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# FUGUE



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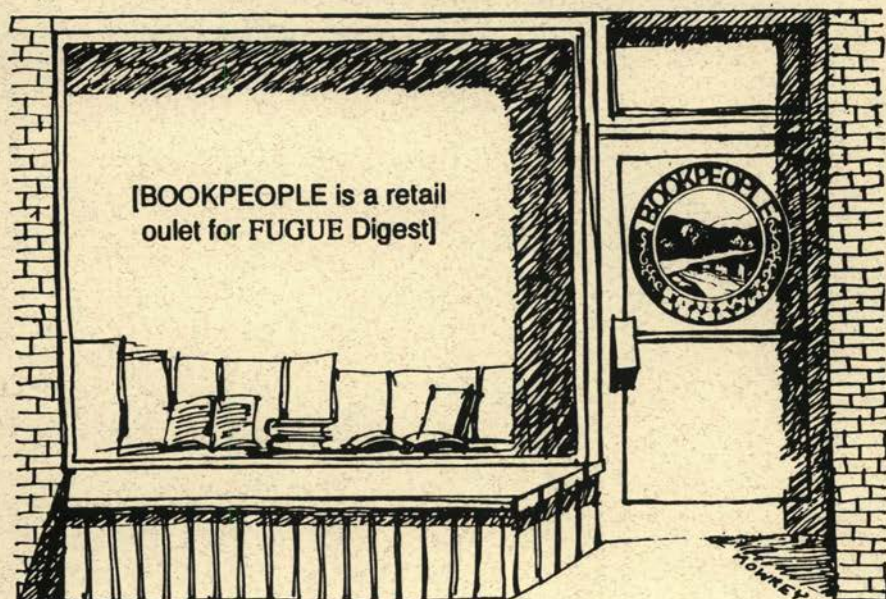
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**SHORT STORIES**

**AUTHORITY FILES**

<i>Don Thomas</i> .....	4
<b>DECLINING WEST</b>	
<i>Fay Wright</i> .....	12
<b>A VERY HIGH LEVEL OF CAT</b>	
<i>William B. Henkel</i> .....	20
<b>THE HEX</b>	
<i>Michael E. Burczynski</i> .....	26
<b>LENO'S FEAST</b>	
<i>Nowick Gray</i> .....	32
<b>PERENNIAL</b>	
<i>Taylor Jessen</i> .....	42

**VIGNETTES**

**A COLD METALLIC THING**

<i>Tom Drake</i> .....	10
------------------------	----

**POETRY**

**PRELUDE TO WAR**

<i>Sean Morris Taylor</i> .....	3
<b>THE MOON</b>	
<i>Julie Rich</i> .....	3
<b>OWL TIME IN ALBION</b>	
<i>Don Thomas</i> .....	9
<b>HIGH COUNTRY</b>	
<i>Paul Lindholdt</i> .....	9
<b>BIVERSE</b>	
<i>Jennifer Boyd</i> .....	17
<b>TALK TWO</b>	
<i>Donna Rhodes</i> .....	17
<b>BUY--BECAUSE YOU'RE WORTH IT</b>	
<i>Sandra Haarsager</i> .....	18
<b>A POEM (FOR FA MU LAN)</b>	
<i>Melinda Hallen</i> .....	19
<b>NEEDS NO NAME</b>	
<i>Lara Therese MacConnell</i> .....	24
<b>BLACK SNAG</b>	
<i>Monza Naff</i> .....	26
<b>SILVER CITY DAYS</b>	
<i>Seth Platts</i> .....	31
<b>SAY GOODNIGHT TO ME JAKE</b>	
<i>Daniel D. Powell</i> .....	41

**DEPARTMENTS**

GRAFFITI, Editorial Comments, Etc. ....	2
GUIDELINES .....	47

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## G R A F

Editorial  
Comments  
Etc.

## F I T I

A tremendous thank you goes out to the English Department of the University of Idaho for making this editorial possible. Like *Gem of the Mountains* [a campus publication] and KUOI [a campus radio station], *FUGUE* has fallen prey to an ASUI Committee Monster that lacks appreciation (or understanding) of alternative learning opportunities for students who wish to pursue artistic career interests while furthering UI traditions. It was nearly two years ago that an orange crate of books representing a student literary journal gone bad spurred J.C. Hendee and me to start anew with *FUGUE*. With the support of English Department Chairman Gary Williams and faculty sponsorship from Prof. Ron McFarland, J.C., I and a staff of four others were given the chance to learn the ins and outs of starting, formulating and publishing a small press literary journal through Directed Study classification.

Today *FUGUE* represents the combined efforts of twelve UI English majors. The quality and quantity of submissions continues to rise, not only from UI students and local citizens, but from national and international authors as well. Every issue returns more positive comments (and sales) than the one before. *FUGUE* is making headway and shows promise for the editorial interests of tomorrow's willing students--as long as it is allowed to continue to adjust to market demands and not to ASUI "rules" that supposedly protect student interests.

This is where the thanks come in. Due to the persuasive efforts of Professor Ron McFarland, the generosity of the English Department, and the support of local advertisers, *FUGUE* has overcome the wound incurred by this year's ASUI Monster. The same battle, however, will undoubtedly arise next year. I leave the *FUGUE* staff with many thanks for your hard work, dedication, great ideas, and most of all good luck--both to those who (like me) get to go face "real life," and to the ones who will continue the publication.

Most Sincerely,  
Leiloni Reed, Exec. Ed.



### PRELUDE TO WAR

2 Men smiled  
shook hands  
and sat down to talk

2 Men argued  
and bickered  
and accomplished nothing

2 Men stated views  
redefined positions  
and went their separate ways

2 Eyes  
watched the 2 Men  
bring 2 countries  
closer to war

2 Eyes  
watched Everyman  
try to hide his fear

2 Eyes had an insight:  
2 Men were blind.

--Sean Morris Taylor

### THE MOON

The moon drifts in the purple twilight,  
A bit of froth at the edge of an ocean,  
A silver sliver sailing above the world  
Almost catching in the black trees.  
Gazing down upon the earth,  
Contemplating men's folly,  
The silent watcher of the world.

--Julie Rich

# AUTHORITY FILES

Don Thomas

I drink too much; I'm partly drunk now. Mary left me last week; she told me I needed to talk to somebody: a psychiatrist. I was doing fine up until a month ago when the nightmares started again. Started drinking again, and finally got drunk enough to tell her the story. She thinks I'm nuts. It only took her a week to leave me after I told her.

Go to a shrink? I'd rather kill myself with the booze. They wouldn't believe me either. Things like that don't happen, can't happen. No white rooms for me. Computer rooms? They're mostly all white. I'm even writing this on a computer. I shouldn't be writing this. It can get me this way. He's dead, isn't he? I should know, I killed him. But that damn machine is still out there.

I'm drunk enough. I can write this. Maybe it will help me forget it.

It started in college, working in the library. That's how I put myself through, as a library assistant. I worked on a computer most of the time inputting bibliographic records into a large nationwide system. All big libraries are computerized these days. They don't even have card catalogs anymore. They're linked into networks of holdings. You can punch in a title, and if one library doesn't

have it, another one does.

So I had a lot of library experience and decided to go to library school. That's what they like to call an M.L.S. in the library business, a Master of Library Science. That's where they taught me about authority files. Authority files keep all those computer records straight. Uniform titles, authors, series: everything is neat and tidy. Just check your authority file.

I was fresh out of graduate school, looking for my first job. But times were tight for librarians. Nobody was hiring in reference work, and I was tired of cataloging. So when I heard about a new bibliographic network starting up in the Pacific Northwest, I applied. When I took the call for an interview, I was down and out. There were only a couple hundred left in the account. So I had to follow through. The rent had to be paid; I had to eat.

The network was based in Seattle. It always rains in Seattle, at least that's what everybody says. The first time I saw Seattle it was sunny, warm, with blue skies. The interview went well, and I was offered the job. It was checking records against an authority file just like the records I input back in college. I was a natural. I took it.

You have to make sure those records are all the same or they get all messed up. Too many ways to

spell a name, too many open entries. And you have to close those entries when they are finished. You have to close those entries.

Do you know what Seattle reminds me of now? Something washed up on a beach. Some huge pale sea-beast with tentacles reaching out into the dark forests and mists of the Sound. It's something that doesn't quite belong there. A modern technological wonder somehow linked to ancient forces that twist the finest ideas along dark paths. It's evil. Like that white room where they put me to work, with a couple of computer terminals, me on one and him on another.

At first I didn't think of him as strange. A spindly little clerical worker, yes, a bit of a nerd, yes, but just a guy. His name was Drew.

He was about forty I guess, thin greying hair, black plastic glasses, and fond of those button up sweaters your parents always made you wear when you were a kid. I guess he was always cold. Computers need to be cool. Drew was cold inside anyway. After we were introduced by our supervisor, he never said a word except to answer my questions about work.

It started to get on my nerves. I didn't know anybody in town. He was my closet contact to a human being in that little room with the computers. It started to seem like the whole world. So I started to talk to him, started to work my way through that cold exterior. We didn't have anything in common except books. That's where I started. If I knew what I know now, I would have asked him to a Seahawks game and put him right off.

We talked American writers, English writers, French writers: good writers and bad writers. We didn't really connect on who we liked, but literature was at least a beginning. He liked Wordsworth, I liked Coleridge. When I brought up

Poe, Drew brought up Hawthorne. Fitzgerald brought up Hemingway, Cather made him talk of Anderson. Baudelaire turned him to Voltaire. He was kind of stuffy in what he liked, nothing too far out of line with the world as he saw it.

I finally asked him out for a drink after work. To my surprise, he accepted. We ended up at little dive near the U district. It was quiet that night; we could hear each other. Before we went in, he stuck a quarter into a paper-stand for the evening edition. He set it carefully folded between us on the bar, occasionally glancing at it as we talked over our first couple of drinks. Eventually there was a lull in the conversation.

Drew picked up the paper and turned straight to the obituaries without even glancing at the front page. Scanning the column of people who had died, his eyes stopped at a name. His lips curled up into a smile. Setting it in front of me, he tapped his finger on the notice.

"Good, I'm glad he's dead. Never liked him anyway," he said with definite glee, no remorse whatsoever. His actions were those of a man almost expecting what he had found. It was a stupid thought, but it did cross my mind. He must have heard it on the radio or something.

I looked at the name. I'd heard of it somewhere before. Reading quickly, it turned out that I probably had. He had been a minor writer over the last ten or twenty years. He had turned to politics for a time in the sixties, little protests and court cases over the war, women's liberation: that kind of thing.

"Hell, I thought he was dead years ago," I commented. "I guess I'll have to close his entry in the database."

"Humph," he breathed out, "don't even bother."

It was just a statement of disgust, but thinking back there was something else there. We closed out

our evening early and he went his way, I went mine.

When I arrived at work the next day, I sat down with my first cup of coffee in front of the machine. I glanced over at the empty station where my fellow drone should have been sitting. He was a little late today. No big deal, he usually stayed late. I started sorting through the set-works. Then I remembered the obituary from last night.

I keyed in the name. It came up readily enough with about half a dozen entries attached. He wasn't prolific or anything. I was about to put his date of death in after the little dash following his birth date, but it was already there. Somebody had beaten me to it. I looked over at the empty terminal. He couldn't have. And there was nobody else in the office that would have. Just a strange screw-up I guessed. Like me, somebody else had figured that he was dead years ago. But it was this year's date?

Drew wandered in about an hour late. He looked a little worse for wear from the night before. The man wasn't used to drinking. It was break time before he looked like he could be spoken to. I told him about the closing date.

"I told you not to bother," was his answer. "I closed it yesterday morning."

I still thought he had heard it on the radio or TV, on the way to work or something and shrugged it off. I went back to correcting records and sending them back if they were too messed up. AACR2 has to be stuck to, there are rules to find pigeon holes.

After lunch, Drew was looking a lot better. We started to talk about one of my favorite writers from the sixties. He had recently been rediscovered by a whole new generation. He was on the supermarket shelves. That must have annoyed him no end; being in a supermarket was counter

to all he wrote about.

Of course my co-worker hated him with a passion. Our discussion grew a little hot. With a final jibe about what a crummy writer the man was, and how stupid the people were who actually read him, the man called me around to his side of the work station. He pointed to the screen of his terminal.

Drew had called up the authority file record on the CRT. There was my author's name all neatly outlined in little green electrons on the screen. He had placed his cursor next to the dash by his birth date. The man typed in the current year as his death, making him dead according to the computer. A totally contented look filled his face. I frowned my displeasure.

"Ha, ha, ha," I let fall in a totally bored way. He was pissing me off, the little jerk. I went back to work, and we didn't say anything to each other for the rest of the day. I didn't plan to say much to him for the rest of my life. I'd just about decided he was too much of a geek, and I'd rather be bored and lonely. I went home at five, ate some food, had some beer over the tube, and fell asleep to late night static.

After a shower in the morning, I pulled in the paper from the concrete and wrought iron "veranda" outside my front door. That's what I liked to call the walk-up to my one bedroom apartment. The paper boy was getting to be a better shot by then. I was pouring my coffee when the article on the front page made me spill it.

It was the freakiest thing that had ever happened to me. That writer was dead as hell, some kind of car accident.

"Weird coincidence," I thought out loud.

That was the sort of thing I would gladly have drunk away the night talking to my friends about back in college. But I didn't have any



friends here, just work, and Drew. I wasn't going to give him the satisfaction of mentioning it. I didn't have to.

"I'm glad he's dead too," was what he hit me with first thing in the morning. He had the same smile he had back in the bar that night.

"I'm not," I answered as indifferently as I could. I was not happy about how happy he was. "It was strange the way it happened though."

"Bullshit." Drew said firmly. "I killed the fucker."

"He's crazy as well as a loon," I said to myself. He must have known what I was thinking.

"I can prove it. Who do you want me to kill. As long as they're in the machine, I can kill them. All I have to do is close the entry."

"Sure..." I hesitated. I decided to humor him. "Kill the president you jerk."

"No, I like him. I only kill people I want to."

I didn't say anything else to him. I worked on the machine for the rest of the day, took long breaks, and generally avoided him until I could get out of there. He was totally nuts. The squirrel had final cracked up in his chosen profession. I decided then and there, I wanted a nice quiet library to work in. I wasn't going to wind up like this freak. I made it home without talking to him. There was a bottle around and beer in the fridge. I forgot about the day fast.

That night the dream started. I woke up sweating in Seattle and it wasn't the humidity. It took place at work. Drew was sitting across the way from me doing his job. I was closing entries on my terminal. I glanced down at what I was doing. When I look up again, he has the skulled face of Death. I go back to work, try and ignore him. When I look up again his eyes are staring into me. There are no eyes, just empty sockets, but I know that they

are looking at me. It scares me. I decide not to look up again. I close more entries. Then I look down at my own hands; they are bones. They rattle on the keys. I have become Death. I woke up and had to check if my hands still had flesh on them. I had to go into the bathroom and look in the mirror to see if I still had a face.

It was just a dream, I knew that. But I didn't get back to sleep until it was nearly light outside. I woke up tired, made coffee. Drank it while I took a shower and pulled on some cloths. When I pulled in the paper from outside, I didn't even look at it, just let it sit on the kitchen table. I wasn't afraid or anything, just didn't have the time.

When I arrived at work, Drew was already at his terminal. He didn't say anything, and I wasn't about to. The days passed like this. If it wasn't work related, we didn't talk. And during those days, I never opened the newspaper. I began to think I was afraid to look. Each night the dream was there again. This was getting to be too weird. I was running down fast. Drinking helped, but I always woke up with a hangover. When I didn't drink, I woke up terrified. It was starting to show in my work. I was making mistakes. This couldn't go on.

One morning I decided that what I was feeling was all bullshit. I walked deliberately to the front door of my apartment and ripped open the paper and started reading it. On the second page, the coffee cup froze half way to my lips. Another writer was dead. This time a poet from the beat generation of the fifties. I didn't want to go to work that day. I called in sick. But that only worked for one day. I had to face the evil little man tomorrow. He had become the "evil little man" in my mind. I was really cracking up.

It was just a coincidence. I kept telling myself this. I would go to

work the next day and everything would be fine. He would just be a clerical worker. When I went to sleep, the dream came again. My hands became white, bony claws on the keys. I think I woke up screaming, but the apartment was quiet. There was no one there to tell me otherwise.

I drove to work the next day telling myself that I was just going to ignore him.

"He isn't going to get to me with his crazy power trip. It is a figment of his twisted mind. If it gets any worse, I will tell my supervisor that the guy has obviously snapped and let him take care of it." That is what my rational mind was saying. The tired side of me, the dream side of me, was shouting that I should keep driving, turn south, find some beach with sun.

It had been raining for what seemed like two months solid. When I pulled into the company parking lot, I sat for a minute listening to the wipers clear my vision. Then the mist would cloud it over again. I turned off the engine and climbed out into the damp, grey mist and black asphalt. The worms were all on the surface so they wouldn't drown. I had to avoid them as I walked in the side entrance of the office.

He looked up when I sat down at my terminal. Drew had been waiting for me.

"You were sick yesterday," he said with that same smile from the bar. "Did you see the paper?"

"No," I said curtly trying to hide the fact that I had by staring into my screen. He knew that I was lying.

"I killed him too," he pointed out with a giggle. Then he stood up and headed off to the break room with an empty coffee cup in hand.

"Drop dead asshole," I yelled after him. He glanced over his shoulder and giggled again as he went for his coffee.

I dropped my hands from the keyboard and stared into my screen. My mind had gone, too little sleep, no one to talk to, I don't know. The image of my hands turning to fleshless bone filled my head. I began to type. I dropped out of set-work screens into the main authority file. I made up a record for a new author, filled in his birth date. I glanced up at the break room door.

"Drop dead asshole," I whispered. Then I filled in the death date and hit the enter key. There was a moment of quiet, a slight hush of soundless automation stopping. And then the sound of a coffee cup falling on the concrete floor in the break room: the cry of a concerned staff member. I didn't bother to go look.

Putting on my coat from the back of my chair, I stared down at the screen. I glanced at the flesh covering my hands, and then kicked out the terminal screen with a soft, electrical implosion. I left by the side door and never went back.

I was doing okay, until the dreams started again. □

**OWL TIME IN ALBION**

...smoking a Camel in the yard after  
the bars close, watching the ember,  
listening to owls.

There is a cabalistical joke in there  
somewhere; occultisms are like that.

Aldebaran has been up an hour.

Sirius is in the west.

Lawn's growing fast now;  
the picket fence doesn't seem so hard.  
When people dream there isn't territory.

At first it's only one,

as quiet thickens  
different trees answer.

Horned one in the poplar, Taurus behind,  
Screech from willows, Saw Whet from pines.

If you listen long enough

birds map out the trees.  
There's a chart above the fence-line.

--Don Thomas

**HIGH COUNTRY**

This high country  
stunts most growth.  
Lupine and paintbrush

penstemon and pines,  
even the paddling  
mallards grow

tiny at this height.  
In mid-May  
the songbird eggs

have yet to be laid,  
winds still agitate the lake  
but all lives try

to endure and thrive.  
Fat trout spawn  
and lunge for flies.

Mule deer clamber up  
scabrock canyons  
to the sky.

--Paul Lindholdt

# A COLD METALLIC THING

Tom Drake

She opened the motel room door and went inside. He followed behind at her heels. They both stopped and looked around: two small, formica covered end-tables, a matching desk, and a cheap portrait of some ring-necked pheasants rising over the double bed.

"Don't fly off," he said, stepping into the closet-size bathroom. "I'll be right back." She gave him a peck on the cheek and headed for the television. The bathroom door made a hollow sound as he pulled it shut.

When he came back out she was already undressed and lying across the bedspread. The television was on with the sound off. Its blue, flashing light lit up her body like a commercial. He stared at it awhile, examining her too big, pointed nose sticking out beneath high piles of red hair, all teased and cluttered with bright plastic berets. She had long, thin legs; he'd noticed that in the bar. But now he could see that the rest of her body was stuck on top without much attention to detail, all bloated and shapeless like a poached chicken.

"Quit gawking and take it off," she said, rolling over to grab an ash-tray from the nightstand.

She stared at the TV as he pulled off his shirt, then the t-shirt beneath it. His belly flopped out over a rodeo style belt buckle like a furry balloon, its broad expanse blanketed with more hair than the crown of his head. He slipped off his boots and unbuckled his pants, letting them drop to the carpeted floor with a dull thud. Then he padded towards the bed in his socks and boxer shorts.

"All of it," she repeated, finally breaking away from the television. "That means everything," and she nodded her beak at the big diamond ring on his left hand. "We ain't doing nothing till you take that rock off."

"The hell," was all he said.

But she had already gone back to the TV. He looked down at her naked body right there beside him, then at the ring on his hand. It had been placed there twelve years back and hadn't been off once in all that time.

"Christ," he said. "It's just a ring."

She looked up at his face, her's blank, then down at the ring, then back at the TV. "I ain't sleeping with no man wearing some other woman's wedding ring."

He looked at the TV too, then down at her, then at the ring, and

back at her again.

"Christ," he said. "It's just a goddamn ring." But he was already pulling on it. His fingers had swollen up childlike and pudgy over the years, and the ring didn't budge.

"Here," she said, taking the hand. "Give it here." And she started tugging.

"Whoa whoa whoa!" he barked, snatching his hand back. "There's a finger in that there ring!"

So they wound up crowding their two ungainly bodies flank to flank into the bathroom. Beneath the bright light of a single bulb their pale forms melted into the white enameled fixtures. She ran water and unwrapped a miniature bar of soap, wet the soap and his hand, and easily slid the large ring free. He held up his hand away from his face, palm out, and examined the pale band of skin where the ring had been. It stood out innocent and obscene beside the darker fingers. "Christ," he said. "It was just a goddamn ring."

She put the ring on the back of the toilet and shut off the light. They left the bathroom and climbed into the groaning bed. She reached up around his neck as he leaned over and aimed his face away from her open mouth, burying himself in her cluttered hair. The flashing light from the screen danced on the walls.

He woke late to the sound of somebody's dog barking. Light seeped coffee brown through the closed curtains and blended with the glow of the silent television. He was alone in the bed, and saw that her things were gone. He reached over to one of the end-tables and found his cigarettes, lit one, picked up the remote-control, and lay there changing channels. Outside a mocking bird began a monotonous singing; he turned on the volume.

After awhile he got up and showered, dressed himself, found his boots and coat, and headed for the door. On his way out he reached up to flick off the TV, but just as his hand reached the button he saw the brightly glowing band of pale skin. Something heavy and cold shifted deep down in his stomach.

He walked into the bathroom and looked on the back of the toilet. It was clean and bare. "Christ," he said, and got down on his hands and knees, digging around in the waste basket. But it was empty. He checked behind the toilet, then behind the door and in the tub. He went out and looked under the bed, under the end-tables and desk. He tore the blankets and sheets off the bed, shook them out. He rifled through the desk drawers, finding only some stationery and a bible. Then he checked the bathroom again.

Finally he came out and sat on the bed, the blankets and sheets piled up around his boots, his left hand held in the shaking right. He felt the smooth, hollow ring of skin around the finger and the hard rise of callous on the palm. But there was nothing there, no band of gold. Something large and hollow welled up like tears between his chest and groin.

"Christ," he said. "Oh Christ."



## DECLINING WEST

Fay Wright

Erin was in the bedroom packing a suitcase when Sam entered. Stopping, he leaned against the door, his lanky frame tense against the wood, his hands at his sides.

She placed her Hanes briefs, tank tops, and jogging bra in next to her dog-eared copy of *A Room of One's Own* and glanced up at Sam. No words. She returned to the dresser and pulled out her flannel nightgown, the one with blue and white geese on it. When he thought of her lean body, naked under that nubby fabric, her brown nipples pointing up and hard, making the geese come to attention, he wanted her badly. But all "wanting" was bad now.

"When is your presentation again?"

Tilting her head up while still folding the nightgown, "I'm not on until four on Sunday. What a time. The conference ends at six." She turned back to the dresser, grabbed a handful of socks and her one pair of lace panties, tucked, almost hidden, under the wool, and quickly tossed them into the suitcase. "Oh, well, 'Blossom where you're planted,' Marmie always says."

*God, I can't believe I just quoted my mother. If I don't get out of*

*this apartment in the next ten minutes, I'm going to go nuts. Sam knows. He saw the panties. He probably even checked to see if my diaphragm was still in the drawer. Screw him. He thinks if he holds on tight enough he can have me like the pennies he pinches. If I never eat another meatless spaghetti dinner as long as I live or hear him recite one more of John Donne's love-sick poems...*

She moved to the closet, grabbed two sweaters and her best faded Calvin Klein's off the shelf. These, worn with her high leather boots, would be the leisure clothes for the post functions. Academics loved to play at being casual Westerners after hours.

Sam's gray eyes followed her. Six years before, he had fallen in love with Erin in just such an outfit at an NCTE conference in Seattle. In tight jeans tucked into cordovan boots, a blue turtleneck, and an Irish knit fisherman's sweater, she looked like the perfect woman of the eighties: clear complexion, no visible makeup, bobbed hair just grazing her broad shoulders, long runner's legs, and a kinetic energy he thought would match his own--the kind of woman in TV commercials you see running along a California beach, mist on her thighs and throat, chasing white mustangs. A perfume would be named after her,

something salty and fresh.

*Erin, can't you remember any of it? We eyed each other all semester. First it was in the faculty lounge over bad coffee. You said something about Kerry needing braces and Tom getting ready to go out on his first date. We started talking about our kids. Then there was the Spring Fun Run. You would show up at the track right after my last class. You wore those thin t-shirts and blue nylon shorts. You got shin splints trying to keep up with me. I told you about better running shoes, New Balance and Nike. Recommended you buy some instead of those Penney's specials you wore. By the next fall, at the conference, we were both in the middle of divorces and the middle of wanting something perfect, something like poetry. Remember? It was October. We had planned it all summer. Alone in Seattle.*

The lounge at the Edgewater was crowded as the conferees mingled over plastic glasses of white chablis and flat beer. The serious drinkers sat at or near the bar and drank scotch.

Sam and Erin had just spotted each other and were winding their way through the denim and tweed bodies toward some point they had been conjuring all day.

Sam's heart pounded as he reached for her arm and something clever to say. What came out was, "Let's find a table."

They sat opposite each other, staring over the winking red candle. She flipped her auburn hair off her shoulders and smiled at the light. He was sure this was love--this desire to capture her attention, to become the flame so that not even their skin could separate them. He thought of two lines from Donne's poem, "Good-Morrow": "For love, all love of other sights controls, / And

makes one little room, an everywhere."

He reached under the table, took her cool hand in his warm one. "So, how did the workshops go?"

Her face became animated. "Oh, they were great! Professor Lendler's presentation on misogyny in the early Victorian era was incredible. It gives a whole new reading to Dickens. I never did like his books, but now I begin to see why. Have you ever read anything about his wife, Catherine Hogarth? My God, no wonder she went crazy, or at least the male doctors of the time called it crazy."

Sam watched her mouth move over her perfect teeth, watched her hands gesture around the candle as she made her points.

"After today, I'm more convinced than ever that I want to go one for my Ph.D in feminist criticism. Wouldn't it be perfect? We could both take leaves of absence, move to Seattle and just surround ourselves with *ideas* and thinking people. You could finally really pursue the writing you've always wanted to. Maybe go for a second Master's or an MFA. Oh, Sammy, let's do it." The waitress came to the table. "Can I get you another drink?"

Sam deferred to Erin. "Yes, I'll have a white zinfandel, lots of ice." Sam ordered a beer, whatever was on tap.

Just then the band started to play.

"Let's dance, Sam. Let's dance and dance and never stop."

Sam placed five dollars under the candle to pay for the drinks, and hand in hand they moved to the dance floor.

Erin threw herself into dancing. She moved about almost frantically, eyes closed, reminding him of Ibsen's Nora dancing the Tarantella. His lanky Montana frame created its own rhythm to match hers as they

danced and danced. The love they made that night was long and hard, a battle of hunger. He had never known there were so many possibilities; she had never known so much naivete.

Sam moved in with her and her children immediately, counting himself lucky to have caught such a wild creature. Later, in an invisible civil ceremony, they exchanged non-traditional rings: A small turquoise one for her, a thin silver band for him. She didn't want a gold band, but said the turquoise was fine. It didn't smack of male dominance, ownership, hegemony, all those traps she was learning the names for in her accelerated Feminist Lit classes. She didn't offer to buy him one, but wanting to be recognizably married, he bought the cheapest band he could find for himself.

For four years it was life as he'd dreamed it--an extended poem of good intention. But then there were the conferences.

Erin submitted papers to everyone she could find, and when she was accepted, which was often, she could hardly wait to fly away for those few expensive days, only to return flushed and remote.

Sam's own work was often accepted as well, but he could never understand spending the money to travel to a strange city, read and answer questions for an hour, and then "schmooze" for two or three days with other hopeful corduroy scholars. Since the work itself was what moved him, once it was completed and accepted, he was satisfied to let others present it.

Initially, Erin was mystified by this attitude of private accomplishment, but what began as strange admiration turned quietly, like roots unsnarling underground, to something dark. Such short steps between caring, disappointment, adjustment, reversal. In the mouths of some,

there is nothing more expedient than the word *love*.

And now, two years later, they stood in this cold bedroom.

So, should I pick you up at the airport?"

"No, there's really no need. Susan is going too. She'll drive and just leave her car on the lot. It's only three days. But we're taking the last flight out Sunday night, so don't wait up." Erin snapped the suitcase closed and looked around the crowded bedroom.

Books were piled from floor to ceiling. Two computers resided in opposite corners, while Sam's running clothes and small barbells were piled neatly under his favorite portrait of her, the one he took the weekend they went to Friday Harbor, their second anniversary. Puget Sound was blue and beautiful for those two days, and they ate shrimp and mussels and drank bottles of good wine. It was their second year together. In the picture, she was standing on the balcony of their room, looking out toward the bay, sun glinting off the water and her eyes. There were no pictures of Sam. Erin never took pictures, not even of the children. She always had someone else record the moments. The past never seem to interest her.

Now it was time to go. She headed out the door.

"Bye. I'll see you in a few days. Don't forget that Kerry has ballet tomorrow at two and Tom needs us to send that check to the university." Her lips grazed his cheek as she headed for the door.

There was no time to say, "Don't go. I love you and the pedant you're about to sleep with tonight wouldn't understand a 'Good Morrow' if it blew both his hemisphere's out," but she was gone.

He moved into the kitchen,



opened the refrigerator door, trying not to look at the pictures under the magnets--snapshots of the two of them in happier days: the beaches on San Juan Island, in San Diego, on Lake Coeur d'Alene--all the water they had shared. He grabbed the wine bottle by the throat and poured a tumbler of cabernet. "Cabernet should be served at room temperature," Erin would chide, but he had never learned to drink warm wine. Finally, it is the small things we cannot give in to, not even to save our lives. Wandering to the living room, he fell into the nearest chair and stared out the sliding glass doors at another gray, Seattle day.

It was over. Six years, one seventh of his life. But he couldn't seem to realize it, to open his fists and release it to the final sea. How was it possible to love someone so fully and so imperfectly? She was still the woman he wanted more than any other. Oh, yes, there was the student in his graduate poetry seminar, the one who wrote nothing but tightly structured conceits and wore black tights and off-the-shoulder sweatshirts, but he never actually bedded her. His line was always, "No one night stand is worth thirty thousand dollars." But the truth was, he didn't really *want* anyone but Erin.... Erin, in the morning in her unraveling, quilted robe, coffee mug in one hand, book in the other; Erin, running next to him on a rainy day, Seattle streets, thin thighs wet and pumping; Erin, challenging everything and everyone twenty-four hours a day. Erin....

He drained the glass, went to the kitchen, poured another, and leaned against the counter. Rain dripped off the eaves and landed steadily in the new flower bed--the Chinese water torture.

Seconds clicked by with digital accuracy.

What could it be about this

latest man? He had a Ph.D in statistics, for God's sake. Erin had introduced David and his wife, Sara, to Sam that second year at the university. She had met him at the computer lab one weekend when she had fled the house to work on a paper. The four of them began getting together on Fridays after classes for a drink. Then they started having dinners. David was a gourmet and did much of the cooking. Sam's only specialty was spaghetti--meatless, because he was a serious vegetarian and a nervous cook. Then were the plays, the concerts. Always the four. Always so friendly, so safe.

Sam began to see the looks Erin and this new, dark man exchanged, but he could not convince himself it was serious. There had been other men, usually younger, often students, but they had never really diverted her. He could tell because within weeks she would come rushing to him and make love so convincingly. Besides, there was so much work to do those last years of graduate school, and her children had so many demands. When could there have been time?

It was then the conferences began. Erin had papers accepted at conferences everywhere, and she always found the money (often from her parents) to attend and present. She was gone more and more. Finally, she slipped up. He found the diaphragm gone and that same month, when he thought she was in Portland at a conference while he was watching the kids and working on his dissertation, the Visa bill showed payment on a room down the coast from Portland. She said it had to be a mistake, a motel by the same name.

He still could not bear to say David's name out loud or to really imagine them together. (Did she open her mouth first encircling his? Did their tongues touch hard and wet, impatient to begin? He could not

let himself picture them.) Once he heard her say "I love you" to him over the extension phone. He tried to pretend he was on the other end.

The glass of wine slipped from his hand, and he watched it spread, red across the flowered time. "Blossom where you're planted."

He moved back to the living room, slid the doors open, and exited.

The air was damp and smelled of dirt. Erin had been planting flowers the day before. He stood for minutes and tried to breathe, tried to remember how it had once been, how once upon a time she had made Russian teacakes and had turned to him with flour on her nose and throat, laughing at one of his jokes, how once upon a time....

It began to rain. Then, slowly, Sam knelt down, his legs sore from his morning run, the miles he used to forget, and he reached out to touch one of the new flowers, but as soon as he felt the wet leaves he began to tear out the bedding plants.

"I wonder, by my troth," six begonias...

"What thou and I did, till we loved?" four blue lobelia...

"We're not weaned till then?" two chrysanthemums, large and bitter...

"If ever any beauty I did see, which I desired and got, 'twas but a dream of thee." His voice dropped to a whisper.

In one, mad sweep, he ripped out an entire wall of pink geraniums and white petunias, the smell almost overwhelming him.

"And now good morrow to our waking souls, which watch not one another out of fear; For love, all love of other sights controls and makes one little room, an everywhere."

All that remained was the red rose bush, an anniversary gift to her last year. David and Sara had been there celebrating with them. They

all drank red wine and toasted the day.

He leaned over it slowly, methodically.

"My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears." The words began to choke in his dry throat.

In two more hours she would gaze into those brown eyes of her lover, dancing another Tarantella.

"And true plain hearts do in the faces rest; where can we find two better hemispheres..."

He refused himself the comfort of gloves. He pulled straight up, the thorns tearing his right palm, the blood redder than the cabernet.

"Without sharp north, without declining west?"

He tore the rose, up and out, flung it to the side of the dark apartment, and wiped the blood on his jeans.

"Whatever dies was not mixed equally...."

Tears spilled onto his cold cheeks as he began to run down the hill, across the bridge, and toward the university. He could see the lights twinkling in the rain, could feel his heart pounding.

That winter it rained 120 days straight. ☐

### BIVERSE

Big black nemesis--milky way  
galaxy candy bar--fat content?  
Battery run planetary revolution  
like those big dangling earrings.  
Moon beauty--polar object that drives us to love  
like Days of our Lives and John Fitzgerald Kennedy,  
these are true feelings.  
Sun, source, our lives depend upon  
new maroon Taurus, satellite dish-free cable t.v.  
and 3\$ off a Large,  
with NOTHING on it.

--Jennifer Boyd

### TALK TWO

Words crowd between us,  
running in ugly lines;  
they increase and expand,  
filling the chasm,  
stretching it wider  
than our hands can reach across,  
words working like the water  
that seeps into the cracks of rocks,  
and through freezing and refreezing,  
eventually breaks them apart.

--Donna Rhodes

**BUY--BECAUSE YOU'RE WORTH IT**

I want, I need  
Cafe au Lait eyes  
(or is Sable better?)  
and lips of Rose Dawn  
(or will Razzle Dazzle Red  
make me more worthy?)

I need  
the smooth skin of Max Factor's Pancake  
(activated by water, like science),  
and cheeks aglow  
with Revlon's Terra Cotta,  
to go incognito.

I want  
the eyes of L'Oreal's Lash-Out  
(fit for Scarlet O'Hara  
and coy Mata Hari)  
for my double identities  
and erotic diversions.

The face  
savors The Look to hide behind  
and learns to love  
the wiles of the female impersonator  
and the disguises  
hiding the fairer sex.

Ah, to be fair,  
to be fine,  
to be real.  
To buy me a shield  
in a mask of makeup  
--because I'm worth it.

--Sandra Haarsager

**A POEM (FOR FA MU LAN)**

Let's just say (because I can't say),  
That the other day I was shaving  
My legs (composing a poem), folded in  
Half under the showerhead; wet, naked  
(Isn't there something elemental about  
That?)--and not paying any attention  
To the task (or the razor) at hand.  
Of course, shaving doesn't require much  
Concentration (however, without some  
Presence of mind you're likely to  
leave rows of hair unharvested). So  
Subsequently, (maybe I do think too  
much or maybe just in the wrong places),  
I managed to carve a disturbingly  
Long gash right along the thin tendon  
That stretches above the middle point  
Of the ankle bone; the pain was proportionate  
To the stupidity of the act, (and it  
Really hurt). The funny part about the  
Whole thing was that I was thinking  
About how to write a poem (with voice)  
That would convey my distress at the  
Fact that I consistently hide myself  
(in just about everything I do).  
And I was just beginning to smile at the  
Aureole liberty glimmering around a twenty-two  
Year old corner--when the instantaneous  
Sting of soap running into a freshly hewn  
Wound pricked me into realization:  
I've submerged my voice in order to never  
Stand naked (and I'm still getting hurt).

--Melinda Hallen

# A VERY HIGH LEVEL OF CAT

William B. Henkel

---

Tom's a pretty big guy. Not just anyone can stop by his place, though he makes it seem like they could with his barrel chested, back slapping, old-lady hugging style. You see, Tom's a populist.

He gets my vote every time he runs, which is just about every election. He even won twice. What for? Treasurer? Yeah, I think it was city treasurer. He was also deputy mayor for a while--that I'm positive. And the rest of the time? Well, you know.

I first met Tom through my buddy Lloyd, who had somehow pulled off the coup of scoring a few tickets to one of Tom's social galas. Lloyd told me: "You see Bates," (Bates is my name); "Bates, I must preface this all important rendezvous with Tom and his circle of notables to give the following prescient forewarning, you see, because Tom is a very high level of cat, so tonight is very close to being the epic and mythological center of your life, and thus you must behave with your utmost couth." Lloyd liked

to pack a lot of words into his sentence--he was always trying to sound like a butler or a prize fighter or something without ever quite pulling it off; but nevertheless I always heard him out, and I was sure that tonight I would walk on egg shells in front of the high level of cat, Tom. And to Lloyd's credit, he had gotten us invited.

We arrived at Tom's mansion, which was all lit up like a Christmas tree, with finely dressed ladies and gentlemen rubbing shoulders and nodding their heads importantly by the shining windows, leaning up against rounded, dustless corners or against smooth Olympic columns, under priceless chandeliers. We were greeted at the door by a large three-piece-suited brute who tilted over Lloyd and me, reviewing our shaky credentials. It seemed to me that this brute was barely controlling an urge to tear our limbs off. And it struck me that perhaps it was his three piece suit that was somehow responsible for controlling this primitive and his violent urges. I became fascinated by the top button of his bulging beige coat, as if it were a secret to controlling this monster, and I waited for the button to pop its last thread and send the button flipping slow-motion through the air, the presage to Lloyd and my final moments on earth. He leaned over us and his rose lapel was at

mustache level; its static charge tickled my nostril hairs on down to some deep zone within me.

"Aaaaaachooooo!" I said.

The bouncer said: "This party ain't for ugly people. You guys aren't thinking of doing anything ugly are you?"

I was holding in a second sneeze as Lloyd answered for us: "To the utmost contrary, my good man, we seek only to mingle with our co-equals and perspective peers at this fine social gathering of like-minded populist-voting notables, and I can assure you that--"

"Kay, 'kay, ga ahead in; get outta here; go on in," the bouncer told us.

As we shuffled through the door into the main room, Lloyd kept up his pep talk: "You see, Bates, what I was relating to you about our Big Man Tom is that... What's the matter? Do you have allergies or something?"

I was rubbing my watery eyes and squinching around my itchy nose. "Naw," I told Lloyd, "just got nose full of the primate's rose at the door. I'm fine."

"Good, my fine buddy; pull yourself together. It is high time that we mingle with the elite."

We dove right into that flowing, mingling crowd of the city's giants, and Lloyd boldly entered us into many good conversations, which I couldn't help notice broke up soon after our arrival. Lloyd told me my awkward silence was turning people off, but I couldn't help thinking that, maybe, it was more Lloyd's bony shoulders--which were quite aggressive in shoving into closed groups of gossipers--that were the primary reason for our initial lack of social luck.

I had my eyes on the trays of grilled sausage and deviled-eggs that kept sweeping by, and trays of gin and even champagne that circulated. But Lloyd would only let

me take one hors d'oeuvre at a time, and he absolutely forbade me to drink.

"Lloyd, you don't get it," I told him. "All this stuff is free."

"No," he replied, "it's you Bates who doesn't get it. You must believe tonight that you have class, and you must act accordingly. We are in the vicinity of a very high level of cat, remember that."

I tried to remember: Tom, a very high level of cat.

I saw Lloyd's plan, and I must admit it was pretty impressive to watch him maneuver us towards the Big Man Tom himself, like we were waltzing from one circle of talk to the next, twirling ever closer to the center of this high-life universe. Lloyd shouldered us in and we--well, I should say mostly Lloyd--shared our views on such grave and high-minded matters as the new gambling laws, the strength of meat packers union local 505, this new supreme court nominee who was accused of several horrible perversions, the odd shifting calendar on Columbus Day, and the ever increasing crime in our city streets.

This last one I actually chimed in on, because my buddy Maloney recently got mugged in his 7-Eleven by some thuggy youths. Everyone shut up and listened to me as I explained how he splashed a Coke slurpee in their face and then quickly followed with a big gulp of coffee that he had hidden behind the counter, which so diabolized the thugs that their thieving plan was completely thwarted, because by this time Maloney was screaming his lungs out and a few curious passer-bys were peeping in to see what the ruckus was about, so the half-blinded thugs got scared and turned and ran for it.

I was feeling pretty good about having finally thrown in a piece of

my mind, and I was starting to go back over what I thought were the relevant details of my story to make sure I hadn't left anything out. But Lloyd shot me one of his shut-up-now-glances, so I let it go at that. I took the opportunity of the lull in the conversation to call over some grilled sausage, and I even grabbed one of those floating drinks in the thrill of the moment, even though I knew it was forbidden.

A fine, gray-templed gentleman asked me, "Well, did the local pedestrians catch these thugs?"

"That I couldn't say, sir," I responded. "Maloney didn't tell me anything about that."

I was feeling really part of this party now, sorta flushed with my success, you might say. And I was thinking up some other stories to tell my new circle of friends, but Lloyd had me by the elbow and was pulling me out of the crowd. "Wha d'ya crazy?" he hissed at me with his whisper which is as loud as you and I talk, so he might as well have just come out and said it in a regular voice, but he hissed: "Bates, you're not supposed to tell tales of common thievery in this elevated atmosphere, don't you see? And now you're drinking too. Pretty soon your good pal the primitive at the door is gonna chuck you bodily out of here, friend. Please now Bates, say something elevated and sophisticated, or keep your silence."

But just then we were shanghaied from behind by my gray-templed pal--the one who had asked about the local pedestrians--and he had with him the man himself, Big Tom, who he was holding by the arm while pointing me out. "This young gentleman," I heard him tell my pal Big Tom, "has a very interesting story to tell about a local theft." Lloyd was immediately all over himself trying to introduce us with his butler words, and I was

about to take Big Tom's hand in mine, but that second sneeze which I had so effectively stifled for so long chose this moment to emerge, and all of a sudden too, with surprising force, which caused me to splash my gin all over Big Tom's silk pant leg. Lloyd's face went white as the dead, and he and couple of attendant looking boys immediately fell to their knees and were doing their utmost to erase this event from the history of the world with shirt-tails and cocktail napkins. But Big Tom waved them away and smiled broadly at me saying, "Don't mind the pants... And bless you," the latter being directed at my sneeze.

That I appreciated; so I repeated my story about my buddy Maloney to Big Tom, this time (with the warm-up I'd had) embellishing it with all sorts of relevant details, such as the exact time of night, and the weather outside, and even what the thugs were after, which was a six-pack of Mickey's Big Mouth. The Big Man was taking it all in, and nodding his substantial head from time to time. Lloyd stood by my side, gaping at my success. The Big Man even saw that I was going to sneeze again, now that the dam was broken, and he took out his own personal pressed and embroidered handkerchief for me to sneeze into, which I did. And let me tell you that it was a great relief to have a handkerchief to sneeze in. And it didn't escape my notice that it was the Big Man's himself, which I'll never forget, and which is why I have, and will always vote for Big Tom, no matter what he runs for. He wouldn't even let me give that handkerchief back to him, so I stuffed it into my front pocket, and I think I kept it there for weeks afterwards, until I finally took it out, washed it and hung it on my mirror in my toilet so I could look at it and check out those



embroidered initials "TC" every morning.

Big Tom handed me another drink and told me that he would personally look into this theft, and I could go tell Maloney, and my whole neighborhood that he, Big Tom the Populist, would bring these thugs to justice, which of course I agreed to do, and later did. The Big Man clapped me on the shoulder with a ham hand and told me what a fine lad I was, and swept on (I was sure) to solve some other perplexing crime or problem of voter discontent. It was a magical moment, as if Superman had just flown down to tell me that me and my buddies were covered. Lloyd leaned against me with one hand on my shoulder to steady himself, silent probably for the first time in his life, until he finally started to murmur to me over and over and

over, "Well done, Bates; utmostly well done, Bates...."

So Lloyd and I were converts, and whenever we heard that the Big Man was running for something, we'd rush to print up some fliers, and nail them around our neighborhood. And we'd knock on doors too, and tell everyone what a gentleman Big Tom was, and we'd usually bring up how he put away forever those thugs who held up Maloney's 7-Eleven, just like he promised. We were our own election team, and I'm not sure if the Big Man ever knew, but I'm certain we swung a number of key votes with our convincing and heart-felt arguments on his behalf. We had a buddy who was a very high level of a cat, and we weren't about to forget it. ☐

## ***University of Idaho Bookstore...***

***...not just textbooks  
anymore.***

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NEEDS NO NAME

She told me it was fair  
to step on toes  
while getting the story,  
to inform the public

that it wasn't unethical  
film the widow's pain  
and ask how he died  
because it's in the name of news.

She frankly offered that  
journalism is a job.  
It has no limits  
and very few guidelines,  
said people watch us because we  
report the whole picture,  
that because we are doing our job,  
it's not intruding.

They called her a human news machine  
never crying  
rarely resting  
always going.

Her colleagues respected  
the work she did,  
the way she would report  
without involvement,  
the way she pushed till  
she got what she needed.

Witnesses say the plane  
made a sudden drop,  
like hitting a windpocket...

said the plane must  
have hit the ground  
and bounced, stopping  
bottom side up, top side down

tearing the plane apart  
and scattering it  
over three hundred yards.

The plane slammed into  
Cow Catcher Ridge  
and became a ball of flames  
barely after take-off

shuffling purses,  
wallets and watches with  
camera parts and melted  
pieces of plane.

But it was only those colleagues  
 who learned the destruction  
 a news machine can cause,  
 the feeling of  
 intruding journalists  
 who watched and recorded them cry

A plane carrying a Boise  
 Television news crew crashed  
 late Monday night

when they tried to say  
 goodbye

All aboard were killed.

--Lara Therese MacConnell

### BLACK SNAG

When it was over,  
 passion and blame abandoned,  
 we divided linens, lamps, and pans,  
 claimed gifts intended to be shared,  
 picture, vase, Ukrainian egg,  
 took back books that for ten years  
 had slept together.

Packing, I memorized each room,  
 heard the conversations, moans, and rhythms  
 of our bodies in quilts,  
 our work in desks and reading chairs,  
 sounds embedded in the walls,  
 and forged indelible the vista from each window  
 as if warned I would go blind.

When I left that day,  
 glad I knew the road by heart,  
 I looked up and away, not back or ahead,  
 recited, "jezo hondo spruce, broadleaf maple,  
 forsythia, red tipped photinia,"  
 and saw a skein of geese fly  
 in their primal V and a red hawk  
 survey the hill from a black snag.

--Monza Naff

# THE HEX

Michael E. Burczynski

When Elsie Jo Dawn Russel waltzed into the store, shaking her big butt like a pregnant cheetah in that black polka-dot yellow dress, I could a puked. Right there, from behind the counter, spewing food, just coverin' her feathered-hat, fake auburn-headed self with this mornin's ham and eggs and grits. But I didn't. No, I just raised my head and looked down my nose at her.

"Mornin', Elsie Jo. What ya come fer today?"

"Wayallll," she began, fluttering her long old eyelashes like a dumb cluck, "I need some fingernail files and a new hairdryer. Mine done wore out yestiday."

Good Lord Above it did, trying to dry that tangly mess atop her head. One of them boer constricters could have been asleep in there and I wouldn't of noticed. Hair that long on a woman her age is trashy. That's the only word for it.

"Well, the fingernail files are over here at the end of the counter," I said, with a nod of my head, "and the only hairdryer we got is that Miss Clairol one back in the back. It's been here God-knows-how-long." She turned and looked at me like that was bad or something. "But it's fine, far as I know."

The little Miss Priss whirled and walked down aisle 4, her black lace slip showin' underneath all that dress until it settled down again, halfway past the magazine rack. And all them African-faced necklaces and bracelets jinglin' away, with her tryin' "to git in touch with my ancestry" and all that other nonsense I heard her talkin' about the other night after the Tupperware party at Mamie's.

"Norma?" Her squeaky voice rang in my ears. Still does. Gives me the chills.

Anyway, Norma? she asked and I swore she could have irritated St. Peter into cussin' up a storm. How Jim Russel managed to stand the woman, I don't know. I wouldn't be surprised at all if they was hav-in' marital problems. Not one bit. "Norma?" she said a second time.

"Wait a minute, I'll be right there." It ain't like I've got all day to wait on her hand and foot. I need to tend to the front, just in case somebody else comes in. Nooooo partiality, I always say. Don't matter how rich you are, you won't get any better service out of me.

"Norma!"

"I'm a comin, I'm a comin." Stupid hussy. "Now what's the matter Elsie Jo, honey?"

She had got the hair dryer out of the box, holding it in her limp left hand like it's soooo boring to be

here. In my store. Ain't nothing wrong with my store. And I've done fine for myself after all these years. Real fine. Little snot. She ain't never worked a day in her life. Just smiled and looked purty during high-school, married Jim Russell and then sat back and let him do all the bread-winnin'. Disgustin'.

"Norma, this hairdryer is too heavy for me. I could never use this thang. My ahm would just fall right off."

Well la de da. Maybe I could buy you an armrest for your birthday.

"Haven't ya got anything else?"

Like I should cater to her every beck and call. "No Elsie Jo, I don't. If you can't use that one then you'll have to go into the big city and find a lighter one."

Well, she didn't like that at all. She sniffled and let out a big "humph" like a sow givin' birth. "I guess I'll just take the fingernail files then, I guess," she said with her back turned. She just set the hair dryer back on top of the glossy box with the pretty white lady's face on it--didn't even think of puttin' it back good and proper.

"Ahem." I made that little cough that lets a person know you ain't pleased with the way they're actin', and I whirled around on my heel and walked ahead of her back up the aisle and straight to the front counter.

I didn't even ask her if that's all like I do other customers. I just rung those babies up and stared out the window. "That'll be 89 cents, with the tax."

She dropped it on the table, out of her gawdy gold-sequined change purse and counted it out. "87, 88... 89." She said the eighty-nine all proudly, like she'd accomplished somethin' great by havin' enough pennies. "Bye now, Norma."

I just raked the money into my hands and didn't even look up. Goll dog it anyway, she always

could burn me up.

Yes, Lawd. Them's exactly the thoughts that was rollin' through my mind that day. Who could've knowed what was gonna happen next? That stupid buck-toothed Jimmy Moose Brown--sixteen years old and gawkin' and carryin' on with that girlfriend of his, not even paying attention to the road...

Good lord. One minute she was sayin' goodbye to me and the next thing I saw was the pavement slowly coverin' up with red ink. I thought it was red ink, that is, until I saw it rollin' right out of the corner of old Elsie Jo's mouth. She's lying there in the road, little Jimmy just standin' over her sayin, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Please don't tell daddy." And Elsie Jo all the while just layin' there, lookin' across at me. Her mouth started movin', and I scuttled into the middle of the street to go to her.

"Jimmy, you go call the amberlance right now!" I shouted at the fool when I walked up, and I thought it shook him out of his childish self. But his head lifted up, and then started to roll around, and then I knew he was about to faint. "Jimmy! Boy, I don't want to have to whup you right now! Now you go call that amberlance!" His head started to straighten, and that scaird, stupid look left his eyes. "GO!" I shouted, and he took up and lit out like a scalded dog.

When I looked back down at Elsie Jo, she'd turned her head and was starin' straight up at the sky and me. "Now, now honey, you jest lay still now. We'll git that amberlance to you in jest a second and then you'll be asleep with that laughin' gas afore you know it." I smiled down at her, tryin' to comfort the poor woman. When she spoke, though, I knew it weren't no use. I ain't never felt so bad.

"Nnnnoooooorrrmmrrraaaah..." she said, so slow and careful that it must a taken her a whole minute, "yyyooooouuuuuuuuuu gonnrrrrnaaa gitt itttsssss." Her eyes sparkled for a split second, and I ain't never been so scaird, either. She started to grin, and the blood trail out of the corner of her mouth made her look like some bad person dressed up like a clown. That pink rouge of hers on her cheeks, them long eyelashes, those crazy, laughin' eyes. I was too scaird to do nothin' but just sit there with her, holdin' her hand and pattin' it, tryin' not to look at them eyes but unable not to, lookin' down at them every now and then and feelin' them stare right through me, but even though they stared directly through me they laughed right at me. I started to wonder if she'd gotten into voodoo and then felt terrible as soon as I'd thought it. I asked the Lord to forgive me, and then I was able to look around and not down at her for a long time.

I started talkin' to her again. "Look at them silly squirrels on that telephone wire," I said, trying to get her mind off of what she had to be thinkin'. She didn't say nothin'. "And mercy, listen to them swallows! Ain't good fer nothin', is they?" She didn't answer. I finally looked down at her again and her eyes was already closed. I saw her hand movin' and reached out to grab it but stopped-- she was movin' her fingers real fast and settin' up them spilled fingernail files into some kind of hocus pocus hyroglicific, and then she started mumblin' my name real low over and over. I could smell her raspy, bloody breath. It was that sweet kind of smell that makes you sick, like spoilt fish or being in a cow pasture during the spring rains. She started to gasp up at me, her eyes still closed, her mouth still crooked up in that red grin stretchin' all across her face. She started to

choke so I tried to lean her head to one side but her neck was stiff as a new fence post. At my touch them eyes flared open again. The sirens started to rise with that familiar up and down noise and she grabbed my wrist lightnin' quick. I was backin' away, slippin' and holdin' my dress up with my arm and her holdin' on to my wrist so tight that I started draggin' her across the street, when she pulled back hard enough to stop me and looked up at me. The amberlance skidded to a stop behind me, but I didn't pay them hollerin' medics no attention at all. I was lookin' at Elsie Jo, and she was lookin' at me. She started to grin even bigger, started to say "Noorrrmma--" and then she started to cough, louder and louder, her whole body twistin' and convulsin' until she finally let go of my wrist and I got up and out of the way as fast as these old bones could move. Once them medic boys loaded her up on the stretcher, I gathered my courage and walked beside her to the back of the amberlance, smoothin' all that hair across her forehead. She was breathin' loud and steady again, them crazy eyes just rolled up and fixed on me no matter what I did or started to say. I had to stop at the back of the amberlance--they wouldn't let me get in. I stood there and looked at her as they picked her stretcher up off the ground and loaded her up into the back. Them eyes of hers was still lookin' at me, and when they started to swing the doors shut, she shot up and hollered it out.

"Don't let her do it!" she yelled, and pointed out towards the end of the amberlance where I was standin'. "Don't let it happen!" And as quick as that she was plopped down again, breathin' hard and difficult and the doors swung shut and then they drove off.

When I turned around and

started to head back into my store I noticed all the people that'd gathered around, on the sidewalk and in the street and had witnessed the whole thing. "What happened, Norma?" seemed like everybody was askin' me, and I jest pushed through all them people without a word. They stopped pesterin' me when they realized I was slowly walkin' back to my store, and one by one they all got up and left too, I guess. When I walked back into the store, I let the old torn up screen door slam behind me. I walked back to the back and started puttin' that Miss Clairol hair dryer back into that box with the pretty white lady's face on it and suddenly I just cried and cried, for I-don't-know-how-long.

Elsie Jo died on the long ride to the county hospital. I know when it happened, 'cause it was when that big wind came up and blew those fingernail files up, up and away. Up until that time that afternoon, nobody'd driven down Robinson Road after the accident. Superstition, or respect for the dead, I guess. I'd done stopped crying and closed up the shop early, and was sittin' out on the porch of the store in my favorite bamboo rocker when that big wind come up. You could hear it comin', it seemed, for miles. A big roar building up in the distance, making a sound like "SHWORLD" and then a "WHOOSH" as it came barrelin' down the street. I had to shut my eyes as I was lookin' directly into it, for all the dust it was stirrin' up. My hat up and took off my head--I reached for it but missed it, and didn't even try to go runnin' for it. It wouldn't've been no use. I looked upwards at the sky, and saw the clouds rollin' into angry, puffed-up faces. It got real black, and it seemed like evening was fallin', but then it got lighter and the wind died down

as sudden as it'd started.

That was when I noticed them fingernail files was gone. I mean, I hadn't noticed that they was still there in the middle of the street until I noticed that they were gone after the big wind come up, but now that it had and they was gone, I noticed that they was gone.

I realized then that I'd been thinkin' about them fingernail files, wonderin' what Elsie Jo had been doin' with them things before she got took to the hospital. I'd been meaning to get Mamie Johnson's boy to look at 'em and tell me what he thought they symbolized before I swept 'em up out of the street and into the trash. She always said he wanted to be an arkyologist someday. Maybe he'd have knowed what they meant. But they was gone now. Weren't no use to sit there and cry over spilled milk. I got up and started to walk back to the house, keepin' an eye out for my straw hat.

The Lord Himself couldn't've prepared me for what came next. There I was, just hummin' my way up the steps of my house when I looked down and there they were. But in a new symbol now. All ten of them fingernail files just sittin' there on the welcome mat, lookin' like a star or a spider or somethin' else wicked, just waitin' for me to cross the threshold above it.

Well, needless to say I didn't step foot across them evil files. Instead I turned right around and walked down the road to Mamie's house and banged loud enough on her front door to wake the dead.

"What in the world--" I heard her start to say, but when she opened the door and saw me standin' there she took me by the arm and led me inside. "Oh you poor dear. You must be traumatized by what happened today. Come on over here and have a seat on the couch. Would you like

some tea child?" She looked down at me and wrung her hands beneath her big chest, earnest as ever I have to admit. I regained my senses.

"Well I don't mind if I do, Mamie. I been workin' all day--matter of fact, I didn't even eat lunch come to think of it." She smiled real big at that, and hustled right off through the swinging doors to her kitchen, calling behind her, "Alright then honey, you just sit right there and I'll cut you a big ole turkey sandwich in a split second." I leaned back and propped my feet up on the coffee table. "Turn on the T.V. too, if you feel like it," came her voice from the kitchen.

Well, sooner or later Mamie come back and I told her all about it. Them files just layin' there, waitin' for me to step across their evil symbol and electrocute me to death. We both got an awful case of the willies when I told her about it.

"I wander what Elsie Jo was up to..." Ole Mamie wondered out loud.

"I ain't got a clue," I said, and then remembered what I'd come over there for. I ate my last bite of that sandwich and took a big gulp of that delicious ice tea of Mamie's. "Yer boy likes that kind of what-not, don't he?" I asked her politely, wiping a big glob of mayonaisse from my lip with a napkin.

"Lawd yes-- he know all about it. Lawd that boy thinks he's Doctuh Livinstun or somethin'." Then Ole Mamie's eyes got real big and she knew exactly what I was thinkin' and she knew I knew what she was thinkin' and that ole girl let out a bellow for Hubba J (that's her son's name, short for Herbert Johnson) that like to blew my ears off. "HUBBA! Git down here quick! I need you, boy!"

"What you need!?" Little Hubba J yelled from down the hall.

"Boy, you know I don't have to ask you nothin' twice. Git yo lazy bones in this livin' room right now!"

Well, Little Hubba apparently knew when and when not to push his mama and this was one of them times. Couple of minutes later he come beboppin' down the hall and wandered into the room. He stood at the other end of the couch beside the lamp with the pretty velvet shade and all them gold tassles. Soon as I saw that boy I thought to myself "Gaaa, he sho does look like a crazy goofball with them thick glasses slapped across his head like that big-ass basketball player Kareem Abba Jabba or whatever his name was." But of course I didn't say nothin'. I just smiled and listened.

Mamie told him all about the evil symbdol settin' on my front porch, and ten minutes later we was standin' behind the boy while he nodded his head up and down and bent down on his hands and knees and looked at it real close. I peered over his hunched shoulders and jumped a little bit when he suddenly stood up. "Yep," he said, "you sho got a hex put on you."

I could of died right then and there. Me, of all people! Good Lord Above! I ain't never did nothin' to nobody all my life! And here I am stuck with a hex. Damn.

"What you talkin' 'bout, boy?" Mamie looked down at him with her head tilted to one side and her lips poked out a mile and her eyebrows raised almost above her head. That twairn't no question--it was a threat.

"Mama, I can't help what I done studied." Little Hubba looked at me quick, to avoid that awful face Mamie was makin'. "Miz Norma, you done got a hex. I seed it before in Egyptian ruins. They explained all them ruins in a book I got and what each ruin means. This one looks like Sheever, and boy that lady was mean, with six or eight arms all wavin' around and gobblin' people up whenever she felt like it. She was



the goddess of destruchin'."

Holy Moly, I fainted. Right there and then. He said that about that Sheever lady and I keeled over, 'cause them fingernail files looked just like her.

And so here I is in the hospital, 'cause I broke my hip when I fainted. And of all the people to come by and visit me, Big Jim Russell dropped by yestiday. He sat right there on the end of the bed and after listenin' to my story just lied his head off, tellin' me how he knew that Elsie Jo was hard to get along with some of the time but that warn't no reason to accuse her of voodoo. He said there was some logistical

way of thinkin' 'bout it, that that just couldn't've happened in coincidence. "Maybe somebody found them in the street and put 'em there 'cause they knew they was yours, he said."

I sat there, 'cause I'm a lady, and it ain't right for a lady to talk back to any man, especially a poor feller widowed so recently. But I know the truth. Ole Elsie Jo was afraid I'd steal her husband and so she put the hex on me. With her dyin' breath. Didn't do no good though. She broke my leg all right, but I done got her man. I seen the way he looked at me, in my nightgown and my leg hiked up in that cast.

I bet Ole Elsie Jo jest did a three-sixty in her grave. ☞

### SILVER CITY DAYS

Chinaman  
 On a bright red bench,  
 Me and my siter  
 Our hammer, our nails,  
 Your Que.  
 Slowly, quietly, anxiously,  
 We creep,  
 Like slithering snakes  
 Through the dust.  
 Now behind you  
 We connect the bench  
 To your Que.  
 What trouble!  
 A night in jail for me.  
 Our father is the SHERIFF,  
 And there is order to keep.  
 So he beat the brat,  
 And the little wench,  
 Who nailed that poor man's Que  
 To that bright red bench.

--Seth Platts

# LENO'S FEAST

Nowick Gray

---

Councilman Leno Atack sat at his desk, his face in his hands. It was a good job, he told himself, the best he could ask for. But he was tired--even though he hadn't moved from these pale, blank walls all day. Leno arched his back and loudly groaned. His stout chest ached from sitting so long; his eyes watered from poring over so many documents, memos and government reports. The stack of them on his desk teetered like a poorly-built *inukshuk*, a man of stones pointing the way somewhere on a bleak, windy day. Leno took a deep breath, flexed his stubby fingers, and looked to the window, where he could see outside how cold it was. He thought of the time when he was ten and his fingers had nearly frozen on such a day, when his family still lived out on the land.

Leno looked at his watch. It was 3:15. Time to go home; he'd worked enough. The kids were already out of school now--why not everyone else? This was like school, but more lonely. There weren't the others to joke around with, the teacher to fool. There were other Council members, sure, but they didn't need to hold down the office as Leno did. It only took one, and he'd been the lucky one to get the job.

He put on his parka, tying up the wolfskin-fringed hood around his face, and walked out the long, low building to the crisp snow. Skidoos rumbled past; kids played in their roundabout way home from school. Leno didn't even know half of them. He walked the long way home, around the snow-packed road that squared the block of houses. He should have gone up the back alleyway, but today he wanted a bit more exercise. He finally came round to the house he'd been given to rent when he was elected to the Council, two winters ago--the white one with the tag on it reading "41." As he walked up to it on the shoveled path, Leno thought with pride what a fine, large, warm house it was. He'd done pretty well for himself. And he was only forty.

Thin, greyish-blue smoke from the oil burner was rising from the chimney pipe, and Leno wondered what there would be to eat that his wife Mary would be preparing. But today it was too early yet for supper. He'd sit down for some tea and bannock with her. As he opened the front door, he heard a muffled voice and the loud closing of the back porch door. A skidoo started up and roared away. Now who was that, he wondered.

Leno walked through the living room to the kitchen. Mary was standing near the door to the porch, as if

at a loss for what to do. Her face was flushed. Leno asked, in the native Inuktitut he and his wife still used at home, "Who was that, Mary?"

The round face of his squat wife turned away. Yes, she was still pretty. But this was too much. "Who was that, I said!"

She turned back to him, suddenly flaming mad. "It was Robert, the teacher," she blurted. "And I don't appreciate being talked to like that."

"And what did he want?"

"Just to talk about Lizzie's schoolwork. She's not trying very hard. We're supposed to talk to her about it."

"Oh we are, are we?" And suddenly the old resentments broke through from their long buildup like green river water at the spring breakup. "So she can get good marks and go to boarding school down south and get a good job like me, only for her it'll be as a typist in the School Board office where all those stuffed pricks can walk by and peer up her skirt? No way. She shouldn't even be in that school. We should take her out right now and teach her how to do the work of the Inuit women, before she's totally useless--unless it's too late already."

Mary at first reacted to Leno's outburst with dumb surprise, but then she patiently waited for her say. "Well, this is a different tune from you. I'm not sure what I'm hearing. The great graduate of the white man's system now wants to tell our daughter that it was all a mistake, and the Inuit should go back to starving in our igloos. Or is it just for the women to go back to scraping their filthy animal skins, chewing rotten meat for their babies to suck on, sewing with bone needles till..."

Leno's fuming glare stopped her short. She must have realized the offense she was causing, for her eyes,

now damp, were downcast. Leno was taken aback by his wife's torrent of words, and he could only stand there confronting her in angry silence, searching his thoughts for words. He'd only heard this sentiment about the plight of women, until now, in newspapers and radio interviews from the south. What a state had things come to when the woman in her home could pick up such ideas--she must have heard them on the radio, too--and turn them against the husband in an argument like this. And then there was the "visit" by this white teacher, the tall, bearded, single man, Robert. What was he doing here so soon after school, anyway? He should have been in the classroom marking papers or erasing the board. She's afraid to look me in the eye, Leno thought.

He decided to hold on to his suspicions at this point and not to provoke any more such disturbing discussion. He stalked out into the living room with the satisfaction of the victor, but with the self-consciousness of the defeated. He turned on the TV set and sat in his threadbare armchair, the one he'd salvaged from one of the teacher's houses when the School Board sent up new furniture.

Mary had looked up and stood there at the kitchen doorway, staring at him. Leno felt her eyes on him as he picked at the chipped wood on the arm of his chair and tried to watch "Mickey Mouse Club" on the TV. He realized what a caribou must feel like when it's aware it's being hunted without yet seeing the hunter. Then she turned back with a final muttering under her breath to the kitchen to start working on supper.

The next day, after a night of poor sleep, of alienation from his wife's body and spirit, Leno sat down at his desk in the Council office to

tackle the day's work. Staring at the document before him, he felt, with some amusement, like a pupil waiting for the teacher to prod him to get to work. Just like he used to do, in fact. And from the sound of it, just like his daughter Lizzie was doing, probably at that very moment. Waiting for Robert to prod her.

No, Leno forced himself to think, not yet. She's only eleven. Was it too late to take her out of school? Probably. It was too bad that Lizzie was their only child. All the fault of those butchers at the hospital in Moose River, where Mary had been flown for the birth. They'd cut out her ovaries while they were inside her for the caesarean. And for no good reason that he was ever told.

Now, with only one child to raise, there was no room to experiment with different cultural paths, the way some parents did with their kids. One would be sent to school, the next one would be kept home to learn traditional skills, a third might be sent back and forth, like Lizzie's chum Sala Putak... who wasn't doing any better or worse than Lizzie in school, but was probably a bad influence.

No, Leno hadn't spoken to her last night about her schoolwork. Why encourage her on the same road he'd taken? Who knows, she might bounce him out of a job before he knew it. Then where would he be? No, it was too late to change the course she was on, but still not worth helping Robert and the others make her any more white than she wanted to be. So that was that. Now, where was he?

The memo. The long, official looking memo that smelled of more work that he'd put off dealing with, and that had remained stubbornly on the top of his ungainly pile of papers. It had come from Richard James, the village's Government agent, who served as middleman

between the Inuit and the southern bureaucracy. Leno himself was the next link in the chain on the Inuit side. It was his responsibility to carry out Government policies as they applied to village affairs, and conversely, to represent Inuit concerns to the Government--normally through the Government agent.

James played a role, then, roughly equivalent to Leno's; yet his house was as much an improvement over Leno's accommodations as the latter were over the bulk of the population's housing. Plumbing, heating and electricity Leno had, but not the fine, soft living room furniture, the vast array of kitchen implements and utensils, the large stereo system with its various components, the automatic washer and dryer... The occasional party he'd attended there gave Leno all the glimpse he'd needed of white opulence, which he both scorned and envied.

He turned his thoughts to the memo that James had signed for the Government. It read:

2 November

To: All Inuit Village Councils

Re: Service Amenities/Housing

It has been brought to our attention that water delivery in the settlements has been less than adequate, in regard to maintaining reserve supplies in houses of Government employees, including teaching staff. In addition, the lack of adequate housing and school facilities pointed out by local school committees and ratified by population meetings has made it necessary to review at the Territorial level and recommend the following amendments to the Village Guidelines (Sect. 3(a)1, para. 5, 17) at this time:

1. Effective immediately, water delivery to Government staff (including all school employees save temporary, locally-based help, e.g. janitorial, secretarial, cultural prep., etc.) shall be increased to a daily basis, or made upon request. Until such time as vil-

lage tank truck fleets are upgraded and/or expanded, the fulfillment of this requirement vis-a-vis delivery to the village housing at large shall be considered "Priority."

2. Blueprints for upgraded housing for Government staff (defined as per sect. 1) and expanded school complex buildings to be forwarded in near future. Construction crews under contract from southern points to be augmented by local hiring, under quota of Territorial Labour Code Sect. 42, recruitment and training to begin immediately. Prescriptions on village-by-village basis to follow.

Territorial Government  
Central Office  
via: Village Agents  
signed: *Richard James*

"Locally-based help, eh," echoed Leno, mouthing out the words. "That's Peter Airo, Thomassie Putak, Jana Samsik... me, too, for that matter." He realized he was talking to himself, in English no less, and shut up. Someone might hear him and think he was stupid. Someone who'd wandered into the Council office to ask for more water to be delivered... when it had to be pumped out through six feet of ice on Perry Lake and trucked on the two half-tracks--if both were working--four miles to the village, to fill tanks in a half-dozen houses. Now they were asking for daily deliveries. That would leave time for about a dozen Inuit houses a day out of sixty-seven. If both tank trucks were working, which was maybe half the time...

Leno got up and stretched, and walked off his nervous agitation in the direction of the main office "lobby," where the coffee machine sat at the ready. Rita, the secretary in the office at the other end of the building, heard Leno and came out to join him.

"How you doin' today, Leno?" He liked the way she talked, her English words carefully modulated, like her hair that was so neatly tied behind

her head before it continued in a dark cascade down her back to wave like a wolf tail over her blue-jeaned rump. He liked the way she wore her cotton shirts with the top three buttons undone. And he liked the fact that this young woman, fifteen years his junior, seemed to enjoy his company at coffee. He smiled.

"Oh, okay, I guess." He sipped coffee, too hot. "Got a pretty heavy request to deal with from the Government right now. It's that business about the water and the new houses, all coming at once. I don't think the population's gonna like it. It'll mean more taxes in the end. And people aren't going to get the water they need."

Rita had taken a seat on the little chrome-and-leather bench beside the coffee. Leno sat down in the oak chair with the burbling machine between them. "But didn't everyone already give their okay to those things, last spring was it?"

"Heh, those guys wait long enough till we forget what it was we okayed..." Leno paused as he sipped, his attention diverted by the tightness of Rita's jeans on her open-crossed thighs.

She noticed his absent staring and shifted her legs to cross tightly together. Leno picked up the thread of what he was saying.

"Uh, yeah. What it was, we agreed to more housing and water service. For the settlement. That doesn't mean only for Government employees. It means for the Inuit--at least that's what the people thought when they voted on that thing."

"You mean it's just gonna be for us, like who worked at the Council?"

"Hah, hardly. They thought of that already and were careful to exclude all what they call 'locally-based help.' How's that for a little subtle racism?" Leno was proud of his choice of words: "subtle." Rita probably did better in school than he did,

had even finished a higher grade, eleven. But he enjoyed talking with her, carrying on English conversation like this. It set him apart from the old-fashioned, ignorant "Eskimo" that he hadn't wanted to become.

"I'll say," she was agreeing. "Well, why don't we just demand to be part of it, though. If the population wanted those things for the Inuit, at least the bureaucrats could start with us."

Leno was amazed to hear, with such innocent clarity, what he had not consciously schemed himself, but had secretly desired. It was perfect. He would approach the Council--they could all be considered Government employees--and they would call a meeting of the population. Certainly when reminded of their earlier decision the people would reassert the need for improved housing and water service; and of course they could now realize, when properly briefed on the Government's current plans, that it would be necessary to stipulate, in specific terms, the first stages of such improvement in the village. Naturally, to compromise with the Government's already-arrived-at understanding, an extension of their narrow definition of "Government employee" should be made to local Inuit Council members and--his mental rehearsal paused long enough to remember Rita smiling at him coquettishly over her coffee cup--even, perhaps, their own "Locally-based help." Oh yes, and they could throw in the demand, for bargaining's sake, for inclusion of the Inuit in the employ of the School Board: Airo, Putak, and the rest. Those Uncle Tomahawks, Leno chuckled to think, would likely be just as happy with what they've got now. Leno satisfied himself that the strategy was complete and tossed down the last of his coffee.

"Yup, Rita. We've got something to work on, now." He took one last,

longing glance at the slender "v" of visible chest, smiled and walked away back to his office. She stood there a moment, looking down at herself, and returned to her own end.

Leno could put the distasteful memo away for now and get on to other things. He'd bring it up at the Council meeting on Friday. He wondered whom Rita was seeing these days. She still lived with her parents in that shack down near Putak's, didn't she? He remembered hearing from one or the other of the Councilmen at one point that she often went to the teachers' parties. Leno thought of her drinking and dancing with Robert, the best-looking of the single teachers, and began to feel that irritated resentment again. He rubbed a broad, stubby-fingered hand over his acne-scarred cheeks. With hot eyes and a deep sigh, Leno went on to the next slip of paper on the top of his pile, a pile that never disappeared.

The right to call population meetings and move on their deliberated decisions was the prerogative of the village Council according to the Government's own "Guidelines." Of course the village Council had no power to act on such decisions without the corroboration and, inevitably, approval of funding by the Territorial office. But they would have to exploit what little power they had. The eight-man Council, in their Friday meeting, fully supported Leno's plan. A general meeting of the people was announced immediately.

The population meeting, in the thick smoke of the community hall, saw call after call for improvement of local housing and water service. Every speech was an echo of what had been said on the matter in April. As it became obvious that a more specific directive was needed this time to spell out the demand to the Government, Leno rose to reiterate

his proposition.

He deferred to the still-intact custom of speaking in the native tongue. "It's obvious," Leno began in a loud voice, unusual for him but effective at times like this when he needed it--public speaking was his own talent, and he'd learned to respect and use it to full advantage. "It's obvious," he repeated for emphasis, "that we all want more and better housing for all our people in this settlement. And if that's a long-range goal, at least we can be confident that we have a reasonable demand now for good water-delivery service. My own feeling is that we need at least two more tank-trucks to bring that service up to the level necessary." He paused to allow the murmurs of approval to settle with his listeners. He noticed Mary, a face in the crowd, looking at him with admiration. His chest swelled and he continued with even greater confidence.

"But you know, this Government doesn't listen very well. We've told them already, after the meetings last spring before breakup, and they haven't heard what we've been telling them. I think we should break through that white ice--" and at this Leno noticed a sharp glance from Robert, who was standing with two other teachers over by the door--"and tell this Government in no uncertain terms that when we say housing, we mean Inuit housing, and when we say water, we mean Inuit water." The teachers all looked blankly now into the crowd, whose faces beamed dimly through the hazy fluorescence of the hall.

Leno had only to finish now, to drive his point home. "I would like to propose that we be very clear that that's what we want for our village." Now came the crucial part, the clincher, when the game had been sighted and stalked, and finally frozen in its tracks. "However. We've got to start somewhere. This

Government, we all know, is just going to say forget it, it's impossible, it's too much *money* to do all that. You know how they are, and they've said as much already. However. If we present to them a long-range plan, which the Council can work out, to bring by stages what we're asking for, I think that's our chance to get what we need."

He sat down. That was all he needed to say, and it worked. The Council was given the clear mandate to draw up a development plan and present it to the Government in the name of the community. The first stage in the Council's report to the Government would be extension of the directives regarding new housing construction and increased water delivery to apply to all Inuit at present holding full Council status. The second stage, to be negotiated at a later date as yet unspecified, would bring related benefits to ancillary staff of the Council and the School Board.

*Ancillary.* The word rolled around in Leno's mouth, silently. It was his working, primarily, in the draft, and as he prepared the report in its final form he again relished the power of his acquired vocabulary that he had learned with such diligence at the boarding school in the south. He packed the document up in a temporary, used manila envelope, wrote on it with a felt-tip marker in large capital letters "RITA--TO TYPE AND MAIL," and put it in his wire "out" basket. It would have been more expedient to take it to her directly right then, for she was working at the other end of the building. But Leno felt a nagging hesitation about giving her the report just yet. She wasn't going to like it, and he didn't want to face her when she read it. But it would have to happen sooner or later.

Heck. He reasoned it out again:

we asked for everyone to benefit in the end; it's just that we couldn't demand everything at once. The Government didn't have unlimited funds, after all, and these things cost money...

Leno finally decided to get it over with, to drop off the envelope on his way out the door. He'd knock off early and go home for a couple of beers with Mary. It was Friday, after all.

Rita looked up at him when he came into her office. Her usual smile was absent. She must have heard already what we've agreed to ask, Leno thought--from one of the other Council members. You can't trust anyone. The second and third buttons of Rita's shirt were done up today, and he sneered as he tossed the envelope on her desk. Fickle women, he thought to himself. One day they lead you on, the next, nothing to offer. Fuck 'em. And without a word Leno turned and left.

As soon as he turned up the alleyway to his house, Leno saw the skidoo parked at the little, pale green picket fence that marked his back lawn. His face grew hot as he walked up to the machine and recognized Robert's keys in it with the leather thong dangling from the ignition. He was glad of his talent now, but that didn't help him much in knowing what to do next. He looked at his watch. Strange, he thought. It's only two-ten. Robert should still be in school.

What the heck? It's my house, for jeez sake, he thought, and strode up the snow-crunchy walk to the door of the back porch. At the door he decided to try a quieter approach and slopped in silently, as he might stalk a bear.

The door creaked on its hinges as he swung it shut against the cold. Damn, he cursed under his breath. And there were Robert's boots making their puddles on the floor. When Leno opened the inner door to the

kitchen, it, too, creaked. A chair moved in the living room. A cup clattered down on a table. Mary appeared at the doorway to the kitchen looking frustrated.

"Well, Leno." She spoke in halting English, for Robert's sake. "You're--you're home early. We're just, ah having tea--Robert's here--he brought Lizzie home sick from school."

Robert appeared and stood behind and to the side of Mary. He wore a smug smile that made Leno avert his eyes to the blank kitchen wall. Leno didn't know what to say or even what language to use. He wanted to assert his own native presence in his own house, but in the presence of the teacher he didn't want to sound stupid. He chose English.

"Where's Lizzie?"

"We've put her to bed. She had a pretty high fever and was sick at school. Seems like the flu."

We, thought Leno. We put her to bed. Indeed. "And why aren't you back at school?" he snapped, finally glaring at Robert for an instant.

Robert's cool reply deflected Leno's eyes again. "I had a spare this hour anyway. It's culture class."

Leno just stood there. He looked at Mary again, his lips pursed tightly.

"Well," said Robert. "I might as well leave now."

It was only then, as Robert moved his tall frame past him through the kitchen, that Leno noticed Robert was wearing a coat and carrying a hat. Still wearing it. Nothing had happened, and yet he had gotten all upset, even angry. Now he felt ashamed. But he still didn't like that Robert, he reflected as he heard him putting on his boots in the porch. No, he still didn't trust him. The porch door closed, the boots crunched down the walk; the key turned and the skidoo roared to life, and then away in



the December afternoon.

There, thought Leno, and he turned back to Mary, who was still in the doorway, leaning up against it with one arm over her head, looking at him with an inscrutable smile. Like the Mona Lisa, he thought. Women. You can't figure 'em. "Let's have a beer," he said, in perfect English.

The community hall was decked out with bright red and green, silver and blue ribbons, and artwork from all the classes of the school. It was packed with people, and the air was thick with tobacco smoke and frosty breath and steam from the great kettles that would feed three hundred. Baked char, roast caribou, seal steaks, the same meats frozen and raw for the slicing, a large pot of soup, another of potatoes, stacks of bannock, urns of tea... it was a grand Christmas feast, and the gay gabble of voices was punctuated by the metallic clatter of serving spoons and pot lids.

The children were served first, and soon disappeared outdoors to the skating rink that had both white and colored lights set up around it for the occasion. The older people were next, then they lingered in the vicinity of the big barrel stove, pulling up chairs and lighting pipes, telling tales of Christmases past.

Leno stood in line watching the collective merriment and feeling warm from the brandy he'd just sipped from a pocket flask, the fancy one he'd bought on a whim two years ago on the Council's trip south. The few who had seen him take his nip just watched; they didn't come to ask for any. At this rate, it would last a while yet, perhaps into the square dancing tonight, thought Leno, feeling the flask snug in his vest pocket.

He was looking forward to the roast caribou. He hadn't enjoyed any

in months. There had been none for sale at the Co-op all that fall; the hunters must have been saving what little surplus they had for the annual feast instead. It was a long line-up, though. Leno slipped out his flask and had another swig. He thought with pride of his full water-tank at home. Well, now nearly full, after the deep, hot bath he'd enjoyed alone while Mary had gone early to help with the food.

Leno's mind ran once again over the blueprints the Council had received two months ago, the blueprints for the house that would be his. A house just like the one Richard James and the teachers enjoyed, just like the Robert...

Just as Leno thought of him, as if by magic, the tall, bearded white teacher appeared. Now Robert was standing, talking with the person in front of Leno in line. That was Peter Airo, the culture teacher. Oh, they were good friends, were they? Robert didn't so much as glance at Leno.

They were approaching the serving area. Mary was there dishing out soup, her face ruddy and gleaming with steam. Next to her was Rita--wearing her plaid shirt with the sleeves rolled up, well open at the neck and sweat-marked--slicing roast caribou. There wasn't much left, Leno saw to his chagrin, as he peered past Robert's shoulder. The teacher had somehow managed to step into line just between Peter Airo and himself.

There, Peter chose caribou--but certainly he'd had some from his hunting all year! A healthy slice still remained, but then Robert's long arm pointed to it, and Rita hefted the whole piece onto his plate. Robert carried it away, down the line for bannock. surely it could have been sliced in two! Rita looked at Leno and smiled, wiping her empty, greasy hands on the front of her shirt.

Mary, just beyond, smiled too. "Soup?" she asked. ☐

**SAY GOODNIGHT TO ME JAKE**

Say goodnight to me Jake,  
You must be beat  
Look at you slumber  
Playing with the angels.  
It was a big day for you

Giving me away  
At the altar,  
So you can crash in the seat  
Only if you  
Say goodnight to me Jake.

Like metal on a mission,  
The truck, hell bent for you;  
The miles closed, closed  
Down to two,  
The miles closed between you.

Roaring and barreling  
Through a custom mad lane,  
The bastard came faster  
Proud of putting it away  
And driving insane.

The teal and aqua  
Made you look handsome  
And proud  
But not too proud, I know,  
To surrender me to a girl

Of all things, I'm sorry,  
I'm not to say that outloud.

I'll tell you instead  
About canoes and karts  
Squishing grapes and lawn darts  
You tried to stab me with.  
Things to a boy that make

His heart pound,

Things like anger tears and tiffs  
On the ground before your head  
Came upon my lap at home  
To nap and dream of us  
Playing checkers as geezers.

Dateline milemarker 372  
The lights and the noise  
Never did bother you.

Cars, people and  
Hypnotic swirling lights  
Bottles and breaths,  
Commotion and chaos  
You feed on with big bites.

But not tonight  
You're beat.  
Look at you sleep  
Please--  
Say goodnight to me Jake.

Here in the ward  
My little mannequin  
Breathes  
Rhythmically, mechanically

Rhythmically, mechanically,  
By things to a boy  
That make his heart pound.

Say goodbye to me Jake,

Jake,

Jake?

--Daniel D. Powell

# PERENNIAL

Taylor Jessen

---

but it also holds the merely invisible.

Once again, it interrupted him. Remember to look up at the end of each page. Keep busy, make stimulus. You must concentrate, they said, or the silence will put you to sleep.

No, he realized, that statement is only half-right.

He was gatekeeper for families, single men, women, pets. He was there to protect a hundred thousand marble advertisements from vandals, who were usually truant but daring eleven-year-olds. Intimidated by ten feet of wall, those who had never done it before would usually try to breach the gate. On occasion, he was also there to open the gate for the man in the hearse with a late-night delivery.

A CB kept him alerted to the arrival of his fresh coffin. His reading light, sitting in the window of his booth, kept away the unwanted strangers. But the books, they did not keep the sleep away. They ward off something else.

Just as the residents of Shady Lake were not the real threat, neither were the trespassers. The dead were certain. A short, sneaky-looking boy or girl dressed in dark clothing was certain.

Silence holds the non-existent

Creeping ivy ran the length of the cemetery wall, making pleasantly random moire patterns, nearly covering its height and its mile-long perimeter. On tungsten-lit city nights like this, a pedestrian might stop and marvel at a million slick glittering leaves. Only then might he notice the exquisite but unkempt irises, evenly spaced in the beds below. Chances are he would not dream of how they had been bought for their own special patch of ground, how some gardener had taken great care to keep them looking dignified when he knew all along that the weed was spreading, would continue to spread until it ran out of the wall, but would never take root in the beds.

The gardener, who was in a hurry to get home from work, would not be able to decide if he had heard, as he left, a thud--something shuddering--the occupant of a cramped container waking up or shaking with a jolt of sudden insight.

He would seek the gateman. The gateman would suggest that (though he would be the last to admit it) he had chased a hallucination once or twice. "Gotta stay alert or you'll freak out," he'd say. But tonight, like most nights, he was just bored. There were no guests, no Colonial

chairs or picture books. He could only offer drinks--some of the best, he added--well aged and preserved by the caring employees of Shady Lake.

A marching band's instruments glittered in the daylight, the guard demonstrated his morning exercises to his guest, and something creaked on badly-oiled hinges, like a car door.

The guard awoke with a start. The arm he had been leaning on had fallen asleep and felt awful as he let it drop to the countertop. "Serves me right for droppin' off like a damned first-week trainee." He put a transparent plastic clipboard over his paperback book to keep it open and sat on his cold hands. The public library, his other job, had over one thousand mysteries to choose from, most under 250 pages. After finishing six or seven of them he grew fond of their regularity, and welcomed the security they brought. He knew better than to bring any harrowing tales into the booth early in the morning, when his reading light cast unpleasant shadows on the cramped walls. He shifted in his seat, turned another page and looked up. A white blur suddenly flew head-on into the plexiglass window before him, bouncing off it with a sharp crack.

The guard bounced a full foot in his chair, poking himself in the eye and falling down on the floor.

He sat up and stared at the door-knob for a moment, listening, his congestion clear. There was a kind of frenzied flit-flit of something against the front wall of the booth.

Suddenly his expression turned from surprise to anger, and he bounded up to his feet and out the side door. "Sons a bitches they think they can scare an old man half out of his wits and break into a private cemetery, well I'll just show 'em

a thing or two--"

He stood in the small space where the gates were ajar, in the gravel driveway facing the street. His lit flashlight played on the bushes. "All right who's there!" There were no stifled breaths, no feet sprinting on the pavement into the blackness. The flit-flitting made him turn to look in front of the booth.

A dove was thrashing around in the leaves below the window, frantically beating one wing, suddenly expiring with a thud against the wooden panel of the booth. The guard went to the creature, picked it up, knelt, cradled it in his hands before the light-giving window. "Isn't that the darndest thing."

"Have you an offering, my child?"

The growl came from inside the gate, in the darkness of the driveway. He breathed erratically as if from lack of practice. With slow steps he limped forward into the fluorescent light of the lamp, and then his grisly countenance confirmed the ashen quality of his voice: he was of medium height, combed black hair stuck in place, wrinkle-free clothing tarnished with dirt and cobwebs, a marble-colored face. Slouching, with one arm bouncing erratically at the shoulder, he walked through the gate; upon reaching his victim, frozen in its crouch, he suddenly stopped, straightened up, put both arms over his head and did a pirouette. Then he bent his knees slightly, looked up, clapped his hands above his head, looked down and thrust them both in the guard's face, palms outstretched.

"Vouchsafe it to me, and the rite will be performed!"

The guard, goggle-eyed, whose years at his post had not prepared him for such a situation, slumped over unconscious onto the wall of the booth.

The corpse stood over its victim, not rushing the process of devour-

ing it. He bent down, looked at its face, held a hand in front of its mouth.

He stood back up, reflected, and broke into uncontrollable laughter.

"Oh, man, oh man" laughed the corpse of Dorian Grey, "Wow. What a scenario. What a total cheese..."

He stepped over the inert guard, ambling down the driveway to the main road. "Pity I never wrote that one," he observed bitterly. "Would have sold rather well."

He remembered a tune and he began to hum it quietly as he strolled away.

## II

He eventually found a pay phone with a phone book. He called his publisher with the spare change left on his eyes, courtesy of several sick and former friends of his.

"Ah, Dorry, good to hear from you. Been a while. It's 3:15. This better be good news."

"It--this is incredible, I, I mean that."

"Naturally. Oh, now I remember. You have been seeking 'the golden yarn.' Success I take it? A five-year mission ending in futility, all hope is lost, when suddenly the missing shred of the map is found again, spiritual affirmation, darling I love you, happy ever after. Nice, reminds me of the last ten books my house published. Look, I have a meeting at seven."

"No! No, wait, Holland, I'm not kidding! Hang on!" Dorian cried, gripping the sides of the phone booth.

"I know, I know," he yawned. "What, is it that work-in-progress I seem to remember from--Jesus, was it that long ago? Y'know, you are the nightmare disappearing creative lit major from hell. I'm not my own house anymore, Dorian. We are a firm, and I'm not the one who up-

dates all the dead files--I mean, one great book, and then--well, anyway, what happened?"

Dorian looked down at his hands, newly dirty, and saw his emaciated fingers. "I got delayed," he said eventually. "But it's all done now. I got the spark, what I've been waiting for, the bit that finally lets me finish this project!" The--the glorious unfinished project!"

"O that fortune has favored the foolish... okay, shoot."

Dorian took a deep breath, gathered his strength, and for the next half hour related to his editor the novel he had drafted, complete with a breathtaking climax and tenderly poetic denouement. He did not blunder the story once, and paced it so well that Holland did not interrupt him even during pauses.

During the whole speech Holland wondered if he should interrupt and explain his circumstances, but after ten minutes he was so captivated with the story that he forgot all about it.

"God." The man was very awake; Dorian, for the first time in ages felt success broil in his stomach. "Uh... gosh, I don't know what to say, really... that's quite unlike... anything I've heard recently."

Holland paused, clearing his throat. "I'm worried, though, um, about the Bhagavad-Gita references. I mean, the cabalists in the general public hardly buy commercial, do they?"

Dorian blanched. This was the same damnable response he had given to his last novel, and he told Holland.

"Yeah, babe, I know," said Holland, easing into his Agent mode. "And you've sold me on this one, too. But it's a pity you had to buy back the reserve unsold on that last enterprise, or I'd be more keen on trying this one on."

Bullshit, thought Dorian. You've got the resources and certainly the

ego. There's something else--

"Dammit, Holland, I'm telling you there--there is no difference between--I mean, Christ--" He was nearly losing control. "Nobody buys Eco or Rushdie for four hundred pages of occult sciences! Are you listening to me? they want fifty pages of sex, violence, and intricate plotting! I even made it easy for them. I put it all at the end."

"Yes," laughed Holland, horribly imitating his coworkers, "and won't that make for an easy endcover: 'The last fifty pages will shock and assault you intellectually. The previous three hundred and a match will keep you warm in case of emergency.'"

Dorian froze, horrified.

"Sedric, you can't do this. You know that I wouldn't bring this to you now if it didn't mean my--everything to--I mean, you're the only one I have left to--"

"Look, kid," Holland interrupted, suddenly serious, "this whole thing is pointless. Things have changed a lot since we last spoke. I've been absorbed, Dorian. We're less specialized now, more mainstream. I am responsible for a very small category of sales called literature. The people I work with, they outnumber me, and I'm sure that if they could they certainly would grow right on top of me. But as it is, we are a committee, with rules, and the equation is simple.

You are too wide for your own shelf. There is limited space in our store, and your section--my section--is small and filled up. These two children of yours, they are tremendous, invigorating, exciting, but there just isn't any place for them. They are orphans, and the people I work with have little heed for the kind of writers I represent. The group will decide and the group will have this child taken out back and shot. A mercy killing.

"Believed me, Dorian, I wouldn't be doing this if I didn't have the

highest respect for your work. I'm sorry."

Dorian laid his head gently on the phone and closed his eyes.

He remembered the guard and the dead bird.

"Oh, but the way my name fills the cover!"

"Don't, Dorian, please. You know how much I hate this."

"Oh, don't give me that. I know what you're trying not to say, that you're really going to hate it tomorrow when you slide up to your boss after the meeting, mention my book and how you so expertly filtered me out, and he says, 'Good show, Sedric old boy, I've got my eye on you.' Christ, you're worse than them, you'd kill an idea before you even gave them a chance to reject it!"

"Dorian--"

"I can't believe you can sit there while they kiss the public ass, and they take your hand and say, 'oh don't worry, we'll show you the way,' and you'll learn it so well you'll destroy some poor misguided bastard in exchange for a promotion! Screw art, I'm going places! Another notch in the spreadsheet!"

"You're oversimplifying."

"You don't care about this, you never did. You're just a name on a goddam flyer, a category that hopes to someday be at the head of a list."

"Dorian, I never said I didn't care about money--"

"Sounds like a cushy job. You're a piece of P.R." Dorian hung up.

Holland put the phone back on the receiver, sat in bed and stared at the wall. He struggled with the reprimand for a while, hating himself and Dorian alternately. Then his eyes widened.

He relaxed. He had made his decision.

He went to his desk, turned on

a light, opened a drawer and pulled out a legal pad.

Walking back to the cemetery, Dorian felt the emptiness grow in him. Yes, Holland, it has been a while. It has been a while since I last talked to you about my failing novel, it's been a while since my family disowned me, it's been a while since I fell from a chair in a dirty featureless building on the South side in a vain attempt to raise enough money to get what few belongings I had left after being kicked out of my apartment out of storage, it's been a while since you cared enough about--And here his line of thought stopped, as he was unable to discover a single thing that he himself had cared about.

He had no trouble getting into the cemetery again, for the guard had not yet moved. Dorian considered what an awful thing he had done, but knew he hadn't. He hadn't done anything, not that evening or in any of his previous evenings. And the one thing which he once was sure that nothing would stop him from completing, disappeared as well as he made his way up the tomb's steps to the door.

### III

Four months later, *Dr. Campbell of Bombay* was published by an obscure Boston firm headed by the book's author, Sedric Holland. It leapt onto the *New York Times* bestseller list and stayed for sixteen weeks at number one. Critics worldwide praised its innovative structure, its haunting character portrayals, and its bizarre exposition of the popular occult. Six months hence, the author announced casually in an interview that previously he had written under a pseudonym, that of Dorian Grey, and had rather enjoyed playing the part of a man

with no family, antisocial tendencies, and virtually no family ties to the outside world. Immediately rare copies of this singular book's initial run were snatched up by collectors, and a second edition was forthcoming almost immediately, which stayed on the bestseller list for thirty-seven weeks. At the time of the book's release, a lawsuit against Holland appeared, headed by a small group of local artists, but it was thrown out for lack of evidence. Holland himself became an international celebrity for a brief period, and thanks to the clever public relations work of his new staff, the lawsuit faded away and the public began to clamor for his next work. He balked, baiting the press often.

"Sometime soon, maybe," he teased, massaging his forearms. "It's been a while."

Nine months after the initial release of *Dr. Campbell of Bombay*, Sedric Holland was at the local public library, half-heartedly digging through the morgue of local newspapers in search of inspiration for a possible short story, not for his own enjoyment of course but to appease the ever-insistent denizens of the Sunday supplements, when he came upon Dorian Grey's obituary. Comparing the date of Dorian's death with the date of the phone call he received regarding Dorian's newest manuscript, he gurgled slightly and died of a heart attack between the tall shelves of newsprint. A janitor discovered his body twelve hours later in a remote section of storage, threw up on both Holland and the paper he was clutching, and took his credit cards.

The literary world mourned his loss: a potentially great artist struck down in his prime, silenced by the grave. ☐



## DEPARTMENT

## GUIDELINES

For  
Submissions  
to *FUGUE*

☐ *FUGUE* is a digest of multi-genre fiction, poetry, and non-fiction. Issues are published at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters at the University of Idaho. Each issue contains vignettes, poetry, stories and commentary chosen to satisfy a wide variety of tastes in literary entertainment. The magazine is staffed entirely by English and English Education majors--undergraduate and graduate--presently attending the University, and this issue has been funded by the ASUI and the support from local merchants. A single issue of *FUGUE* is only \$3.00 retail, USA funds.

☐ **Submissions:** Proper manuscript format and submission practices apply to all works sent to *FUGUE*, without exception. Include the following on all manuscripts: name, address, phone number, *word count* (fiction) or *line count* (poetry), proper headers, title & byline. Manuscripts must be typed with one-inch margins on all sides, double-spaced

(poetry may be single-spaced), with title and page number in the upper right corner of each page. Include a #10 SASE with your submission for a response. Make a copy of the manuscript for yourself--*the manuscript will not be returned*. Submissions should be delivered to: *FUGUE* c/o University of Idaho, English Dept., Brink Hall Rm. 200, Moscow, Idaho 83843. Response time is usually no more than six weeks. No simultaneous or reprint submissions. You are welcome to include a copy of your submission on disk in IBM format with your manuscript, but you must include a disk mailer with appropriate return postage if you wish the disk returned upon response.

☐ **Editorial Process:** Each submission is read by several staff members who make a recommendation, then pass it on to the executive editor and staff advisor for final decisions. All readings are done "blind." Staff readers will not be aware of the identity of the creator. *FUGUE* is looking for a wide range of genres--Mainstream, Experimental, Fantasy, Mystery/Suspense, Metafiction, Historical, Science Fiction, Magical Realism, Horror, Fantasy, Western, Cultural, Regional, Speculative, etc. *FUGUE* is a showcase for all types of *entertaining literature*. In some cases, we may contact a contributor for a re-write,

clarification of text, or notification of necessary editorial changes.

**☐ Stories:** These must be complete and concluded, with good characterization and plotting. You must make the reader *feel* without resorting to standard cliché tricks. Endings should have a foundation in the plot and not simply pop out of nowhere. Experimental fiction is acceptable, but we do not cater to an elite readership--the story must be comprehensible and enjoyable for anyone. Average word count is 3000 words, but we consider any length up to 7000. Book excerpts, chapters, and serializations will not be considered. Payment is \$10-\$20 according to length.

**☐ Novelettes:** Any story with a length of 7500 words or more. We are twice as critical in this category of literature as for any of the others, since such a piece would reduce the number of works published in an issue. The greater length must be justified by superior content. Payment is \$30.

**☐ Vignettes:** Many of today's published *short-short* stories are actually vignettes--stylishly rendered scenes/events that emphasize imagery and impression over plot--these are sometimes also referred to as "sudden fiction." A mood of "endlessness"--scene carries forward/backward beyond the text--should be maintained. This is perhaps the most difficult type of fiction to write and still maintain as engaging for the reader. Maximum word count is approximately 1000 words. Payment is \$5.

**☐ Poems:** The modern standard is "free verse," but we would like to see a wide range of other forms as well, including successful hybrids of traditional and modern formats. We consider all premise and non-premise themes without restriction, from the serious to the utterly whimsical. Payment is \$2-\$5, depending on length and content.

**☐ Non-fiction:** We are looking for well-constructed commentary, articles, essays, reviews, etc., written in a comprehensible style aimed at readers, not at peers/writers. All articles, essays, and commentary must relate to *contemporary* works, authors, issues, or to a generally well-known topic. Note: we are not particularly interested in works which merely establish a forum for personal socio-political views. All topics must have a relevance to the general public. The maximum word count is 1000 words, but longer works may be considered if exceptional. Payment is \$5 and up.

**☐ Fugue Staff Submissions:** The staff is allowed to submit work for publication in the magazine. Such submissions will be read "blind," as for any submission, with readers chosen by the executive editor. No special consideration will be given to any submission by a staff member of *FUGUE*. This is guaranteed by the Executive Editor.

**☐ Final Note:** If you have further questions, write to: Exec. Ed., *FUGUE*, University of Idaho, English Dept., Brink Hall, Rm. 200, Moscow, Idaho 83843. Include a #10 SASE if you wish a response. All queries will be answered within two weeks. If necessary, for resolving a problem or answering a question not covered herein, you may contact the Executive or Managing Ed. locally by phone. Do not call about the status of your submission--no information concerning the status of any submission will be distributed under any circumstances, except via SASE delivered directly to the contributor after the submission has been fully reviewed by the staff.

**☐ FUGUE** was established in 1989 by Leiloni Reed, J.C. Hendee, Barb Hendee, and Prof. Ron McFarland as an outlet/forum for writers and as an instrument for students to obtain some experience with editing and publishing.

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