

The Lady Who Stopped the War  
Y York

"I can't see you. Boy, it's important you know that. They told me that my eyes trap eyes; people back up like they're afraid they're going to get sucked in. Their description, the guys with the key. My descriptions, when I bother to make them, are less fanciful. Bessie Smith trapped a person's eyes while she sang; he became hypnotized and walked onto the stage with her. I said he, but I don't know if it was a man or a woman. A hypnotized person leaves his sex and race behind; following a greater need. Like worship or love, love when it is like worship, not love of the usual self-serving, ego-slob, jealous-monster, needy kind. I was Bessie Smith a little while ago. On my cot, my cot, hard, but all of a sudden it didn't poke me, my arms were further from my body, my knees couldn't touch together, kept apart by big, soft thighs, and I thought I must be Bessie Smith now, and of course then it all made good sense. If I was a fat, black woman with the ability to make hearts soar, the ability to end wars, of course they would put me here. Hearts must not soar; a soaring heart is capable of original thought. What would you need that you would give your power into the eyes of a stranger? I understanding need. But I don't have any need. That's why I'm dangerous. That's why I'm here. You see that I'm here, whatever I say, whatever is said about me, you shouldn't forget that I'm here now; that says more than I can say or that they can say. Listen to me, not because I'm going to tell you the truth, how can a person do that? but because you listen to me, you see me here, they tell you something, and then you have three pieces, whereas you might normally have one. With three pieces you are much closer to the truth. I'm sorry if this puts you in danger, but I no longer see our danger as consequential. I no longer have a deep NEED for our safety. This has made me dangerous. Along with my current need.

I first came to their attention when I stopped the war. I needed to; my need was big, in spite of what I have already heard myself say. I was locked in a grey despair, trying to keep the news out, but it kept sneaking in, these horrible messages, coming up from the ground and I kept knowing things. One of the things I kept knowing was that I could end the war if I could think up the right words. There were words that would end it, if I would only think them. What? Was I a magician? Was I going to think up abracadabra suddenly? I was not. I had only ordinary words, and would only ever have them. What is mightier than the sword, anyway? Nothing. Nothing is. Then think up the words from the ordinary words you know, stupid! PEACE it together. Like you have to do with your three pieces; I had to do it with ordinary words.

Applesauce epistle appeasement, Baltimore BonBon Basket, corporal conjugation cooperation coffin, delinquent deliverance dolomite,

equestrian eliminator, Open sesame. Hocus Pocus. Voila.  
Rumpelstiltskin. Flavorful fortune fluoride flower flounce fabric  
phallus fiction fashion, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana. No.  
Serious Grave Caption Collaboration Conflict Peace? Platitude  
Cliche conundrum cabriolet, coffee, spices, bread. Bread. Bread.  
Bread  
Bread.

Spoon bread.

And it stopped. Generals pulled out before they even knew what  
they were doing. They had to leave, begone! And once they were  
gone, they had to find out what made them go, and that led them  
to me, and that put me here.

Because having ended the war, I wish now to end the rest of it.  
If I am here, blinded, a grey cloud filling my brain, no words  
can link up to end the rest of it. But what they didn't know,  
but what they cannot know, what they must not know, is that the  
words don't have to come from Bessie Smith. or Me. They can  
come from anybody. They can come from anybody. Anybody?"