

down in the
Down in the Dirt
internet magazine
free sampler
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dirt

the soap box
monologues

free

poetry and prose from

Down in the Dirt internet magazine
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BORN OLD

JERRY VILHOTTI

When Johnny, with the blond curly hair, could walk, his father would take him on very long journeys all over the neighborhood: by the shoemakers, adjacent to where the baker's son had fallen from the mountain to his death who had given Johnny many rides on the handlebars of his bike, with a fake cat in the window holding the sole of a shoe; across cobblestones the great poet Poe once walked upon with his inner demons clutching his heart and mind while living in matrimony with his sister-cousin when the area was called Fordham Village and by the tire store with a cardboard print of a little boy inside a tire holding a candle against the darkness surrounding him ... but even before Johnny could walk, the father would hug him closely and kiss him tenderly; push him out above his head - bringing forth excited screams of joy from the baby and he would get excited over the excitement the boy showed. The more Tina, the father's daughter, began to look like a grown woman, the more he hugged Johnny and caressed him as if he were an anchor probing deep murky waters.

Seventeen year old Tina felt like spitting on the kid: "Here lousy, take this!" she would whisper harshly to him as she held her nose, pretending he was a horrible odor, giving him the sandwich to take to her father for ever since his hand had fallen from the table like a twitching leaf caught in a fierce breeze only to clutch to Tina's firm ass cheek - which was seen by the mother who called him an animal and visitor of sheep pens - they tried to stay away from one another to prevent glances with suggestive meanings in eyes.

Tom, who was seven years old when Johnny had descended among them in a crash landing from the body of a thirty-nine year old woman becoming the old-born baby, would tease the "little jerk with moxie" by making scary faces at him when no one was looking or pinch his legs from beneath the table and then pretend he had done no such thing when accused by a talking Johnny and the mother would hit Johnny, whom she really hadn't wanted - overwhelmed at the thought of feeding a fifth mouth during the dying of hunger Great Depression brought on by the rich to emphasize their worth for if there weren't hoards of wretched poor how would they know they were well off - for trying to get polio-legged Tommy into trouble with the father who had once bitten the carpet to shreds when Tom had dropped the bowl of pasta to the floor - insisting brace and all clutching his leg that he could negotiate the walk from counter to table since his hands were not inflicted with polio - rather than eat the wide-eyed frightened child. The meal was washed off and eaten after refreshed with more red gravy.

What Tommy would try to do was throw Johnny down the steep flight of stairs but Johnny's holding onto the railing prevented a head long fall through a glass window and into a courtyard five levels below where Black Jack the custodian would greet Johnny every day with a grand hello; failing this, Tom would pose a special challenge to this kid-brother who was slowly stealing away the love of his father and mother that he had sole possession of since his leg had been attacked when he was

six months old and Johnny would walk to the top of the stairs like a car with a flat tire - imitating Tom's polio walk - to hear Tom say: "Come on Johnny - jump! I'll catch you! I swear to God! Trust me - Christ I'm your fucking brother!"

Johnny believed and jumped but Tom only half caught him making Johnny bleed from the nose and lip. The very last time Johnny jumped, Tom missed him altogether making Johnny's knees, elbows and forehead bleed. Then after, whenever Tom called from the bottom of the stairs, Johnny would not go. He would instead get fully absorbed in the toy coal truck with a blunt nose his father had given him and play all about the kitchen floor until the noise of the truck's wheels scraped away all of Tom's might angry calls...

MONOLOGUE TO A MARRIED MAN

DAVID-MATTHEW BARNES

I bet you work in a fancy office
With real plants and a gorgeous view of the city
You probably give all the girls a little pat
Every now and then
So no one suspects anything about you
At Christmas, you give them all boxes of candy
Truffles, probably
White chocolate or pink champagne
They can't wait to dance with you at the office parties - shake your hands
Because they adore you, they worship you
Especially the wives
But you refuse politely, don't you
Because you are a married man
And doesn't your wife look lovely tonight
And I bet - when she comes home from her little
Weekend getaway
And she's hugging you and she's kissing you
Because she missed you so much
It won't be her you're touching
It won't be her you're kissing
And it won't be her that you're thinking about
It'll be me
And I will tell you why,
and this is so sad
Because you - you are nothing but a coward
And I am nothing to you
But a tool for your imagination.

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