

*dreaming: My Father*

Connie Johnson

My father rarely visits me in my dreams  
 Preoccupied by Paradise, devoid though it may be  
 Of pig's feet & transistor radio baseball,  
 Or bread crumbs to feed the backyard pigeons  
 While dressed in a Sunday church suit.

Gnarled trees  
 Not tall enough to block the noonday sun  
 I feel disconnected, but old age has  
 Finally taught me how to pray;  
 I'm no man's daughter now

And I miss my father though you've  
 Been gone a long time, blues by Buddy Guy  
 Still making me feel a Southern connection,  
 And gospel music making me picture Sunday  
 Church suit deacons that look like you.

Random celebrities show up in my dreams;  
 I'm likelier to dream of a Dodgers shortstop  
 Than I am my own flesh & blood daddy from Tallulah, LA,  
 Collard greens & yams alongside those pig's feet,  
 You patting your left foot as you eat

Soulful as Buddy Guy's guitar.

There's a lot going on in Paradise  
 Leaving you no time to infiltrate my dreams  
 Or tell me stories about Tallulah:  
*"I wouldn't tell you I could never tell you about what  
 life was like way back then"*

Gentle Southern man  
 Who more than earned Paradise  
 You're busy, so busy & I want to  
 Dream of you smiling, remembering  
 Home runs on a transistor radio

Still soulful as Buddy Guy's guitar.

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**Connie Johnson** is a Los Angeles-based writer whose poetry has appeared in publications such as *San Pedro River Review*, *Cholla Needles*, *Rye Whiskey Group*, and *Writing In A Woman's Voice*. In 2023 she was twice-nominated for a Pushcart Prize. *Everything is Distant Now* (Blue Horse Press), her debut poetry collection, is available on Amazon; *In a Place of Dreams*, her digital album/chapbook, can be found at [www.jerryjazzmusician.com](http://www.jerryjazzmusician.com)