

# children churches & daddies

Published since 1993 • Janet Kuypers, Editor

stupid,  
boring,  
technical  
crap:



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Children, Churches and Daddies

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## chapbooks:

1993: hope chest in the attic (chapbook and book), the gallery (computer program), knife, people today, dysfunctional family greeting cards, slate and marrow, dreaming of dandelions and ice cubes, addicted, new world order, gasoline and reason, the written word, the printed gallery, right there by your heart, rendering us, gabriel, magnolia christmas, how you looked then.

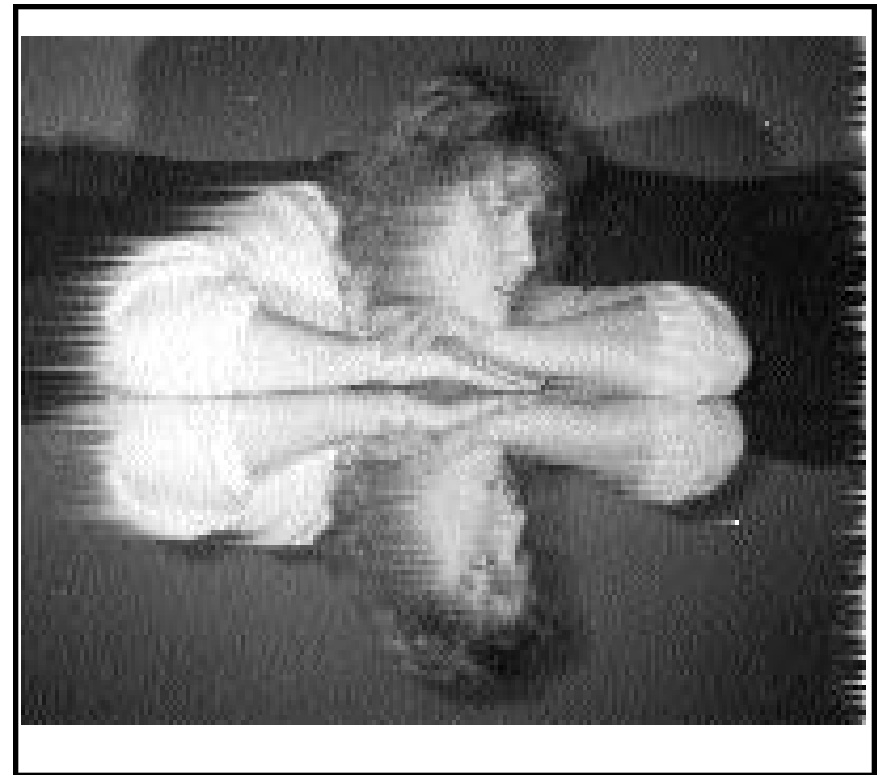
1994: paper backbone, winter prayers, looking through their window, games, order now, a (fe)male behind bars, two year journey, they told me their dreams, the window (book), city, it was a perfect house, pictures from a still life.

1995: things i saw alone, proud to be a part of things, love letters, scratching, still had to breathe, wrinkles in the palm of my hand. Upcoming chapbooks: house of slavs, come into my garden, texas, new york, in these desperate times, before the storm, some things instinctively hurt, the house is a ship, circling overhead, six stories, this is what it means, louisiana poems, quiet madmen, she thinks/he thinks, singular memories.

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# children churches & daddies

the non-religious, non-family oriented literary and art magazine



volume 71



edit  
editorial

with you  
(2/18/94)

It's Friday again

the birds are singing this morning  
the sun is out  
it's warmer than usual

maybe it's always like this  
maybe it's today

it always seems darker  
when you're further away

think globally  
act locally  
change personally



## children, churches & daddies

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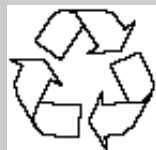
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and geez,  
recycle this.  
do i have  
to tell you  
everything?



knew Andrea knew her too well, and she wouldn't be able to fight her words, even after all these years.

"I went through this. When Jack told me I'd never be able to leave him, that I'd be sorry if I did, that I'd pay for trying to divorce him, that's when I knew I couldn't take it anymore. No man has a right to tell me—or you—what you can and can't do. It hasn't gotten better, like you keep saying, has it? No. I know it hasn't. It never does.

"I know this sounds harsh, and it is. If I was willing to run away, run away so convincingly that my own family thought I was dead, then it had to be serious. Do you think I liked leaving you? My brother? Do you think this was easy?"

Gabriel paused, tried to lean back, take a deep breath, relax.

"No. It wasn't easy. But I had to do it, I had to get away from him, no matter what it took. In spending my life with him I was losing myself. I needed to find myself again."

They sat there for a moment, a long moment, while they both tried to recover.

"You don't have to run away," Gabriel said to her. "You don't have to run away like I had to. But he won't change. You do have to leave here. Let me help you."

Within forty-five minutes Sharon had three bags of clothes packed and stuffed into Gabriel's trunk. As Sharon went to get her last things, Gabriel thought of how Sharon called her "Andi" when she spoke. God, she hadn't heard that in so long. And for a moment she couldn't unravel the mystery and find out who she was. Sharon came back to the car. Gabriel knew that Sharon would only stay with her until the divorce papers were filed and she could move on with her life. But for tonight they were together, the inseparable Sharon and Andi, spending the night, playing house, creating their own world where everything was exactly as they wanted.

And this was real life now, and they were still together, with a whole new world to create. They were both free, and alive, more alive than either of them had ever felt. "I want you to meet Eric. He's a good man," Gabriel said.

And as they drove off to nowhere, to a new life, on the expressway, under the viaduct, passing the projects, the baseball stadium, heading their way toward the traffic of downtown life, they remained silent, listened to the hum of the engine. For Gabriel, it wasn't the silence of enabling her oppressor; it wasn't the silence of hiding her past. It was her peace for having finally accepted herself, along with all of the pain, and not feeling the hurt.

Andrea. Gabriel.

The next morning, she didn't know which name she'd use, but she knew that someone died that night, not Jack, but someone inside of her. But it was also a rebirth.

And so she drove.

remembered the way they looked every fall when the leaves turned colors. She remembered that one week every fall when the time was just right and each tree's leaves were different from the other trees. This is how she wanted to remember it. And she drove past her old town, over an hour and a half away from the city, passing where her parents, her brother could still be living. She didn't know if she would ever bother to find them. Right now all she could do was drive to the next town, where her old friend used to live. Best friends from the age of three, Sharon and Andrea were inseparable, even though they fought to extremes. And as she drove toward Sharon's house, she knew she'd have to move quickly, if her husband was still there.

She double checked in a phone book at a nearby gas station. And she turned two more corners and parked her car across the street. Would she recognize her? Would she believe she was there? That she was alive?

Gabriel saw one car in the driveway, not two; she went to the window, and looking in saw only Sharon. She stepped back. She took a long, deep breath. She was a fugitive turning herself in. She was a fugitive, asking people to run with her, running from something, yet running free. She knocked on the door.

Through the drapes she saw the charcoal shadow come up to the door. It creaked open. There they stood, looking at each other. For the first time in three and a half years.

Sharon paused for what seemed a millennium. Her eyes turned to glass, to a pond glistening with the first rays of the morning sun.

"Andrea." She could see her through the brown curls wrapping her face. Another long silence. Sharon's voice started to break.

"You're alive," she said as she closed her eyes and started to smile. And Gabriel reached through the doorway, and the door closed as they held each other.

They sat down in the living room. In the joy, Sharon forgot about the bruises on her shoulder. Gabriel noticed them immediately.

They talked only briefly before Gabriel asked her. "Is Paul here?"

"No, he's out playing cards. Should be out all night."

"Things are the same, aren't they?"

"Andi, they're fine. He's just got his ways," and Sharon turned her head away, physically looking for something to change the subject. There was so much to say, yet Sharon couldn't even speak.

And then Gabriel's speech came out, the one she had been rehearsing in her mind the entire car ride over. The speech she gave to herself for the years before this very moment. "Look, Sharon, I know what it's like, I can see the signs. I know you, and I know you'll sit through this marriage, like I would have, this unending cycle of trying to cover the bruises on your arms and make excuses—"

Sharon moved her arm over her shoulder. Her head started inching downward. She

## The New Philosophy of Qum

### john hayes

I am rocking in my old wicker chair, sipping vodka on the rocks and waiting for the ball game to start when the little blue man materializes.

"Hello," I say. Since I switched to vodka nothing surprises me.

"My name is Qum," he says.

"Care for baseball?" I ask. "Good game this afternoon, winner should be in first place."

"No baseball in Acari," he replies. "What is it? A gambling game."

"I might go a buck or two on this one."

"In your money, How much is that?"

"Oh, buy you about a double slug of this stuff." I pour him a double shot of vodka.

He drinks it, turns green and holds his glass out for more. Qum is about three feet tall and has pointed ears and head. He has an unusually thick neck but overall is well proportioned.

He wiggles his pointed ears, a sign, I subsequently learn, that he is thinking.

"Are these bucks difficult to get?" he asks.

"Very. Men kill to get them. Even go into politics."

"This is very good stuff" he says draining his glass. "We will need more." He wiggles his ears, "Therefore we need more money."

I notice that my bottle is about empty.

"I couldn't agree more," I say. I take a good look at his short blue body. "Who the hell are you?" I ask.

"Qum, I already told you that."

"Okay, what are you?"

"On Acari I was a highly eminent gambler. Twelve afternoons ago during a high stakes game I made the mistake of taking advantage of our most high premier."

"You mean cheated?"

"No, took advantage of. I didn't know it was the high premier. She's supposed to handle affairs of state in the afternoon, not gamble."

"Think of the good side," I say. "Anytime a politician is not tending to business, they can't do any harm."

"Please, don't interrupt," he wiggles his ears. "As I was about to say I was exiled to Earth," he holds out his glass. I pour each of us a drink, "We're out," I say.

"Is it true?" he asks, not understanding the significance of my statement, "that with your bucks one can acquire rustic estates, ample vodka, gorgeous women and total enjoyment."

"I have always heard that, but it requires far more bucks than I will ever have."  
"We shall see," says Qum. I look up to see my wallet floating thru the air and into his hand. He withdraws my five dollars and says we shall parlay it into a fortune. I point out that picking pockets is frowned on by the law and could even get one busted in the nose.

"Tut, tut," says Qum. "We shall gamble."

"With five dollars?"

"Certainly, we shall bet on a sure thing. This ball game, for instance, who's playing?"

"Yankees and Red Sox."

He forms an ellipse on my porch floor using pink chalk. A white "Z" slowly forms.

He wiggles his ears, "The Yankees will win," he says.

"With Caruso pitching at home, this I already know."

"Poor odds?"

"Terrible."

"Perhaps something else?"

"Can you figure the sixth at Sportsman?" I hand him my racing sheet.

Qum draws an ellipse on the porch floor with pink chalk. A "Z" slowly forms. He wiggles his ears.

"If you always get a "Z" from the pink chalk why do it?" I ask.

"Holy Cow," he declares is a winner. "It helps me to wiggle," he adds.

Holy Cow is paying thirty to one so I phone in my bet. At the end of the sixth we have one hundred and fifty dollars, less tax.

I drive to my bookies, pick up my money, buy more vodka and return to my house. Qum is rocking as he scrutinizes the ball game.

He looks at me, "Explain this game to me. What's it all about?"

"Winning." I pour each of us a stiff drink.

We are both thirsty and drink heavily while making plans for the future. The plans are simple. We will win every race at Sportsman. The next day we start off fine but at the end of the fifth I learn that Qum is not infallible. He points out to me that he needs vodka to predict accurately and as I need a drink myself we drive to "Happy Harry's, the used car friend you can turn to" and leave there minus my Celica but with 395 dollars. We purchase a gallon of vodka and return to my place for some serious thinking.

The next day Qum mentions that this is not a good race day so I suggest the stock market. Qum is a natural at this. Initially, except for vodka and a few other necessities, we reinvest our winnings. But as our dollars accumulate we acquire two sport cars, a rustic estate, one fair race horse, many cases of vodka, all our friends drink vodka, and lots of gorgeous friends, both male and female. Qum takes to women like he does to vodka and we are both blissfully unaware that our

"So there I was, twenty-two years old, with no future, with no identity. My family, my friends, would all think I was dead in the morning. And for the first time in my life, I was so alone. God, I was so scared, but at the same time, it was the best feeling in the world. It felt good to not have my long hair brushing against my neck. It felt good to feel the cold of the three a.m. air against my cheeks, on my ears. It felt good to have no where to go, other than away. No one was telling me where to go, what to do. No one was hurting me.

"I found my way two hours away to this city, came up with the name Gabriel from a soap opera playing in a clinic I went to to get some cold medication. I managed a job at the company I'm at now. Did volunteer work, rented a hole for an apartment. Projected a few of the right ideas to the right people in the company. I got lucky."

She told him all of this before she told him that her husband's name was Jack Huntington.

She brought him home, sat on the couch while he made coffee for her. He tried to sound calm, but the questions kept coming out of his mouth, one after another. Gabriel's answers suddenly streamed effortlessly from her mouth, like a river, spilling over onto the floor, covering the living room with inches of water within their half hour of talk.

She felt the cool water of her words sliding around her ankles. And she felt relieved. Gabriel, Andrea, was no longer Mrs. Jack Huntington.

Eric told her that she could have told him before. "I'd follow you anywhere. If I had to quit my job and run away with you I would." It hurt him that she kept this from him for so long, but he knew he was the only person who knew her secret. He smiled.

There was a burden lifted, she felt, with Jack's death, the burden that she didn't have to hide who she was anymore. She didn't have to worry about public places, cower when she felt his presence, following her, haunting her. It's over, she thought. She can walk out in the street now, and scream, and run, and laugh, and no one will come walking around the corner to force her back to her old life, to that little private hell that was named Andrea.

But sitting there, she knew there was still one thing she had to do.

She put down her coffee, got on her coat, told him this was something she must do. Gabriel got into her car, started to head away from the city. As she left, Eric asked where she was going. She knew she had done what she could for the last three years of her own life to save herself; now it was time to go back to the past, no matter what the consequences were.

He thought she was going back to her family. She was, in a way.

She drove into the town she had once known, saw the trees along the streets and

yell at me, about the way I acted with him, or what I said in public, or that the way I looked was wrong, or something. And every once in a while he would hit me. And whenever it happened I thought that I should have looked better, or I shouldn't have acted the way I did. This man was too good for me. And I had to do everything in my power to make him happy.

"Less than eight months after we met, he asked me to marry him. I accepted.

"We were married two years after we met; it was a beautiful ceremony, tons of flowers, tons of gifts—and I was turning a junior in college. My future was set for me. I couldn't believe it.

"And as soon as we were married, which was right when he started at the firm, he got more and more violent. And instead of thinking that it was my fault, I started thinking that it was because he was so stressed, that he had so much work to do, that sometimes he just took it out on me. I was no one's fault. Besides, if he was going to climb to the top, he needed a wife that was perfect for all of his appearances. I had to be perfect for him. Take care of the house and go to school full time.

"Money wasn't a problem for us, he had a trust fund from his parents and made good money at the firm, so I could go to school. But he started to hate the idea that I was going to college in marketing instead of being his wife full time. But that was one thing I wasn't going to do for him, stop going to school.

"He'd get more and more angry about it the longer we were married. After the first year he'd hit me at least once a week. I was physically sick half of my life then, sick from being worried about how to make him not hurt me, sick from trying to figure out how to cover up the bruises.

"I'd try to talk to him about it, but the few times I ever had the courage to bring it up, he'd beat me. He'd just beat me, say a few words. Apologize the next morning, think everything was better. I couldn't take it.

"I threatened with divorce. When I did that I had to go to the hospital with a broken arm. I had to tell the doctors that I fell down the stairs.

"A long flight of stairs.

"When it was approaching two years of marriage with this man, I said to myself I couldn't take it anymore. He told me over and over again that he'd make me pay if I tried to leave him, I'd be sorry, it would be the worst choice I could ever make. This man had power, too, he could hunt me down if I ran away, he could emotionally and physically keep me trapped in this marriage.

"So I did the only thing I thought I could do.

"I wrote a suicide note. 'By the time you find my car, I'll be dead.' I took a few essentials, nothing that could say who I was. I cut my hair—I used to have long, long hair that I dyed blonde. I chopped it all off and dyed it dark. Then I drove out to a quarry off the interstate 20 miles away in the middle of the night, threw my driver's license and credit cards into the passenger's seat, put a brick on the accelerator, got out of the car and let it speed over the cliff. Everything was burned.

money is going backward on the market.

It is not long after our money starts going backward on the market that Qum busts into my room early one morning waving the financial page of the "Times" in my face.

"Go away," I say.

"Nothing doing," he shouts and shoves the financial page under my nose. I ignore it and reach gratefully for the vodka which his other hand holds. Qum steadies it to my mouth. It hits my stomach and spews up on the floor as I thoughtfully lean over the side of the bed.

"Try another," says Qum, handing me a second shot. This one stays down.

"You'll have to clean it up yourself," he says pointing to the mess I have made on the floor.

"Why not Arthur?"

"He's gone."

"Gone?" I echo his word.

"Gone. Everyone's gone. We're broke."

"Betty too?"

"Just as soon as she realized we were broke," Qum says.

"Gad!"

"It's our own fault," he shoves another slug in my general direction.

I take it with fervor, "Yeah, that guy at the broker's office told us to watch our investments."

"Speculations," says Qum. "Okay, up and at them and back to work." He pauses and wiggles his ears. "And no more partying."

"No more partying?"

"Right."

"But why have money if we can't spend it?" I ask.

"For its own sake."

"Its own sake?"

"Dollar upon dollar for its own sake. Wealth for itself!" he shouts.

"The means shall be our ends," I cry catching his enthusiasm.

"We will write a book glorifying our new philosophy," he gushes.

"We'll be famous."

"Rich."

I clutch his hands in delight, a tear of sheer ecstasy dropping from my cheek as I ponder the great ideal which we have created.

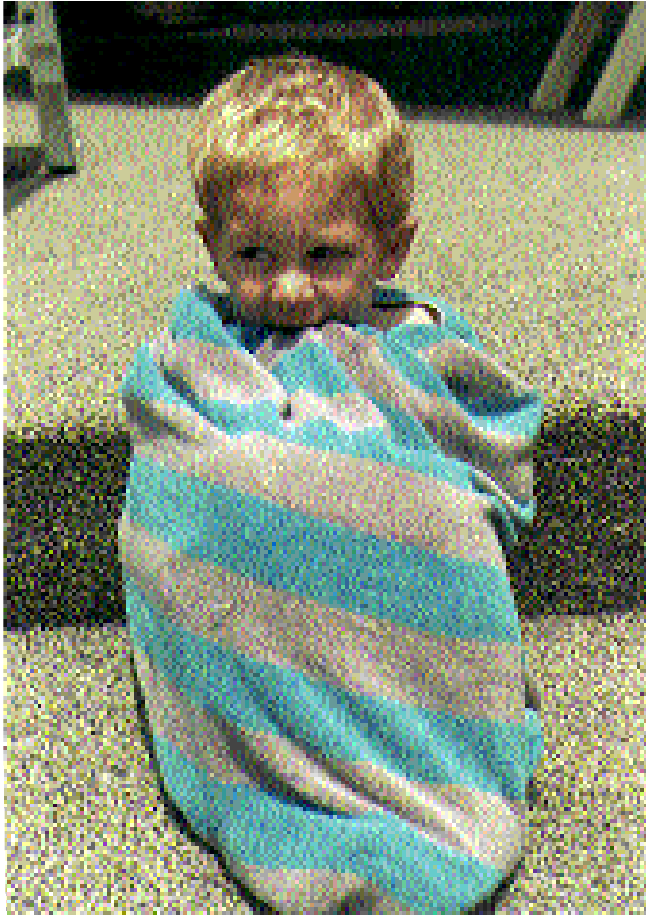
He wiggles his ears.

"What?" I ask.

"We need a stake."

"Sell cars for Happy Harry," I say.

"Okay," he says. He wiggles his ears. "How many cars?"



"Enough for a case," I say, "I'll start writing our book."  
Qum leaves, all three feet of him jiggling, except his ears. They wiggle.  
I begin writing. The ethical accumulation of wealth by any means...  
I am on page 87 when a smiling Qum returns, vodka in each hand. He fixes  
drinks, then looks at my first page.  
"Strike ethical," he says.

She asked him if they could stop at a club on the way home and have a drink or two. They found a little bar, and she instantly ordered drinks. They sat for over an hour in the dark club listening to the jazz band. It looked to Eric like she was trying to lose herself in the darkness, in the anonymity of the crowded lounge. It worried him more. And still she didn't relax.

And she drove on the expressway back from dinner, Eric in the seat next to her. He had noticed she had been tense today, more than she had ever been; whenever he asked her why she brushed her symptoms off as nothing. The radio blared in the car, the car soaring down the four lanes of open, slick, raw power, and she heard the dee jay recap the evening news. A man died in a car accident, he said, and it was the lawyer defending the famed mob leader. And then the radio announced his name.

And she didn't even have to hear it.

Time stopped for a moment when the name was spread, Jack, Jack Huntington, like a disease, over the air waves. Jack, Jack the name crept into her car, she couldn't escape it, like contaminated water it infiltrated all of her body and she instantly felt drugged. Time stood still in a horrific silence for Gabriel. Hearing that midnight talk show host talk about the tragedy of his death, she began to reduce speed, without intention. She didn't notice until brights were flashing in her rear view mirror, cars were speeding around her, horns were honking. She was going 30 miles per hour. She quickly regained herself, turned off the radio, and threw her foot on the accelerator. Eric sat silent. They had a long drive home ahead of them from the club, and he knew if he only sat silent that she would eventually talk.

While still in the car, ten minutes later, she began to tell him about Andrea.

"Three years ago, when I moved to the city, my name wasn't Gabriel. It was Andrea. Seven years ago, I was a different person. I was a lot more shy, insecure, an eighteen year old in college, not knowing what I wanted to study. I didn't know what my future was, and I didn't want to have to go through my life alone. My freshman year I met a man in the law school program at school. He asked me out as soon as he met me. I was thrilled.

"For the longest time I couldn't believe that another man, especially one who had the potential for being so successful, was actually interested in me. He was older, he was charming. Everyone loved him. I followed him around constantly, wherever he wanted me to go.

"He met my parents right away. They adored him, a man with a future, he was so charming. They pushed the idea of marrying him. I didn't see it happening for a while, but I felt safe with him.

"And every once in a while, after a date, or a party, we'd get alone and he'd start to



She pressed the button for the elevator. And he could just as easily see me walking out of work, getting in Eric's car, she thought. I have to stop thinking like this. This is ludicrous. And he won't be there, he won't see me, because, well, the chances are so thin, and Hell, it's a big city. I have to try to relax. But she couldn't. And there was no reason she should have.

At the restaurant, they sat on the upper level, near one of the large Roman columns decorated with ivy. She kept looking around one of the columns, because a man three tables away looked like Jack. It wasn't, but she still had to stare.

The meal was delicious, the presentation was impeccable. She was finally starting to relax. The check arrived at the table right as the place began to get crowded, so Gabriel went to the washroom to freshen up before they left. She walked through the restaurant, feeling comfortable and confident again. She even attracted a smile from a man at another table. She walked with confidence and poise. And she loved life again.

She walked into the bathroom, straight to the mirror, checking her hair, her lip stick. She looked strong, not how she looked when she was married. She closed her purse, turned around and headed out the door.

That's when she saw him.

There he was, Jack, standing right there, waiting for a table. He had three other men with him, all in dark suits. She didn't know if they were mob members or firm associates. Or private eyes he hired to find her. Dear God, she thought, what could she do now? She can't get to the table, he'll see her for sure. She can't stare at him, it'll only draw attention to herself.

And then she thinks: "Wait. All I've seen is the back of him. It might not even be him." She took a breath. "It's probably not even him," she thought, "and I've sat here worrying about it."

Still, she couldn't reassure herself. She took a few steps back and waited for him to turn around.

A minute passed, or was it a century?, and finally he started to turn, just as they were about to be led to their table. She saw his profile, just a glimpse of his face. It was him, it was Jack, it was the monster she knew from all those years, the man who made her lose any ounce of innocence or femininity she ever had. She saw how his chin sloped into his neck, the curve of his nose, how he combed his hair back, and she knew it was him.

By the washrooms, she stared at him while he took one step away from her, closer to the dining room. Then she felt a strong, pulling hand grip her shoulder. Her hair slapped her in the face as she turned around. Her eyes were saucers.

"The check is paid for. Let's go," Eric said as he took her jacket from her arm and held it up for her. She slid her arms through the sleeves, Eric pulling the coat over her shoulders. She stared blankly. He guided her out the doors.

By Todd Nissen

DETROIT (Reuter) - The man who assaulted civil rights hero Rosa Parks was sentenced to eight to 15 years in prison Monday on the same day Parks was to be honored for her role in the Montgomery bus boycott 40 years ago.

Joseph Skipper was sentenced by Records Court Judge Dalton Roberson about one year after he was arrested for breaking into Parks' Detroit home and striking the then-81-year-old woman several times in the face.

With time off for good behavior, Skipper will be eligible for parole in five years, four months and two days.

Skipper, who was 28 at the time he was arrested, pleaded guilty to unarmed robbery and breaking and entering in the case, which also involved two other elderly women.

Dick Padzieski, chief of operations for the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, said law enforcement officials would have preferred Skipper receive the maximum sentence of 10-15 years. But he noted that the judge was hampered by restrictions preventing him from imposing more than two-thirds of the mandatory sentence.

"We are not unhappy with the sentence," he said.

Skipper will soon be turned over to the Michigan Department of Corrections, where he will be assigned to a state prison. Corrections spokesman Warren Williams said Skipper may end up being transferred out of state or to a federal facility for his own protection.

"This is an individual who might be at some increased risk here in our prison system," he said.

Skipper, who like Parks is black, told police he did not know he was breaking into her house when he was searching for money to buy crack cocaine. But he did recognize the woman often referred to as the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement" after he was inside her home.

Parks made history in 1955 when she refused a white man's demands to give up her seat in the front of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Parks was arrested for violating local segregation laws. Soon after that, blacks boycotted the city's bus system.

A national celebration honoring Parks and the 40th anniversary of that boycott was beginning with a black-tie reception in Detroit Monday.

# ANALESE

The tarot reader told me  
that I would have a daughter  
and that I should name her  
Analese

This she promised  
would ensure her health  
and happiness

Analese came to me in the fall  
drunk on lust and Absolut  
Her presence was immediate  
pelvic insomnia and tears  
It was the wrong man after all  
and no explaining  
could make him right

Analese could have been  
my mirror  
an inheritance  
of who I am  
A woman today  
my daughter  
Analese  
in some other hands

I drove so many hours  
in the secret of the night  
and changed a promise  
to just another day  
Analese is just a memory  
of a fantasy of my youth  
and every fall the leaves  
mimic her hair and dance  
in the wind of her laughter

Analese  
you were meant to be  
but time was not mine

to give you  
Analese  
virgin prayer  
amen

cheryl  
townsend

ly picked her head up and looked in the mirror. She wasn't the woman from then, she had to say to herself as she sneered at her reflection. But all she could see was long, blonde straight hair, a golden glow from the sun, from the days where she didn't work as often as she did, when she had a different life.

She had to pull on her hair to remind herself that it was short. She pulled it until she almost cried. Then she stopped, straightened her jacket, took a deep breath and walked out the bathroom door.

Eric started to worry. As they car-pooled together to work, Gabriel sat in the passenger seat, right hand clutching the door handle, left hand grabbing her briefcase, holding it with a fierce, ferocious grip. But it was a grip that said she was scared, scared of losing that briefcase, or her favorite teddy bear from the other kids at school, or her life from a robber in an alley. If nothing else, Eric knew she felt fear. And he didn't know why.

He tried to ask her. She said she was tired, but tense, an important meeting and a pounding headache. He knew it was more. She almost shook as she sat in that car, and she began to rock back and forth, forward and back, ever so slightly, the way a mother rocks her child to calm her down. It made Eric tense, too. And scared.

Work was a blur, a blur of nothingness. There was no meeting, the workload was light for a Friday. But at least the headache was there, that wasn't a lie. She hated lying, especially to Eric. But she had no choice, especially now, with Jack lurking somewhere in the streets out there, winning his cases, wondering if his wife is dead or not.

She never wanted him to know the answer.

Eric called her a little after four. "Just wanted to check if we were still going to dinner tonight. I made the reservations at the new Southwestern place, you said you wanted to go there. Sound good?"

Gabriel mustered up the strength to respond, and only came up with, "Sure." "Do you still have the headache, honey? Do you want to just rent a movie or two and curl up on the couch tonight? Whatever you want to do is fine, just let me know." She knew at this point he was doing all he could to make her feel better. She didn't want to put him through this. He shouldn't have to deal with her like this. She searches for her second wind. "No, Eric, dinner would be fine. We can go straight from work to save the drive. Thanks, too. You really have a knack for making my days better."

Eric smiled at the end of the line. And Gabriel could feel it.

They got off the phone, she finished her work, turned off her computer, started walking toward the elevator when it finally occurred to her: Jack might be there. She can't go. Even if he's not there, she could see him on the street, driving there. She just couldn't go.



Yes, life seemed good for Gabriel, she would dine in fine restaurants, visit the operas and musicals travelling through the city. And she had only been in the city for three years.

Eric would wonder what her past was like when he'd hit a nerve with her and she would charge off to work, not talking to him for days. She had only lived in the city for three years, and he knew nothing about her life before then. In the back of his mind, he always thought she was hiding something from him, keeping a little secret, and sometimes everything Gabriel said made him believe this secret was real. She told him her parents lived on the other side of the country, and even though they dated for almost two years there never was talk about visiting them. She never received calls from her old friends. There were no old photographs.

This would get to Eric sometimes; it would fester inside of him when he sat down and thought about it, all alone, in his apartment, wondering when she would be finished with work. And then he'd see her again, and all of his problems would disappear, and he'd feel like he was in love.

One morning he was sitting at her breakfast table, reading her paper, waiting so they could drive to work. "Hey, they finally got that mob-king guy with some charges they think will stick."

Gabriel minded her business, put her make-up on in the bathroom mirror, hair-sprayed her short, curly brown hair.

"Hey, Gabriel, get a load of this quote," Eric shouted down the hallway to her from his seat. He could just barely see her shadow through the open door to the bathroom. "'My client is totally innocent of any charges against him. It is the defense's opinion that Mr. Luccio was framed, given to the police by the organized crime rings in this city as a decoy,' said Jack Huntington, defense lawyer for the case. 'Furthermore, the evidence is circumstantial, and weak.' What a joke. I hope this guy doesn't get away with all he's done. You know, if I—"

Gabriel stopped hearing his voice when she heard that name. She had heard Luccio over and over again in the news, but Jack. She didn't expect this. Not now. It had been so long since she heard that name.

But not long enough. Her hands gripped the edge of the ceramic sink, gripping tighter and tighter until she began to scratch the wood paneling under the sink. Her head hung down, the ends of her hair falling around her face. He lived outside of the city, nearly two hours. Now he was here, maybe ten minutes away from her home, less than a mile away from where she worked, where she was about to go to.

She couldn't let go of the edge of the sink. Eric stopped reading aloud and was already to the sports section, and in the back of her mind Gabriel was wondering how she could hurt herself so she wouldn't have to go to work. She would be late already, she had been standing there for over ten minutes.

Hurt herself? What was she thinking? And she began to regain her senses. She final-

## transcribing dreams

I

I was at a beach, I don't know why the dream was there, but it was, the dream I mean. And you were there, and your family too, and at one point your little sister, the one that isn't so little anymore, pulled me to the side and told me she was pregnant. She loved her boyfriend, she couldn't have an abortion, she didn't want to tell her parents. And she told me, and I didn't know what to do. Later in the dream, still at the beach, she told you, and your parents, and you were screaming that you were going to kill her boyfriend, and your mother was babbling what would the neighbors think and your father was speechless. And I know that all of you were hurting her more, that what she needed most was supportive words, someone to hold her. Didn't you think she was scared enough, I wanted to ask. But I didn't, I watched all of you do this to her, the poor little girl. How scared she must have been

alexandria rand

## IT'S HARD

to think of winter  
when the heat bears down  
like unwanted advances  
on every inch of flesh  
Hard to remember the  
brittle puddles and  
opalescent illumination  
that fluffs cottony on  
your yard at night The  
nights with need of  
human warmth so  
shunned in sweaty  
summer air Ice tea  
replaces hot chocolate  
and so much more is  
traded for the season  
And as I write this poem  
I hear the squeal of his  
hot tires leaving my drive  
way once again

cheryl townsend



gabriel

janet kuypers

She had lived there, in her fourth floor apartment on the near north side of the city, for nearly three years. It was an uneventful three years from the outside; Gabriel liked it that way. She just wanted to live her life: go to work, see her new friends, have a place to herself.

But looking a bit closer, it was easy to see what a wonderful life she had. Her apartment was impeccable, with Greek statues and glass vases lining the hallways, modern oil paintings lining her walls. She was working at her career for a little under two years and she had received two hefty promotions. She served on the board of directors for the headquarters of a national domestic abuse clinic and single-handedly managed to increase annual donations in her city by 45%, as well as drastically increase the volunteer base for their hotline numbers. She managed a boyfriend, a man who was willing to put up with her running around, working overtime for her job, visiting clinics. A man who loved and respected her for her drive. Not bad for a woman almost twenty-five.

## Dusty Dog Reviews, CA (on knife)

These poems document a very complicated internal response to the feminine side of social existence. And as the book proceeds the poems become increasingly psychologically complex and, ultimately, fascinating and genuinely rewarding.

## C Ra McGuirt, Editor, The Penny Dreadful Review (on Children, Churches and Daddies)

CC&D is obviously a labor of love ... I just have to smile when I go through it. (Janet Kuypers) uses her space and her poets to best effect, and the illos attest to her skill as a graphic artist.

## Dusty Dog Reviews (on Without You)

She open with a poem of her own devising, which has that wintry atmosphere demonstrated in the movie version of Boris Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago. The atmosphere of wintry white and cold, gloriously murderous cold, stark raging cold, numbing and brutalizing cold, appears almost as a character who announces to his audience, "Wisdom occurs only after a laboriously magnificent disappointment." Alas, that our Dusty Dog for mat cannot do justice to Ms. Kuypers' very personal layering of her poem across the page.

## Debra Purdy Kong, writer, British Columbia, Canada (on Children, Churches and Daddies)

I like the magazine a lot. I like the spacious lay-out and the different coloured pages and the variety of writer's styles. Too many literary magazines read as if everyone graduated from the same course. We need to collect more voices like these and send them everywhere.

## Dusty Dog Reviews (on Right There, By Your Heart)

The whole project is hip, anti-academic, the poetry of reluctant grown-ups, picking noses in church. An enjoyable romp! Though also serious.

## Children, Churches and Daddies. It speaks for itself.

Write to Scars Publications to submit poetry, prose and artwork to Children, Churches and Daddies literary magazine, or to inquire about having your own chapbook, and maybe a few reviews like these.

3255 West Belden • Suite 3E • Chicago, Illinois 60647 • attention: J. Kuypers

## Carlton Press, New York, NY

HOPE CHEST IN THE ATTIC is a collection of well-fashioned, often elegant poems and short prose that deals in many instances, with the most mysterious and awesome of human experiences: love... Janet Kuypers draws from a vast range of experiences and transforms thoughts into lyrical and succinct verse... Recommended as poetic fare that will titillate the palate in its imagery and imaginative creations.

## Dorrance Publishing Co., Pittsburgh, PA

"Hope Chest in the Attic" captures the complexity of human nature and reveals startling yet profound discernments about the travesties that surge through the course of life. This collection of poetry, prose and artwork reflects sensitivity toward feminist issues concerning abuse, sexism and equality. It also probes the emotional torrent that people may experience as a reaction to the delicate topics of death, love and family. "Chain Smoking" depicts the emotional distress that afflicted a friend while he struggled to clarify his sexual ambiguity. Not only does this thought-provoking profile address the plight that homosexuals face in a homophobic society, it also characterizes the essence of friendship.

"The room of the rape" is a passionate representation of the suffering rape victims experience. Vivid descriptions, rich symbolism, and candid expressions paint a shocking portrait of victory over the gripping fear that consumes the soul after a painful exploitation.

## Fithian Press, Santa Barbara, CA

Indeed, there's a healthy balance here between wit and dark vision, romance and reality, just as there's a good balance between words and graphics. The work shows brave self-exploration, and serves as a reminder of mortality and the fragile beauty of friendship.

## Mark Blickley, writer

The precursor to the magazine title (Children, Churches and Daddies) is very moving. "Scars" is also an excellent prose poem. I never really thought about scars as being a form of nostalgia. But in the poem it also represents courage and warmth. I look forward to finishing her book.

## You Have to be Published to be Appreciated.

Do you want to be heard? Contact Children, Churches and Daddies about book and chapbook publishing. These reviews can be yours. Scars Publications, attention J. Kuypers, 3255 West Belden, Suite 3E, Chicago, Illinois 60647. You can write for yourself or you can write for an audience. Write to us.

P

W

submit

Children, Churches and Daddies  
poetry, prose, and art work to Scars Publications  
Janet Kuypers, Managing Editor  
3255 West Belden, Suite #3E  
Chicago, Illinois 60647-2559

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Chicago, Illinois 60647-2559

Permanent Address: 8830 West 120th Place, Palos Park, Illinois 60464

silence

“once”  
fact  
hand  
sarcasm  
silence  
thrill  
breaking  
once—  
raped

There.  
break  
silence  
weapons  
compassion  
knowledge  
now  
help  
do  
go  
away  
silence  
someone  
me  
friend  
now  
find  
again

two years

rest  
anymore  
lead

me

anymore  
talk  
love

past  
mind

pathetic  
acts

scare

present  
can't  
push  
years

gabriel athens



AGAIN

She says nothing  
Again  
As though she ever said  
Anything  
Even when she spoke,  
giving yes and no answers  
to essay questions  
Supposed to satisfy me  
like I'm supposed to know  
what she feels, thinks  
wants  
Though I know it's not me  
and  
I guess that's enough

jerry walraven

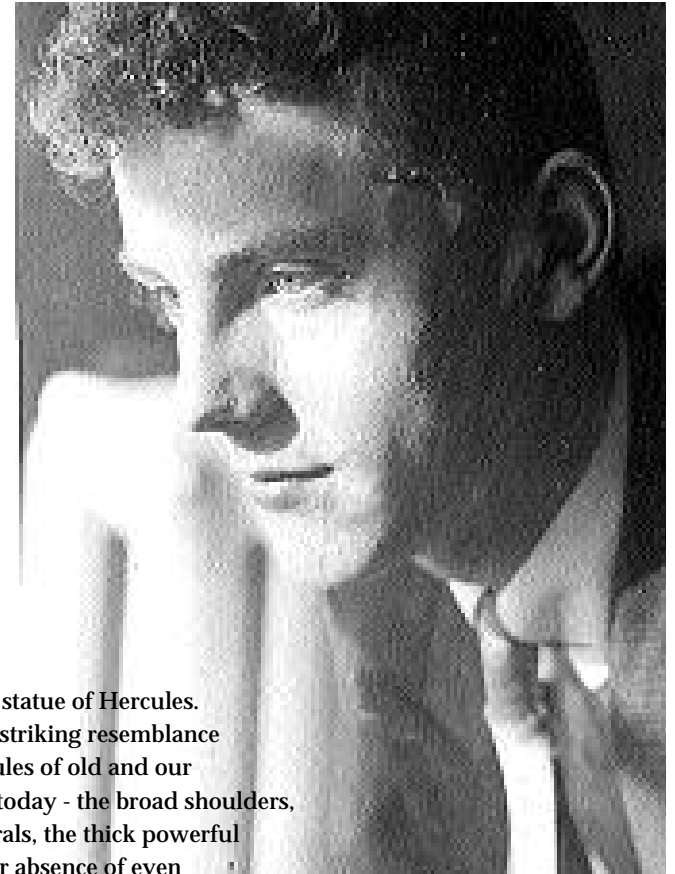


# Floy's anality would have impressed even Sigmund Freud

## michael estabrook

My boss, when I worked  
a year and a half at Ives Laboratories  
was Floy Estes, and he loved The Company,  
was so grateful for the opportunity  
to wear a suit and tie to work,  
and proud of his professional status in  
the Medical Community.  
He had worked hard  
making his way up through the ranks  
from Detailman to  
Hospital Rep and finally to District  
Sales Manager, and he did it all because  
he was so organized. ('Organization  
is the key to success I always say.')

His company car was  
neat and clean, trunk spotless,  
boxes of product 'literature' and samples  
of Synalgos, Isordil,  
and Cyclospasmol arranged in nice,  
tidy rows, and wedged-in  
so they wouldn't move around as  
the car moved around. His street maps were  
neatly folded in the glove compartment,  
doctor's offices marked with little red X's,  
pharmacies in green and hospitals  
in blue. Floy



who I likened to a statue of Hercules.  
'Notice please the striking resemblance  
between the Hercules of old and our  
very own Nick of today - the broad shoulders,  
the massive pectorals, the thick powerful  
thighs, the peculiar absence of even  
a run-of-the-mill penis.'

Anyway, it was a great evening,  
everybody agreed, a memorable evening.  
Doug, the President of the company,  
said I was like Johnny Carson,  
that I had missed my calling.  
And while everybody seemed to have  
such a great time, and while for months  
afterwards they all circulated the video-tape  
of me up there insulting the hell  
out of them, I still have the same  
exact job today that I had  
back then, back in 1989. Guess Doug  
wasn't kidding when he said  
I'd missed my calling.

# Vice Presidents on Parade

michael estabrook

I did a slide presentation at  
the Annual Awards  
Banquet and roasted them, all 4 of the  
brand new Vice Presidents, and threw in  
the President of the company too  
just for good measure, I suppose.  
I found old photos and made them into  
slides, used anecdotes  
from their illustrious careers, and from  
history and mythology, too. I compared  
Tim, our Ph.D. Microbiologist,  
to a chubby amorphous bacterium.  
'In the old days we called him names like  
Timmy, or Tim-O, or Timmy-Wimmy,  
or sometimes, and this is my favorite, we  
just called him plain old Fuck-Face.'  
And Leon, another Ph.D. in  
something or other,  
I compared to a Gargoyle, 'Beneath this  
serious, stolid, unflappable, intellectual  
vener lurks a wild, slaving,  
savage sort of beast.'  
Then for Gerald, our French VP, I showed  
that famous painting of Napoleon Bonaparte  
by Jacques Louis David,  
the one with his hand in his jacket,  
but said that in Gerald's case  
his hand is in his pants.  
And finally there was Nick

cc@d

had a folder for everything  
you could imagine (even a folder to keep  
empty folders in), each with a neatly  
typed label. And to illustrate  
everything he said he told an incredibly  
long-winded story in his completely  
monotonal voice about  
his old Uncle Clyde going senile  
down on the family farm.  
But he didnt have a folder ready,  
and neither he nor his bonehead Uncle Clyde  
knew what to say the time  
I met him  
for lunch at the Esquire Diner  
over on Route 4 in Middletown, New York,  
and told him in a rather breathless voice  
that I was quitting The Company  
to go paint houses  
with my brother Todd.



cc@d

# APPRENTICE

If you look too closely  
at life  
you begin to see the  
seams  
where an inexpert tailor  
stitched it all together  
And the flaws in the  
fabric,  
magnified over time  
eroded by misuse  
stand out  
catching your eye  
so that it is  
all you can see  
and ignored  
are the improvements  
The Patches  
that have stood up  
to time

stand back  
and  
view from  
a distance  
because a little wear  
is always in style

jerry walraven



# EMINENT DOMAIN

In this heat  
this heat of anger and jungle  
tears cliché the rain  
into hiding in grey clouds  
The pulse of living  
aches in the head of poetry  
like prey awaiting its death  
The sun rages in long hours  
A glaring stare into cowering eyes  
Flesh belies submission  
Wailing its facade  
swollen like cacti  
Even leaves turn upward  
begging  
A prayer echoes in the haze  
and falls ashen  
under droned footsteps  
that perpetuate the march  
the onward homage of pagan docility  
until darkness breathes relief  
up through the subterrain  
and eyes close  
in humble servitude

cheryl townsend

# the explanation

so i figured i'd have to write out information  
that our readers might want to know  
in the form of a poem, since  
they seldom look over the ads.

ha! i got you, you thought  
you were reading a poem, when it's actually  
the dreaded advertising. but wait -  
you'll actually want to read this, i think.

Okay, it's this simple: send me published  
or unpublished poetry, prose or art work  
(do not send originals),

along with a SASE for response, to  
Children, Churches and Daddies, Scars Publications,  
3255 West Belden, Suite #3E, Chicago, Illinois  
60647-2559. Then sit by your mailbox and wait.

Pretty soon you'll get your SASE back  
with a note from the happy people at cc+d  
that says (a) Your work sucks, or (b)

This is fancy crap, and we're gonna print it. It's that simple!

Now, if you're also interested, there are two  
books available through scars publications:  
one is called "hope chest in the attic" and  
the other is called "the window."

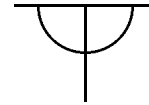
Hope Chest in the Attic is a 200 page, perfect-  
bound book of 13 years of poetry, prose and art  
by Janet Kuypers. It's a really classy thing,  
if you know what I mean.

The Window is about 180 pages of her newest  
stuff. It's hand-bound, paperback, and she'll  
even sign it if you beg her enough. Man, it's groovy.  
two dollars would cover the cost of printing and  
shipping. oh, and four dollars would cover  
back issues of cc+d or chapbooks. and make  
those checks payable

to me, of course, janet kuypers. gifts are always  
appreciated as well. just kidding.

and for you people out there with magazines, just  
keep in mind that we here at cc+d are more than  
happy to run ad pages for you, if you'll do the same  
for us. seems pretty fair.

is that all? yeah, i think that's pretty much it.  
now for the real poetry...



MARK BLICK-  
LEY

OKAY, IT'S THIS SIMPLE:  
WE'D LOVE TO PRINT A  
CHAPBOOK OF YOUR WORK  
UNDER OUR LABEL. BUT  
HERE'S OUR LITTLE DILEMMA:  
IF WE PRINTED EVERYTHING  
WE WANTED TO, A LOT OF  
FORESTS WOULD BE GONE,  
AS WELL AS OUR DRINKING  
MONEY. WE CAN'T AFFORD  
THE PRINTING, SO IF WE  
ACCEPT YOUR WORK, WE  
CAN DESIGN A CHAPBOOK,  
EMBLAZON THE THING WITH  
THE TRIED-AND-TRUE CC D  
LOGO, GIVE IT OUR ISSN NUM-

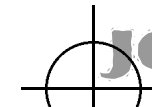
ERROL MILLER

JOHN SWEET

THE NINETEEN  
FIVE NINETY

SCHEINOH A

JOHN SWEET



## JAZZ #2

Peace is a bullshit word  
when no one wants it.  
And harmony is for fools  
who can't handle jazz  
Because it's in the breaks  
that you remember  
What you're struggling for.

And maybe I view love  
not so much as magic  
But as fiction to be read  
and written about  
Someone else. With clever  
lines and romantic times  
That don't play in real life.

jerry walraven

## "Hands"

Joseph Skinner

I'm a mechanic. I like to work with my hands. I like the rough feel of a ratchet wrench handle in my palm, and the soft give of the vice grips as they lock in, and the Archimedean power of a cheater bar as it wrestles down a stubborn stud. At the end of the day, I'm not concerned with scrubbing my hands with Grease Release until they're shiny clean. I get the worst of it off, but I enjoy seeing the blackness between the ridges of my fingers, making my prints stand out. As my wife Sabrina likes to say, those grimy prints are my identity.

Sometimes my hands fuck up. This one week they fucked up big time. The reason, I think, was that I was just horny; Sabrina was on the rag or something and not giving me any. What can I say? I was distracted.

Anyway, on Monday there was the overtorqueing of a head gasket, which of course split the gasket. Then there were the two studs I busted, both real grizzlies to drill out. Tuesday I started spot-welding a gas tank without checking to see if it was completely dry: about two seconds away from sending J.B.'s Autoworks up in a fireball.

Wednesday morning bright and early I left a diesel engine running as I changed its air filter, and a whole set of little hex wrenches got sucked into the engine. This did not make a pretty noise. J.B. came flying in out of the boneyard. He suggested I take some time off. Take a hike, he said. Find your center. I didn't know if this actually meant I was fired, or what. J.B. is a fatherly old hippie, but he has a business to run.

Back home — Sabrina and I lived in Pojoaque then, which is about halfway between Santa Fe and Los Alamos, birthplace of the A-bomb — I scrubbed my hands really good, getting every trace of my job off. Sabrina wanted to know what was going on, so I told her.

Hey, everybody fucks up, she told me. That's par for the course, and for a guy to think he never will is so much macho bullshit.



I'll show you macho, I said, and I grabbed her by the neck and wrestled her down on the bed, my hands around her throat. She likes it rough, sometimes. But this morning she jabbed me hard in the side. Get outta here, she said.

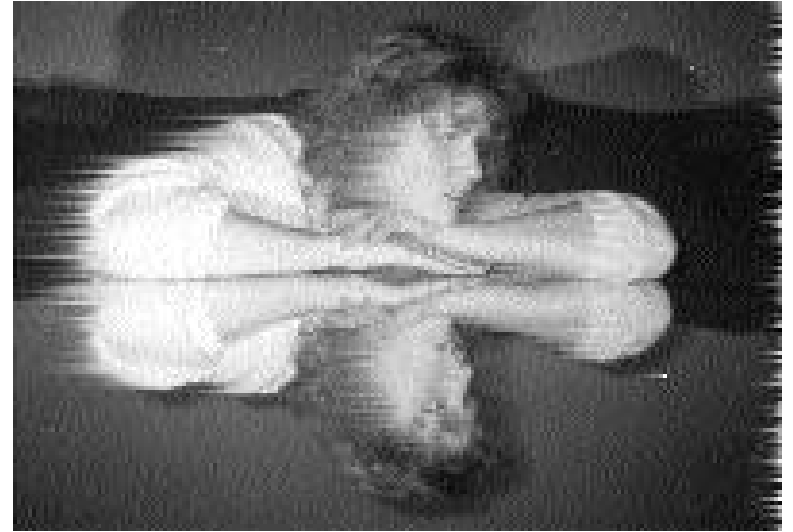
I'm going hiking up in mountains, I pouted, rubbing my ribs. I'm going to meditate. Find my center.

You don't know how to meditate, she pointed out. She was looking at me a little worried now.

I laced on my new waffle-stompers and stuffed two cheese sandwiches and a wide-mouth water jar into a fanny pack and headed for the JÇmez. My car was a VW bus borrowed from the shop, and it wasn't hitting so well on a cylinder or two, so it took its time toiling through the pinon-studded foothills up into the land of the ponderous ponderosa. It was late September, a nip of fall in the air. Fat yellow roadside chamisas, accompanied by slender lavender asters, roasted pungently in the sun. The aspens on the higher slopes had already turned, streaks of gold in green ore. I got caught in the last of the morning rush hour traffic snaking its way to Los Alamos, which slowed me down even more, but at last I made it to the butterscotch-scented high country above the Atomic City. There I stopped at a familiar but unmarked trailhead.

I was the only person on the trail. This trail rises steeply at first and then runs along a saddle and eventually reaches an outcropping of tuff which affords a formidable view of Los Alamos, not to mention the Espanola valley and the R<sup>o</sup> Grande. Sabrina hates this trail because of its closeness to Los Alamos. She believes nasty radioactive things are dumped near it. She critically points out those weird little concrete boxes you can see through clearings, and she resents not being able to wander very far off the trail without encountering a fence with a dire yellow-and-black DOE No Trespassing notice. The land beyond the fence is said to be peppered with mines. She can't imagine why I would choose to hike up here.

I settled myself on the outcrop, against a wind-twisted ponderosa growing through a crevice in the tuff. Los Alamos doesn't look like much unless you know what goes on down there. The main labs look like your vintage 1950s high school, and the houses are pure suburbia. You would think it would be one big bunker bristling with gun turrets, but no, it's by far the most middle-American looking town in all of northern New Mexico. I



mounted me and fucked me with smooth cam-like strokes. It had been a long time since I'd come three times in one day, not to mention gone hiking too, so I knew I was going to sleep well that night. I thought I'd go back to the shop tomorrow. I figured I'd wake up pretty refreshed, ready to pull some engines, just let the hands do their work, no longer horny, undistracted by extraneous thoughts, mindfully mindless, which is really the best way to get the job done.

J.B.'s favorite expressions, on this further elaboration: it takes hands to rape. It takes hands to grapple, to seize, to pin down and, more important, to hold a weapon. Most important of all: it took the evolution of the hands to form the brain that could even conceive of such a thing as "rape". To say that an animal could rape was only so much anthropomorphism. The human hand grasped the tool; the brain developed to use that tool; and then everything else followed: language, abstract thinking, social power, rape. That, I think, must have been the gist of that Scientific American article.

And I further flashed on the reality of flashing: to hold your cock before an unexpectant woman, as I had just done, was to advertise both the instrument of rape as well as the weapon-holding ability that made rape possible.

By this time, I was in a sheer panic to get out of there. I shucked on my clothes, not daring to look to where she had been standing. After dressing I finally and sheepishly looked over, but she was gone. I plunged down the trail in a trot, then reined myself in to a fast walk: good God, what if she were ahead of me and thought I was after her? On the drive back to Pojoaque I was sure I was going to get pulled over and charged with exhibitionism: just what I needed.

Sabrina was tranquilly at home when I got back.

What have you been doing, fucking trees? she asked, dissolving a glob of pine sap in my hair with peanut oil. Funny she knew it was there.

I found my center, anyway, I said. I think.

Show me.

To prove to her I hadn't used myself up fucking trees, I mounted her and, keeping my hands prayerfully at my chest, fucked her in squat thrusts.

This man's a Yogi! she exclaimed.

Look, Ma, no hands! I cried.

I didn't mention the woman, but I told her about the grasshoppers and the rape theory and she said I thought about things too much. Which reminded me of a show on Nova about computers and artificial intelligence which said that computers really could never think, the way we think of thinking, because they don't have a body and therefore can't learn the way we beings with bodies learn. But by this time I was tired of thinking about it all, so I let it go. After a while Sabrina

think this ordinariness makes it even more sinister, but Sabrina, like I said, is not appreciative. She accepts the irony in the juxtaposition between this most technological of towns and the surrounding cliffside caves, where the ancient Anasazi lived, but she does so grudgingly.

I assumed the classical position of meditation, legs folded with feet on thighs opposite, arms akimbo, hands prayerfully at mid-chest. I closed my eyes and tried to reach the sublime.

Now, two things tend to happen to me when I attempt to meditate in the wilderness: I get to thinking, and I get horny (or in today's case, even hornier), not necessarily in that order. I try my best to achieve that thoughtless, out-of-the-body emptiness you're supposed to get when you meditate, but instead the opposite seems to happen: my mind and my body merge into a self-fulfilling fullness, a self-consuming convolution something like the proverbial snake that tries to swallow itself. As a matter of fact, certain positions of yoga lead me to wonder precisely what it would be like to be able to suck my own cock, like Kokopelli, the Anasazi fertility symbol, petroglyphs of whom you can sometimes find in these mountains. (But why is fertility symbolized by a guy sucking himself off? Could this be related to Nietzsche's idea that all good and fertile thought involves the re-absorption of semen?)

At any rate, I usually end up doing something weird. I've climbed naked up evergreens, letting the bark scratch and the needles prickle; I've rubbed my bare haunches against mossy rocks like an animal leaving its musky mark, all the while making strange whining noises; I've poked a hole in the warm, damp silt on the banks of the Rio Grande and fucked, so to speak, Mother Earth. Afterwards, I've always felt stupid and ashamed, as if God or somebody had been watching me.

This morning I tried my best to behave, but it was to no avail. These hands, these hands that had been fucking up all week, these mischievous hands began to abandon their pious configuration and pluck nervously, involuntarily, at the snaps of my denim shirt. They reached over my shoulders and pulled it off in one ten-clawed tug, and my right thumb and forefinger seized my left nipple and squeezed hard. My tit burned and my cock swelled up fit to pop my fly buttons.

I forced my hands to stop for a moment. I stared down at Los Alamos, tried to collect myself. I tried to put my mind on

something neutral, an article in Scientific American for instance, a magazine to which I subscribe and sometimes even read. But all I could think about was those hands. I recalled reading somewhere, possibly indeed in Scientific American, that we owe all technological progress, if you can call it progress, to our hands. Human history, in other words, is the history of that notorious old opposable thumb. The brain developed as the hands used tools, say the anthropologists. From those stone scrapers that hollowed out these Anasazi caves to the Los Alamos computers that developed newer, better weapons systems, it was ultimately a matter of hands.

After a while, I gave in. My hands deftly undid the laces of my hiking boots and reached for my belt buckle while my feet, those pitiful pseudo-hands, pushed my boots off. My pelvis arched eagerly to the sky as I rolled back onto my shoulders and my hands shucked my pants and underwear off. Naked, I writhed beneath the tree, the fir needles mortifying my flesh, turning it a stippled pink. I grasped my cock with both greedy paws. Now, I said, with a deep and satisfying sigh, now I've gotten in touch with my center.

I ground the back of my head against the trunk of the tree, my toes alternately splaying and grasping the rock. My meat pumping in my hand like a piston in a cylinder, I braced myself on my knees to come.

That's when I saw her frozen in her tracks on the trail, watching me, the woman.

Now, she looked an awful lot like Sabrina, complete with Sabrina's green plaid shirt, but I really couldn't tell from that distance. It would not have been beyond Sabrina to follow me here and spy on me. If I had to explain myself to her, whoever it was, I would simply say that I had not believed anyone was behind me, since I had heard no other car park at the trailhead there even by the time I reached the summit of the first rise; and that furthermore, I had no idea I could be seen from the trail. What would be harder to explain was why I did not stop as soon as I saw her. Here I'd have to fall (spuriously, I agree) back on the boys-will-be-boys argument: once we get started, we can't stop. Once we men get our hands on our tools, we can't let go.

My wad shot out in a pitiful, sluggish arc in the general direction of the Atomic City, and my shame exploded at the same

time as my orgasm. My unit still pulsing, I slunk behind my pocked rock like a reptile, leaving my clothes up there by the tree.

My mind was very clear (Nietzsche was wrong). I listened intently for the woman's footsteps of departure. I heard nothing; either she was still there, or the sound of her movements were swallowed up by that tremendous silence blaring from the valley below — a silence like stereo speakers turned up full blast but playing nothing. As I cowered, my naked ass hanging over Los Alamos, I couldn't help but wonder how long it took those Los Alamos scientists who exploded the first atomic bomb to feel their shame; I wondered if for some it hadn't come as instantaneously as mine had when I popped my rocks.

I remained for a long time frozen in a squat, my balls grazing the ground; I did not even move to brush from them a clambering woodlands ant; only when it got to my asshole did I give it a pinch of the sphincter and it dropped off, confused and disoriented. After a while another insect, a large and colorful grasshopper, so common this time of year, hopped beneath my gaze. Gaudy creature, assembly of plates and rivets dipped in high-gloss lacquers. A second later, another hopper, the male, plopped down beside her. They faced off, gazing into each other's huge, unblinking eyes, and shortly the male, who was slightly smaller than she, clambered aboard, and they fucked.

There was something oddly titillating in the contrast between their rigid, unblinking faces and the quivering and writhing of their linked abdomens, through which an intense, peristaltic communication was taking place. Every energy was concentrated in the genital act, with everything above the lively abdomens nothing but a shell of still armor. (Maybe only a man would find this provocative — we are often accused by our females of being too “genitally-oriented.”) The female grasshopper, in the throes of insect passion, began to incline her rear steadily upward while the male scabbled on her armor to keep his place. How helpless he was in this act, I thought, how dependent on her will and cooperation. His spurred legs scabbled and slipped, and only the firm grip of her abdomen on his, the two tubes fused, prevented him from taking an embarrassing spill.

Rape, it occurred to me in my moment of lucid shame, is impossible among such creatures. Then I flashed, to use one of