

The Old Bad Man

BY

♦ Lizzie ♦

An Antebellum Slave Mammy



RETOLD BY

Arri ngton McCoy

ILLUSTRATED & EDITED BY

Elena Michel



Dedication

To the free souls laid to rest at the McCoy Slave Cemetery.
May you feel the Lord's peaceful embrace in his heavenly light.

Special Thanks

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission
The McCoy Family of Mecklenburg County
Volunteers at St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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PUBLISHED BY
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
for the **McCoy Slave Cemetery**

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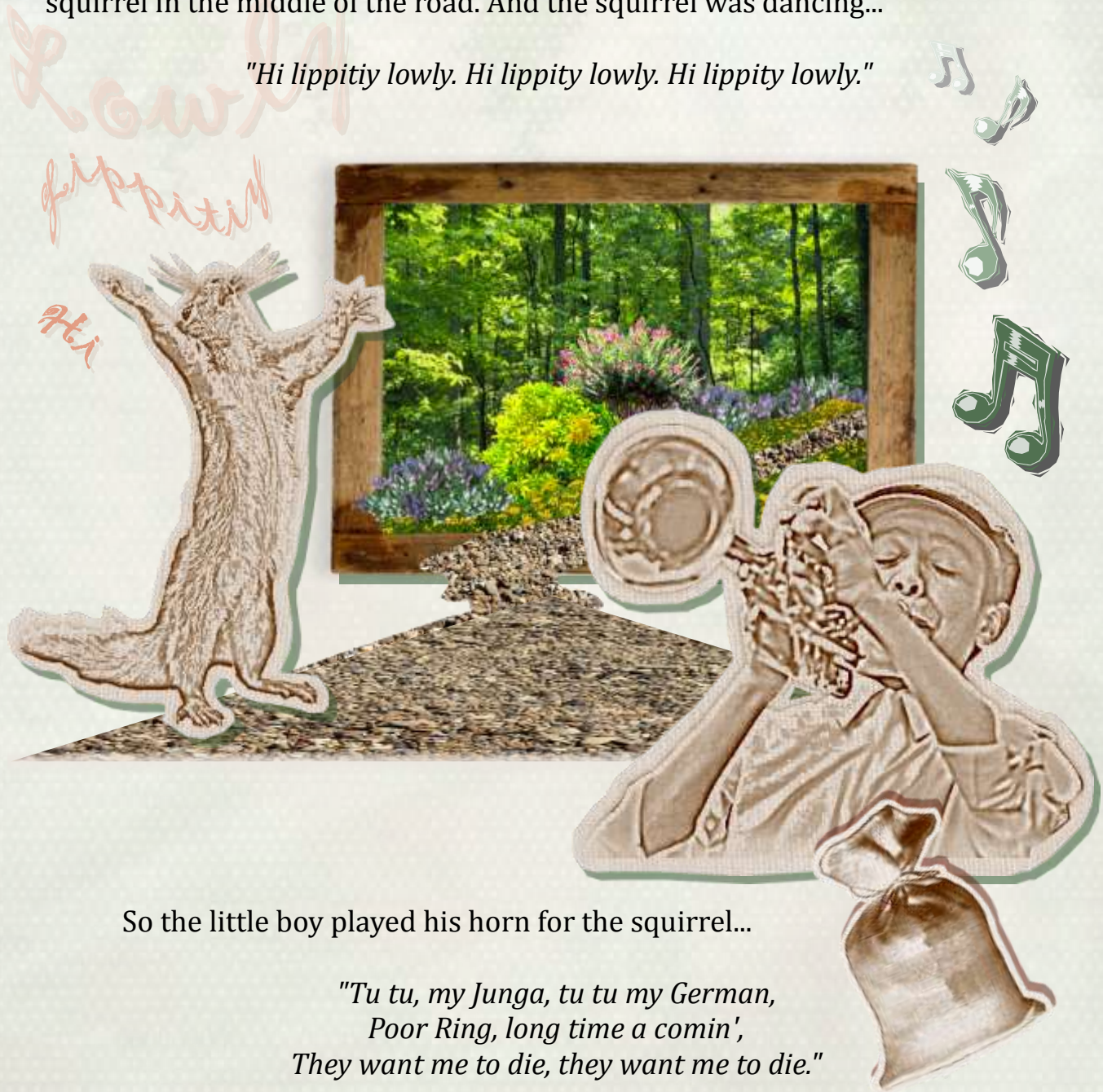


A little boy had three dogs: Junga, German, and Ring. He spent his days hunting and playing with the dogs. He loved them, and they loved him. Though the dogs might range far afield, the dogs would always come immediately to the boy when he played this song on his horn...

*"Tu tu, my Junga, tu tu my German,
Poor Ring, long time a comin',
They want me to die, they want me to die."*

One day the little boy's mother told him to take two bags of wheat to the mill to be ground. She told him to leave his dogs at home and to lock them in the smokehouse so they wouldn't follow him. The little boy felt bad about this because the dogs went with him where ever he went, but he was a good boy and did what his mother told him. He took the wheat and started off down the path through the woods to the mill. As he was walking along, he came upon a squirrel in the middle of the road. And the squirrel was dancing...

"Hi lippity lowly. Hi lippity lowly. Hi lippity lowly."



So the little boy played his horn for the squirrel...

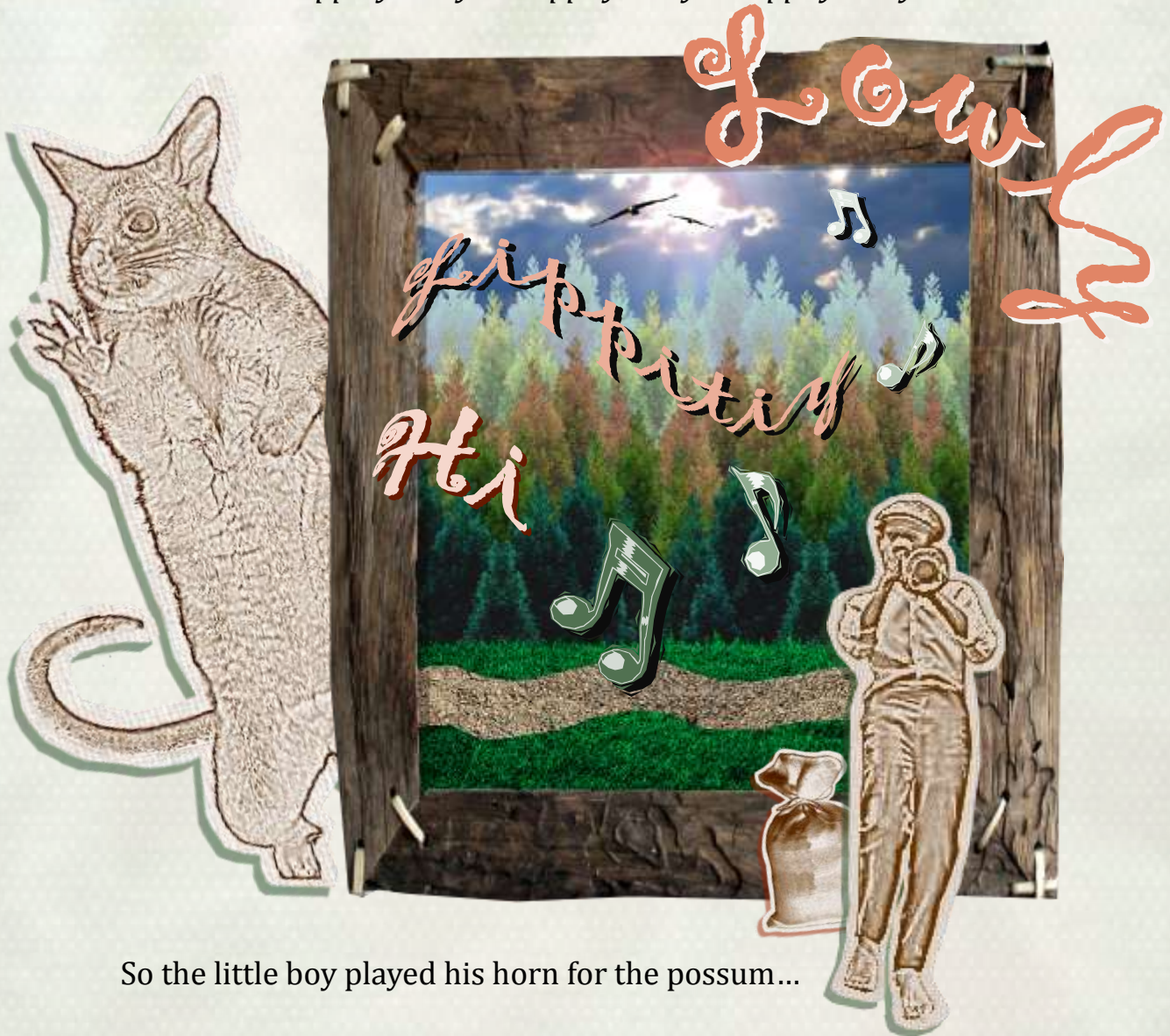
*"Tu tu, my Junga, tu tu my German,
Poor Ring, long time a comin',
They want me to die, they want me to die."*

When he finished playing, the squirrel said, " You play very well little boy, but there's worst yet to come."

Back at the farm, the dogs who had been sleeping on the dry dirt of the smokehouse floor woke up and started looking for a way out. They had never not run to the little boy whenever he played his horn.

Well, the little boy continued on down the road. At the next bend he came upon a possum dancing in the middle of the road...

"Hi lippitly lowly . Hi lippity lowly. Hi lippity lowly."



So the little boy played his horn for the possum...

*"Tu tu, my Junga, tu tu my German,
Poor Ring, long time a comin',
They want me to die, they want me to die."*

The possum said, "You play very well little boy, but the worst is yet to come."

The dogs could tell that the boy was farther away. They probed every crack looking for a way out of the smokehouse. The little boy continued down the road. Next, he came upon a coon. And the coon was dancing...

"Hi lippity lowly. Hi lippity lowly. Hi lippity lowly."

The little boy played his horn for the coon...

*"Tu tu, my Junga, tu tu my German,
Poor Ring, long time a comin',
They want me to die, they want me to die."*

The coon said, "You play very well little boy, but there's worse yet to come."



The dogs were becoming frantic. The little boy had never had to play three times before the dogs were at his side. The boy continued on till he came to a dark section where the road narrowed. A tall, dark figure of a man stood off to the side of the road in the shadows. When the little boy moved to go past, the figure stepped in and blocked his way. It was the Old Bad Man!

When the boy lifted his horn to his lips to play, the Old Bad Man grabbed him and carried him off through the woods under his arm. He carried him a long way, deep into the woods into a section where the boy and his dogs had never gone before. Finally, he came to a stone wall with a door in it. The Old Bad Man carried the boy through this door and locked it behind him. Then he went through another and another and another.... After passing through seven walls altogether, they came to the Old Bad Man's house. The Old Bad Man took the little boy to a room in the back of the house and chained his arms and legs to the wall. Human bones were scattered all around the room and a large stone sharpening wheel sat in the middle.



The Old Bad Man got out a big, long knife and started to sharpen it. As he spun the stone with the foot pedal, the little boy asked to have one wish granted before he died. Even the Old Bad Man couldn't deny his final wish. The little boy asked for seven times to pray a song to the heavens by blowing his horn, and this was his prayer:

*"Tu tu, my Junga, tu tu my German,
Poor Ring, long time a comin',
They want me to die, they want me to die."*



At this time, the dogs were positively frantic to get out and go to the little boy. They had begun diggin' and scratchin' at the floor of the old smokehouse.... And the little boy played again...

*"Tu tu, my Junga, tu tu my German,
Poor Ring, long time a comin',
They want me to die, they want me to die."*

By the time he had finished the second time a little light was showing through the hole in the smokehouse floor. By the time he had finished playing a third time, Junga's nose was sticking out from under the wall of the smokehouse, and they were diggin' and a scratchin'... The boy played a fourth time...

*"Tu tu, my Junga, tu tu my German,
Poor Ring, long time a comin',
They want me to die, they want me to die."*

And at that time the dogs broke out from under the smokehouse and ran to the woods on the trail of the little boy – first Junga, then German, then Ring. By the time they came to the place where the Old Bad Man had grabbed the little boy, he was starting to play for the sixth time...

*"Tu tu, my Junga, tu tu my German,
Poor Ring, long time a comin',
They want me to die, they want me to die."*

Back at the Old Bad Man's house the little boy lifted his horn and started to play for the last time...

"Tu tu my Junga, Tu tu my German..."

The Old Bad Man stopped sharpening his knife and looked at its gleaming edge and took a step towards the little boy who continued to play...

"Poor Ring, long time a comin'..."

The dogs had reached the walls surrounding the Old Bad Man's house. They didn't even slow down. They jumped over that first wall. They jumped over that second wall, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth and the seventh! They ran into the Old Bad Man's house, jumped on him, and ate him up!

And it took seven days and seven nights for the dogs to chew the chains off that little boy so they could go home.



To understand Lizzie's story, we must imagine life in Mecklenburg County, 120 years ago. The neighbors were miles away; thus, a child's closest friends were pets and siblings. There were no cars, few stores, and the food you ate was raised and prepared on the farm. There was no electricity or refrigeration. Meat was smoked in a smokehouse to prevent it from spoiling. People grew wheat to make their own bread. However, they couldn't turn wheat into flour; thus, wheat had to be brought to the mill.

McCoy Slave Cemetery

Huntersville, NC

Albert McCoy (1843-1925) established the McCoy Slave Cemetery in the 1840's and was used until the 1880's. It is thought that there are 25 to 50 plots. Like numbers, names are have been lost over time. A memorial on site mentions only three names: Charles, Jim, and Lizzie. Albert's son, Thomas (1873-1949), in the 1940's, established a perpetual trust to St. Mark's for the care and upkeep of the cemetery. We honor those buried at the McCoy Slave Cemetery as free souls resting in God's infinite peace. Learn more or schedule a free guided group tour: www.StMarksEpiscopalNC.org/mccoy-slave-cemetery.

St. Mark's Episcopal Proprietor & Publisher

St. Mark's Episcopal and our volunteers feel privileged to uphold the sanctity and memory of the McCoy Slave Cemetery. Our deepest regret is our inability to memorialize each individual life laid to rest. At least we have Lizzie's story. Like the cemetery, this book is available as a *free* digital download due to the efforts of impassioned volunteers. St. Mark's also has volunteer groups extending a hand into our community, the southeast, and abroad. Established in the 1880's, today we uphold our founders' desire to embrace and serve all. To learn more about us, please visit us at www.StMarksEpiscopalnc.org.

Arrington McCoy Story-re-teller

Arrington McCoy is the great-granddaughter of Thomas McCoy whose mammy was Lizzie. Arrington retold 'The Old Bad Man,' for a seventh grade assignment at Providence Day School in Charlotte, NC. Arrington is now a young woman whose adventures have taken her to Switzerland where she currently resides. Her immediate family continues to be a staple of the Huntersville community and St. Mark's.

Elena Michel Illustrator & Editor

Elena Michel is the voluntary Buildings and Grounds Chair at St. Mark's Episcopal Church whose duties include the McCoy Slave Cemetery. Elena came upon Lizzie's story whilst conducting research. God blessed her with a light bulb moment, and the rest is history. Elena used her talents as an architecture and graphic designer to illustrate, and she utilized her hobby as a writer to provide very little editing to Arrington McCoy's retelling. Please visit www.ElenaMichel.com to learn more about Elena and her sustainable architecture and graphic design practice.

Vocabulary

Coon

Shortening of the word raccoon.

Antebellum

The American South era during plantation prosperity due to legalized slavery (1800-1860).

Mammy

An American South nickname for a black nanny caring for white children.

Mill

A building where flour is ground into wheat using two large grinding stones.

Smokehouse

A shed-like building without windows and a dirt floor where meat was smoked to prevent spoiling.

Slave

A person who illegally or legally owns another person who is forced to work for no pay.

About Lizzie

Lizzie was a slave. Even after the Civil War she lived and worked on the McCoy Farm in North Mecklenburg County. She was a mammy to my great grandfather, Joseph B. McCoy, and his eleven brothers and sisters. She would entertain the children with stories and riddles. Most have been lost, but a few have been preserved by word of mouth. My father, Tom McCoy, told me these stories, and this is the first time one has been written down.

~ Arrington McCoy
7th Grade

Little is known about Lizzie's life: how she looked, birthdate, or favorite things. However, tending to eleven McCoy kids must have been busy; yet, we do not know if she and her husband (Jim) had children of their own. We know Lizzie was married as their names are engraved on the memorial at McCoy Slave Cemetery. We can be certain of one thing, she was very much beloved. Lizzie's stories, having been passed down for generations, are a testament to her tender nature and creative spirit.

~ Elena Michel

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To make a donation to the
McCoy Slave Cemetery, please visit:

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