

Contents of Divisions in Cormac McCarthy's *Outer Dark*

- 3** [italic] Three men as shadows, silhouettes, on foot, no speech, on a bluff, in sawgrass, sedge, above a river.
- 5-6** She (Rinthy) wakes him (her brother, Culla) from a nightmare: that Culla is singled-out, in the darkness of an endless eclipse, as the one at greatest fault.
- 6-9** A tinker is at their cabin, his wares, his "traps," Rinthy is "sick," Culla says (she is pregnant with his child); she asks after cocoa, a fire, and Culla is "never listening."
- 10-11** Rinthy begins contractions, Culla won't go for a midwife (she'd "tell").
- 11-11** Culla hews and brings wood for a fire, Rinthy hears "varmints" outside.
- 11-15** Rinthy's water breaks, Culla totes water to the cabin, Rinthy goes into labor, Culla delivers the boy, and as Rinthy sleeps Culla takes the child outside.
- 15-18** Culla abandons his child deep in the woods, but Culla becomes lost, and, after dark, and in a lightning storm, he finds that he's circled back to his unwanted child.
- 19-23** The tinker follows foot-tracks along a riverbank, loses them, finds them, and hears a child's cry, finds it, takes it back to his cart, walks on past a store at the crossroads, through the next town, to a woman who will find a nurse for it.
- 24-25** Culla gets back to the cabin, Rinthy is asleep, he takes an axe into the woods and hacks at the ground in the simulation of a burial, and tells Rinthy the child has died.
- 25-27** Culla cooks an egg for Rinthy, goes to the store, but, as it is a Sunday, it is closed.
- 27-28** They eat stale cornbread, he sees the child's face in the darkness as he lies down to sleep on the floor, in the morning he goes for water.
- 28-29** She drinks water, remarks on a dirty window, and Culla won't wash it, maybe she heard the tinker, Culla says no, he goes to the store, she says everyone is a stranger to her.
- 29-30** With another week of recovery, she can walk around in the cabin, sit in a chair, she leaks milk.
- 30-33** Rinthy begs Culla to say where the child is buried, he points her the way, she goes alone, looks at the earth and digs into it with her hands, and she recognizes that Culla had disturbed only a few inches of soil, it's not a grave, and he comes up, startles her, she screams, he howls at her that she's done wrong by proving his lie.
- 35** [italic] Three men, "blind with purpose," "at a slow jog" on foot through a farm lot, through a barn, startling guinea fowl and a hog, take a spade and brush-hook, and go on.
- 37-48** Raining, Culla wades through mud, gets to town, asks a man with a wagon if he needs help, buys cheese and crackers, asks the man again about work, who says check with the squire, who has Culla sharpen an axe to cut up a tree, and who works for a while, asks the

squire about a saw, comes back to the squire later, maybe for food, the squire prods him with questions, there is a commotion of hens and a hog beyond the barn, Culla receives half a dollar and supper.

48-50 Culla is gone, the squire's boots are gone, and, as it turns out, so is the brush-hook, and the squire rides off in a wagon with his shotgun.

50-50 Three men overtake the squire, who reaches for his shotgun.

**51** [italic] "They" (the three) see and change their course, through sedge-grass, to catch the squire in his wagon, and cut him down with his own brush-hook.

**53-57** Without concern for money or any provisions, Rinthy leaves the cabin, heads to town, leaves the road as Culla is heading back to the cabin, she goes on to the crossroads and the store, gets a drink of water, asks after the tinker (whom she says has the baby), finds that Culla has sold their father's shotgun to Buddy Sizemore.

57-59 Rinthy walks on, stops at a house, says Rinthy Holme, the boy of the family (the mother wonders, the father declares) is to bring wood.

60-61 Rinthy eats with a family (the man is "Luther").

61-65 A woman shows Rinthy to a room, Rinthy goes out to the pump to wash, the boy of the house talks to her, the man and woman sleep in the next bed.

65-72 The family eats breakfast, and, dressed in their Sunday clothes, get in their wagon (and sit on kitchen chairs) to go to town, the woman has a quilt to sell, by noon they are at the town.

72-74 Rinthy asks after the tinker at a store, in the street the boy asks if she wants to see a show, flashes his money at her, and she walks away from him.

75-76 Rinthy asks a second storekeeper about the tinker, the man says "Deitch," but she doesn't know a name or description, and leaves.

76-77 Still in town, Rinthy finds the family, and they offer her dinner.

77-77 The wagon goes back home in the dark.

**78-82** Culla is walking along in the road, a man sitting by a tree speaks, and Culla stops to talk to him, the man wants to trade boots, Culla declines, they walk together, drinking whiskey, Culla says he's looking for his sister (places: Johnson County, Cheatham), the man is a beehiver.

83-90 The two walk into a town, Culla asks the other if he knows where to ask about work, the other says at the store, maybe; the townspeople have gone over to the church, and after a while a wagon with three clay-marked coffins drives into town and stops, Culla looks the bodies over, one has been stripped of his suit, the crowd begins to eye Culla, who moves off, and then begins running, a group at a trot trailing him out of town, he loses them at dark he heads south.

90-91 On the road, Culla eats "early" field turnips, says he'll paint a barn roof.

91-94 Culla paints on the roof for three days, when four men come to catch him, and Culla runs, and is hit by shotgun pellets, and he runs into a woods.

**95** [italic] A bearded man with long black hair, in a black suit “that was small,” looks at squire Salter’s body in a wagon-bed, and says they’ll look for the killer, and by morning two millhands have been hung.

**97-116** Rinthy sleeps under a bridge, hears a horse with "labored breath" cross the bridge at night, at a pace, "hoofs exploding" with force on the bridge, she walks on, stops at a house to ask if they need house-help, but her breasts leak milk and she moves on without waiting for an answer, walks past two hanged men, eats some "small" field turnips, and a farmer calls to her, she talks of hunting the tinker, the man tells Rinthy to go to the house and stay for dinner, and she sees that his wife is worn out, churning many pounds of butter for sale in stores, has had five children and all are dead, and the man comes in, says to Rinthy he can’t eat butter, and he and his wife argue, she throws a spoon at him with stew in it, he throws at her a block of butter, and, as Rinthy leaves, he ruins all the butter, and Rinthy walks on, meets an old woman with a hoe (against snakes), who talks about her dead husband and his father, a squire, the woman offers Rinthy food, they talk about Rinthy’s lost child, about “varmints,” (Rinthy had walked through Well’s Station, where the two men were hung).

**117-127** Culla on the road in the woods, at a cabin, asks an old man for a drink of water, two hounds move away, the old man talks of a hurricane, of things going underground, that it’s fourteen miles to Preston Flats, that he had hunted geese, has a four-gauge shotgun, of his having spent his money on whores and whiskey, he talks about music, about snakes, of preachers and cures and no cures, of thinking too much and getting things more wrong, Culla says he’s hunting his sister (nineteen, towheaded, blue dress).

**129** [italic] Two hounds howl, three men on the old man’s porch, one in a too-small black suit, perhaps a minister, who disembowels the old man.

**131-146** Culla keeps walking through the woods, to Preston Flats, and through it in the night, walks on, to a turpentine camp, asks about work, a man says to ask Clark, Culla shaves at a pool in the woods, goes on, in town talks to a teamster, goes to Clark’s store, the clerk says wait, a man says to Culla he’s lost five children to cholera, Clark, in a white suit, drives up, the man (who’d lost children) has no butter and wants Clark to take two hanged men out of his tree, Clark says in a day or two, goes into his store, Culla follows, asks about work, Clark asks if he was in town last Wednesday, Culla says no, Clark tells Culla to take a pick and shovel and dig two graves, and Culla works until dark, sleeps by the road, hears something on the road, but it’s nothing, heads back to town, sees (now) three hanged men, one in a dirty white suit, Clark’s rig stands untethered in front of Clark’s store, Culla leaves town, runs.

**147-156** Rinthy is in a town, looking for a doctor, and a lawyer shows her the way, they talk about her having only a dollar for the doctor, about her having a baby, it rains, the doctor arrives, Rinthy talks about her milk, that the baby was born in March, six months ago, and the doctor doesn’t believe she still has milk, they talk more, he gives her salve, she says she lives nowhere, hunting her baby.

**157-183** Culla comes to a river’s ferry crossing, the river very high, a man on horseback comes up and the ferryman comes over to carry him, but the rider has left, a trick on the ferryman, Morgan (a town) is on the other side of the river, Clayton County comes up as a name, they talk about the rain raising the river, and another man on a horse arrives, so the ferry starts

back across as it becomes dark, and the river is more violent, and snaps the ferryman's cable, and now in the dark the horse comes free and races past Culla up and back on the deck, and on its third pass it crashes through the railing overboard, and now Culla is alone in the night on the ferry-barge as it spins downstream, and much later he sees a light on shore, a campfire with three men, and Culla throws them a line which they tie-off, one of the men on shore asks permission to shoot Culla, another of them says no, and Culla makes it to their fire, where two stand, one with "long arms dangling," one with a rifle, and Culla asks to dry himself at the fire, offers to tote wood, and the third man, bearded and in too-tight a suit, off to the edge of the light, says come up, they ask Culla if he wants to eat, and he tries their meat but cannot swallow it, and the bearded man tells Harmon to get some wood, and Culla again offers, but the man says "no," and remarks on Culla's (the squire's) boots, and the bearded man asks more about the horse, and says that one man of these three (the mute) has and needs no name, and that many would like to know his own name, and that "Harmon" is the third one's name, and that the bearded man likes to have Harmon keep the fire up, in case someone comes along, and the bearded man talks about Culla's boots again, this man whose own boots are split, his naked foot showing, and tells Culla to take off his boots, and Culla does, and the bearded man puts these on, and passes his boots to Harmon, who puts his own on the third man's feet, and takes those last ones to Culla, and (without details) the bearded man twice tells Harmon to leave Culla alone, and soon enough the three leave Culla at the fire.

**184-194** Seated by the road, Rinthy finds the tinker, who says he hasn't been in Johnson County for six or eight months, she says she wants her boy, he says he doesn't have him, and he says to her that after eight months there'd be quite a nursing fee, which she hasn't thought of, and she says she'd do anything to get him back, they talk more, and she walks following him and his cart all day, and at evening he turns off through sedge to a musty cabin, where he starts a fire, brings in some whiskey, a lantern, some food, they talk, he says he once saw a "manchild" abandoned in the woods, they argue, she wanting the child, he saying she doesn't deserve it, that she can't repay the blood he's spent on his life, he says Culla has a "sickness," says he will never give Rinthy the child, and as he leaves he says he will kill her if she follows him.

**195-208** Culla walks to a tenantless old cabin, builds a fire, sleeps, wakes to a man holding a shotgun on him, who takes Culla to a squire, who says Holme is guilty of trespass, and who fines him five dollars that he doesn't have, then orders ten days to work it off, and the man with the shotgun wants a few of Culla's work-days, but the squire says no, the squire feeds Culla breakfast, who asks if he can stay on after the ten days, and the squire looks at him and says no.

**209-211** Rinthy is in a farmhouse, cooks for a man, says little or none, the man crushes a moth attracted to his lamp's flame.

**211-212** Rinthy gets up in the night, dresses, and leaves the house; on the road a huge, emaciated horse, saddled but riderless, passes her.

**213-227** In the spring, Culla comes across a valley filled with a drove of hogs, a drover says they're headed to Charlestown, talks of mule footed hogs and the devil and the bible, offers Culla supper if he happens by their camp, and the hogs come to a cliff at the river and spook, and drovers run to head them off, and the hogs spook more, and the man who'd spoken to Culla is swept over the cliff with hogs, and the other drovers talk about Culla's lack of help

for the dead man, Vernon, and that Culla must have spooked the hogs, and a parson, or reverend, comes up, decides that Culla had run the hogs off, and (as in his nightmare, again) the crowd turns on Culla, decides to throw him over the cliff or to hang him, and the reverend walks with Holme, talks about faith, and Holme jumps the cliff into the river to escape.

**229** *[italic]* Along the road in a clearing the tinker comes on the embers of a fire, brings it back, has the child with him, spends the night at the fire, and wakens to three men, one with a rifle.

**231-236** Out of the woods, and through sedge, at a clearing Culla comes on the same three men he'd met at a campfire after the ferry collapse, the child is there with a healed burn, the tinker has been hung and is still hanging in a nearby tree, the bearded one talks of Culla finding them easily, Culla says he wasn't hunting them, the bearded one says the child must be Culla's, and talks about the child as a nothing from a nothing, and slits its throat, and the third of the group, the mute one, buries his face in the child's bloody throat.

**237-238** Rinthy comes on the same clearing, the same dead fire, and the child's whitened ribcage, the tinker's burned goods, the tinker still in a tree, and she sleeps there.

**238-238** The tinker in the tree, over time, by wind and seasons, falls bit by bit to earth.

**239-242** Some years later, Culla is greeted by a blind man he's passed-by on the road before, and who asks what Culla needs, that he would pray for it, Culla asks why he never prayed for his own eyes, and the man says he was once taken to a "healing preacher," among the lame and the blind, and that a man who "nobody knewed what was wrong with" "hollered out," and then the preacher went away, and Culla leaves the blind man and goes ahead on the road, which leads to an uncrossable swamp, so Culla backtracks, stands absolutely still at the roadside as the blind man passes, the man headed to the same swamp, and though the blind man smiles at Culla, and, lacking common humanness, Culla abandons the blind man, as he does not speak a warning.