

Funeral

by Jake Barnes

After the funeral there was a luncheon in the church basement. I introduced people to my wife. I saw folks I hadn't seen in years. My cousin from Fargo, for instance. She had gotten fat.

One of the ladies who made the arrangements had asked me if we wanted a hot dish. It wasn't necessary, she said. Sandwiches would be fine. But people kind of expected a hot dish.

While people were eating, I table hopped. I schmoozed with a long lost cousin, a second-cousin actually. I had never met the man. He told me that my mother was a good Christian woman. Well, you can't hold that against her, I replied. He blinked. His Mrs. pursed her lips.

When we got back to our room at the motel, my wife gave me hell. That was an awful thing to say, she said. I told her I didn't think I had anything to apologize for.

Later I sat at a table writing out checks, one for the nursing home, one for the church. A thousand dollars each. I told my wife I bet I get a nice thank you letter from the nursing home and nothing from the church. Why is that? my wife asked. I said because the church would think it should be more.

