

The Good Old Days

by Jake Barnes

My mother—God rest her soul—told me that she remembered the first time she heard a radio. Her uncle had one in the attic of his house, a crystal set. You put on earphones to hear the broadcast. She said the first thing she heard was the music of a jazz band in Chicago. What a thrill that was!

What she didn't tell me was that her brother Carl got fried during an electrical storm when lightning traveled down the antenna. I got that information from her dotty but bright and always interesting sister, Florence. I was visiting one summer, and went out to the State Mental Hospital just outside of town to see her. I always liked Florence. She was nuts, but she was funny and honest.

Florence liked to pull your chain, however, and I'm not sure that what else she told me about the incident was true. She claimed that they didn't discover poor Carl for several days, and when did, they decided to leave the body where it was. He was pretty crisp, Florence said. He didn't need embalming.

