

Excerpt from *Brown Bottle* by Sheldon Lee Compton

The crisp scent of snow was in the air though it was the second week of October and not a flake had fallen. But it was coming. It was warm the day when Brown stepped past him while Lafe pulled lettuce up from the ground, even for autumn. Pulled a pistol on him in the back bedroom after slamming the door through. That sound, that snapping of metal and hinge, broke him away from Lafe.

By the time he made it into the trailer, Brown was standing over Tuck with the pistol. Other than Tuck's scared breathing, not a sound. Hen must have made the call. Police cruisers arrived within minutes. They'd already been there once that day. Place and purpose were easily defined and to face facts, Tuck's had become a hotspot for the troopers, on the radar and a long list with other dealers in the region. But this time they had to wrestle Brown Bottle Taylor to the ground. This after luring him away from Tuck Collins, a crying and pitiful man who they wanted to arrest for dealing drugs but couldn't.

Brown could have shot Tuck. He did not. Maybe it was fear. Maybe it was hesitation, which could have been the same thing, more or less. But he didn't kill him then. It was a thought. Something to go on.