

**THE
MIGHTY
RED**

**A
NOVEL**

**LOUISE
ERDRICH**

THE MIGHTY RED

A NOVEL

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HARPER

An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers

Dedication

*To those who love birds
and defend their place on earth*

Epigraph

The Red River of the North is young. From the sky it looks like a length of string arranged on a flat board in a tight scrawl of twisting loops. The river gathers in the Ottetail and Bois de Sioux rivers and runs north on a slight incline from Wahpeton to Winnipeg. The river is muddy, opaque with sediment and toxic from field runoff. Not a river you'd swim but good to fish, at least at its source. The river is changeable, a slow and sleepy trickle in summer, rampaging like a violent toddler in spring, when it sweeps across the land reflecting the sky like its mother—a vast prehistoric lake. Over millennia, the waters have given the Red River Valley earth its blackness, its life. The river is shallow, it is deep, I grew up there, it is everything.

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The Night Driver
2008

Crystal

On a mild autumn night in the Red River Valley of North Dakota, Crystal pulled herself up behind the wheel of an International side-dump, steered out of the sugar processing plant, and started her haul. Out in the country the sugar beets from Geist's fields were piled in a massive loaf on the company piling ground. Crystal drove down the highway, turned onto the access road, and got loaded from the pile. She cruised back to the plant, unloaded. Repeated for as many times as fit into a twelve-hour shift.

On night hauls she always packed a certain lunch. Two sandwiches—turkey salami on whole wheat—carrots, apple chips, peanuts, two cookies. She'd attached a segmented canvas tool bag to her lunch cooler. The pockets of the bag were always filled with the same things: phone, multiuse tool, Black Jack gum, Icy Hot roll-on, Tylenol, lip balm. She brought jalapeño meat sticks, her toothbrush, wallet. In her pocket she kept a lucky hat knitted by her daughter. Crystal also wore an olive-wood cross brought back from the Holy Land by Father Flirty. She wasn't much of a Catholic, but like other people who crave order, she was superstitious. Her shift was 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. By the time she left for work, her daughter was at her homework, unless she was waitressing. Crystal got back in time to see her off to school.

At 11 p.m., Crystal ate her first jalapeño stick and used some Icy Hot. She left the plant and was going back out to the country, high beams cutting into strange mats of fog that lifted and fell, when a brilliant shadow vaulted across the road. Before she could touch the brakes, the animal was snatched away into blackness. It was a mountain lion, the first she'd ever seen. There was the flow of it, her lights glancing off its pelt, the ruthless slope of its head. Crystal rammed her elbow into the side window and slowed down. Driving over the place she'd seen the big cat disappear, Crystal felt a slight electric charge along her jaw. Even in the cab of the heavy truck something had touched her. A twinge of unease. A prophecy. She tried to shake it off. Her daughter, Kismet, and her husband, Martin, were certainly winding down their days at home. Maybe Kismet had made popcorn and Martin had brewed himself a cup of the special bedtime tea he liked. They were safe.

'Tune your thoughts to a better station,' she muttered.

Then her thoughts were broken up as she turned down a gravel road and drove toward the powerful halogen lights out on the piling ground.

On her way back to the plant, it crossed Crystal's mind that the sighting might have to do with the grandmother who'd raised her, Happy Frechette. Happy had lugged whiskey to Fargo to sell during Prohibition. She had traveled on foot and wasted a bottle beaming a mountain lion. Good money! She had fumed about it over seventy years later. Each time she told of her walk it got longer and more eventful. Was sighting the cougar a sign she'd finally died? Avidity and cruelty

had kept Happy alive, but nobody could live forever. Although if there was anyone . . .

Crystal reeled in her thoughts, drove up the lift at the beet plant. She put on the hat Kismet had made out of sparkly gold yarn; it was like a warrior helmet. A couple of the guys teased her but she mocked them back, pretending they were jealous. She was still buzzing from the mountain lion, but she didn't say a word about it. The big cat had appeared just for her. The lift rose, until the mercury switch opened the side gate and tipped out thirty-two tons of sugar beets.

By the time Crystal was back on the road, the call-in show she liked to listen to was on.

Tonight, the topic was angels. Are they out there? Are they listening to us? Answer, yes. The host, Al Ringer, was talking to an expert. They were discussing Creatures of Holiness, the Prince of Faces, Tetragrammaton, and the Order of Cherubim. The angel expert said she would break this down. If you watched the heavens, you could ask for help from the Angel President involved in governing the movement of the stars that night. For instance, the configuration of Libra, on display now, was ruled by Zuriel. Was it worth addressing Zuriel? Probably. Although Zuriel was above speech, Zuriel communicated with the Lord of Hosts by signs. Told what was needed, what was wanted, on earth. Zuriel's mute requests might be said to elicit more attention because Zuriel wore special rings that flashed and glittered.

Someone named Boris called in. Boris had been visited by an angel as a child. The angel had awakened him by calling gently from the end of his bed. When he got up, the angel took him outside, taking care to slam the door in order to wake his parents. His parents looked out the window and saw their son in the front yard. Immediately they rushed out. The angel told Boris to run away as fast as he could. His parents chased after Boris. They were nearly down the block when behind them their house exploded.

'The angel saved us,' said the caller.

'That's what angels do,' said the nonplussed expert.

'What did the angel look like?' asked Al.

'Like a seal.'

'A seal.'

'I mean, it was kind of glowy and golden, but yes, a seal.'

'In ancient days a seal was considered a fish,' said the expert.

'You say the seal, or angel, led you down the steps and out into your front yard,' said Al.

'How did that happen? Physically?'

'A hand came out the end of its flipper and the seal-slash-angel sort of floated. It all seemed normal.'

'They do take various forms. I'll be the first to admit I have no special—'

Al cut the expert off. 'Just a minute, here's another call.'

The next call was from a person who was, or considered himself, an angel.

'Why?' asked Al.

'I was chosen. Simple as that.'

'What does our expert have to say?'

'I will try to be gentle about this, but angels are not earthly beings.'

'Neither am I.'

'They exist outside of time.'

'So do I.'

'Angels see the world from every possible dimension.'

'Same here.'

'They have direct encounters with God.'

‘Obviously.’

‘Well,’ said Al, ‘it seems that you’re an angel. Thank you. Next caller.’

‘Hello. I’m the mother of a son. We live on a farm. When my son was real young he climbed up and fell into a grain bin, which most people the grain would suffocate, but not him. He wasn’t swallowed down. He said something lifted him up from below. Then later at the zoo he climbed to the top of a chain-link fence and down the other side. It was a tiger fence. The tiger curled itself around him and did nothing. My son’s had any number of close calls. Last spring, he and his buddies went out on the snow after a party. They raced around on their snowmobiles. Well, things happened. But he was more or less okay. My question is first, does he have a guardian angel and second, how to say thank you, specifically, to an angel? Oh and third, how do we stop these things from happening?’

Crystal turned up the volume, leaned forward, stared out at the empty highway as she drove.

‘Overall question. You want to know what’s going on?’ said Al.

‘Yes, yes that’s it,’ said the caller.

The expert jumped in, excited.

‘Obviously, yes, your son has a guardian angel! And from the gravity of these incidents I would say his guardian angel is very highly placed, perhaps at God’s right hand. These instances are proof that . . .’

The expert went on for a while but by then Crystal had stopped listening. She knew the caller. The voice belonged to Winnie Geist, a member of her book club, whose family land and beet pile she had just turned down an access road to reach. Crystal could even glance across the perfectly flat fields, glistening under the moon like calm black oceans, and see that a light glimmered in a second-floor window of Winnie’s house. Everybody knew about the tiger and what had happened after this party Winnie mentioned on the air. But Crystal hadn’t known about the grain bin or that there were other miraculous escapes. Al Ringer moved on. Crystal turned off the radio and drove for a while in silence, headlights peacefully cutting radiant holes in the blackness. She’d never liked the kid. Gary. But people had said, the way people do, that he must have a guardian angel. Gary was in her daughter’s high school class. In fact, they’d gone on a couple of dates—against Crystal’s advice. She couldn’t forget that Gary was one of a group of boys who’d tormented Kismet when she was going through her phase as an innocent, hardworking goth. Crystal didn’t trust him and she certainly didn’t trust his mother. Winnie Geist liked tragic endings, even hard history, and pretended she understood what she called the physics of farming.

Crystal had named her daughter Kismet to attract luck and lightness of heart. But fate was also involved. And the mountain lion was a hungry shadow. Or maybe—she touched the olive-wood cross that hung around her neck and remembered how the light glared off its fur—maybe she had seen a destroying angel. She thought about how another big cat had refused to eat Gary and touched her cross yet again. Crystal didn’t know if there was anything serious going on with Kismet and Gary, but she did know that guardian angels only protect their special person. Getting close to someone whose angel was as powerful as Gary’s was asking for trouble.

Part One
The Proposal
2008

The Diamond

On some days the stone was dull, as though it did not care to shine, but today it twinkled. Garrick Geist, aka Gary, eighteen years old and pressed for time, opened the little hinged box and tipped the ring side to side to catch the light. The stone winked at him. He placed the box in the cup holder between the seats of his mother's car. Many times he'd opened the box to examine the thin golden ring. Still, as soon as he shut the lid he wanted to check again. The saleslady up in Fargo had said he'd purchased a wearable fleck of eternity. He wished she had not said fleck. She could have said, maybe, piece of eternity, or symbol. People thought he was a confident person, cocky, especially during football season, which was now. His mother always insisted that from the get-go he'd been hell on wheels, though supernaturally lucky, escaping drownings, maulings, always this or that catastrophe. He had been that way until the party. He thought he'd be that way again. Still, a different word than fleck would have helped him in this moment.

While he waited for his girlfriend, who said she was not his girlfriend, to run down the front steps of her crooked old house at the end of Tabor's main street, he put out his hand, drew it back, resisted again the urge to look at the ring. Between lifting or hauling sugar beets and a home game, he had three hours. Had the stone really winked? He was beginning to feel ridiculous, but maybe he should check, at least, that it was really there. He'd bought it with his own money, not his parents' money, and Gary was pleased about that. His father had started paying him for some of the work he did on the farm. The fact was, they weren't as rich as people thought. True, he'd inherit three thousand acres, probably more from his uncle too, and at twenty-one become a full partner, but this fall they'd started on a new house and their farm debt was a source of pressure. Still, a young man needed cash, his father said. Besides buying his own snowmobile—that was last year—Gary had bought this ring. The two were more connected than anyone would ever guess, the snowmobile being the reason he had to buy this ring and to propose marriage to Kismet R. Poe. Here she was at the passenger's side window. Gary jumped out, walked around the car, and opened the door for her. His mother had taught him how to treat a lady, and Kismet R. Poe was a lady—his lady, he hoped.

Of course, she would have laughed at him and said that was fucking hopeless. Or, though she sometimes dressed tough, she was a nice girl, so she might just smile and shake her head. He felt his lips stretch in a smile so embarrassingly anxious that, as he walked back around the car, he put his hand to his mouth to wipe the smile away. He was in full control of his face as he pulled out. There was nowhere he could think of to go in town. He wanted a meaningful place, an overlook that wasn't a dam, a hill but there were no hills, a magnificent tree. But Tabor was cutting down all of its old trees. Nobody knew why. The only place he could think of was about

half an hour away. So he'd asked her to go on a drive, and they started out.

After the last of three stoplights in town, they took the curve on the first overpass, went by Steve's Autobody and then lines of giant farm machinery. A seed station, stacked pallets, Pookie's Valley Steakhouse. On the straightaway Gary steered with his knees and occasionally draped a few fingers on the bottom of the wheel. Kismet's thoughts were elsewhere. They used up their conversation in the first few minutes. This didn't really bother Kismet; she liked her own thoughts and could enjoy an uncomplicated silence. Then Gary asked if she was bored. She brushed that off and said that she was a visual person.

'I mean, if you're bored, we can talk or something,' he offered.

'No, that's okay. I like watching the world go by. It's good as talking.'

In fact, it was better, at least where Gary was concerned. She liked the way the fields and ditches looked in late October, the soft scorched colors, the pale stubble left in the rows, the trees stripped bare and bristling. She counted the even peaks of pine trees that surrounded farmsteads to break the wind.

However, within a mile or two, Gary's question whether she was bored made the silence complicated and exposed the fact that she actually was bored, very bored, and being consciously bored reminded her of what her cynical best friend, Stockton, had said—how boredom was a part of small-town life that you had to get drunk to accept. She wasn't drunk now. She wasn't drunk very often. She did think that if she spent much time with Gary, though, she'd have to have a bottle handy.

Still, there was something about him. . . .

She took a deep breath, held it, and blinked at the square lake. Yes, it was a square lake. The earth had been dug from a field. The displaced earth had made the second overpass. Kismet watched the lake go by as she slowly released her breath.

'It's nice just having a quiet ride,' she said.

Kismet wanted to forestall Gary from sharing his thoughts. He might get solemn and talk about his farming ideas or his philosophy, which was that you should do what your mother told you to do. Kismet had met Gary's mother and she questioned that. Gary believed that radio frequencies could carry disease. He started many sentences by declaring 'There are two kinds of people . . .' He didn't believe in God but said he could get behind the idea that aliens had manufactured the skein of life. He also talked about, say, the Ten Commandments, and would wonder whether 'Thou shalt not kill' applied to deer. He loved deer. He cried when he saw a dead one. He also cried when he saw a living one. This was a thing about Gary that really got to Kismet. He didn't hunt. His father and uncle tried to take him out hunting. He refused. He loved animals, not only deer, but every animal. Still, she didn't appreciate it when he said that she reminded him of a deer in winter with her dark brown eyes and matching hair. Deer were lovely creatures but they were prey animals.

College will get me out of here, thought Kismet, and a tiny rush of fear made her want to sleep. She pushed her seat back. The sun was beaming through the windshield and it was autumn sun, the mellow light of early afternoon. She fell into a dreamy nap as Gary meditated aloud about whether dinosaur bones were real or had been placed there by a super-intelligent race of ancient humans, or by aliens. 'Aliens again,' she murmured.

'Damn straight,' said Gary in a heroic voice.

'You know the bones are real,' said Kismet.

'Probably,' said Gary. 'Here's the turnoff to that place. Remember Blosnik? He was a hands-on man. There's two kinds—'

'I know,' said Kismet. 'Your mom and dad . . .'

'Yeah, Winnie and Diz.'

He liked calling them by their first names.

'They always say there are two kinds of people, hands-on and hands-off. They really liked how Blossnik took our class out to dig fossils—'

'On the banks of the Sheyenne,' said Kismet. 'That was where you found the bison tooth. Which aliens didn't put there.'

She closed her eyes and wondered why she was spending her day off with Gary listening to the same things he said over and over. Though sometimes a surprising thought broke through. But not today.

'Okay. A bison tooth.' Gary nodded. 'Petrified! You know . . .'

'Turned to stone,' they said in unison. She turned away. Gary's throat shut. He was so nervous that he'd fallen into old grooves of conversation. He slowed the car. They were close. At home, he kept the tooth on his trophy shelf under a glass cheese dome. 'I love that thing,' he said every time he passed it. At present, the brown stone tooth was in his pocket. He'd brought it for luck. He and Kismet would have to walk to the place he'd dug it up. That's where he would propose. He stopped the car.

'See that?'

He pointed across a field and told her it gave on to the riverbank.

Kismet wasn't having it.

'We're walking across a field? Are you kidding? I wore my nice boots.'

Kismet lifted her foot up and rested her stacked heel on the console. 'Not budging, Gary.'

'Don't be a hardass. I wanna show you where I found the petrified bison tooth.'

'The tooth is cool, I concede that, but?' Kismet nipped her chin at some hunters in orange vests walking along the edge of a shelterbelt. Gary followed her look.

True, getting shot at wouldn't make her want to marry him.

'Hey.' She plucked the box from the cup holder and before he could speak she opened it. 'A ring.' She put it back. 'Let's go home.'

He scooped up the box and begged her to wait.

'Give that to your mom,' said Kismet.

'I'm going down on my knees.'

'In the car?'

He swung the car out and the box rattled back into the cup holder. Kismet braced herself as they fishtailed on a gravel section road and then careened into the presence of a deserted farmhouse overgrown with giant thistles. Baby trees reached through the tousled shingles of the roof. Gary stopped the car with a jolt and turned to her in torment. He couldn't speak. His agonized good looks melted her heart.

'Awww, don't look at me like that.'

'Marry me.'

Kismet blurted that she had a boyfriend, though that wasn't strictly true.

'I don't care!'

Gary grabbed the box and offered the ring to her. His hands were shaking. He'd lost weight since last March and the hollows in his cheeks gave him an eerie authority. Kismet tried to turn away, but she couldn't move. His desperation paralyzed her. He grasped her hand, wouldn't let go, and before she could react the ring was on her finger.

'Ahhh, ahhh, ahhh,' she managed.

‘Yeah? Did you say yeah? You said yeah!’

Gary threw himself across the storage console and the cup holder and was on her, weeping in a frenzy, ‘Yes, yes, yes, oh my god I love you I’ll do anything.’ And so forth, on and on, alarming her and then as he quieted, convincing her of his passion, of his commitment, of his ardor, his adoration, and his love. For surely this was love, thought Kismet, this was the heights. She had conquered him. Her heart swelled. He would do anything and everything for her. How she herself felt about him didn’t really enter into it at that point. He had never gone out for long with a girl. And all of a sudden he had dated Kismet, and everyone at school treated her with a mixture of skepticism and surprised respect.

Was it true, at least, that she found him tolerable?

Or was this something pulling at her a sense of the inevitable? Gary always got what he wanted, said everyone. But did she also want to be carried off into an exhilarating madness, for that was how he was acting, an insanity of love? Was this what passion felt like?

As they drove back the same way they’d come, Kismet put on the radio and didn’t listen to the music. She tried to think. Gary had said that he didn’t care if she had another boyfriend. Was her other boyfriend real if she never said his name? Maybe she didn’t have to marry Gary Geist but could just be engaged to him for a while. She didn’t really have to wear the ring, she decided. No harm in seeing where things went between them besides, well, sex, which they’d had, or almost had, behind an old grain elevator and on his friend Charley’s basement couch. During football season Gary often stayed at Charley’s house so he wouldn’t have to drive out to the farm.

Gary was handsome, but Charley’s attractions were on a different order entirely. His looks made people uncomfortable. Charley Jura, Knieval Rappatoo, and Harlan Gall were some of the guys who had been at that party. And there was Eric Pavlecky, Gary’s best friend. Eric lived on a nearby farm and had been there too. Eric drove to school with Gary every day. He was the only one of those guys who ever said hello to Kismet between classes as they passed in the hall.

‘Are you going to tell Eric?’

‘He already knows.’

‘About the ring?’

‘Yeah, we drove up to Fargo. He was waiting in the car.’

‘Did you show it to him?’

‘I was going to, but he said it was your business and my business and I should keep it as a personal surprise. Were you surprised?’

‘Yeah, really surprised.’

‘As you may know,’ said Gary, as though he was some kind of teacher, ‘diamonds are from the time of dinosaurs. They are petrified carbon. Old as time.’ After a drama-filled pause, he said, ‘You are wearing a symbol of eternity.’

‘Oh my god,’ whispered Kismet before her throat closed. A sudden sweat leaked from her brow and armpits, alarming her as much as the ring had. The pressure of millions or even billions of years. She slipped off the ring and silently placed it in the cup holder. She had taken Mr. Blosnik’s class too and was pretty sure that diamonds were even older than dinosaurs. A simmering nausea, a twinge of headache, and flushes of fear overtook the sweats as they drove along but subsided once they reached her house. He stopped the car, hopped out, but didn’t get to her car door in time. Kismet was halfway up the broken concrete walkway. She waved. He blew her a kiss, then looked around to see if anyone else was watching. So he missed that she didn’t blow a kiss back at him. She was already in her house. He took out the bison tooth. Held it for a

moment, nodding his head in a silent prayer. People said he was lucky to survive what happened at the party, but there were times he thought being dead might be better. He slid back in, behind the wheel, and only when he was turning onto the highway, pounding the steering wheel, moaning to the radio, did he glance down at the cup holder and notice the glint of the ring.

The Scream

Mom . . . ! Mom . . . !'

It was Kismet's panic call, coming from the entry. Crystal lurched to her feet and rushed over from the shambles of her little work desk. It was her night off. Kismet held her arms out and walked into her mother's hug.

'What happened?'

'Gary asked me to marry him.'

Crystal stepped away from her daughter and her hands flew up to her face.

'Mom, you look like *The Scream*.'

'Don't be sarcastic,' said Crystal. 'This is serious.'

Her hands dropped to her olive-wood cross. Kismet gave a resentful waggle of her fingers. Crystal saw that at least there was no ring, and gathered that Kismet hadn't said yes. She tried to control the relief in her voice, and said, 'Let's have a cup of tea.'

'I want the tummy tea.'

Kismet's voice was peevish, like a child's, and this was irritating to Crystal but she said, 'Sure.'

There was a small pot of honey in the middle of the round kitchen table. The pot was shaped like a beehive. Kismet sat down and looked at it while the water boiled on the feeble electric burner. She spoke in a mournful, deadened tone.

'Everyone knows bees live in boxes so where does this beehive shape come from?'

Her out-of-nowhere observation seemed a cry for help. But for Crystal to jump in with her opinion of Gary might drive Kismet straight into his tiresome but too-lucky jockish arms. She stalled, poured the boiling water through a strainer full of peppermint leaves, put the mugs on saucers with spoons, and brought the tea to the table.

'Maybe, uh, village life in England,' said Kismet, using her stagy faraway look. 'You see, it became a symbol!'

They maintained a short silence, blowing lightly across the hot tea. Crystal was sipping awkwardly, as though she had forgotten how to work her lips. She could see her own teenage strategies reflected, and it was distracting to remember how she used to thrash around in the quicksand of hormones and new emotions.

'How do . . . you feel about him?'

Crystal used the most neutral voice she could manage. To stop herself from saying too much she put her cup down and pinched the side of her knee.

'It could be, I think, that I love him,' said Kismet, looking at her mother as though she was having a serious revelation. 'In fact, I may be in love. In love. How does it feel? How did you

feel about Dad, I mean, when you had me? You love him, I guess, but back then were you desperately in love?’

Kismet dipped her spoon into the honey hive and stared at the tea as the honey slipped off the spoon and dissolved. Then her face opened up like a soft beseeching flower and tilted toward her mother.

I’ve got to be really careful now, thought Crystal. Her marriage to Kismet’s father was over. Crystal had thought this before, but there had always been some reason or another not to leave Martin. But this time she was pretty sure it was for real. She’d been delaying a break until Kismet graduated and was safely in college. Her heart squeezed in, out, in, out. She drew a calming breath. She mustn’t speak of this! As happened so often since Kismet had become a teenager, Crystal pictured a rickety wooden bridge and plotted her way across.

‘Desperately in love? I thought so,’ she said.

‘Thought so?’

‘Thought those were my feelings back then, yes.’

She could see that Kismet had something to say but didn’t want to shock her. Please god do not let her be pregnant, thought Crystal, and closed her eyes. But Kismet only had a question. ‘Was it sex?’

‘Partly.’ Crystal opened her eyes. ‘You’re still on birth control, right?’

‘Yeah. How much was sex? Give me the numbers.’

‘The numbers?’

‘Like a percentage.’

Crystal threw her hands out, miming idiotic shock. Then they slapped their hands over their faces and whooped with laughter until they couldn’t breathe. Give me the numbers! Give me the numbers! Finally Crystal gasped, ‘Eighty.’ Kismet screamed and pretended to choke on her tea. At last Crystal couldn’t take it, just couldn’t take it anymore. She put her head down on the table and mumbled loudly.

‘He’s not good enough for you.’

Crystal sat up. Kismet’s face had hardened almost imperceptibly. Now it was like they both had poker hands and were trying not to show their tells. Kismet broke first and took the mugs to the sink. ‘He really loves me, Mom,’ she said, looking out the window into their scorched brown sacred yard.

I am a dumbass, Crystal thought.

They were practically the same height, Kismet just taller by half an inch. They were pliable but sturdy women, not conventionally pretty in a contemporary way but more like 1930s movie stars with curled Cupid’s bow lips, eyebrows dark and flared, faces classic ovals with prominent cheekbones, sharp jawbones. Without smiling, Kismet could put to work a devastating dimple that punctuated one side of her smile with a mark of irony or complicity. She had melty brown eyes, lush black lashes. Crystal’s eyes had a sharper glint, for life had taught her to be suspicious. The two of them were curvy, flexible, with small arched feet made for high heels. They could walk for miles in heels with only minimal pain. Their languid-looking, plump hands were actually tough paws. Crystal’s were steering-wheel-trained by the International, Kismet’s were agile from bearing plates from heat lamps to tables. They were both hard workers, descended of Ojibwe field hands, potato pickers, dedicated bootleggers. In those old films, maybe they would have played the molls of gangsters. In fact Crystal’s maiden name was the same as that of John Dillinger’s Menominee lady, Billie Frechette. She’d kept that name but allowed Martin to give