

DON. Don't worry about it. You should just take 'em.

BOB. I can't afford 'em.

DON. Don't worry about it.

BOB. You'll buy some for me?

DON. Do you need 'em?

BOB. Yeah.

DON. Well, then, I'll get you some. What do you think?

BOB. Thanks, Donny.

DON. It's for you own good. Don't thank me . . .

BOB. Okay.

DON. I just can't use you in here like a zombie.

BOB. I just went around the back.

DON. I don't care. Do you see? Do you see what I'm getting at? *(Pause.)*

BOB. Yeah. *(Pause.)*

DON. Well, we'll see.

BOB. I'm sorry, Donny.

DON. Well, we'll see. *(TEACHER appears in the doorway and enters the store.)* Good morning.

BOB. Morning, Teach. *(TEACHER walks around the store a bit in silence.)*

TEACH. Fuckin' Ruthie, fuckin' Ruthie, fuckin' Ruthie, fuckin' Ruthie, fuckin' Ruthie.

DON. What?

TEACH. Fuckin' Ruthie . . .

DON. . . . yeah?

TEACH. I come in to The Riverside to get a cup of coffee, right? I sit down at the table Grace and Ruthie.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. I'm gonna order just a cup of coffee.

DON. Right.

TEACH. So Grace and Ruthie's having breakfast, and

they're done. Plates . . . crusts of stuff all over . . . So we'll shoot the shit.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. Talk about the game . . .

DON. . . . yeah.

TEACH. . . . so on. Down I sit. "Hi," hi." I take a piece of toast off Grace's plate . . .

DON. . . . uh huh . . .

TEACH. . . . and she goes "Help Yourself." Help myself. I should help myself to half a piece of toast it's four slices for a quarter. I should have a nickel every time we're over at the game, I pop for coffee . . . cigarettes . . . a *sweetroll*, never say word. "Bobby, see who wants what." Huh? A fucking *roast-beef* sandwich. *(To BOBBY.)* Am I right? *(To DONNY.)* Ahh, shit. We're sitting down, how many times do I pick up the check? But—No!—because I never go and make a big *thing* out of it—it's no big thing—and haunt like "This one's on me" like some *bust-out* asshole, but I naturally assume that I'm with friends, and don't forget who's who when someone gets *behind* a half a yard or needs some help with—huh?—some fucking rent, or drops enormous piles of money at the track, or someone's *sick* or something . . .

DON. *(To BOB.)* This is what I'm talking about.

TEACH. Only—and I tell you this, Don. Only, and I'm not, I don't think, casting anything on anyone: from the mouth of a Southern bulldyke asshole in-grate of a vicious nowhere cunt can this trash come. *(To BOB.)* And I take nothing back, and I know you're close with them.

BOB. With Grace and Ruthie?

TEACH. Yes.

BOB. I like 'em.

TEACH. I have always treated everybody more than