

George Singleton

an excerpt of

I Feel Like Being Nice Today

EVEN with my limited interaction with Randall Minning, I knew that he was the kind of man who shouldn't drink bourbon and talk to strangers. I had arrived an hour earlier than my lab partners, and waited at a table for the rain to let up. Randall came in looking loaded for bureaucrats and sat down hard at Gus's Riverside Informal Tavern. Gus had just put out a new sign and said that over time he might change it to True Gus's Riverside Informal Tavern so it came out True G.R.I.T. At the time I couldn't know that Randall Minning brooded about his wife Donna back home, eight miles away on the other side of the Saluda. This was July, and it looked as though God finally decided to parole the drought that had left us a foot below normal yearly precipitation. Last year we went something like nineteen inches, and the year before that it was sixteen. It had rained, according to Gus, six inches in the last twelve hours.

Randall Minning had left his house, he mentioned right off coming through the door, with the ceiling dripping and his wife insistent that she could see an angel's image on the splotchy sheetrock. She didn't want him to go up and patch some faulty nailheads, seeing as a wet angel looking down had to be some kind of good luck. Randall Minning turned to us and said he didn't believe in angels. He believed in tripolymer sealant.