

WHAT SO ★ PROUDLY ★ WE HAIL

The American Soul in Story, Speech, and Song

Food That Pleases, Food to Take Home

ANTHONY GROOMS

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This story by African American writer and educator, Anthony “Tony” Grooms (b. 1955), taken from his 1995 collection Trouble No More, is set during the days of the lunch counter sit-ins, in this case in Grooms’ hometown of Louisa, Virginia. It exposes the human complexities of the racial situation, this time mainly from the side of two young African American girls, who, inspired by a sermon from their minister, decide to go to a local lunch counter and “demand their rights.” And it raises questions about the strategy of nonviolent resistance, about the difficulty, for the resister, of purging anger and practicing agape, the love which, according to King, is the heart of the “power of nonviolence.”

Collecting all the evidence you can from the entire story, characterize Mary and Annie and explain, if you can, their differences. Where is courage in this story, and where love and compassion? What does Annie discover through her encounter with “the monster”? What is the connection between exercising your human rights and exercising your humanity or your love of neighbor? What should follow for race relations, as Annie discovers, that none of us can help the way we are born?

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