In Mr Lincoln's town.

"What's the matter, Billy, something gone wrong? ~~Nobody to talk~~?" I had dropped into Billy Brown's drug store in the Public Square of Springfield hoping to find him free for what he liked as well as I did — a talk about Mr Lincoln. But the prospect was not ~~pleasing~~ hopeful. Billy plainly was cross. He put back the big glass jar from which he'd been measuring powders with a bang, he dusted off the scales with an angry flourish and when he rinsed his hands ~~at~~ it in the wash basin at the back of the store he did it with an impatient splash that sent the water flying and made him mutter something which sounded like "Gosh dang it."

But as I'd heard Billy [illegible] say apologetically more than once he "just couldn't stay mad," he didn't now. His face cleared with the drying of his hands and he came back to the front of the store, a welcoming if slightly sheepish smile on his face.

"Glad to see ye," he said. Come in. Take The Chair" - "The Chair" being the scared old Windsor in which as Billy never failed to tell a visitor of whom he approved, Mr Lincoln had "set-home" and lounged back in the 40's & 50's,

A'. Yes, sir, 2 wuz out of ~~business for a~~ ~~year~~
~~a all right now - & I tell you that~~
~~young fellow you see - & he ma~~
goin' 'round an' you ~~come~~ kum along
Been in here for a [illegible]
nine fellows [illegible] 'round [illegible]
bein' a failure - & he has to
admit - he's havin' a hard time -
had to give up a little business he'd
started - he had out - while that
he's got his trade, and he's
started his business in that
& nothin' can take that away.
nuthin that he's got a good trade
& he owns his home & he
ain't got any debts but what
he can work out - & here he
is ~~[illegible]~~

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~~[illegible]~~ when ~~[illegible]~~ what a hard time he'd had [illegible] & how he'd lost his courage & that a man whose nearly 40 ~~42~~ hadn't got any chance & the country goin' to the dogs - complainin' talkin' it up. Well I finally bust right out at 'er & I said

¶ "See here, Jim, you ought to be ashamed of yourself - you ~~talk~~ right in this town where A.L. lived & where his grave is - talkin' about givin' up at 40. Why you're the only man who ever ~~[illegible]~~ & had to start in - thought he'd lost everything - you ain't as old ~~as old~~ ~~[illegible]~~ as A.L. was when he thought that. What did he do? He did just

What you'd ~~do~~ expect me to do if you want a baby — He went to ~~work~~ [illegible] at ten years old What you got to do — went to help to be came out a bigger man than he'd ever been if he hadn't had all that trouble — Got out here to go get a job" —

"Well, you would soon found ~~out~~ ~~said he~~ said something about — not bein' any (A. L.) it don't nearly to me much difference — to the world ~~carpenter~~ if he didn't go to get some ~~trade~~ ~~training~~ carpenter work ~~another trade~~ right off anyway I'm goin' to give him. I'm blamed if he see any man ~~[illegible]~~ gone up at 40 in Mr Lincoln's town as I can help it."

"Believe that, Billy! That Mr Lincoln thinks ~~[illegible]~~ I would never have been the great man he ~~is~~ if it hadn't been for

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him comin' out in '49?"

"Beautiful—course I do, knew it—
know it—because I saw it—went
on right—under my eyes.
'Queer ain't it—a good lot o' men
'long about (40) fer one reason
or another find out suddint-like
real life ain't quite so easy as
quite so sure as they thought it—
'round the corner in & under the
things don't taste so good, seems
flat—sometimes it's one thing
& sometimes it's another & sometimes
it's several things comin' in a
heap. There's growin' old—curious
how a man will go on for 40 or 50
years, never thinkin' he can get
old. Sees everybody doin' it—losin'
their hair, gettin' stiff in the joints

8.

not gettin' any fun out of things but he
don't ~~think~~ say to himself that's me laughin' he
~~thinks~~ says at a buryin' that's me they're
puttin' in the grave there. Goes on
just as if he was different and then
one day he sees it. You'd be sur-
prised at the times men come in
here, lookin' ~~sorter~~ ~~sorter~~ scared 2
say surprised-like, 'Billy, I'm gettin'
old', 2 know what they're copin'
that—I'll say 'Well, there's somethin'
steel—will stop it' and 2 call: 'tis solid
just like they come in 2 say 'Billy
I've got the stummick ache'
funny and it's sorta pityful.
'Twant gettin' old that worried
Mr Lincoln—no sir I reckon he pretty
much allers felt old—no luck
everybody goin' back on him—not

the 2 room is a stummick ache

wantin' him any longer in office - settin' showin' him off the shelf. Yes sir there he wuz 40 years old. ~~when~~ I laid by in what he'd allers felt was the place he wanted to be. No mistake about it he was what you might call a natural politician. Liked politics better'n anything else - right - better'n he did law s'allers thought. Course he had to have a trade s' do them times law seemed to be ~~the~~ what you had to know if you ~~was~~ ~~[illegible]~~ wuz seekin' office - So he studied law but he was in politics before he took that up. Started almost as soon as he landed in old Sangamaw early in the 30s

I hear them historians sayin some-times that ~~he~~ it was Mary Lincoln who pushed him into ~~office~~ politics. Hardly — He was seekin office long before he ever saw her — Been at it ten years before he ever married her.

Easy for him to get elected in them days. People liked him and I tell you he was a big man almost from the first. From the time he piloted a steamboat down the Sangamon from up near here — first one I reckon the only one ever got anywhere near ~~this~~ any town — a pilot — for a steamboat them days looked ~~[illegible]~~ like a locomotive engineer ~~to a boy~~ does to one now-a-days. Then he went to war — Indian war — Captain

& that - made him popular & then he got - the Capitol for Springfield - at least he was one of them that - got - it - but evidently he seemed to get most credit - people was always talkin' about him - tellin' funny things he'd said - listenin' to his opinion - There wasn't any doubt - ~~people in Springfield~~ they did thought - a sight of Mr Lincoln & his party was always willin' to give him an office when it could - they sent him to Congress in ~~46~~ '47 - He was tickled to death about goin' & so was Mary Lincoln, & don't wonder

She'd been pretty poor ever since
she married the L.-couldn't have
a lot of things she'd been used
to goin' to Washington - just suited
her. Reckon she expected to make
quite a splurge down there. Thought
they'd make a lot of her because
she was a Kentucky Todd

"Well as I was sayin' ~~that~~ they went
down the fall of '47 - no man
ever do much in one term in
Congress 2 ~~[illegible]~~ session - Mr L
always said you couldn't do
nothin' till you learned 'still
your district does expect you
not to do anything to make
'em mad & your party expects
you to pl[illegible] after the ~~[illegible]~~
~~of [illegible] [illegible]~~

— you ought to seen Mr L. when he
went off — so smilin' and happy
standin' up straight — like he allers
did when things were goin' to suit
him ~~or~~ or when he'd got a big fight on
& had ~~it~~ his mind clear. I never
like to think of the difference ~~[illegible]~~ between
him then and the way he was
when he come back to stay after two years ago — Defeated — clean.

"What was the matter? Well you know
they didn't send him back to Congress
but want that. I reckon he didn't
expect that much fur he's smart. OVER

~~[illegible] they didn't [illegible] his [illegible] Democrats~~
~~Says Mr L. was a [illegible] — kinda [illegible]~~
~~[illegible] — no [illegible] Congress.~~
~~when he [illegible]~~

But he did think he'd get an office
from the government. He'd worked
hard ~~fer~~ to elect old Zach Taylor —
^mendin' made speeches up in New England —
~~[illegible]~~ out here — wrote letters — give all

a seen this District - was goin' Dimycrat
the Whigs - Mr Lincoln was a Whig - was
goin' to pieces out here. I reckon we
knew we'd elect - our man like he did
no 'twant not goin' back to Congress
but

over A

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his time to it - and I reckon he expected something - Mary L. did you ~~ever~~ better believe ~~seen of~~ ~~[illegible]~~ - ~~[illegible]~~ stuff I s'pose he nursed the ~~[illegible]~~ whole business of office gettin' - for himself & what was worse for his popularity - out there - for his friends. Didn't git anything to speak of fer any-body. They do say he could a been made governor out in Oregon but Oregon didn't look like much in the '40's & then Mary Lincoln never a one that - she havin' been East - once and seen Washington and New York and got it into her head that she'd git to Europe someday. Least ways that's what the women said.

What he wanted and tried hard to git was the Land Office down in Washington - that was a ~~a~~ wonderful good job - paid well. He wanted

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(nothing was he decided g ~~[illegible]~~

it and tried hard to get it – but ~~he~~

for himself ~~but~~ til after he'd tried to get it fixed – for one his friends ~~who wanted it~~. He did his best ~~for~~ ~~him~~ to get ~~it~~ it for this man & when he saw he couldn't he tried for himself – stood out.

~~Eighty~~ name was Edwards, and town (

Edwardsville

"Well, sir, when Edwards found out L. was tryin' to get that office he went around that road – ~~said he~~ sayin' L. was a traitor – that used to come in to L. of a good deal when ~~he~~ he come the office. ~~Everybody said he could & had it all the place – he kept so to tell he wouldn't make a truth until he saw Edwards had no chance~~. Talkin' in town one day ~~he~~ ~~said~~ – "I want that office myself –

OVER

what a ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ he didn't have a chattel

When there wasn't anybody around I asked
him about it =
over

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Edwards might hev it, and then I lost his friendship – ~~that~~ that's the worst thing there is, Billy, losin' a friend – ~~a~~ friends are the best part of a man's life & I couldn't stand it if I didn't know ~~I~~ what I did was all fair a' above board. Didn't I know it? – No sir, Mr Lincoln never in all the time I knew him would done a low-down thing like goin' back on a friend to get somethin' he wanted for himself and he didn't neither. But there was people believed he did – Glad enough to believe it – was a lot of Whigs. ~~Some of them was~~ Office seekers mad because he hadn't got 'em what they wanted. But ~~I wouldn't pay~~ wa'n't only 'cause he wa'n't ~~never. I was~~ bein' any great shakes at gettin' ~~people~~ offices – that soured

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people on him out here. ~~The~~ It was his way he went on in Congress about the Mexican war bein' wrong not bein' just and necessary' as the President was tryin' to git Congress to say it was. He didn't think so - wouldn't say so. Made speeches that were mighty unpopular out here with everybody. ~~for~~ you got to remember there were a lot of our boys down there fightin' - boys from Whig homes as well as Democratic ~~families~~ homes. In way in the ~~war~~ war our folks were gittin' wounded and killed and there wasn't anything to do but git things best we could - And here was Lincoln insistin' it was wrong - sorter pokin' fun at the President for gittin' us into it.

¶ Bein' a Democrat that made me mad. It was our war & we wasn't goin' to stand any Whig even if it was Mr (L) standin' up in Congress makin' fun of it. The he did. Seemed to me for a fact, he sorter did drive the President into a corner but I wouldn't say so then. People felt so strong about that it some of Mr L's best friends got scared at what he was doin'. Billy Herndon - that - was his law partner - tried to call him off. Herndon told me Mr Lincoln just stunned him when he answered.

"'What would you have me do? Skulk ~~be~~ the vote? ~~be if~~ lie when I vote? Well I won't do it and neither would you.'

"Well" said Herndon. He thinks he's right and when he thinks he's right you never can stop him, but he's splittin' the party and he's killin' him-self."

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and so he wuz and so he found out he got home. 'Stead of crowd of peop pushin' up to shake hands like t been used to. ~~He~~ lots of 'em kinda ~~as~~ turnin' off — ~~nobody~~ he wa'n't nearly like they expected to be. He seen it all as clear as day from the first — He wa'n't popular any longer like he used to be. He wuz beat & his party wuz beat & worse all he'd lost a lot of friends.

Young men in the party didn't ~~come to~~ ~~[illegible]~~ hang around askin' advice like they used to. ~~you~~ I reckon it looked to him a ~~cat~~ little mite as if the time had come when the youngsters he'd known wuz goin' ~~and~~ to try to edge him off the shelf. That's a puzzlin' ~~and~~ and a discouragin' thing for a man. ~~[illegible]~~ It's a good deal like discoverin' you're growin' old. Well, Mr L had that to face when he got back from Congress.

All comin' together as it did he wuz pretty blue. I went around quiet-like his head down, didn't come in here like he used to;

& when he did didn't tell so many stories ~~like he used to~~. Mr L's ~~[illegible]~~ got the blues boys used to say & the Democrats were tickled. I quit & I felt plumb bad seein' him like that.

I reckon he didn't get much help home either — Mary Lincoln had got it into her head she ought to be in Washington — she'd talked quite a bit about it — sort of set up

20 the missus said natural enough — she didn't like comin' back here any too well, didn't like bein' set aside any better than he did. & when she took it out on him at home sometimes. Always

very uncertain in her temper. But when she'd had a cross spell she allers did her best to make up for it - 'specially if was the children. Call 'em in next day - mebbe that - might - give 'em pop-corn. make 'em candy

Out of our way it got to be so everybody ~~[illegible]~~ kept out of the way when she had a tantrum. You couldn't help knowin' it. She wasn't one to speak low when she was mad. heard her said so you could ~~see~~ ~~way~~ clear down the street. They ~~so~~ did say she used to chase Mr Lincoln out of the house sometimes with a broomstick. I asked Ma about that - and she said: 'William

2 2 you
I dont want to tell you all these
things they say about Mrs Lincoln.
Taint right to spread 'em. They
make it harder for him if folks
were talkin. Of course
Mrs L's got a temper but devil.
you blame her too much. He
aint so easy ~~to live~~ for her to
live with. He's careless
about things.

(She wants things nice & wants him
proper. He dont know when things is nice
& when they aint — & he's too natural
to be proper & she understands it.
Them two allus fussin' at all kinds
& she dont like ruff raff around.

"His folks bothered Mrs Lincoln. No
wonder. Most of 'em want much accoun

see your folks are your folks and
Mr Lincoln was always for doin'
what he could - that is as much
as Mary Lincoln would let him -
Tom Lincoln - that's his father -
so I thought. They had a little
place over near Charlestown -
in Coles County - Mr L. used to go over
there when he could. Thought a
heap of his step-mother. Used
to help his step-mother - no use
to shiftless. But there was a
chance of doin' something for
~~the~~ some of the children. He'd
liked to take 'em in his house - put 'em
in ~~skool~~ school - let 'em keep around
the house but she wouldn't
hear to it - so they said

Them folks tell - they say he neglected
his father. didn't ask him over

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When he wuz married, didn't go to see him when he wuz dyin'. Well, they didn't want to rile Mary Lincoln that's all I can say. She'd just been havin' a baby when Tom Lincoln took his last sickness and she wuz had a baby Mrs Lincoln had to be awful - for weeks - wouldn't let him out of her sight - if she could help it - So the woman said. Not but what he wuz willin' to do all he could - awful tender-hearted and tickled to death every time he got a baby - they wuz [illegible] long-

a 2 ~~[illegible]~~ weeks the time he wuz more than usual careful not to git Mary Lincoln to fussin'

They'd lost a little feller a while before - went awful hard on her. seemed as if she couldn't git over it - seemed to me sometime when Ma told me how she was takin' on as if she thought she was only one concerned with it - every one feelin' bad - I reckon the only way Mr Lincoln helped was when he got in the minister and then two of em got her to jine the church. Mr Lincoln didn't jine, never did - but he took a pew & went steady after the little feller's death. Pew's still there. We put a plate ~~marker~~ on it. - Meant to drop in someday & see it.

Well you kin understand how all this made him gloomy. Party give back on him - losin' friends and her everlastin' naggin' and complainin' at home. He began to look bad—awful bad.

"Feelin' a little out of sorts ain't ye Mr Lincoln' I ~~sau~~ say to him one day in court when I couldn't keep still any longer.

"I aint sleepin' so good Billy' he said. I knew it. I'd heard one of the boys which been on the circuit with him not long before sayin' about the way he acted— said one night he waked up— you know in them old taverns them days they all slept together in one big room— well he waked up * and there was Mr Lincoln settin' up in bed mutterin' to himself, pretty soon he got up & set by the fire lookin' as if he would be very dead— Probably many. Lots of men goin' through a discouragin' spell

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such as he wuz havin' would be glad enuff to die. Easiest way out.

"He wuz havin' black night—~~lyin' a wake thinkin' of all sorts of things and they all seemin' a danged sight worse than anything could be~~. Curious how a man's mind jumps from one thing to another when he's lyin' awake ~~[illegible]~~ worryin'. Can't keep it settled on anything. If the Doc'll tell he's ~~[illegible]~~ sees beginnin' of signs of consumption or somethin'!—and then he goes to wonderin' what his wife will do—how she's goin' to get ~~on~~ along without any more he'll earn and then he remembers some money he ain't paid a twelve bill ever got far enuff ahead to pay it and he sees his children growin' up without the education he

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he meant to git 'em. and the boys turnin' out-bad & the girls Marryin' no-account men. And then he git to thinkin' how if he done this a-kind-done that everything would have been different and like as not he ~~wonder~~ ~~if~~ [illegible] ~~himself~~ ~~says~~ he git to pityin' himself and wonderin' how would be if he'd take somethin' and git out of ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ trouble once for all. I tell you things ~~[illegible]~~ look mighty queer and you ~~[illegible]~~ ~~things~~ at night when you can't sleep and you git to worryin'.

I reckon Mary Lincoln wasn't exactly soothin' when he got to worryin' about — now ~~man's~~ ma's different. She allus real understandin' ~~and~~ ~~apt to~~ allus suggestin' somethin' ~~suggest a way to git~~ she thinks.

[illegible] sleep. 29

sleep. "Count yourself to sleep William" she says to me the other night when I got to worryin'. Hump, I'd been tryin' that for an hour or more and every time I'd got ~~[illegible]~~ to about ten my 'd go my mind chasin' down some new kind of misery.

"Well some how Ma always smooths ~~[illegible]~~ me down ~~the~~ no matter what she says & I like to tease her — Ma's lots of fun. So what I'd ~~to be~~ do but begin to count out loud lots of my voice — 'one — two — three' — but before I got to ~~six~~ we was both laughin' & then next thing I knew it was mornin' I'd had a good ~~[illegible]~~ sleep.

But Mary Lincoln wasn't like Ma. When he wasn't sleepin' good like as not she'd scold him. Then very those who