie’s kid sister by about a year. Sarah, he assured me, was damned good looking and a swell kid to boot.

He told me to think it over, and believe you me, I did just that. I didn’t mind getting a chunk of a business, but picking up a wife at the same time, sort of bothered me. I mentioned the proposition to my parents. My father grumbled at the prospect of my leaving the store, but my mother told me, I’d be a fool to refuse.

I still didn’t know what to do. Three days later Sam dropped in again to see what I had decided. He was driving his wedding present from his father-in-law to be . . . a brand new Mercury convertible.

I start work at the Peerless Dress Manufacturing Company Incorporated this coming Monday.

Jazz . . .

Deep rumble of many voices punctuated by shrill bursts of laughter
Low throaty tones of the clarinet woven through the dim smoke-clouded cellar
Loud peal of horn calling through the dusk
Dull thump of drum—
Quiet

Dim lights glow on the shimmering golden form of the trumpet
It raises then drops quickly as blinding spots hush the throng
The trumpet sounds—the drum answers
The clarinet glides into an obligato
The bass picks out the beat
They blend—

JAZZ

. . . Patti Burns