

Louisville Again

Yoshi was almost mugged on a dark street in Louisville, and it was all my fault. We were staying at the historic Brown Hotel within short sight of the high-rise where we lived forty years ago. But on our first night in Louisville, we ventured out onto the main drag, Fourth Street, which stretches a mile to the riverfront. In our day, when we were young, the area around the Brown and the nearby *Louisville Courier-Journal* where I worked was upscale. Now it's a bit seedy, and the elite crowds gather mostly in the downtown blocks bounded by the Seelbach Hotel midway up Fourth and the new Galt House on the banks of the Ohio River. Just the reverse of the way it used to be. Nostalgic for my old haunts, I dragged Yoshi out of the bright lights and into dark streets in search of Teke's New York Bar, a hangout for *Courier-Journal* folks once upon a time. Teke's was not there anymore, of course, and Yoshi was complaining and annoying me. In my semi-drunken state, I turned and walked away, returning alone to the Brown just two blocks away, leaving Yoshi to follow or otherwise find her own way. I should have known better, even with liquor flowing through my veins. Yoshi, strangely, has a good sense of direction in a wilderness, much better than my own, but she doesn't know which way is up in a geometrical city environment. Without me, she promptly got lost. Two scruffy men with frizzy beards approached her and spoke to her. They were not blacks but white trash of some sort. She didn't understand what they were saying. Nobody else was around. The men, face to face with this frightened Asian woman, made it plain. "Money, money, money," they said. "I have no money," Yoshi replied, clutching her purse in dread. Thank God the men let her walk away unmolested. It could have been so much worse. Further along, a little black boy showed her the way to the Brown Hotel. With tears in her eyes, she told me the story. I have never been able to bear Yoshi's tears. I was so sorry that I had let her get into that dangerous situation, and I still am, always will be. She forgave me, as she always does, and the next night we dined safely at the Brown Hotel, in the English Grill with its framed portraits of champion thoroughbreds, just off the hotel's elegant lobby. We probably should have stayed at the Seelbach or at Galt House, in a better part of town, but the Brown resonates in my memories of Louisville, both before and after I married Yoshi. So that was it, this time, probably the last time.



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