

Moses Reborn

by Tanya L. Schofield

Influenza Jones knew she was Moses. Reborn, of course, because the real Moses had been dead for longer than Influenza could remember. It didn't matter that she was a woman and Moses was a man, she knew what her body say and her body say she be Moses. She knew it as sure as she knew that you had to Machine Wash Tumble Dry your nightgowns but never your underdrawers. The other white-heads at the nursing home laughed at her when she told her truth, told her if she was Moses she should turn their weak tea into wine - which shows you what they knew, since that was Jesus' trick.

No, Moses was the one in the bible that spoke to God directly, not through a regular man in a black robe, like Father Hannaford who came to preach to them each Wednesday night before Bingo. Moses got the Word from God, and he tried to hand it to the people, but people is stubborn, Lordy, they is. Influenza Jones knew the pain of being the go-between, the middleman, the messenger. People not interested in listening to the Word Moses brought back were like to shoot the messenger, and that was the truth.

It was a marvel they managed to follow Moses as long as they did, Influenza thought. All he wanted to do was free them from their bondage and bring them to the light, and all they wanted to do was fuss about the heat and the walking and the hunger. She shook her head. People is stubborn, for sure. And now all of her people were wanting to fuss and carry on about the policy reforms that would change their way of life here in Centerville House - but they were too afraid to do anything.

Influenza Jones had given them the Word, for what it was worth. All of them, even the nurses that knock-knocked at her door in the morning to be sure she'd brushed and flossed her four remaining teeth after breakfast. She'd gotten the Word directly from God, and that was on a Tuesday, which was Father Hannaford's bowling night, so no one could say it was from him and not God. They didn't care to

listen, or believe her, and she guessed that's how Moses felt pretty much all of the time.

Well, come curfew, Influenza Jones was going to sneak right out of the Centerville House, and she was going to lead as many as would follow her. She was going to drift like a tumble weed, following the Word as far as it would take her, free from the House where no one listened because she was just an old woman with a foolish name. Her mama had given her the name because it sounded elegant, and God Himself had given her the Word, and not one of those people at the House had the right to throw stones.

Influenza Jones, with Moses right there in her head, waited for the lights to dim and the halls to quiet.

