



Lela Corinne's Story

When

I was a little girl, one of our family traditions was to spend important holidays with my grandparents who lived first, in the country, and then, in a town about 100 miles from our home. My brother and I dearly loved my grandfather, whom we called Bobo. He always smelled of pipe smoke. He was completely bald, his ears stuck out on the sides of his head, and he had a snaggle-toothed grin. If I went to the store with him, he always bought me licorice. My brother and I used to fight over who got to sit by him at mealtime. When my grandparents lived in the country, sometimes we'd have quail, fried like chicken, with cream gravy. That was some good eating.

My grandmother, however, was a strange and silent woman. She sometimes wore dresses made of printed flour sacks that had been pieced together. She wore men's socks, which she rolled down to her ankles, a rag wrapped around her head, and perhaps strangest of all, she had a mustache. Sometimes, she played her old upright piano, which was slightly out of tune, but she hardly ever spoke. She sat in her chair and smoked roll-yer-owns in yellow papers she kept in her Prince Albert can. I think I was a little afraid of her, and my parents didn't go to great lengths to encourage my brother and me to interact with her.