Harry rode all night.

He thought of his Mattie all night.

He stopped at the end of the town.

He stopped at the end of the brook, which represented in his mind his journey was over.

Harry brought his horse to the brook to get water

He stooped down and put water in his canteen and peered in the darkness down the brook towards Mattie.

Just as in the darkness he could not see the brook, but only heard a distant sound, so was Mattie no longer in his heart.

She had freed him so he can live.

After all those years she was happy I found her to only be released by her love. Like a fish that was a most precious prize and once caught released to be free.

Harry stood and looked into the darkness and said, “Thank you my only true, for setting me free.”

Harry pulled his saddle from his horse and took his blanket and placed it on the ground.

He laid under the open sky, with his arm behind his head and thought about Mattie.

Where he laid his head that night was warmer than where Mattie was.

It was symbolic to him the life he hoped for could not be.

He remembered Mattie said, God is fixing it.

He turned over and said, “I hope her God is fixing her son. Her boy.”

Harry went to sleep and woke when the birds began to sing.

He got up and made coffee and sat for about an hour and saddle his horse and rode lighter, because the heavy burden of his heart was removed, thanks to his Mattie.

Once he crossed the town’s city limit to ride through it, he knew he was riding away from his past.

He had two days of riding ahead of him.

Now his thoughts of Mattie began to fade and the face of the woman who has waited for him for these years began to become more solid and not waving as the waves of the sea.

He began to hear he laughter of his three children.

He began to say, “Where have I been for these seven years that I could not remember my own children’s voices. Their laughter. Their cries.”

Harry said, “Now I can be a husband and a father. Thank you, my Mattie. Forever Harry.”

Harry was on a hill that lead to the big town he would ride through for a day and a half to get back to the capital.

He began to think on the young governor and his beautiful first lady and their three children.

Much like his family.

Harry smiled and sat tall in his saddle.

He rode with dignity but humility as he was going to his wife and children.

William started the fires around the perimeter of the house.

He went and got his quilts and made a mat by the fire.

He knocked on the door and entered the solemn house.

He looked into the bedroom and saw the little girl’s silhouette and he was peeping for Joshua.

Then he saw a mat on the floor with a sailboat next to it.

Wes was sitting in one of the chairs by the bed, but the other chair was empty.

He looked at Natalie and reached and touched her motionless face.

Natalie had no reaction.

She still had her bowl of oatmeal from that morning in her lap.

William saw it and looked around the room and saw the other bowls and cups.

He gathered all the dishes and cups and food.

He discarded the food and washed the dishes.

He could not think.

He put the dishes and the food away.

He prepared himself and went to sleep in the frozen cold of the night.

He felt he should be tortured in Joshua’s place.

He looked up to heaven but was too heavy in sorrow to speak to God or JESUS.

He could not understand why this family was going through so much and what about Shelia who lost her mind when she heard and saw her children burning.

William sat up and said, “Does she know Thomas killed her children. Why would he kill her children? It had to be money. How did Betsy and Joshua put that together. What to do about Thomas?”

William looked up to the dark night sky and laid down and cried for Joshua. The little child.

Joshua was physically asleep’

His eyes were moving under his closed eyelids.

Wes sat and watched him.

Wes was trying to think and write about his new patient.

The little girl tried to free her hand to reach for Joshua.

Wes was so disturbed and distraught he saw her but did not move.

He thought she is a child and would not understand this.

The little girl whispered, “Please Joshua Wes.”

Wes could not deny such a sweet baby anything.

He looked at her big brown eyes and lifted her sheet so her hand could be free.

Wes began to cry as he moved Joshua’s hand on a pillow to allow it to be in reach of the little girl.

The little girl whispered, “Wes love me.”

Wes thought that was odd and he thought she was talking to him and he said, “Yes I do.”

But before Wes responded the little girl laughed.

Wes was full of fear.

He did not know if Mattie had snapped, but she sounded good talking to Harry.

Wes thought, “She is in there planning her and Joshua’s life.”

Wes leaned forward and watched the little girl hold Joshua’s hand with tears in his heart for a little child whose mind has been taken away.

He thought Joshua, was one of the first who would run and hold her hand as she went through this ungodly hell. Because of Joshua’s love for her caused him to look beyond her pain and be there with her. He has, had a caring heart. Now he is a vegetable. She is now comforting him through his mental pain as he comforted her through her physical pain.

Natalie walked in

Wes turned to see who it was.

Natalie sat and watched the children all night.

Betsy had gone to their tent and went to bed.

She cried all night.

William heard a noise and lifted his head to hear. Then he recognized it was Betsy.

Betsy was thinking, “Why did I open my mouth? I thought Joshua was in the wagon. I did not know he was listening. Oh God..”

She was beating her chest, “It’s my fault. Let it fall on me. I have lived and have known some of lfe’s pleasure. But the baby hasn’t. Please restore his mind, Oh GOD. Don’t let this evil be upon him. I had planned for him to be with me and my children.”

Betsy sat up in her bed and was blowing her nose.

She thought, “How I can live with my baby not having a mind Oh GOD!”

Betsy sat in the bed and kicked and screamed all night long.

Dr. Obersteen and Emma left earlier.

He got their water and put it in the wagon.

He held his head down because he missed Joshua complaining about carrying the water.

He fell on the wagon and cried out for his son.

Dr. Obersteen drove the wagon back to their campsite.

Emma walked around the campsite all night.

Dr. Obersteen sat and had his hands folded under his chin.

He watched Emma all night.

Finally, he saw Emma slowing down ad by the time he jumped up, Emma had passed out.

He picked her up and carried her into their tent.

They slept to mid morning.

Their sleep was more of heavy burden of grief than of being tired.

Dr. Obersteen and Emma sleep was interrupted by Thomas yelling for them.

Dr. Obersteen and Emma fell out of the tent.

Thomas looked at them.

When the sleep was wearing off Emma, she realized it was Thomas and she looked around for Dr. Obersteen’s guns.

Thomas saw Emma running throughout their campsite looking for something.

He knew she was looking for something to use to hurt him.

He kept his eyes on her.

Dr. Obersteen said,”Thomas? What do you want?”

Thomas still peeping for Emma said,”Betsy was right. I set Shelia’s house on fire. I did not mean to kill her children. They were quiet and I did not know they were in the house. Shelia would always take her children with her. I set the house on fire from the back. When I set the house on fire. I throw the matches in the back yard to catch everything out there on fire. I ran from the back in time to see Shelia screaming and running to her house. I caught her. She went to get a job that day and wanted her children to rest and be surprised when she returned. Then I heard the children and saw them in windows screaming for their mother for Shelia.

We were ra out of town because the sheriff believed we set the house on fire, but could not prove it.

Shelia for three years lost her mind.”

Emma was in Mattie’s tent listening.

She was looking around and saying. “God, let me avenge the babies.”

She waked out of Mattie’s tent.

Thomas watched her.

Dr. Obersteen looked at Emma’s hands and said, “Thank You God.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Why did you do it Thomas?”

Thomas said, “Shelia’s land was worth a lot of money. I figured I could sell her land and payoff my house and land and let her and her children live in one of my houses.”

Emma walked over to Thomas with her fists balled up and yelled, “You killed Joshua yesterday. Another child. You prolicide.”

She ran and began to hit Thomas.

Thomas fell but got up and ran and Emma was running behind him.

Thomas was running and calling for help.

Frank and Glenda ran out of their tent.

Cate heard Thomas running and screaming and saw Emma running behind him.

Dr. Obersteen sat by the fire.

He said, “Father.”

The angel over the city, the scribe and the attendant watched Emma run behind Thomas.

JESUS said, “Let him go. He asked for forgiveness yesterday. He never thought about asking for forgiveness before, but because he will die soon I needed for someone to remind him of his sins and him to ask the Father to forgive him. He has confessed his sins to others. He will die soon from pneumonia.”

Emma just about had him.

The attendant blew at Emma and caused her to fall, without hurt to herself.

Thomas looked back and saw Emma crawling to get to him.

He thought, “Where is the doc?”

 Emma could not get up and run because the attendant had blown his breath to keep her down.

Emma yelled, “I’m going to kill you for what you did to Joshua.!!!!”

Cate ran to Emma to help her off the frozen ground.

Emma was beating on the ground and screaming “Joshua!!!”

Dr. Obersteen slightly turned his head to listen.

Thomas ran passed Harold.

Harold stood and did not know whether to run behind Thomas or run to the crawling Emma on the ground.

Nosey Frank and Glenda tipped out of their homesite onto the dirt road.

Harold ran to Emma, because she kept screaming “Joshua”.

Cate could not pull Emma up from the ground.

Harold ran to Emma and fell on his knees.

Cate said, “Help me get her up.”

They tried but the air the angel blew kept Emma down until the tired Thomas made it home.

Harold said, “Where is the doc?”

Cate was still yanking on Emma’s arm but finally sit on top of Emma.

Harold looked at an exhausted Cate and said, “You need to get up.”

Cate looked at Harold and said, “I am too damn tired to move.”

Emma just screaming and hitting the ground, “Joshua.”

Harold looked around and did not see anyone to come to Emma he said, “Cate, something really bad has happened to Joshua and Emma think Thomas caused it. I don’t see anyone coming to help her.”

Cate looked at Harold and her eyes filled with tears.

Harold and Cate finally were able to get the exhausted Emma off the ground.

Emma looked back and said, “Thomas I’m coming for you. I’m coming.”

She wobbled down the dirt road being carried by Harold and Cate.

Frank and Glenda did not say anything.

They heard “Joshua”.

Did not know what happened to Joshua.

They were afraid for Joshua.

Harold and Cate walked an exhausted Emma to her campsite.

Dr. Obersteen was seated and did not move.

Harold and Cate looked at each other and walked Emma over to the doctor.

He stood and Emma collapsed in his arms.

Dr. Obersteen took Emma to their tent and they stayed there until noon.

Harold and Cate sat by their fire and heated their bath water and made coffee for their.

Frank and Glenda stood in the dirt road by Joshua’s campsite and watched.

Harold and Cate decided to be brave and walk to the cute house.

Frank and Glenda decided to walk with them.

Dr. Obersteen wrapped himself and Emma in quilts.

He held her as tight as he could.

He felt her breath on his face and her tears that mingled with his tears.

They heard the four walking to the cute house.

They could not stop them.

They had the right to know about Joshua, Thomas and Shelia.

Emma said, “John. I repented to God. Why did this happen to Joshua.”

Emma burst out crying.

The four heard her screaming and stopped.

They did not know whether to continue or whether they should return home and mind their business.

Cate said, “I’m going. How much they helped me.”

Harold said, “Me too.”

Glenda and Frank did not say anything but continued to walk with Cate and Harold.”

Dr. Obersteen held Emma tight by her head and said, “Shu.”

Emma said, “It’s my fault. I have to take care of him.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “He’s our boy. We all ill take care of him.”

The angels were quiet.

The attendant walked the dirt road with Cate, Harold, Frank and Glenda.