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I'm pleased to be here, and I think I sense my billing correctly that I must first of all and foremost be an entertainer. I shall begin in a pedantic manner, however. Storytelling in Appalachia goes back as far as we have any record of Appalachian people, probably as far back as the stories that King Arthur's knights told around the Round Table. They were the same kind of Celtic people that we are, having been forced northward there along the border of Scotland, and the Scots wouldn't let them into the highlands, so they became the Celtic Fringe and carried their storytelling propensities, their stories, their ballads, their metaphorical traditions and their superstitions, many of which, no doubt, come out of Druidic religions, though we have no way documenting that, into northern Ireland, where they had a colonial status for about four or five generations, or up to six generations, changing their language patterns very little, and they were already speaking a language that was a hundred years out of style when they moved over from the border country to northern Ireland, beginning about the time Jamestown was being settled. It didn't change much while they were there, four or five generations, a hundred twenty to a hundred fifty years, and they brought that to America, and those who came into Appalachia brought it with them there. They came so rapidly, they were not assimilated. They got into Appalachia without having been assimilated, and thank God, they're not assimilated yet.

Those who did not go into Appalachia became middle-class Presbyterians, leaders in the region all the way around Appalachia, extending toward Canada through the Midwest. The Bible Belt follows their trail. They, however, lost contact with their Appalachian cousins, and for several generations, though they were interested in us, they were not interested in claiming kin with us. So we went our own way.

Now this folktale telling tradition in Appalachia is widespread and includes many subjects. We probably continue to tell the best rigged jokes in the world. They're elaborate, architectural. One will tell for twenty minutes as if he's not telling a joke. Suddenly, the boom is lowered and there is an explosion. We're very skillful at that. We also swap stories in periods of idleness. We get stranded on somebody's porch during a flood, you see. There's no moving on. Now if there happens to be an outsider among us, he is very much puzzled by our behavior. We know how to enjoy one another's company without saying a word. We can sit together all afternoon and not exchange a word if we've said all we have in the mind to say. An outsider can't understand that. He has to be talking if he's with other people, so that bothers folk. But such a situation does indeed lead to, or encourage, story-telling in the traditional way, and the stories might be old ghost stories dragged out of memory [and] snake stories. We have fabulous snake stories that are not peculiarly our own, but that have local adaptations, hunting stories, many, many hunting stories, and then traditional stories like those that Richard Chase collected in the area in which I work, the Jack Tales. And then Richard collected other stories that had nothing to do with Jack and published those as the Grandfather Stories, Grandfather Tales. Incidentally, one of those he collected from me, one of the longer ones, and I'm going to tell you that story in a few minutes.

I want to speak in dialect, and I don't want to talk much about the dialect. I grew up in eastern Kentucky. My grandmother knew these traditional stories to entertain children. My grandmother came along just after the Civil War in a community in which there were no schools. Throughout Appalachia and especially in Kentucky it wasn't safe to have schools up to thirty years after the Civil War because of the feuds. So many schools closed forever, and in some counties some schools did

not open again officially for twenty-five years. That meant, then, that we reverted to a folk culture. My grandmother came along during those years. She didn't go to school a day. To use a mountain metaphor, she didn't know B from bull's foot.

She was a very shrewd woman, though, and talked beautifully. Her speech was musical. The melody was commanding. She never paused, because the word came directly out. She was an illiterate person, and the word was close to the idea. There was no humming and hawing the way you college people do, "uh, uh, uh," while you think of what you want to say next. It was a beautiful stream of speech with her, but it was this same old-fashioned dialect, a hundred years older than Shakespeare. It's not correct to say that we're Elizabethan. The coasts of the Carolinas are Elizabethan. The Appalachian dialect is a hundred years earlier, closer to Chaucer. She was speaking that dialect beautifully, and of course I learned the dialect. I heard her stories. I grew up in a community that was untouched yet by the outside. I've tried to hold that dialect all the while I was getting a Ph.D. degree in English and studying speech and learning how to enunciate, so that no one would observe or discover my origins, for when I was coming along, it was a shame to be an Appalachian person, and the teachers let us know right away that our first job was to hide everything in us that suggested that we were Appalachian. We've changed now. We have more to be proud of than most people, really, especially our teachers generally. But they didn't know it, and we're just now discovering it.

The stories were not memorized. Storytellers don't memorize their stories. Instead, they hear the stories, they know them, the stories live for them, and if a child is going to hear a story, then the animals that might be the characters in that story will change their behavior in order to reflect for the child some problems he's having, so by identifying with the characters in the story, he can see how other creatures handle problems that he's dealing with. Now the wise old grandmother slips this in. The boy doesn't know what's happening, but he gets to see how the bear or the fox or whatever handled his story. Well, that might be enough to say it. The next time the grandma tells that story, however, she might not include it that time. But generally the main points of the story will be roughly the same, and no good storyteller will ever hold himself responsible for being factually accurate. Incidentally, we have a lot of those pleonasms in Appalachia. We do talk of "true facts," "tooth dentist" and the like.

Let's set a situation here, and let me tell you a story then, part of a story, that I do, when I try to talk about Appalachian dialect, which I'm not going to talk about tonight except probably to help you appreciate my story. If you do not know Appalachian dialect, let me give you three or four things that really differentiate us from the others, from the other dialects, about which there will be no questions. In the first place, we have a manner of speaking that is our own. Only we have it. We have a strongly "r" oriented speech, a very strong "r," and the "r," as you know, is formed against the hard palate, just behind the upper teeth. We try to bring all sounds toward the middle of the mouth. On the middle of the tongue, you know, lies the sound schwa, the "uh" that people always say. We try to reduce all vowels to that "uh" and in so doing make diphthongs of them, except the "ah," which is already there. We can't do anything with it. We do the same thing for back vowels, and we barely open our mouths, so that the words ooze out and drip off our chin. We do not sound final "g"s. Nobody should ever have done that. That was the biggest mistake that ever happened in the history of the English language. We still don't do it. Not that only, but

We retain the beautiful Middle English "a-" in front of "-ing" words, so that if we have a string of those "-ing" words separated with the "a-"s, the result is indeed musical, lilting, of excellent aesthetic quality, so that our speech is indeed beautiful, partly because we did things our own stubborn way.

Now to illustrate that a little bit, instead of saying “bat,” “hat,” and the like, as people normally do, we start off there but we bring it back to the schwa, and say “*bat, hat.*” With diphthong from standard vowel to central middle position here and in the following examples. [Note: words with dialectal pronunciation are italicized in this document, but not rendered phonetically.] *Bet*, “bet,” *hit* “hit,” and the like.

Then, real differentiations, number one, we have our own way of handling the diphthong that appears before “r” in such words as “hair” and “bear” and the like. Now in the Deep South, one hears *hair* or “hair,” *bear* and “bear,” [two different vowels, no post-vocalic “r”], and northerners think that’s awfully cute, and only about ten or thirteen million people say that. There are seventeen million Appalachian people. Only four million of them migrated and try to get back home every weekend if they can, but we say that our way, and our way is to hurry from the consonant directly toward the “r,” hurry as fast as we can. Because we love the “r,” we start looking for it as quickly as we can, and the result is that we say *hair, bear, fair.* Only we say that, and when people hear that, they want to laugh, and that’s curious. Thirteen million people are not wrong; they’re just different.

That is one differentiation of our speech. We say *hair, bear, fair.*” Only we say it. There are pockets of people elsewhere in the country that say it, but they were determined, their speech patterns were determined by regional Appalachian third settlers, you see. We were second settlers in Appalachia. Those ones are third settlers out of Appalachia. There are communities in Texas that are the same. The little girl that played Loretta Lynn in the *Coal Miner’s Daughter*, a professional actress. A professional actresses can’t say *hair* and *bear*, but she grew up in a Texas community in which that speech was common, so she didn’t have to learn to say it. She could say it anyway, and she did it beautifully.

Then we have our way of saying the diphthong “ou.” For us, it’s always a triphthong. Instead of saying “about the house,” we say *about the house.* You hear the three sounds? If there’s an “r” behind, we really get something. “Flower” becomes a *flower*, “sour” is *sour*, a “coward” is a *coward* unless the yogh out of the east of Virginia has crept in, as has happened in some of the Appalachian communities, in which case it would become a *coward*, because some old-timers in Appalachia still say *cyard* and *gyarden*, and they would say a *coward* or a *coward*. “Howard,” your brother’s name, would be *Howard*, and the like.

Now that might be enough to say about the speech. Now imagine, if you can (I did well with that, I took only three or four minutes for that. I sometimes take an hour.) Now imagine if you can an old woman, seventy-five years old, let’s say, or thereabouts, who grew up in Appalachia, who never traveled very far away from home, who went to school very little or not at all. If she went to school at all, it wasn’t long enough for her teachers to do her any damage, and her daughter has had to hurry off to town in her son-in-law’s half-ton truck to do a little shopping while he went to the bank and talked with the boys on the corner. They’ve left the four-year-old son with the grandma. In Appalachia, grandparents do not chastise grandchildren. That’s a part of the cultural tradition, unless they’re accepted to be raised by the grandparents. Then that’s different. But if they’re brought for a visit, they’re never chastised. Instead, they’re managed. Well, the grandma thinks the little boy is out playing in the back yard. He’s very quiet.

She goes to check on him, and she finds the little rascal sitting flat down on the wet sand beside the branch making a flutter mill in the branch. He’s already wet, and she’s afraid he’s going to catch his death of croup, and she knows she can’t scold him, and so she says to him, “Would you like to come

in and let grandma tell you a story?" Well now nobody can turn a story down. So he gets up and brushes the sand off his bottom and follows her in. She sits in her *favor-ite* rocking chair, I'm getting into the dialect now, her favorite rocking chair, and puts him by knee beside her, his backside's toward the fire, and tells him a story. Now it can be any kind of a story, but I'm going to tell one that you know, so you can make comparisons.

She says to him, while he's sitting there drying without knowing what's happening to him: Oncet they's an old sow that lived away back up and under a rock clift at the head of a holler, and she had three little pigs that was getting up right smart size. And one day the oldest of them there little pigs sankered up to his ma and his sister, "Ma," he says, "I been a-studying." (That means "considering.") "I allow hit's about time I was a-going out into the deep dark woods to find my fortunes." And his ma says to him, says, "Well, son, I been 'specting this here time to happen. I reckon a body's bount and compelt to do what he thinks he has to, but I want you to be awful careful when you get out there in them there deep, dark woods, 'cause I hear tell they's a old bad wolf a-romping up and down the length and breadth of this here land and country of ourn, and they ain't nothing in this long, wide world he'd rather do than to catch a fat, juicy little pig like you and eat him up. Now I want you to find you a pretty little level place some'eres, clear away the bresh and the briars and pull down all the vines, and make ye a good strong little house outen rocks and mud. And when you get everything fixed just to suit your notion, I want you to come back to see your poor old ma ever chance you get." Then she fixed him a little budget of grub [to] last him about three days, I reckon, piled him some house plunder in a drag sled, and he started out, a-swinging his little budget in one hand and a-pulling his drag sled with t'other'un. And agin he got around the first bend in the branch below that there rock clift, he just happened to look up on the side of the hill there, and standing up there ferninst a white oak tree in a little sunny spot was that old bad wolf. And his ears just pointed right straight up like that, and his eyes was all squinched up in little squizzles of light, and he was a-watering at the jaws, and his big long red tongue was a-hanging sigodlin' and acrost his breastbone, and he was a-coiling ["quilin'"] and a-uncoiling ["unquilin'"] his tail just like that. Well sir, that there little pig was scared and feared both. His eyeballs popped out on stems, his earpanns begin to rattle, his throat felt like hit had rocks in it, but he was right for light like. He says, "How do?" and that there old wolf says, "How do, little piggy. Whereabouts you going at this fine day?" And the little piggy says, "I'm aiming to go down into the deep dark woods to find my fortunes if I'm let alone. I allowed I'd find me a pretty little level place some'eres, clear away the bresh and the briars, and pull down all the vines and make me a good strong little house outen the rocks and the mud." And the old wolf says, "Oh no, little piggy, don't make you a house outen rocks and mud. Hit'd be too cold. Make you a house outen leaves and sticks. Hit'd be warm. Wouldn't take ye half as long."

Well, the little piggy started on, a-pulling his drag sled and a swinging his little budget of grub, and he got to thinking about what that there old wolf had said to him, and he allowed he was about half right. Well sir, he found a pretty little level place in the bend of a branch, and hit had trees a-growing in it, all kinds of trees, sycamore trees and buckeyes and oak trees, red oaks, white oaks, yellow oaks, black oaks, water oaks, and hit had chestnut trees and chinquapin trees, and hit had walnut trees, black walnuts and white walnuts ["warnut"] both, and he got to snouting around in the leaves in the mold, and he allowed they's enough mast there to winter a pig iffen he's careful. And so's then, he pulled down all the vines and tore away the bresh and the briars and fetched leaves and sticks and made himself a right pretty little house out of leaves and sticks, put him a bark roof on it, hung him a shetter on the door (in Appalachia, the door's the hole, what goes in it's the shetter). He used groundhog hide for hinges and put him a latch on the outside. Well that night, he made him a fire on the hearthstone ["hathstone"] and hit was a-roaring up the mouth of that there chimley, and he's a-setting there a-warming his hoofs on the good warm hathstone and a-eating the

last of that there grub his ma had fixed for him, when he heared somebody a-pecking on the door, and hit was the old wolf. And he says, "What do you have?" And the old wolf says, "Hit's me, little piggy. I was just passing along and I seed your good warm fire through the cracks. Hit's cold out here. Let me come in and warm a little while." And the little piggy says, "Huh-uh, I'm a-feared to." And the wolf says, "I can't stay long, little piggy, I have to hurry right on right away. Let me come in just for a little while." Little piggy says, "Huh-uh, I'm scared." And the wolf says, "Little piggy, if you don't let me come in, I'm aiming to huff and puff. I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in." And the little piggy says, "Huh-uh, I'm peert scared both [?]." And so's then that old wolf reared back on his hind quarters and begin to huff and puff, and he huffed and he puffed and he huffed and he puffed and he broke that there little old house all to flinterations, and he went in and eat up that little pig, and [he] never did get to go back to see his old ma are et [?] time.

You could finish the story, I suspect, if you cared to. This story my grandma told is a Jill story. It's like the Jack stories except in this case it's a girl ... with the hand of the prince. There is no love element for her at all. She, the, apparently a hangover of the Celtic woman who solved her own problems. Very curious story. Pol and Nance (Nance we say in Appalachia), and Muts Mag, Muts I believe must be an old dialect word that meant dirty, Muts Mag, and it begins like this, and this takes, you all have time, I guess, it takes about twenty minutes. Try in the dialect again.

Oncet they's a poor old widow woman that lived in a little old tumble-down house in the middle of her cabbage patch, and she had three girls living in the house with her, two of hern and one her second old man's daughter. Her girls was Pol and Nance (you know, of course, that in the Appalachian dialect, "was" is singular or plural, either, and "were" is subjunctive), Pol and Nance, and her old man's daughter was Muts Mag. Now Pol and Nance, they was awful proud girls. They didn't want to work in the cabbage patch because they didn't want to get their complexion sunburnt, and they wouldn't wash the dishes because they didn't want to get their skin roughed up on their hands, and they wouldn't pack out the ashes because they didn't want to get their fingernails dirty. They didn't do nothing much. About all they did was to sit and primp and fix one another, and poor old Muts Mag, she had to do everything. She packed in the water from the spring in the cedar buckets and she built the fire in the morning and cooked the meals and scoured the pots and washed the dishes and hoed the cabbages and gathered them and never did get to go nowhere. She had to stay at home and work while Pol and Nance traipsed up and down the roads. She never did have anything good to wear because everything she wore was handed down to her from Pol and Nance. Life was pretty hard for her. She didn't complain much, though. Well one day the poor old widow woman took sick and was like to die, and she lay down in her bed and called the girls to her bedside. And she says to Pol and Nance, says, "Now I'm aiming to give you'uns the cabbage patch and the little house." And then she looked at Muts Mag and retched down her apron pocket and pulled out an old case knife, the one handle broke, and said, "Muts Mag, I ain't got nary a thing in this long live world to give you 'cept this here old case knife, but always keep it in your apron pocket 'cause a body don't never know when a case knife might come in handy." And then she turned over and died. And they put nickels on her eyes and laid her out and called in the neighbors, and they made the coffin and buried her back on the back side of the cabbage patch betwixt her two old men. Soon as the funeralizing was over, Pol and Nance set in to eating up them there cabbages as fast as they could. And finally they wasn't nothing left except a little pot liquor in the bottom of the pot. And then they got to a-talking. And say, says, "Well I guess it's about time we was a-going on a journey to find our fortunes." They looked in the meal barrel, and they wasn't a dusting of meal in there. And they says to Muts Mag, says to her, "You run over to the neighbor's house and borrow a cup of meal. We want to have a johnny cake made. And then in the morning, you get up and make it and get us out early. We want to get a soon start." Muts Mag says, "Can I go too? "No, you can't go, you dirty thing. We'd be ashamed to have you along with us. Besides, you

got to stay here and look after the little house and take care of the cabbage patch." Well, Muts Mag, she went over to the next house and got a cup of meal and come back and got everything ready, and the next morning she got up so they could get a soon start and made them some johnny cakes. And they got out and sopped all the liquor out of the bottom of the pot and wropped their johnny cakes up in a towel, started on down the road, and Muts Mag says to them, "Now can I go too?" And they said, "no, you can't go. You have to stay here. You ain't got nothing to wear, and we'd be ashamed of you." She says, "But I want to go." "You can't," they says. Well, she just kept a-dingdonging [?] on them, and a-finally, they says to her, says, "Well, you can go, but you have to walk behind us a right smart piece. We don't want nobody to know that you're with us, and you can't have none of our Johnny cake. You have to run over there to the neighbor's house and borrow a cup of meal and make your own." Well, Muts Mag, she went over to the other house fast as she could, and Pol and Nance took off down the road. She hurried back and made herself a johnny cake and wropped it up in a towel, washed her feet, put on the cleanest dress she had, and took out after them. They was a-long gone, far out of sight when she started. Well, she walked fast as she could, [a] hour or two, and a-finally she seed them way on down the road there ahead of her. And she stepped up a little, tried to catch up with them, and they turned around and she could see them a-hanging their faces together in a whisper. And she knowed and reasoned they was something up. And so she walked on right down towards them, and of course one of them turned and seed old Muts Mag, and says, "They Lord 'a mercy, there that there thing comes right behind us" (incidentally, *they* there means "thou," see), "They Lord 'a mercy, there that there thing comes right behind us. What are we going to do with her?" The other'un says, "Let's kill her." First one says, "No, let's not kill her. Let's stop her up in that old stump over there acrost the road." So's then they thought that'd be what they'd do. Nobody'd ever find her in there. They'd put a flat rock on top of her. And so's when Muts Mag got right down ferninst them, they retched out and grabbed her and stopped her up in that old hollow stump, put a big flat rock on her, and went on. Well, Muts Mag begun to whoop and stave and make a lot of noise, but it didn't do no good. She couldn't lift the rock off. And a-finally she bethought herself of that old case knife in her apron pocket, and so's then she scrambled around till she could get her hand in her pocket, pulled the old case knife out, opened it up, and begun to carve the rotten wood on the inside of the stump, trying to cut her way out. Well, while she was busy a-doing that, a fox come along. He heard the scratch, scratch, scratching in there, and he says to her, says, "Who's in there?" She says, "me." He says, "Well, me who?" She says, "Me, Muts Mag." He says, "Well, what in the world are you doing in there, Muts Mag?" She says, "Why, Pol and Nance put me in here." He says, "Well, what'll you give me to let you out?" She says, "I'll take you to where they's fat on a goose's neck." Well the fox, he reared up on the stump and lifted the flat rock off with the end of his nose. Muts Mag hopped out, the happiest woman you ever saw in your life. She danced around there a little bit and took the fox on to where there's fat on a goose's neck and went on. Hit was a hour or two before she caught up with Pol and Nance again. She looked off down the road there and seed them. She hurried up to get with them again. One of them turned around and saw her, says to the other, "They Lord 'a mercy, there she is, right behind us again. What are we going to do?" The other'un says, "I says let's kill her." "No, let's not kill her. Let's put her in that old chop house acrost the road over there." And so Muts Mag got right down ferninst them and they grabbed her and shoved her in the old shop house, shut the door. Well, hit just had a latch on the outside, and they's no windows, and they's no way for her to get out. Well, they went on. Muts Mag begin to run from one wall to the other'un, to whoop and stave, to make the awfulest loud noise you ever heard, but [it] didn't do no good, and a-finally she bethought herself again to that old case knife. She retched down in her apron pocket and pulled it out and begin to carve and cut around the door facing about where she felt the latch was on the outside. The fox come along. He heard her in there again, and he says, "Who's in there?" She says, "Me." He says, "Well, me who?" She says, "Me, Muts Mag." He says, "Well, what in the world are you doing in there, Muts Mag?" She says, "Why, Pol and Nance throwed me in here." He says, "Well, what'll you give me to let you out?" "Well, I'll

take you to where there's fat on a goose's neck." And so's then he reared up and tipped the latch with the end of his nose. The door flew open, and Muts Mag walked out. She took him to where there's fat on another goose's neck and went on down the road. Now hit was a-getting away along in the evening (that means "afternoon"), almost dusty dark, and she looked out ahead of them, seed them off down the road there, and she caught up with them, and the one turned and saw her. "Well, so what are we going to do with her? There she is again." The other'un says, "I says let's kill her." The other'un says, "No, let's not kill her. I tell you what let's do with her. We ain't got no money, and hit's a-getting late in the day and we've got to stay all night some'eres but we can't pay our way. And we could say, we've got the best hired girl in seven counties, and she'll do all the work while we're here, but we'll have to let her walk a right smart piece behind us." So they decided they would do that, and they took off down the road, and Muts Mag a-trailing along after them about a quarter of a mile behind, and the first place they tried to get to stay all night, the woman says, "Well, we don't follow keeping nobody here, but the people who live at the next house keep people sometimes," and so's then they went on, and it was already after dark when they got there. And they come to this here little old gray log house a-standing at the mouth of a branch, and they could see smoke coming out the chimley, and they could see firelight through the cracks in the window, and they knowed somebody lived there. So they walked up ferninst the door and hollered, "Hello," and the door opened, and they could see this little old dried up woman with a big long black poke bonnet on outlined against the fire. And they says, "We're two ladies who've come along ways today. We're hot and tired and hungry, and we'd like to know what the chances might be for us to stay all night here. Now we ain't got no money, but we've got the best hired girl in seven counties, and she can pack the water from the spring or scour the pots and wash the dishes and do things like that." The little old woman says, "Why, we don't follow turning nobody away. You gals just come right on in." And so they went in and sat down by the fire and the little old woman dipped them up some stew from a big pot that was on the fireplace and brought them some buttermilk and cold cornbread, and while they was a-eating, Pol and Nance made out like they was ladies, and Muts Mag, she kept a-looking, and she knowed and reasoned that little old woman was a witch. And so's then she was awful careful. And after they'd eat, Muts Mag got busy cleaning up around the fireplace, a-scouring the pots and a-washing the dishes and a-packing in water from the spring and the like and got everything ready, and the little old woman says, "Now I guess you gals is tired," and said, "you just go up the ladder there agin the wall into the loft and get you a quilt and find you a place to lay down and sleep. My own three daughters are up there asleep already." Well, they went to scaling up the ladder beside the wall, found quilts and laid down. Muts Mag, she suspicioned something, so's then she found her a place in the straw beside a knothole. She could look down through the boards to see what was going on down there, and Pol and Nance went to snoring right away, and Muts Mag watched. Atter a bit, the door opened, and in come the ugliest old giant that you could ever imagine in all your born days, and he had a little head about as big as your fist, and he had to stoop way over to get through the door. And he come in and took a seat beside the little old table in the middle of the floor, and he says, "Old woman, is my supper ready?" She says, "Hush your mouth, you old fool, I've got you three little pullets up there in the loft, and you're going to make so much noise that you're going to scare them." She says, "Now I'm a-going to go down to the spring and get some more water, and while I'm gone, you wring their necks and have them ready, and I'll cook them when I get back, but you be careful, you bumbling old fool. Don't you wring the necks of my daughters. They're all wearing night caps." And so she took the cedar buckets and went off down toward the spring, and Muts Mag, she didn't lose no time. By the time she was out of the door, Muts Mag had grabbed off the nightcaps of the daughters and put them on Pol's head and Nance's head and her head, and she'd laid back down and was a-snoring like she was sound asleep. Well, that old giant went over there to the corner. He just had to step one foot on the first rung and he retched up in there with that great big hand. He's a-feeling around with that big thumb and big finger, and he come to a head that had a nightcap on. He passed it by. He went to the next head. It

didn't have any nightcap on it, so that big thumb and finger, he caught it by the goozle, drug it down through that scuttle hole, wrung its neck, and throwed it over agin the pot. And just about the time he'd wrung the neck of the third girl, the door opened and in come the little old witch woman with her buckets of water. She seed what he'd done. She was the maddest woman you ever heard tell of. She put them buckets down and grabbed a skillet and begin beating him around with that skillet. "You bumbling old fool," she says, "you've killed my three pretty daughters." Well, Muts Mag didn't lose no time. She stood up and ripped her quilt into three pieces, tied it together, bumped some boards offen the roof with her head, tied the quilt rope around the rafter, and they went scaling down, and by the time the commotion was over downstairs, they was long gone.

My time is about to run out. I'm two-thirds through the story. That might be enough. How many have ever heard it? How many have ever heard the story? How many know Pol and Nance and Muts Mag? One person.

Audience member: Not that one, but it's similar to the Jack stories.

CW: Yes, it's similar. Well, I'll just end it in one minute here out of courtesy to my follower who'll tell you probably even more interesting stories. At the end, Muts Mag has her three bushels of gold. The king has no son. She goes to work for the king. He has no son, so she doesn't get a prince, but she goes over into the next valley and makes her, with all that money, makes herself a fine house just like the king's. It's a big long white house with a double decker porch and with a chimley on either end of it, and the window faces are painted blue, and the doors are painted blue, just like the king's house, and the last time I was over that way, I axed about her. Folks was telling me that she's just getting along fine. Thank you a lot.