

I MISS YOU

S O N D R A L E E

I CANNOT RECALL WHEN, OR HOW WE MET . . . BUT WHERE? It was at the Actors Studio!

Norris's height, 5 feet ten-and-a-half. Mine, 4 feet ten-and-a-half . . . We loved to exchange clothes! YES! Often we wore each others clothes! And somehow they always fit!

My Norris knew how to wear makeup. She knew all the models' secrets: eyeliner, you put it here, shading goes there, deepens and lengthens, shortens there. She knew all that stuff. She was very serious about her looks and appearance. Everything she did was committed and worked on with discipline (Norman?)

She always remembered what YOU liked. Such as my silver pig pin and the ceramic flying pig on the wall of my kitchen.

We were sitting on the carpeted floor of her little studio, which was not far from their family apartment on 142 Columbia Heights, which she kept for herself to paint in, read in, write in, escape to? All her chotskies were there and a wonderful small photo of Norman and her in the bathroom. One I always coveted. I had asked her to listen to what I hoped was the beginning of a book of my memoirs. Her response was attentive, and swiftly "cut to the chase" (she must have learned that from Norman). As time went by, we checked in with each other; she confessed to be writing a book as well. Not her memoir *A Ticket to the Circus*. That was later. We shared opinions. We trusted each other.

It was that down home quality she always had. The soft muted voice that still had Arkansas in it, although it could be firm as a fist to an editor: "Put it back like AH WROTE it!!!!!"

My Norris loved her juke box that Norman had bought and romanced her with. We would sing and dance to all those songs in their living room.

I always thought that Norris was a better playwright than Norman. Her dialogue was savvy and sexually knowledgeable, as it still is.

Her favorite colors—autumn auburns, olive greens. Most of her jewelry was from street vendors. Great-looking expensive shoes! Oh those shoes!!

Fair skin, so pale and smooth; sometimes just a little smudge of shading at the bottom of her nose. Baked great Apple Pie, like red wine.

Even when things were difficult when she became so very ill, she would show up, if it really meant something to you. She kept that family together. Often just looked like one of the kids! It was fun to sit at the table with them all.

Hey listen, my time must be up. We all must have many more intimate stories to share. Me for one, I could go on and on about Barbara or Norris or whatever we called her.

The colors of her life, they will always belong to us. My woman friend who I love so much, NORRIS CHURCH MAILER. I MISS YOU !!! SONDR