

She Waits

She waits.

She sits next to his parking space and waits.

Sometimes she sits in his space, daring him not to see her!

Summer seems to be early this year and warmer temperatures are already with us, but the sun seems not to bother her at all. Charlie says that I am stalking her, but I tell him that it is not my fault that our breakfast nook and table sit at a window that overlooks the parking area of the condos across the street. It is impossible not to see her and know that she waits for him.

We moved into our apartment several years ago in early September and Charlie recognized and knew several of our neighbors across the street in the condos. In particular, he pointed out a slender, elderly gentleman and his wife, whom Charlie had once known in the business world.

We would be outside several times a day walking Charlie's small dog and would frequently see our neighbor walking his small white terrier. That was when we began to notice her. She would be there, waiting, when he came down the steps from his second floor condo with his terrier.

She would walk beside them to the corner, then stop and wait while he and the terrier continued on a longer walk. She would be there waiting when they returned and walk back to the condo with them. When they reached the condo he would stop and talk to her, and sometimes reach and touch her hair. She

would lean towards him, then turn and walk to the corner of the condo and disappear towards the units down the hill. He would then turn and go up the steps with the terrier closely at his heels.

I saw his wife a couple of times over the several years, twice when an ambulance appeared and raced with her to the hospital. When I asked their next-door neighbor about her condition, nothing was known except that she had been sickly for years. His wife died after the second trip to the hospital.

We did not see him again for several months, but at dinner one evening I noticed that she was there again, sitting by his parking space, waiting.

"Strange", I said to Charlie. "I guess she doesn't know."

In the Spring, he was suddenly there again, telling a neighbor that he thought that maybe he could stand living in the condo again without his wife. Once again he and the little white terrier would come down the steps after dinner, once again she was there everyday, waiting, and once again they would walk in the early evening. She would wait at the corner while he and his dog took a longer walk and then they would come back to his condo. She would lean against him for just a minute, he would touch her hair and she would then turn and disappear around the corner of the building.

It did not last though. He could find no peace living in the condo without his wife

and, eventually, moved closer to his son and family. The condo still sits, untouched, awaiting life. He comes less and less frequently and always leaves after a very short time. He cannot live there but it seems that he cannot bring himself to actually sell the condo and move out either.

She appears almost every day. She sits and looks at his parking space. She watches for him to come. Sometimes she sits on the new wrought iron bench he has placed near the head of his parking space. Sitting there amidst the ferns and flowers, under the trees moving softly in a gentle Southern breeze

sometimes resting her head on the back of the bench and napping, it speaks of other times in the "old South-.

She still prefers to sit near the edge of the curb where she stretches her legs or walks around the foot of his steps, exercising it seems. She still naps sometimes in the parking place in the warmth of the sun but still seems to listen, her head turning immediately upon the approach of a vehicle.

But he seldom comes now.

A neighbor told me that the older gentleman had asked another condo owner to let him know if they were ever aware of anything that she wanted or needed so that he could get for her. Unfortunately, the neighbor cannot remember who that condo owner is.

She just appears, coming gracefully up the hill, sometimes past the swimming pool, which she cautiously avoids. It looks to me as though she had lost weight but she is as beautiful as ever. She walks with grace, her hips swinging slightly

above her long legs. Her posture is always perfect, her back straight, head held high, bright inquisitive green eyes, emphasized by her dark black hair. She knows that she is beautiful but love will not let her be too proud to wait for him.

She waits.

"How can he just move away and leave her?" I demand of Charlie, "She loves him!"

"Yes", answers Charlie, "but she is a cat".

MEN!