

Florence

by Jim Gold

Florence turned her head toward Fred. Her blue eyes burned into his sockets. “Fred,” she said, “you know my struggle. After I read *Paradise Lost*, I decided to battle God for control of the Earth. Today I am still fighting. It’s tough. God is everywhere, and I am nowhere. This fight may take my whole life.”

Fred shrugged. “Who am I to question God?” he asked. “Why don’t you go back to Jamie’s Meat Market? Being a butcher made you happy. It gave you a feeling of fulfillment. What happened? Did it become just another job?”

“I still *like* butchering. But I wanted to go beyond cows, sheep, pigs, and chickens. I wanted to expand big time. That’s why I took such a low-paying job with Satan, Inc. They swear they’ll put God out of business in five years. They’ve got fourteen branches in the city already and expect to open in the suburbs next year.”

“Fine job for a young woman,” Fred mused.

She agreed. “I want to be president some day.”

He looked concerned. “I hope you’ll be happy. Such high expectations can lead to lots of frustration.”

“I don’t expect to fail,” she assured him.

from Carlos the Cloud

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