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LINDA – Fieldnotes – Thursday, November 1, 2007

Subject: Kitchen Table meeting in Wilson Garden

Location: 122nd st between Douglass and Powell

Time: 12:00-2:30pm

As I walk east on 122nd toward the garden I meet Terry and Pai walking along slowly. Pai has a baby doll tied to her bag with a light blue scarf. She wears a black t-shirt, which later I see has "love" printed on the front. Terry is wearing her white denim jacket with a dark pink scarf.

122P

137P

We greet one another and chat. Two casually dressed white men come out of a building talking. One may be in his fifties with thinning brown hair, the other is a little older, perhaps in his early sixties with white hair. They greet us and one of them asks Terry if she has change for a twenty. She says no. They start to walk away, west, one saying to the other that they should go to the store for change. Terry calls after them that she does have change. They head back and Pai swings herself by a railing onto the bottom step of the nearest stoop. The men talk to her in high voices. [I find this amusing, Pai simply stares.] Terry hands the man two ten dollar bills and he hands her a twenty. We keep strolling slowly. I ask about the Halloween party at her house. Terry says trying to have a quiet dinner with so many children is like an "insane asylum."

123P

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When we get to the garden Luis is walking towards us. He wears a white shirt, very baggy black carpenter-style pants, but in a fine fabric that looks a little like linen, but without wrinkles, and a jacket.

The chain is on the left side of the gate, as usual, but the lock is not on the chain. The four of us head inside the gate and Alex is standing there with Xavier and Niko. Alex shakes our hands, saying she is the "welcoming committee." As Alex follows the boys further into the garden I remark to Luis that Niko looks all better. He replies that it broke last night [a fever?]. Later Alex says that they stayed at home last night, and there are jokes about bringing or abandoning a sick baby.

121P

138P

Tiffany is inside with Sahara. R.J. is also inside with Desmond. Alex is wearing a thin sleeveless close-fitting white shirt over jeans. Tiffany wears a bright green hoodie over jeans, and Sahara is once again wearing her brown-and-pink head wrap and pink hoodie. She has no shoes, and Tiffany reports that she lost one, saying that they were too big. Tiffany heads out with Sahara in the stroller to buy more shoes. She asks Xavier if he wants to go with her and he says no.

132P

133P

134P

Luis puts his things down on a chair. He and Terry chat and I stand awkwardly on the far side of the table. I come around the other side of the table, and Alex comes to figure out what's for lunch. I think she brought an acorn squash and apples, and apparently nobody is scheduled to bring food. She plans aloud to grill the acorn squash and the apples, and I bring out the apples I brought. Luis starts to build a fire with twigs and dry leaves. Alex figures out that there is no charcoal. I tell her that Tiffany bought some from a store

1335

nearby last time, and she says they also need bread. Alex decides to go to the store and I ask if I can go with her. She says she'll be glad for the company.

Tiffany comes back with Sahara and new pink shoes. Terry laughingly coos over the shoes, that nobody is surprised that the shoes are pink—Tiffany loves pink and brown. Alex asks her where she got the charcoal and she says a store around the corner. Alex pulls on a long sweater jacket, multicolored in reds, oranges, yellows, and a bit of blue and green, that hangs to her knees. She leaves the sweater hanging open.

Alex and I walk out of the garden and down 7th Ave. She says that my project sounds really good. She asks me how I came up with it and I tell him about Varenne.

There is a small store