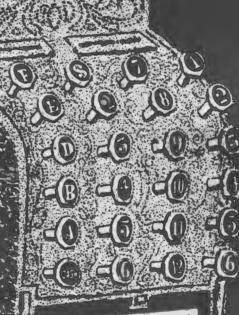
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TRAPPED

The darkness drops in silence slamming doors, echoing in empty stares. Keys turn round in square holes and shades are drawn on broken glass.

Safe, secure, they sit in terror.
Hearts, minds, and senses,
bleakly shadowed in the moonless night.
Yearning for the touch of dawn,
they shrivel in fear of life.

With the passing of the light, outstretched hands retreat. Smiles are swallowed, eyes are closed. Shells are formed, smooth as glass, yet, a pearl forms within.

The sun slides over the horizon, awakening the dead of the night. The shell opens slowly, the pearl drops in the sand. Hearts are offered in the warmth of the winter morning for the duration of the day-light...dark?

Cathy Hall

OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

I wrote a letter to Attica today. First a name, then a number. Three years of being a number, waiting to hear from a lawyer, and cursing a foul past.

A friend's uncle died today, And I found another stamp. Sixty years of being a man, waiting for an angel's call, And ending a lengthy past.

My friend the number, might get a parole, And with it freedom My friend's uncle got a cold grave, And with it

I write my student number. Twenty years of learning to be a man only to receive letters of two dead men.

J. Mandolare

We were all squatting at the sewer, throwing rocks in the water. The water was dark and smelt like worms. I threw a stone and watched the darkness swallow it.

"Ugh!" Pete said. The stone splashed on Pete's face. "Hey, look! Here comes Jay-Jay. Hi Jay!" Mark said.

Jay nodded. "What are you doing?" he asked.

"Nothing .. throwing rocks," Mark said.

"Well I'm not gonna do that, I got a magnifying glass... you guys wanna watch me make a fire in the grass?" Pete and Mark both said ya and we all walked over to the grass. Jay-Jay made a fire in the grass and I caught a frog.

"Jay, can I have a turn now?" Pete asked.

Jay said, "O.K."

Mark grabbed the frog from my hand. "Hey! Why don't we see if it works on the frog?"

"Ya, we could burn its eyes out!" Jay said.

I walked back to the sewer. I threw more stones in the water and the boys came back with the frog. The frog had no eyes left and it was hanging by its back legs on a string. Jay put the frog down the sewer. We watched the frog jump and splash in the darkness.

"Wait! Don't drown it Jay. I didn't get a turn yet,"
Pete said. Pete took the frog away from Jay and they all

went over to the grass. I went too.

"Why don't you burn a hole in its head?" Mark asked.

"Good idea!" said Pete. The frog's head sizzled and tore open. It twitched awhile and then it stopped. Jay picked up the frog and walked to the sewer. We followed. Jay untied the frog and dropped it in. We watched the frog float on its stomach.

A big boy we did not know came over to watch. He was eating from a can of whipped cream.

"Any ya boys want some?" he asked.

"Ya sure," said Jay. Jay and Mark and Pete got up.

Then the big boy sprayed them with his can and I got up and took his can and sprayed him in his face. The big boy tried to grab my arm but I got away and started to run. I came to a rock wall but couldn't climb over it... I felt two hands on my head. The big boy pounded my head into the rock wall. I couldn't do anything, until the boy finally stopped. My head was stinging and burning. I fell to the ground and I couldn't move. I could smell the ground. It smelt like worms. I got up and my head was dizzy. I could hardly see. I couldn't walk

straight.

I looked for the boys by the sewer but they were not there. I went home. I had to rest at the bottom of our apartment stairs. When I came to our door and tried to go in, the door would not open. I knocked and knocked and no one answered. I began to cry. Then the door across from our door opened. It was Mr. Addcock, holding a glass in his hand. When he saw my face, he dropped his glass but it didn't break, and I went in. I was still crying and Mr. Addcock told me to lie down. My head and eyes were stinging. Mr. Addcock made me drink from his glass and I laid down on the couch. Mr. Addcock left and came back again. He put cold cloths on my head and eves and I fell into darkness. Then the darkness went away and I got up. Mr. Addcock was snoring. He had his glass in his hand. I walked over and took the glass from his hand and drank from it. I got dizzy and saw a monster in the mirror, so I laid down on the couch and the darkness came into my head again.

Pam Good

Duck Lady

Petulant woman Chinesed yellow waits behind the counter. She moves with glum acquiescence, slowly she retrieves a cold roasted duck from its embarrassed position. Sullenly she cleaves it meat splinters fly and settle on her apron oily juice drools over her dainty hands. Silently she boxes the meat her lips wordlessly count change. She turns to array of cellophane noodles -I wait for recognition of myself, for acknowledgement of profound meaning She does not regard me now. Uncomfortable with my Caucasian skin and rounder eyes -I leave. untying strings, and open the small box. Grasping my duck I torture it and let it linger in my mouth, ignoring all but the mess of the sirupy glaze the collapse of the bones between my teeth and the tenderness of the candied bird.

Lisa Gibson

She gropes at others' worlds longing for a holding grasp, clutching at fragmented half truths lying in the future betraying the present, She finds herself solitary when moon and constellations conduct their cast parade, Her bedded body lies taut, sleepless, in an insomniacs' trance. Her skull an echo chamber of silent shrieks reverberating wildly -

a million maniacal razors slashing herself in two, simultaneously dead and alive.

Mindy Soltysiak

The Tower (XVII)

The fall of the tower was not heard in the thunder of night light that is not the sun swelling unevenly at every horizon, luminous, collapsing like ruined castles rotted by a thousand years of rain Death has tired of harvesting mushrooms. Death is a creator

Jenny Beaven

The Moon (XVIII)

 -wolvesthis land, this is left by the dying sea the sea that is filled and sick with mutant nightmares

dogs left of land-beasts, but these guard
 the two towers. What the towers were
 is unknown and immaterial
 what they are is guarded

- sea-beasts - this
path begins at the water and
leads across the desert of glass.
Things have happened here - the moon is
swollen now, and swings lower
through the smoke-sullen air every
night. We must follow.

Jenny Beaven

Navigator of another world fins for feathers, scooping up salty refreshment with pursed O-lips, diving deep, no bend fears, to a seascape of sunken treasure on a flowing terrain of abandoned bones and sea buoyant flora.

Scraping the surface of the air world, lifted with a scarlet gush, a sudden hook stabbed between bulging eyes.

Futilely flipping to and fro, flipping slipping to death.

Mindy Soltysiak

RESORTINGS

I drew my back out of the breaking waves, my eyes and ears burning from the salt water. White foam gushed over my shoulders, pounding my fevered body. I saw the others, scattered along the edge of the beach, pulling themselves onto dry sand.

I gagged, and could hear the others gagging and

moaning, spitting out the hateful brine and bile.

I dragged myself onto the beach. The sand was very hot, and the sun's blinding white glare shot into my eyes. They felt like blisters. I lay on my back.

We were on a publisher's convention boat, heading northwest from Yucatan. Hurricane Nora sent us tearing southward. The boat was lost and we ended up on what I later learned was Isla Coca, which at one time was a Central American prison island.

A hot wind blew fierce, and the salt came out on my skin, powdery and white an irritating.

As if drawn by a magnet, we lurched our way across the beach to the shade of a grove of palm and citrus trees. There were eight of us. We stared at each other. Last night we were laughing at each other, last night we were lost in the world of pink and green bubbles and crooked grins.

I leaned against a palm tree, and slid to the ground. I sat there and listened. The others were breathing heavy and talking quick, in hoarse, tired voices. They were all confused.

I thought about what I was going to do, about how I was going to get help, about how I was going to let my wife know I was all right. I thought about walking along the coast, keeping close to the coconut and citrus fruit. I'd find a tributary and keep on walking up the

river until I came to civilization. And then, if this island turned out to be uninhabited, I'd at least know its surroundings.

I thought about Robinson Crusoe and tamed monkeys

that did flips. I developed a headache.

"So what are we going to do about her?" I heard one voice say.

"I'm not drawing straws again!" This man was angry,

like he was going to be ripped-off again.

"O.K. then, fine. The fittest survive." This man was

coughing.

"I'm game!" A fourth voice. The others were also talking among themselves but I couldn't make it out. "That's the way I like it," he continued. "Early bird gets the worm!" The man who was saying these things ran down the beach and into a grassy brush.

"I thought he said he didn't know where she was!"
"Well, I'm going to get her. I know her, I know how
she thinks." This man had a sensitive tone in his voice.

"Can't imagine why she ran off." The man who said this was younger and handsomer than the others. He looked a bit hurt.

"What do you mean, you spent the whole evening with her last night? I remember last night." He was shouting. "I took her away from you. Remember? She was trying to get away from you."

They were talking about Gretchen. I was searching the water, to see if anyone else out of the party of ninety made it, but I found no one. Not even any wreckage.

I walked along the beach, trying to find some civilization. I stayed with the palms and citrus trees. I ate only the citrus fruits (which weren't quite ripe) because I didn't have a knife to open the coconuts with.

It got late, so I made ready to spend the night on the

beach. I watched the sun set over the Pacific. I was very thirsty, and I tried to get some relief by eating the citrus fruit, but that only made my mouth pasty. I was dying for water, and fell asleep.

The next day I almost fainted when I stood up. Another hot day, and all I could see was a yellow, netted veil over my vison. I recovered eventually and continued my search for a river so I could find some civilization.

Not a hundred yards away from where I spent the night, I found a wide area covered with currents of cool water. The water ran into the sea, making the sand look like braids of long hair. It was only inches deep, so I splashed through it as I ran toward what would bring me to deeper waters.

I followed the braided stream into the trees and a little further it got so deep I fell into the water. I flopped around, sucking the cool water into my belly like a vacuum. I almost drowned myself. My belly hurt. I lay in the water laughing, and dunked myself over and over. I opened my eyes and rolled them about under the water. I rinsed out my ears and nose with my fingers, to get the sand out. I couldn't get enough water in me,; I wanted to get it all through me, like a sponge.

I finally got up the ambition to continue. I walked along, right in the stream, making my way over rocks and boulders and unexpected drops. I finally decided that this would tire me out, so I walked along the bank of the stream, singing to it.

I soon felt myself going uphill. The grassier area had already given way to brush, and soon it was outright jungle. I turned back to get some citrus fruit, and packed a couple of oranges and those fruits that looked like

limes but were sweeter, into my shirt. Then I continued

uphill, along the stream.

The ground became silty and muddy. Vines hung down from tremendous trees. Everything seemed so huge, but was soft and fleshy, except for the bark on some of the trees.

I ran to the edge of the ridge, and looking down the steep incline, I saw what I later found out to be the prison. Its mottled grey walls were thick and square; I thought it was a monastary. Brown dust blew over the top of the front wall; I could tell the dust was coming from inside the walls, in little miniature tornados. There were block-shaped buildings within the walls, the doors were gone. I could hear the wind blowing through the dark opening, humming. I supposed that the place was deserted.

I didn't have to concentrate on walking fast to get to the buildings; the steep incline forced me to run. I didn't intend to be in a hurry; I felt that no one was there. I did figure there would be a well or some source of fresh water.

By the time I got to the entrance, it was sunset. I walked through the wide entrance where the gate used to be. I saw the holes and rust marks where the iron gate used to be.

The inner walls and the buildings took on a beautiful orange-pink glow in the setting sun. The glow seemed to vibrate, causing a striking effect when the orange-pink walls met the deep blue sky.

I kicked at the dust, and watched another miniature tornado form. The dust drifted over the walls when the tornado ran into a corner of the outerwall. I walked across the yard, peeping in the buildings.

All the buildings were empty except for concrete bench-

es and tables that were left behind. Almost all the bars from the windows were missing--I guess they salvaged all the iron they could when they moved off the island.

I stepped into one of the buildings, one that still had some bars on the windows. Gretchen was in there, building a fire. She was afraid of me at first because she thought I was like the other men that were chasing her -- the ones that chased her all over the convention boat, at least.

She was sorry she played the game on the boat, the one that made her so popular. She was afraid, and hoping that she would be safe in this old prison with me. "It's a prison?" I asked, pulling the citrus fruit out of my shorts.

"You bet," she said. Then she kept hoping we'd be safe and she was hoping and hoping and hoping so hard she cried herself to sleep on me. I sat there on the floor, very hungry and uncomfortable. I was afraid I'd drool on her if I tried to eat any fruit. So I sat there, and through the barred windows I watched the prison walls turn grey, then blue, then black in the on-coming twilight. Then night.

In the firelight I watched the stains on the walls. They seemed to be dancing, as the yellow firelight flickered in the soft breeze.

The fire eventually went out, and I was very hungry, and I couldn't sleep because Gretchen was snoring and moaning in her sleep. She twitched, too. I hoped she would flinch and thrash herself off me.

The I watched the prison walls turn blue-grey again when the moon came out.

I woke up the next morning, and Gretchen was peeling an orange. She was getting ready to eat it herself, but she gave it to me instead. Thank you," I said. I could see that she had already eaten about half a dozen, because in the corner were a pile of peelings that weren't there the day before. The sky looked grey today.

"It'll burn off," Gretchen said. She tossed me something that looked like a cross between a pear and an

apple.

"Manzanas de agua," she said. "Water apples. I'm up to here with them."

"They're good," I said, manzana de agua juice spill-

ing over my chin. They were very watery.

I talked her into coming with me to the east side of the island, which was over the next series of hills (I imagined), even if only to investigate or spend the day at the beach.

Indeed, when we got over the first hill past the prison, we could see the Pacific Ocean. It was very hazy. We walked down the hills to the shore, passing manzana de agua trees as well as citrus.

It was only an hour's walk. We saw some goats and pigs that must have been the decendants of the farm animals herded by the ex-habitants of the island. I was glad: they provided a good potential source of meat and milk and baby animals that Gretchen and I could tame.

Gretchen and I talked about this possibility, that we might have to live out our days together on this island, fighting off the seven other men from breaking up our homestead and getting to Gretchen.

But I told her we couldn't have any children because:

- 1) I was already married
- 2) and had four kids;
- 3) besides, if we did have children here on the island, the next generation of people would be the victims of recessive gene degradation, unless we could get

one of the men to be friendly enough; he could add to the gene pool; he would have to be a young one so that by the time one of our daughters grew up, he'd be able to mate with her and she wouldn't have to marry one of her brothers.

We got to the seashore and found an old sailboat hidden in the trees. The said was torn, and the rigging was all tangled up, so it was useless. I tore all the rigging out, and tore off the sail, and we had to use Gretchen's bra and shirt for a sail and rigging.

We took off for sea, and for the first time had some hope for rescue: we could see the Central American

coastline.

"That's where the Pacific ends," I said. "and connects to the Atlantic."

We made it to the island just in time. The seven other men were crowding each other off the shoreline, knocking each other over and into the sea, trying to stay balanced on the island and reach out to grab Gretchen at the same time.

Gretchen's bra and shirt worked fine. She thanked me for my ingenuity and I thanked her for weighing 800 pounds and being 7 and 1/2 feet around.

Mac Kemer

Found Poem

"Then he rubbed himself, having shut the door of the hut. The fire was blazing up. She ducked her head in the other end of the sheet, and rubbed her wet hair.

"We're drying ourselves together on the same towel, we shall quarrel!" he said.

She looked up for a moment, her hair all odds and ends.

"No!" she said, her eyes wide. "It's not a towel, it's a sheet."

D. H. Lawrence Lady Chatterley's Lover - pg. 208

Having shut the door to the hut fire blazing she ducked her head in the other end of the sheet and rubbed her wet hair. We dry ourselves in the same towel we shall quarrel no it is not a towel it is a sheet.

Kimsue Malfetti

My father refused me bail and I sat despondent, smoothing out my velvet skirt, smoking my first cigarette ever, imagining memoirs and sleazy muslin shifts and Carole Lombard in a sheeny slip. Suicide had crossed my mind before, but I wasn't in the mood this time and not yet have I felt my affairs ordered enough to depart this world prematurely, especially on my own accord. And anyway, Roxanne Cambi recommended managing one's life at least until uneventful sexual fulfillment. Cambi had warned Mrs. Morse that Elizabeth was on the brink but Mrs. Morse had said I was merely endearingly negative. Then again how much time does one have to converse intimately with childless homeroom teachers. Cambi didn't have a mother and she sent her jeans to the dry cleaners and we weren't the least bit friendly outside of school; she lived on the landfill just short of the breakers and I was south of the railroad tracks woodside. Our paths to the shopping centers rarely crossed and she was too boyish to bother admiring the slow pitch sluggers down at the park. Cambi quit school early and went to nursing college in New York, never writing and never bothering to check the personals section of the Long Island Press. I splurged once on a classified ad in the Rolling Stone; I shouldn't have bothered; it was obvious I cared more than she did; I always had, what did it matter. I didn't go to school. I went down to the beach and told Sterling Mace I wanted to be in his summer musical. He handed me a cowboy hat and black satin gloves and told me to lure men to dance to Guy Lombardo after ushering senior citizens to their seats for Oklahoma seven nights a week. On the ushering staff was a willowy girl named Ramona who had sex on Freeport piers at night and who had been using a diaphragm for five years. We ate jujubes in the elevator and teased the older men to tears, sitting outside the men's room, waiting for the producers. One night Ramona didn't quite catch the 6:35 out of Freeport, and to amuse myself I lip-synched all the songs to a thin-hipped quitarist with tangled glossy hair. He was just sitting there in the orchestra pit, with the most marvelous fingering technique during People Will Say We're in Love. I winked at him until he blushed and all I could manage out of him was "Hi kid," Ramona came back and plotted strategies during our breaks. She decided we ought to set up a special table under the dancing tent and invite him over after the show.

He wasn't one of the Royal Canadiens and he didn't look like he had anyone to go home to. Ramona managed to disappear before midnight and I was left to attempt conversation with this musician. He seemed utterly fascinated with everything and anything I had to say; by closing time I had reached over and bitten one of his fingers. He took me home to one of five towns and while I was in the bathroom cursing I wasn't on the pill, I looked up and saw an oil painted photograph of a woman in mink stole, elbow evening gloves and pearls. He had said he had no mother; what was she doing in the bathroom over the vanity.

He held me and kissed me and apologized for not loving me and I protested and said it wasn't necessary really but he cried and put his clothes back on and asked me if he came back tomorrow could I shave under his arms then? Some nights after work we would lie on the grassy incline by the causeway and wrap ourselves in a grey cashmere blanket. We would steal away behind the bleachers and I would ask, Can I have you Jackie? He cried less often but would say, "I don't want to make love to you now." He really went to music school; he

was just doing this for the summer and for the sheer love of musicals.

He swore once the summer was over everything would be fine. I believed that also. My mother said I could go to fashion college so I bought a leather portfolio bigger than I was and a cummutation ticket for the month of September and waited for Jackie to tell me which coffeehouse he'd be playing weekends. Ramona's diaphragm failed her during the Freeport High School fraternity rushing so she was on the Jersey shore recuperating. I had given up on Camhi and all the letters I had sent to Mrs. Morse were returned to sender. I walked up to the box office the first day of September to pick up my check and Jackie was leaning on the quanset hut. He didn't say anything but I rushed up to trace the outline of his ear. He pushed my hand away, "I thought I told you before," and walked down the boardwalk. The next time I saw him his hair was cut short and he was in a piano store buying piano rolls. He barely said hello and seemed surprised I pierced my ear again. He had found new friends, he said. He didn't have to play with their hair or bring them to orgasm. One night in a bar he sat with them and I sat alone waiting for Ramona. He sashayed past on the way to the men's room. I found an ice cube in my palm. I let it strike the ceiling, splattering shards and drips on his hair and tee shirt. I ran out tripping on my sandals. Another time he was walking by the depot. I swung at him and the full force of my arm hit him across the neck; he stumbled but never broke stride. I trembled into folds of sobs, hugging my arms until the wail rose from my shaken body.

I went to his school and found a poster that said he and Stu somebody were playing acoustic guitar in the Maple Arbor. Ramona couldn't make it that night so I

sat alone wearing clothes Jackie once said he liked. Jackie sang Statesboro blues and tears wet my face: he sung that to me the nights he couldn't sleep. Stu looked so much like Jackie I could hardly concentrate. I drew on the tablecloth which was who. After an intermission, I snuck up closer to the front and hid behind a wallpapered pillar. This time Stu sang and Jackie concentrated on his fingering, so I knew Jackie couldn't see me. I knew the song so I waited for the lingering notes near the end and hurled a six inch carving knife at Stu. He fell over his quitar and Jackie's face drained. He kicked over the footlights and saw me scrambling for the exit. He caught me but I pulled free and ran down the street. They found me later outside the Maple Arbor. Listen, I swung at him and the full force of my arm hit him across the neck; he stumbled but never broke stride. And I trembled into folds of sobs, hugging my arms until the wail rose from my shaken body. Listen, I hit him and he said nothing.

Elizabeth Connor

A VALENTINE

And there was something that stopped them from going all the way to touch and feel. The Nutcracker or Baked Ballerina. Yes there was something something that was there was there and could not be helped. It was something that they neither of them could stop from stopping them to go all the way. To touch and feel. And really there were no tears in this stopping because there were better things to do for them than to worry about stopping this something stopping them from really going all the way.

So this is not a tragedy because in ten years everything was different and they didn't even remember the stopping we don't kiss like that anymore.
you see I read in january's cosmopolitan
preferred osculation consists
of fleeting moist passes of the lips
encompassing
but not engulfing
no deboning of the tongue
or spelunking of the palate.
just noisy little smacks
to let your attache know
you can't pass a newsstand without buying \$1.25 worth
of cleavage.

Elizabeth Connor

STREET DANCE

The window's light Showers down. Embellished slick streets. With stone steps occupied, And sirens shreak Admonitions. as it rains crisp tilted sheets. There are strident profanities, echoed now and then, as the dancers move off the stone steps. In late September the beer cans are ripe and ready to be thrown, Their fate is debris sliding away on slippery pavement with washed away thoughts. The hooker's light again invades the street, or maybe police light? Or reflected red heat, as the dance continues.

Madelene Porrey

LOOK HERE, NOW!

Hal Blaine lay on the ground, dazed. The shirt on his back was torn and in shreds. His ruined spaceship lay a hundred feet away, a crumbled and twisted mass of

wreckage still smoldering from its recent impact.

Blaine lifted his head, shook it, and looked around. The battle with the Creenies had been fierce. He had bailed out just in time, too; a moment later and he would have been charred cinders like his spacecraft. He studied the area where he had landed on this Godforsaken planet—a rocky terrain with several scraggly trees here and there. Luckily, his gun had been in its holster when he'd jumped. Blaine pulled it out and examined it; it seemed operable.

Just then a primeval scream brought him around. A huge thirty-foot Glokk stood atop a towering rock formation. One of its four arms broke off a chunk of stone and slung it at the small human below. Hal ducked, the rock shattering into fragments behind him. Raising his blaster he took a well-aimed shot, hitting the Glokk square in the chest and flinging pieces of green and pur-

ple horror over a twenty-foot square area.

Managing a weak grin, Hal lowered his blaster. He had to be more careful--it could just as well have been a Creenie, one of Earth's mortal enemies, and he would

have been done for.

Making his way back to the ship to see what could be salvaged, Blaine heard voices. Thinking quickly, he dove into an abandoned Bartfarn hole, which had ample room to hide his muscled bulk, and waited. The voices came closer. Then Blaine stiffened-- Creenies! So they had found him! When the voices were only a few feet away, Blaine braced himself, then burst out of the hole.

The Creenies had stopped to look at the ship--Blaine's ship. His first shot hit the leader in the head, splattering Creenie brains all over the place. The dead alien's com-

panions made a break for it, and a second shot blew a Creenie in half. The third fell into a Bartfarn hole just as one of the creatures was emerging. The sickening crunch of his enemy's exoskeleton told Hal that it was well-received by the Bartfarn, a hundred-foot carnivorous worm.

Now that that was over, he had to find the Creenie ship and get off this crazy planet. As he turned to leave, a scream came from behind a small hill to the left of him.

Bounding up the stubbly surface, he stared out at the plain below. A cave-woman, her only garment a thin loincloth, lay on the ground cringing in fear at the hideous spectacle above. Hal Blaine followed her gaze upward.

And hideous it was: a gigantic three-winged Zygslup: Again the blaster came into use. As the bird dove toward

the girl, Blaine fired.

The spurt of energy seared a hole in one of the thick leathery wings, but merely served to anger the beast. Forgetting about the cowering female, it rose in the air, trailing a stream of thick brown ooze from its injury. Hal didn't move, but watched intently the moves of the creature. It circled the sky a bit and then, with a screaming battle-cry, nose-dived straight at his attacker.

Blaine knew the next few seconds would be crucial. Aiming at its single multi-faceted eye, he pulled the trigg-

er.

Nothing happened.

In a fit of rage and impotence, he threw his blaster to the ground. The Zygslup was still coming; Hal had to think fast. He bent his knees. The monstrous creature still came, closer--closer, the huge beak ready to devour this tasty morsel. At the last possible second before it could snatch him up, Blaine acted.

Hal Blaine sprang--and leaped from the story in a

rage.

"Now just a Goddamn minute, here! Who do you

think I am, Superman? I can't keep fighting these stupid creatures all the time; I need rest! I'm a mortal, an Earthman, flesh-and-blood. Okay?"

I, the author, stared in disbelief at Hal Blaine, Space Rover, standing on my work table, Tom Thumb-size.

"What kind of a stupid, insolent S.O.B. are you, anyways? Makin' me spread gore and terror throughout the universe for the peace and well-being of Mother Earth! I'm like a prisoner in these idiotic epics, bustin' my backside two-hundred pages a novel for 157 hare-brained books: That's--!" He broke off suddenly and muttered, "God, it makes me wanna vomit!", after which he let loose a string of obscenities unbecoming to an intergalactic hero.

"Yeah, but you get a nice broad at the end, don't you?" I countered.

"Big deal! Just when I'm about to lay hands on her, another crisis comes up and I have to fight another one of your moronic creations. F'instance, in Intergalactic Maniacs I was finally getting chummy with this far-out blonde when you let loose a bunch of crazies in Asteroid Menace, the succeeding novel. I've hardly so much as seen a chick since you started writing your serialized novels and got me into the Space Patrol."

"You mean you had a life before I invented you?"

He glared at me as if I were a hated Creenie.

"You didn't know that? You of all people! Of course I had a life before you 'invented' me. And I'm not speaking for me alone, I'm speaking for all the other members of the Space Patrol who get their brains blasted out every five pages . . . "

His face was livid, and froth began to leap from his

lips.

". . . and I'm not talking solely about you, but about all the authors who treat their characters like mere puppets. Some aren't so bad, but you -- you're some kinda sadist. To you, we're your little masochistic stuffed-toy

scapegoats you can kick the stuffin's outta any time you want . . . "

I stole a glance back at the manuscript; the Zygslup

still hung in mid-air, mouth agape.

". . .your real problem is psychological. You don't want to get out and do real work, so instead you sit and deteriorate and churn out . ."

Some people stoop to hurt others. This guy was actual-

ly spelunking.

". . . these mind-rotting so-called epics where I go through so many adventures I can't even keep track of them at the end of the day. Why . . ."

As he said this, he unconsciously waved his blaster at me. I flinched before I realized I had made it empty.

(A point to ponder: How had he retrieved it?)

". . . why you make me look like some kind of muscle-bound buffoon." He yelled (though to me his voice was a Mickey Mouse squeak), flinging his gun at my typewriter. It hit with a diminutive "tink!" and bounced to the floor--table.

"What do you want me to do? I write these stories for a living. People like them, people like you. Please come back into the story." I begged.

"I refuse." He squeaked adamantly.

"B-but without you I'll starve!"

"Starve then."

An hour later, after much debate, we reached a compromise: he would return to my stories and continue to earn me money and I would have Space Patrol give him an occasional leave so he could get acquainted with a few chicks. I was not wholly satisfied with this deal as I knew it would cost me some fans which I couldn't afford to lose, but I gave a weary consent because a few Hal Blaine novels were better than none.

As he jumped back into the story, a passing spaceship blasted the Zygslup out of existence, saving Blaine. It settled to a halt behind some boulders. Blaine snatched up the rescued girl and raced toward it in friendly greeting.

Blaine was a pushy and arrogant bastard and I wasn't about to bow to any of his demands. No way. I was going to do things the way I wanted, even if I did agree with his ideas. He was never going to get a rest, now. No, sir. I fixed his wagon.

The rescue ship was a disguised Creenie war vessel.

by David Group

PEOPLE, PLACES AND VIBRATIONS

L SHILL (At a New York Carnival Day)

Inside where orchid chince walls,
refracted carnival light be bops
up and down serpentine bar,
the shill takes a fast chug of wine,
and sloshed around with apprehensive tension,
than espectorates into a brown stoneware cuspider,
and chased with a coke, so the man does not see
that he's ready again for another round.
But

The man gets wise and screams indignation, as the shill calls the patch to shroud. the puzzle of the pageant.

Then gets ready for flight, with shovel and broom, down sleepy forty-second street to get some briny deep.

Madelene Porrey

Found Poem

"But we have to be separate for a while, and I suppose it is really the wiser way. If only one were sure.

Never mind, never mind, we won't get worked up. We really trust in the little flame, and in the unnamed god that shields it from being blown out. There's so much of you here with me, really, that it's a pity you aren't all here."

D. H. Lawrence Lady Chatterley's Lover Pg. 283

We separate
it is the wiser
never mind
never mind
we won't get worked up.
We trust the flame
and
the unnamed god
who shields it
there is so much of you here with me,
really,
it is a pity you aren't all here.

Kimsue Malfetti

and the others cannot matter anymore
they surface as salacious reminders
and you won't listen to my side.
look I was young and careless
no I was old and deliberate
I planned it to prevent deep sleep at night.
it was needed for the moment
and the songwriters haven't been as kind

Elizabeth Connor

CHANGE OF ADDRESS REQUESTED

and Dad, tell me what it's like to be a man-the mandreams and man-successes and man-failures, the boy growing into a man. Do the nightmares disappear (fear of dark, of night and shadows and monsters) or do they just grow with you, transform. Or do they become clearer with age? I want to know what it's like to be a man like you. Did you cry a lot when you were a baby? What did you play when you were a boy? Baseball or war or . . .

When did you have your first crush and your first real sexual experience? Did you make it and did you like it? What does it feel like to be inside a woman? What does it feel like to join the Marines after the war is over and you still have to train as if it was still going on or another one is coming up? And they tell you kill kill and you never even had a fist fight after school. One day in the barracks you let some bully punch you right in that Italian nose of yours and then passed out from pain, without a touch of humiliation. Maybe thank God the war is over. What was it like when you were discharged? Did the Marines make you the man you wanted to be?

You finally went to live on your own in Manhattan to be an actor like your older brother. You got bit parts in plays and did carpentry on the side. You played the priest (and you were an agnostic, holding the cynical view of the young) in the movie version of The Miracle Worker and your one scene was edited out. What was it like when you were at that party given by Andy Williams and you were sitting on that couch between those two beautiful starlets and fell asleep? Is that what it is to be a man?

You finally moved out of the city to Jersey, gave up acting but not your agnosticism and spray-painted houses for a living. You let your friends fix you up with blind dates and they took care and tried to find you girls to

match your personality. Maybe you didn't like your personality so that's why you didn't like the girls. Bernadette Peters still wrote you letters. She was already becoming a successful actress and still very young. You were just past thirty and went to your parents house for dinner on Sundays. Your older brother came over too, with his Japanese wife and their two half and half daughters, more beautiful because of the mixture. Your younger brother taught in a dilapidated school in the Bronx and he also joined the family on Sundays. Everyone but the sister who was living with that older man. He was still married to his first wife and would not get a divorce because he was Catholic. Your parents not only didn't like him because of all that, but also because he was Irish, and wouldn't you think Japanese would be worse?

What was it like to be a man past thirty still trying to find yourself, listening to Dylan and Joan Baez and Joni and Judy Collins and Arlo and Melanie and Pete Seeger. who all sang of those larger things that you somehow couldn't fit yourself into? Did you feel like the years were slipping by you too quickly and there would never be enough time for you to catch up? Or were they slowly slowly rolling, dragging you along in no set pattern, with no rhythm that you could figure out? You were thirty-five and your mother nagged you to get married but you could tell that she really didn't want you to. Your parents were getting old but they could remember Italy down to minor details and they still picked at each other over the same things, the same things, like a routine so that you were used to it and didn't even notice it anymore, but to an outsider the bickering would be comical. Something else you did not notice (you were used to this too) was another part of the routine that would sometimes pop up in the middle of an argument or else from the quiet after a meal. When your mother said, "when I die," there was panic in your father's eyes and

he'd say, "I'm going with you." What was it like to be their son?

Did you expect anything different at that New Years Eve Party? You knew that mutual friends had arranged for you to meet that woman and you didn't want to go at first but then you went and you were bored and sat like a rock. She was bored and cool, there's a difference. Maybe she thought it was all so phoney just like you did. She said a few words to you, not like she meant them but perhaps out of some sense of obligation to the mutual friends. "I never go to the movies because you can see the same thing on TV a year later." And, "Yes. Dogs make delightful pets." Instead of telling her that you had been in a movie or that your dog had been hit by a car and by the time you got home from school separate parts of her were connected by only a thread of intestine or liver or stomach or skin, you responded in mono-syllabic answers. You probably didn't know what she wanted. Did you expect anything different? Your friends told you that she lived alone in a little house, a widow, and she worked as a maid for many well-to-do families in the area. Yes. They even told you that she might be a little hard to get along with at first. You didn't care, though. You didn't try to get along with her. She left the party early and after she was gone you put your hand to your beard and thought about what you didn't know about her. Maybe some Dylan song was running through your head. Maybe she knew something you didn't know. You started calling on her and she let you. You brought some albums to her house and in the evenings after work you both set up easels and painted to Dylan. You felt important because she was opinionated and had high standards. You felt special and you felt strength because of her strength. But she knew who was stronger because she knew you were pliable so she tried to teach you, mold you. She told you about women, how they are and why they act the way

they do. She wanted you to take a stand, on anything. And it isn't as if you had no opinions at all, it's just that you didn't express them with the force she desired and admired. You did not respond to her teachings right away. Maybe that was better for you because it turned out that she loved you for your mild, calm, patient nature, and she told you so. You were a team. She had enough emotion for both of you, but behind the emotion lay the vulnerability. You could sense it, but you didn't ask. You could wait because you were patient and she loved that in you.

Maybe, though, she thought that she was getting too close to you or she was afraid of something. She didn't talk as much. She became cool and private and you didn't know what was going on. Finally one night you called her up and the line was busy so you kept trying and trying and trying until you couldn't take it anymore and had to go over to her house. When you got there your albums and your easel and all your other stuff was in a careless pile on the little front stoop and you banged on the door and said, "Let me in. I want to talk to you." She wouldn't open the door. You made a lot of noise so finally she did let you in. She looked at you for a second and then hugged you and cried into your neck. She held you tight and you led her to the sofa where you both sat down. She finally let go her physical grip on you. "Oh, oh," she said. It's all because, it's all because . . ." She told you that she brought on her own widowhood (she still sobbed) because she shot her husband and she was in prison for five years and her daughters (yes, me and Grace) were in a foster home and she couldn't get them out. That was the only barrier left between you. It wouldn't be easy, but you promised her that you would get her children back. You couldn't do anything about the guilt, but you would get the children back. That did it. All at once you were married and floundering in the beaurocracy of the Child Welfare Service and spending money on lawyers and taking off too many days of work. It took time, but not all your time because you were newlyweds and you had to discover each other's sexual selves. But before you could develop confidence in the sexual part of the relationship, she was pregnant. What is it like to be a man waiting for real fatherhood and getting step-fatherhood first? And how did it feel when you and my mother believed you had the world to offer me and Grace and we resisted and refused it? How did it feel to force it on us? Did you believe you were fulfilling her dreams? Did she give you no choice? Why did you call me up when we were still in the foster home to tell me that the baby died right after she (not even a son) was born? Did you feel hurt or angry when I, coldly as I could, said, "I'm sor-

ry? "

Then you dragged us with you to the hills of Pennsylvania. What possessed you to offer us your name? Did she put you up to it? How did you feel when we refused that too? We would not take our mother's love, but you certainly took your share of it and gloated like it was some kind of prize you had won. Did you know that we were jealous? we wanted unconditional love, without loving back. Or else we didn't want your or her love at all because then we could say that we were still all alone. unloved. Did you think hard work would make us a family, because that's all you wanted at first--a family. We who never worked hard and were repelled by the idea. I think it was a romantic notion on your and her part to move into that dirty, crumbling two-room schoolhouse, so sure that soon we would have running water and electricity and all the other things that we began to think of as luxuries. How I hated both of you then (so did Grace) because you were making us clean that deadrat-infested cellar and tear down walls and ceilings (the black dust would cover us and come out on tissues when we blew our noses) and haul ice-covered long long 2 x 10's and then measure and cut insulation and the fiberglass made us itch all night and then measure and cut those slabs of sheetrock and carry them to you where you waited on the ladder. All this after school, after we got off the bus and walked up the driveway to the house. You would be sitting on the red couch waiting to talk to us, our outgoing and incoming mail opened on the coffee table before you. You would do all the talking, calmly and for hours and say, "now, honey," to quell her outbursts. You told us over and over what a real family was and when you asked us what we thought, at first we'd tell you but you said that feelings don't matter (Don't feel, act") so we learned to either not answer or to say, "I don't know," You would get angrier but at least we protected our feelings. Then after that was supper and I couldn't see what I was eating for tears. I couldn't taste it. But one good thing about the work after supper was that I could get out my frustrations.

There was no time for homework because I'd be so tired. I think good grades and school mattered to you, a first generation American, your parents were immigrants to this land of opportunity, but she didn't care about education. I was sixteen and she told me that I could quit school and get married. Would a man materialize from thin air begging to take care of this child?

Did you know, could you tell, that besides the intense hate, there was an even more intense love and need for love? Yes. I loved both you and her. I know now how much she loved me and it hurt her when I wouldn't accept or acknowledge it. I wanted to hurt her. I can't

explain it all yet.

And at first, Dad, I wanted you to see me as a woman. She must have known it because she told both me and Grace that we must be modest in front of you because you were a man and not our real father and men can't help the way they act, they have no control over nature. Is that true, Dad? She wanted to get pregnant again. Your alarm was set for 5:30 every morning so you could

talk. We could hear the murmuring of your soft voices but not what you were saying. We thought you were talking about us. She would take her temperature as soon as she woke up so she could tell when she was ovulating. I never heard a thing. No primal experience for me, but I

tried to listen anyway.

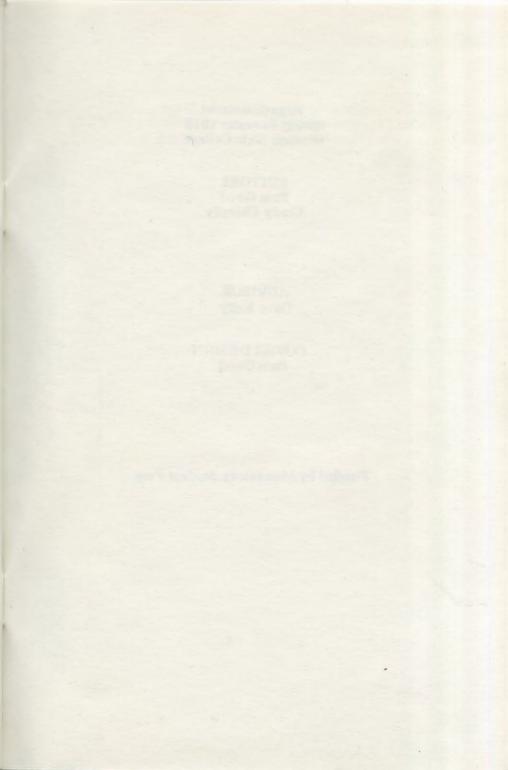
I was jealous for both of you and I was in my glory whenever I was alone in the kitchen with her or alone with you to talk about Dylan (I still have your albums) or even to help you work. Then both of you turned Christian at the same exact moment. Did she plan it that way? I was afraid to be near either of you because you would confront and prod, trying to convert. We again resisted and then we pretended. I even fooled myself for a while. But wait, Dad, you know all this. We've been over it so much, separately and together. It still doesn't make any sense to me, but you know that too. That's why I stay at school or just any place that's away from both of you, but mainly her. I cannot even talk to you or her. I can write this letter to you because I want to know things and only you can tell me because you are not blood. I feel something different for you, Dad, something very strong. I think that you are not always one with my mother. There has to be more to you than that. There must be reasons for you. Tell me about being a man, a man like you. Tell me about not being a woman. She has already told me about that. Only you can say it and I can only hear it from you. Just us, Dad, you and

Cecil

Jean Lupoli

it got so bad the blood rushed each opening and fought to coat the exaggerated cracks. a surprising red that dried to brick he said, "call sherwin williams, the color could be introduced in their fall line."

Elizabeth Connor



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