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### Red Tomatoes

Jackie Sanders  
*Trinity College*

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## **Red Tomatoes**

Jackie Sanders

I see this woman every Saturday morning at the farmer's market I work at. I sell flowers and corn on the cob with my ma and little sis. This woman, I think her name is Janie. I've heard her say it once or twice. She pulls up alone in a green Ford pick up that's seen better days. She's probably in her fifties or so, at least she looks it. Shoulder-length grey hair with slight crow's feet at the corners of her eyes.

Every time she comes to the market, she only stops at one stand. She gets out of her truck, slowly. Sometimes she doesn't get out of her car for a good five minutes, instead she's smiling in the rearview mirror and talking to herself or something. She wears no makeup, as far as I can tell, except for this bright, bright red lipstick. She always has it on. I think it makes her look real pretty, like how I want to be someday. When she finally gets out of her car, she's looking at her feet and whispering to herself. She walks past my stand, and I can tell she knows where she's going.

When she approaches the stand, she starts wringing her hands. She sometimes closes her eyes and you can see her chest moving up and down. I think she's trying to calm her nerves. She walks over, and stands in front of the owner, Henry. He's a great guy and really nice to my family.

Henry is strong and has broad shoulders. He wears flannel shirts and worn-in jeans with mud stains on them. But he's not a tough guy. His eyes are friendly and his handshake is firm. He's got little family, if any. I've never seen them. When Janie approaches his stand, his face breaks into a huge grin. Whenever I get the chance, I sneak over to hear them speak.

“The usual?” he’ll ask her. She’ll move her head up and down so fast I wonder if it hurts. He usually does the talking, while she just nods or smiles or laughs nervously.

Henry sells tomatoes, the biggest and juiciest ones I’ve ever seen. Their bright red color is the same shade as Janie’s lips. He puts 4 or 5 in a brown burlap sack for Janie. I think he chooses the best ones for her. Once his hand brushed hers and she turned red. About the same color as her lips too. It’s romantic I think, how she seems to like Henry. I hope I find someone like that one day.

She leaves pretty soon after she gets her tomatoes. I can tell she wants to talk more but she can’t think of anything else to say. When she leaves she walks at a faster pace. She’s no longer wringing her hands and she looks around to see the other people at the market.

When she gets near her car she turns around and peeks behind her shoulder one last time. At this point you can only make out the distinct red on her lips and in her sack. She approaches a tin garbage can, and opens up the lid. Slowly, she empties the tomatoes from the bag into the can. One by one they tumble and their redness disappears. I wonder if I should tell Henry she doesn’t keep his tomatoes, but I’m afraid then that their love story won’t come true. After, she tucks her sack under her shoulder and walks back to her car. I know she’ll be back next week.