

An Invisible One

By Pete Clark

Tuesday morning, I made a list of needed items and headed out for Big Wally World on Smith Road near Quebec Street. At Wal-Mart I bought special food for our resident Royals, Ella and Harry, plus a couple of other items. I put my purchases in the car and walked around to get behind the wheel.

As I opened the driver's side door, I noticed a young woman walking toward me. I slid into the seat and left the door open and waited to see what game she was playing. She said her name was Jenny and she needed to get to Colfax. She paused and I waited to see how much money she would request. She asked for no money. She wanted a ride. I asked her where she wanted to go on Colfax. To Peoria was her answer. An alarm had gone off. I had a scary experience with a hitchhiker years ago, but my inner voice said, *You must do this* and I agreed to drive her to Colfax and Peoria.

When we were on Quebec Street, headed for the left turn onto 17th Avenue she began a monologue. She said she had been hanging out with some other Black People who were mean to her, especially the men. They all kept asking her for money and said those people and other Blacks called her racist. She had to get away from them. She was hungry and had no money. She couldn't get a job because prospective employers told her she didn't enunciate properly.

She said she avoids her family because they say they don't like the way she dresses and say she looks homely. She hasn't seen her husband in some time and her children have been taken from her. She has tried and failed, to get her children back. She was hungry and had no money.

She began talking about her drug use and medications. She said she does not like marijuana but she occasionally does cocaine and wants to quit, but it is hard to do. She is only taking medication for serotonin as she doesn't like mixing her psychiatric medicines. She said she feels better when she is not using a lot of prescription medications. She was hungry and had no money.

I was almost to Moline Street when I saw that Peoria was blocked off, so I turned onto Moline and pulled into a parking lot. She was still talking. She said people do not understand why she wants to be a concubine. I told her you do what you have to do, but sometime your best effort is not good enough and you must try again. She is an intelligent, young, slender, attractive black lady who is a lost soul, one of a vast multitude in this country, unable to find a place in the sun. They are the invisible ones. She had said she was hungry and broke, so I gave her money for food. If she didn't use the money for food, that's OK. It was the least I could do.