Lincoln Story

Possible Title - A Brand New Lincoln Story or A Lincoln Story not in Sandburg

Comedy and tragedy always went hand in hand with Lincoln. It dodged his footsteps from youth to death when at the last tragic moment when ~~the~~ tragedy sent a bullet into his frame he was smiling. It was they who forced him to see things as a whole, not in part. Tragedy slayed him and she always did - comedy came on to console him, so that smiles went along with his tears.

Those who saw life only in part whose companions were all pain or all jest cannot understand those that did. Neither friend nor enemy realized that he understood their point of view, that he understood what they were thinking and feeling. And so far as he could would give it their due. He made even the rebel his friend. There were not a few of them down in Kentucky that swore by him and until the end of their lives declared that if he had lived the brutal reconstruction that malice and vindictiveness forced on the South never would have taken place. Such an unreconstructed rebel was the Kentuckian Judge Fontaine Talbot Fox, the father of Fontain Fox who for so long contributed to the joy of our lives.

Judge Fox was no easy man to win over. When he died the Louisville papers spoke of him as the battling old boy who died after ninety years of tolerably plain speaking and life no less a

Digital Image, 200[illegible] The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

Among his friends in war time days that Judge Fox quarreled with and continued to love was Joshua Speed, a friend of Lincoln's. It was a rare friendship, that of Joshua Speed and Abraham Lincoln. It went down to the bottom of their souls. In those early years they shared everything - their love and sorrows - their doubts and faith. It is one of the few relations in Lincoln's life that we can be thoroughly thankful for, as he was. For Joshua Speed and the ~~hanging~~ Judge Fox were friends, and it may be that Joshua Speed had something to do with the Judge's repeated declaration that Lincoln was one of the few great men that America had produced.

At all events they began to discuss Lincoln and Joshua told him intimate things. Among them this story and as I said - a brand new story of Lincoln's, not even in Sandburg's War Years. The story takes you to ~~that~~ that whole dark four years of being President - 1862. I didn't see how things could be much worse. McClellan ~~refusing~~ with his highly polished army refusing to budge and snubing Lincoln unmercifully. Poor Mary Lincoln exasperating the country and particularly the humorless leaders of the war by giving a grand party - her party - not an official party. She had come to Washington to be queen of her house, ~~but~~ but darker than all for Abraham Lincoln was the illness of his boy Willie, more like himself than the others had been, he thought. A thoughtful and merry lad and while the party went on he lay dying. They would not let him alone even after the boy was dead and this is the story Judge Fox used to tell, as Joshua Speed told it to him

Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

in Abraham Lincoln's words.

(The pursuit of the would be postmaster had swarmed over the Capital.) The guardsfilled every vacant space in and around the White House, pursued him to the very door of his study. And this was going on while his boy lay dying, was going on even after his son's death. An energetic citizen of Michigan arrived at the White House the day after Willie died, and in spite of the guards thrust his way to his study door, making an outcry so the President came out to see what it was about. And this is what Speed told Judge Fox.

"Well, Josh, there he was and there was I. And I couldn't very well not have him in." (See letter)

Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library