

"Could you . . . my package is just right over there."

I say I'm sorry; I forgot about the package. I go over and pick up the black and yellow checkered plastic bag. How do they expect old people to hold on to bags if they don't got any handles?

I hear a shout from over by the pay phones.

"Stop right there, and put that package down."

This old man comes right for me.

"You young hoods . . ."

But before he gets to me, the lady stops him. She tells her husband what a help I was, how kind I am.

I give him the bag, and he says he's sorry. Then, he thanks me.

I tell him it was nothing.

A voice comes over the intercom system and says the mall is closing in five minutes.

The man takes a wallet out of the breast pocket of his suit.

"Just a little something for helping out my wife."

I say there's no way I'm taking any money, and I push the bills away.

He thanks me again.

I walk to the exit.

I press down the metal bar and walk out through the large glass door. The parking lot is dark, and the night air is raw. I do up the copper snaps on the front of my jacket. Then, I turn up the collar.

I walk, my hands thrust deep into the front pockets of my jeans. I stop to stare at the dimly lit highway overpass. It is completely empty.

No, nothing's ever going on on a Wednesday night.

Untitled

by Rebecca Lee Horne

Sweet scented ladies
on a Southern porch.

Only air moving,
elegant fans force.

Cool iced tea,

Wet tendrils of hair.

Words are as water,
pouring from lips fair.

The onset of dusk

Softens the day.

Distress of the noon,
melts away.