

Big Mama's Home

by Evon Roberts



As a little girl, I enjoyed going next door to Big Mama's house. During the winter, her home had the aroma of freshly baked sweet potatoes. She would take the potatoes from the coals of her pot-bellied stove. My siblings and I would cut open the sweet potatoes, add butter, sugar and eat until we were filled. Uhhmm, delicious!

One autumn evening, as my three younger brothers and I were playing in the back room, the front door flew open. People crowded into our living room with urgency. What was going on? They were carrying Big Mama to the front room. The front room was the one special room in our home designated for prayer. My parents would only let the twelve children enter that room for family devotions or special prayer meetings. Now people were escorting Big Mama to that same room.

"What's going on?" I curiously asked my eleven-year-old brother.

"I don't know. I think they said Big Mama is not feeling well," he responded.

Prayer warriors were marching into the room. I could hear them praying and calling out to God for His mercy. They had anointed Big Mama and were quoting the scripture "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD" from Psalm 118:17.

I heard someone run from the room. It was a lady sobbing. She said, "Your Big Mama is dead. Oh, Evangelist Carrie is gone to her new home."

My eyes filled with tears, for I couldn't believe it. Big Mama's house was next door. What was she talking about by saying Big Mama has gone to her new home? I was young and did not understand, for this was my first time seeing a loved one die.

"Pray! Pray!" she said. Soon even we small children were praying. My Dad and Mom stayed in the room and cried out to God all night even after Big Mama's eyes had rolled back in her head and her skin had turned cold. They would not give up but stood on God's promises.

After many hours of being in the room praying over her cold earthly flesh, something happened. Big Mama sneezed. Warmth entered her body, and she opened her

eyes. God had restored life in her body!

One morning in November, my sister, Alfreda, called from California. She wanted to see how Big Mama was getting along.

“When you hear of my home-going, don’t worry about me,” Big Mama sang into the phone. I thought to myself, she doesn’t have to walk far to go to her home, for Big Mama’s house is less than 50 steps from our back door.

Many nights we banged on her door. “Big Mama, let us in!” She would open the door as we raced into her cozy home to spend the night. In the morning, we would trot back to our house to get ready for school. Oh, how we loved going to Big Mama’s home.

Late one November evening, Big Mama was sitting in the living room talking to my parents. “The next time I leave here, do not pray me back. What God showed me on the other side is so glorious and beautiful that I cannot put it in mere words. For eyes have not seen nor ears heard what the Father has in store for them that love him, that’s scripture,” she said, staring at something in the room.

In December 1980, I did not shed a tear as I had done before. Yes, I will miss the quilts, scarves, and pillbox hats that she so often made and sold. I will still salivate when I think of her sweet potato pies and banana pudding. I smile as I hear her voice singing the old spirituals in her room. I will miss walking to the store to purchase a RC Cola for her, for she always let me keep the change. When I see the many people she prayed for, or took dinners to, and helped, I say a prayer. Tears swell up in my eyes, and my throat gets tight just thinking about her. I will not cry, for I know that finally Big Mama’s home.