

## Betty Lou's Lament

FRIDAY

You know me, Baby. I ain't one to complain. Hell, for what is it, going on twenty five years now, you got to admit, I'm pretty low maintenance. I don't think I ever back-talked you once, even back when you was running with that floozy. But, Honey, it's been awhile. I still need your touch ever now and then. I need to least sit in your lap, feel your arms around me, your fingers on my body. I don't do good just being window dressing. It don't have to be nothing fancy. I know you got the shakes. Hell, if you didn't, we'd probably both be sitting on easy street right now. If you would just give me a little squeeze, a little tickle once in a while, I'd be happy as a pig in shit.

It don't have to be like the old days. I don't even have no desire to go back there, going out every night to a different club, turning heads and shuttin' up the crowds. Those were some days though, coming home in the wee hours and raising all kinds of Billy H. Hell 'til the sun come up, keeping the neighbors awake. But I don't miss that. Sometimes it was too much. I got the scars to prove it, and not just the ones you can see. Baby, I'm tired too, but I ain't pushing up the little daisies. I still got needs, you know.

Seems like with you and me it's always been too much or too little. Back when you was taking on the world it was like trying to get ahold of a tornado's tail. I was really kinda glad when you hooked up with Rachel. She was what you needed back then, with her slim blond body and that electric personality. Smooth talking, she was, and that firm round ass that just seemed to mold to your lap. It didn't bother me none ,cause I knew when you finally came home, when you

finally slept, you would wake up next to me. Even if she was there too, I'm the one you spent your quiet mornings with. I'm the one you would sit on the porch with and share your secrets.

Rachel could spend all day in bed with the covers pulled plumb up over her head. She go out acting all wild at night with you, turning all them fool's heads. Didn't make me no mind. I knew who you really were. I still do. I know you're scared now. The palsy done took your livelihood an' it's getting hard for you. I know that. I want to soothe you and let you know it don't matter to me. I can't be no help to you if you won't even touch me. An poor ole Rachel, she lives here like an old maid. She don't even share our room anymore. I can't figure why she even stays on.

Baby, I don't want to make you sad or piss you off. I just want you to know that life ain't over, least not yet.

## SUNDAY

I seen that fire in your eyes yesterday. I hadn't seen that in a while, you stalking 'round me like an old coyote hunting something. I was afraid you was gonna pick me up and start thrashin' on me an howling like you used to do when you and Rachel would come in late and you was blind drunk. She'd go to bed but I knew you couldn't sleep. You had to relive your little victories. 'Cept you would get rough, sometimes too rough and I'd get hurt. Never broke nothing though. It was okay, Baby. It's just who we are. You didn't touch me yesterday, though. Instead you went in the dresser drawer where we keep our mementoes, all the stories and songs we made up together. When you yanked out the drawer with both hands and emptied it on the bed you took me by surprise. The look in your eyes scared me. I didn't know if you was gonna cry or set it aflame. Then you just picked up each sheet and read it, trying hard as you could to steady your hands. Still each one fluttered like some elm leaf on a fall wind 'til it broke loose and you picked up

another one. When you had gone through every one I seen you get up slower than ever before. You seemed so tired. When you got up it weren't just your hands that trembled. It was like the palsy had taken over your whole damn self. That's when I really wanted you to touch me. I know I could help you get through this and I know, if the tables was turned, you'd do it for me. Instead, you just give me this strange look and leave.

Now you're back. I see that look you get, all glazed over like maybe you been hitting the sauce some. But you're smiling real pretty and lookin' at me like I was all glossy new.

"I have a surprise for you," you say, and lay me on the bed. Damned if I don't almost start vibrating on my own. Then you slip off the bed and go get Rachel and lay her on the bed beside me. This is a little strange, I'm thinkin', but you're smiling an' I'm getting touched so I'm cool with it, for now.

And now you're undressing us both, each one a little at a time. When you get us both buck-naked is when you break out the soft cloth. Head to toe you caress our bodies. I don't know about Rachel but I'm loving this, just tingling all over. Then, as if this wasn't treat enough, you slip your hand into that little bag you brought home. Low and behold, you pull out two packs of bronze wound D'addario light gauge strings, better than Dean Markley, way better than Black Diamonds. You plan to dress us up to the nines. It takes a while to get us both dolled up and tuned just the way you want. I know it's fixin' to get good now. Ole Rachel is gonna have to lay there on the bed admiring her fine self 'cause you gonna take me on your lap and do a little finger-pickin'. That's real sweet, Baby. It feels real good but, tell you what, why don't you strap me on and give me a few good strokes, even slap me a little if you need to? Let's dance our asses off - all through the house!

