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Cemetery, Chapel Of The Cross, Flora, Mississippi

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CEMETERY, CHAPEL OF THE CROSS, FLORA, MISSISSIPPI

The story goes that a young planter went to New Orleans to buy slaves, or maybe it was cotton, but somewhere on the river—either going down or coming up—there was an argument with a gambler over money or a woman's honor, one or the other, but there was a duel, or maybe just malaria. The young planter died. The planter's fiance (whose parents had built the stone chapel at Annandale for her wedding) waited on the Vicksburg dock for the steamer, and then the shiny wooden casket was loaded into a glass-sided hearse for the fifty-mile trip to the plantation. Ten years later Grant would rest up from the war there, but that's another story. Anyway, she died, too, of a broken heart, they say. All these things are true, or some of them, maybe even most, because legends are like that. And they say that a ghost is often seen out behind the chapel, a girl in the white crinoline of the eighteen-fifties, mourning her dead lover—I myself have seen the gravestones lying there side-by-side, so part of the story must be history, and the rest, if not true, perhaps should be.