

A Ghost Story

By T-Bone Slim

Crime and chaos because of unemployment threaten the country; said A. F. Whitney, president of the Brotherhood of Trainmen.

A case of virtue is work deep—outside of that may I observe with due humility: crime and chaos no longer threaten—they function.

Masters are gone completely berserk, if you ask me.

When better wages are made, (to paraphrase the Buick deep-thinker), th I. W. W. will make them—In fact, as it is, that organization is credited with maintaining the present standard against terrific odds—were it otherwise, we would have to pay the bosses for letting us work—a sort of a bribe, you know, to keep us out of crime and chaos.

Work! blessed word.

Today I passed a public school at recess time. Children (most of 'em) were playing tag, white and colored—no color line was drawn and I got to wondering if this nation will be more colorful in years to come.

My prayer was answered: Only a few paces farther I passed an office. "Automobile Insurance," "Let us take care of your troubles," "Money to Loan" . . .

I glanced in and there on the "mourners' bench" sat an old lady, deathly pale. I figured: a long delayed square feed would do her no harm.

Color? I despair of ever seeing color in this nation, or in that little school-girl spending her recess play-time, O so carefully, shaking crumbs of something from an oh so small sack . . .

Somebody is to blame and that somebody has no shame.

Philadelphia's business, always conservative, cautious, is at a dead standstill—but so is New York, for that matter. Upon the waterfront saw three liners, Berkshire and a couple lesser evils and gang after gang of longshoremen waiting, waiting . . . what are they waiting for? For the heavens to open and dump some bread on their heads?

For the first time I was regarded suspiciously—as if I, poor me, could deprive the whole "mob" of their jobs. Why I wanted only one.

Such are the muchly heralded signs of prosperity. Yesterday saw first spring bird. Made up my mind the bird is demented—what the bird thought of me is not for me to say.

This morning I've got a date with a master, 8:30—visions of great wealth flood my soul.

He fails to show up.

There was great mourning in our camp until an ageing, working mechanic started broadcasting his woes . . . For 12 years he had worked in the place—week before last he was sent home for two days—last week he was turned back six times—this week, Monday, he is told to go home and, if he has a chance, grab another job.

He did succeed in landing another job, beginning tomorrow—that explains how I came to eat his lunch, one orange and three chicken sandwiches.

All signs of prosperity.