

Li'l Melvin



I'm afraid to lose my mother. She was afraid of loosing me. Does that define my life? Right. I'm no superman. I'm just a boy. Boy's have feelings too. But what am I, this twelve year old boy, supposed to do when my mom beats me all the time?

It's not that I see everything or watch everybody, because I don't. It's just that my mom makes me stay in the house a lot, even when the other kids in the neighborhood go outside to play-all the time, every day. My mom says it's dangerous outside, like she never goes out of the house herself. If it's dangerous for me, it should be just as dangerous for her, right?

Well, shit, if that's the case, I'd rather be out there then in here with her getting my butt kicked when she gets bored and feel like doing something adventurous. But it usually happens when she gets drunk. Sometimes she'll do it thinking I'm a burglar, instead of her twelve year old son. That's how drunk she gets.

One time, she came out of her bedroom when I was going in the bathroom after I woke up one night. As soon as I stepped out of the bathroom, my mom swung on me with a broom but I'd gotten use to how she be acting plus, I saw her come out of her bedroom just before I went to pee so, I ducked but she gave me an upper cut, snatched me up then told me, "Who you, lily nigga? You pay rent in this apartment you can stay. If you can't, get the fuck out," then went back in her bedroom and closed the door like that was normal, sadly, for me, that was normal but out in society it aint.

I either stay on the porch, which my mom don't consider outside, outside but outside of the apartment, or hanging out of my bedroom window; the two semi-safe zones for me, until she gets drunk and comes chasing me for something or other.

But that's how I see a lot of stuff like, one time, I was looking out of my window and I saw this lady about to get in this car and before she could get all the way in the car took off, dragging that ladies other leg like it was a tail pipe or something.

When my mom is in *her condition* and finds me on the porch, even though chances are I had just walked out there and she saw me, she would walk out there and ask me, "And who the hell are you, you li'l raggedy goat mouth bastard?"

When she catches me leaning out of my window, happy at least the other kids parents let them go outside and play, she'll say, "Oh, ya' li'l ass tryin 'a runaway, huh, you li'l bastard? Then she'll say, "Take ya" li'l ass out side and play with ya" li'l friends." But she don't mean *outside*. She means out on the porch.

I could never win for losing with her, especially when that *condition* comes along. When she's not in that condition, she swears up and down she hasn't seen me in years, which isn't that often. And she doesn't stay that way, not drunk, for long.

My one true getaway is when my grandma and grandpa stop by. They are funny and way different from my mom. Sometimes I wonder if my mom really is their daughter.

Either way, I like it when they come over. No, I love it when they stop by. I wish they could live with us or I could stay with them. They always buy me things, more than my mom has, but they have to hide it from her because she'll try to take whatever it is from me to buy her some beer. She even sent me to the store to buy her some beer a few times and they kicked me out every time, too.

Sometimes I'll forget and leave my gift lying out and when my mom sees them she thinks somebody dropped it off for her and think I opened them and yell at me, then say, "Boy, you got one more damn time to go in my stuff like this," shaking my gift at me, "And what you starin' at wit' ya' li'l black, nappy head ass? Gone outside somewhere outta my damn face." Only she means, get out of her face and go on the porch.

So, you can see why I love it when my grand's stop by because mostly they come to see me. But end up spending a couple of minutes talking to my mom, only out of courtesy.

My grand's used to be professional dancers, danced with James Brown and some other old groups. At least that's what they told me. That was like a hundred years ago but just slowed down not too long ago, which I don't care as long as they keep coming over to see me.

They still go out dancing every Tuesday and say's dancing keeps them feeling young. But it has to be something else to it, because they don't look like they getting' any younger to me and they aint even movin' all that fast no more either but it's cool. They're my cool grand's.

"Damn it, Harold," My grandma grand would say, because they was doin' a practice dance for me'n my mom before they go out, but she wasn't interested. She kept cutting her eyes over at me trying to see what they brought me, which I had a glow stick stuck down the back of my pants so she couldn't see it.

"Stop knockin' my damn wig crooked, will you? Damn, and you can't be slinging my ass all over the place like that no more. You gonna mess around and make me buss a hip bone or something. I aint no spring chicken no more, man..."

"See, boy, that's why you gotta get yourself a Cadillac," Pops said, "Get you a Cadillac Melvin because she aint never gone break and aint gone talk back neither."

I swear, as soon as my grand's left, my mom came after me and it couldn't've been for no other reason than because I was happy and she wanted to see what I had.

Either way, a loud fart came from behind me, just as I was pulling out that glow stick and ran, as I threw it in the other direction.

Stuff like that'll always run any kid outta the house. I raced from our fourth floor apartment on 361 Walnut Ave and ran half way down the block, took a quick right, cut across the church parking lot then climbed up on the low roof of the Catholic Church in the back.

Some of my friends; the ones I couldn't go out and play with, only at school which I couldn't be happier to attend, were already on the roof. It's a place we found comfort in for some reason. Even though we hated going to church.

One of the other kids asked me a stupid question; if I was ever an orphan.

"I got a momma and daddy, you fool," I told him, "But that don't mean I can't feel bad for the kids who don't."

"Randy, stop askin' stupid ass questions like that. "You a damn orphan yo'self," Andrew told Randy. "Ya'll come'er. Look what I found."

Randy was stupid. He always askin' stupid stuff and gossipin' like a girl. 'Always tellin' other people business, that's why I don't never tell him nothin'.

When I looked through the heavy leaves and tree branches to see what Andrew was talkin' about, I was scared at first but then, when I saw they couldn't see us, we all started pushin' each other aside to get a better look.

Just a hop, skip and jump away from where we were standing on the church roof was another apartment building. We was all outside hiding in the dark but what we was looking at was inside an apartment window, in the light, through a full view of an open window.

A lady was standing at her stove close to her kitchen window. Some times she would turn directly toward her window facing us and we couldn't be more happy because we could see her hair.

She was completely naked from her waist down. A man with a big fat stomach was sitting at the table right behind the lady. He wasn't wearing a shirt and one of his arms rested on the table. We couldn't see where his other one was, until he reached up and squeezed the lady's butt, which made us all giggle. We had to cover our mouth when we did so they wouldn't hear us.

The lady was pretty, even though we couldn't see her face at all. But we could tell she was wearing a orange shirt that only came down to her stomach. Boy, we wanted to stay there all night but we couldn't. I, at least, had to get back to my dungeon.

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