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The Fort Showalter Blues

Harold L Johnson

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The Fort Showalter Blues Harold L Johnson
It's after the Korean War and before the Vietnam disaster, years when the U.S. government still had enough credibility and authority to draft young men into military service. Joseph Birdsong, an optimistic young African-American from small-town Washington state, goes to the city--Portland, Oregon--for college in pursuit of his dream of success in life, encouraged by success he had enjoyed in school as a student, fair athlete, but especially as a musician. Having grown up in an essentially white environment, his identity as a Black American had only begun to come home to him as he left high school. He works his way through college, but life in the city becomes complicated by difficulties of his own creation that lead to his induction into the army. In the army, Joe encounters the meat and bone reality of a considerable cross section of young American males. He meets crucial personalities among his fellow soldiers and in El Paso where he is stationed, individuals who consciously or unconsciously support the emergence of his greater awareness of who he is and what he'd best be doing. Joe begins to get the idea of a viable path for himself through the often dangerous physical and psychic maze of American daily life and culture. By story's end, he might be ready for his big journey.

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