

THE DIVINERS

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JENNIE MAE. You're like to work all the time, Mr. Showers.

SHOWERS. (*Softly, dismissing the idea.*) Shit.

JENNIE MAE. What?

SHOWERS. Little work never hurt nothin.

JENNIE MAE. I never heard you talk like you been to-day.

SHOWERS. Use those kind a words all the time when I'm thinkin.

JENNIE MAE. You think in swear words?

SHOWERS. I think worse things'n that.

JENNIE MAE. Is that why you give up on preachin?

SHOWERS. That ain't quite how I'd put it.

JENNIE MAE. Don't you believe in the Bible?

SHOWERS. I was raised on the Bible, Miss Layman. My Daddy's a preacher and his Daddy before and his Grandad and right down the line. Boy comes to be seventeen or eighteen there's no questions asked—hand him a Bible, turn him loose on the world. He'll make his way fine. Be an awful fine preacher. (*Slight pause. To himself:*) Be just like his Daddy I guess . . . (*He begins to preach as the memory builds:*) My Daddy . . . now he was a preacher. He had folks up on their feet and out a their seats and singin and stompin and life was just fine. Man took to a Bible like he was there just to shout it. Gonna tell everybody! Everybody bout the wonder and the miracle and the sweet love a Jesus! He'd say now you there, Miss Layman, don't you love that sweet Jesus? Don't you love him so much you could cry? Well sure you do! I said sure you do! I said come on up front here and tell us about it! Tell the whole Church how you love that sweet story! Bring em all up front! Let em all tell the story! No sin's a great sin cause all men are sinners! Yes, Ma'am! That's all men! I said all men! I said

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every last man is a sinner! (*He catches himself. Slight pause:*) Then there's me . . . I'm up front the Church and I'd shout somethin out and they'd "Amen!" right to me. I'd shout and they'd shout and then all a sudden . . . it's dead quiet. I mean they're lookin and waitin and all ready to holler. And there's me up there . . . thinkin! Plain forgot I was preachin.

JENNIE MAE. No—

SHOWERS. Yeah! Plum forgot where I was. Sometimes two or three minutes at once. I tell you, Miss Layman, I think too much.

JENNIE MAE. Think too much?

SHOWERS. I am all the time thinkin! And thinkin and preachin don't mix too well, Ma'am.

JENNIE MAE. Well I never read too much Bible, but you surely can fire it up, Mr. Showers.

SHOWERS. I'm thirty years old, I never done nothin else! All I'm good for is talkin, Miss Layman. Runnin on at the mouth, just jawin away . . .

JENNIE MAE. I think you talk real nice.

SHOWERS. The whole time I was preachin you know what I felt? Nothin.

JENNIE MAE. Mr. Showers—

SHOWERS. I felt nothin, you see?

JENNIE MAE. You still sound awful nice.

SHOWERS. Aw, I need to learn to shut up. (*Pause. Then quietly:*) Well, damn it.

JENNIE MAE. What's a matter?

SHOWERS. I just can't shut up! I guess you're just too nice to talk to.

JENNIE MAE. Now don't tease me.

SHOWERS. Miss Layman—

JENNIE MAE. You make me feel like an old maid when you call me "Miss Layman."

END  
HERE

START  
HERE