Question

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His features, his hair, his gait had given him away. And now people had nicknamed him “Nigger”. How he hated it, and how meekly he accepted it.

When he had been graduated from the little college, he had found that he couldn’t leave it—it and his memories. So he had bought a small house in town and had worked steadily in his large garden, always thinking and remembering. When the college had found its going harder and harder, he had given it his entire wealth and started raising sweet potatoes to peddle to his old friends. His back ached. He hadn’t time to chat on Main Street any more. He barely recognized his old classmates when they came to their back doors. Finally, then, the college had closed and “Nigger” Thompson had cried that day as he plowed his potatoes. But he had to keep on living; so still he carted his potatoes.

“Nigger” Thompson looked down at his book. The hymn was sing-singing its way to the last note. The class droned its solemn “amen” in monotone and then looked expectantly again at “Nigger” Thompson. Again he rose stiffly. Down the line he moved, carefully taking the book from each old hand, nodding humbly to each old person, speaking of the weather to some, merely saying “How do you do” to others. He crossed the room with his armload of books and put them on the chair in a nice, neat pile. Then he turned, half smiled, and said good-bye to those who were not too busy stirring about with their wraps to notice him. Buttoning the top button of his ageless, unpressed sack coat and grasping his crumpled hat, he started up the back stairs—alone.

**Question**

By Jean Porter

What is your plan, O God,
When lives are lost
And hearts are torn?
What is your plan, O God,
For us who mourn?