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## Metamorphosis

### Louie Crew

When I learned  
he fantasizes me  
as O. J. Simpson,  
I grew jealous  
until I discovered  
the Juice's magic  
whereby my  
50-year-old  
jellied presence  
now hustles more than pigskin  
or Rent-a-Car.



Tape Monster, art by Christine Sorich

### This Story's Heating Up: The Effects of Global Warming

Okay, so I wrote at great length about global warming before (<http://www.janetkuypers.com/kuypers/prose/2006/understanding-global-warming.htm>) Understanding Global Warming originally appeared in cc&d magazine, the hardbound (<http://scars.tv/ccdissues/ccd165z25oct06.htm>) v165.25, which is still available for sale <http://www.lulu.com/content/483678> for a PDF file or for the \$19.95 the hardcover book) before I got to see *An Inconvenient Truth*. And it's funny, I've always tried to do things to save energy (to not only save money, but to also reduce releasing CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere), but only after my husband and I watched the movie did he start openly talking about doing things to help the environment. And it's easy now to see stories appearing on the radio or on television weekly about another climactic catastrophe, so since I said I could write another editorial about global warming, I started thinking about the weather we're experiencing right now.

Okay, I'm in Chicago, and for those who don't know what a winter in Chicago is normally like, let me give you a brief explanation of every winter I've experienced as an adult in Chicago. The weather is often cool but not freezing until maybe around the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, and that's when the snow starts setting in big time. But every year, no matter what, the really horrendous snow and ice storms comes very close to New Year's. Trust me, by the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> of January, there's a ton of ice and snow that you've tried to get off you driveway and sidewalk by your home. You'll be walking around like a duck with thick rubber boots as soon as you step outside to avoid slipping on the ice. I remember when I met my husband, actually — it was the beginning of January, and we met because we both took the train at the same time. Well, he had to really actually like me, because every time he saw me, I was wearing a heavy winter coat and I was wearing a hat and gloves and a scarf. I was bundled up like a little Eskimo, because that's what you do to get anywhere in Chicago at that time of the year.

Well, I'm starting to write this editorial, and it's January 12<sup>th</sup>, and the high has been in the 40s. There's no snow on the ground (there was a snow storm in the beginning of December, but it melted and the only water that has come from the sky has been from rain, not snow, and not even sleet). I go out in the evenings and I have to decide if I should both-er even bringing a coat along.

This is January. I should have eighteen layers on to keep me warm. I should be cursing the cold weather. But instead I'm forgoing wearing jackets when I go out at night. I know the Farmer's Almanac said this would be a very mild winter, but I shouldn't be listening to people in New Jersey say that their flowers have been tricked into blooming in January because the weather's so warm. Their flowers might not even bloom in the spring then, because nature was expecting a winter to hibernate through before their blooming in spring.

And if you think this record for the warmest winter in recorded history isn't because of global warming, fine. Just read the rest of this and see if you still feel that way. And fine, I'll stop going on about how this weather change is affecting me in Chicago, or even family in New Jersey. Arizona has had the ten hottest years on record for the state – and they were all since 1990. I even remember being in Arizona the summer of 1990, lying in the sun for just a little while, and I smelled something burning. After a while, I thought it smelled like meat cooking. But there was nobody around with a grill — I realized that it was my flesh burning that I smelled, and I got out of the sun. It was 122° when I was there, and apparently Arizona had a lot of how years since then.

Want other states° Fine. In the summer of 2006, North *and* South Dakota had highs of 120°. In fact, June '05 through June '06 was recorded as the hottest *ever*. (But if you want to hear about adapting, consider that in record heat waves, the Parisians used the idea of misting water for tourists... but there are only so many last-ditch efforts we can make to help us through these global problems.)



## The Ice Man Cometh (Icecaps, Glacier Melts and Earthquakes... Oh My)

This warm weather we've been having (you know, over the past 10 years it's been unseasonably warm as well, and earth has been hitting a lot of records for the highest temperatures and the warmest seasons) has been warming the ocean waters (and yeah, I'll guess that fish that are used to a certain temperature won't be able to continually migrate to cooler waters and hope the food they eat under water migrates with them). Now, this might sound like a cool thing for those who like to surf off of Atlantic or Pacific beaches, but that warming water will be circulated throughout all of the oceans, causing the waters that flow underneath glaciers and arctic areas to heat up. Just recently heard of the Ayles ice shelf on an island in northern Canada – I read in an AP article ([http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20061229/ap\\_on\\_sc/canada\\_arctic\\_ice\\_break](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20061229/ap_on_sc/canada_arctic_ice_break)) that “The Ayles Ice Shelf — all 41 square miles of it — broke clear 16 months ago from the coast of Ellesmere Island, about



500 miles south of the North Pole in the Canadian Arctic.” Remember that the Ayles ice shelf is *on* an ice shelf, but CNN (<http://www.cnn.com/2006/TECH/science/12/29/canada.arctic.ap/index.html>) even noted that “Scientists using satellite images later noticed that it became a newly formed ice island in just an hour and left a trail of icy boulders floating in its wake.”

41 square miles? That’s like about fourteen *thousand* football fields in size.

Scientists will have to watch the motion of this broken ice shelf now, which has formed its own island, because it can move in the water — and may very likely “drift into populated shipping routes,” Laurie Weir (who monitors ice conditions for the Canadian Ice Service) said.

And yeah, I don’t have to search the Internet or scavenge all media outlets to hear these things — this was so big that there was even reporting on it in the Chicago Tribune ([http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nation-world/chi-0612300063dec30\\_1.4678271.story?coll=chi-newsnationworld-hed](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nation-world/chi-0612300063dec30_1.4678271.story?coll=chi-newsnationworld-hed)). The Chicago Tribune pointed out that “the ice shelf was one of six major shelves remaining in Canada’s Arctic,” and “some scientists say that it is the largest event of its kind in Canada in 30 years.” Warwick Vincent of Laval University, who studies Arctic conditions, added that the remaining ice shelves are 90 percent smaller than when they were first discovered in 1906.

Luke Copland, head of the new global ice lab at the University of Ottawa, was even reported by MSNBC (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16390346/>) as saying, “Even 10 years ago scientists assumed that when global warming changes occur that it would happen gradually so that perhaps we expected these ice shelves just to melt away quite slowly.” Now scientists who study arctic conditions all couldn’t believe what they were seeing with the break of this ice shelf. Ice shelves like this one have existed for many thousands of years, and something like this happening can only be due to a climate threshold being crossed. It also surprised scientists because they believed that any changes due to global warming would happen over a much slower period of time, and the fact that these events are happening now alarms them with the speed of the effects of global warming.

And ice melting might not only be a problem for raising water levels on the planet or affecting where underwater fish and plant life can survive, it might also even effect animals that depend on the ice right now. The Bush administration is placing polar bears on the “threatened” list (because of a loss of habitat). I even found sources in Korea (The Korea Herald with writing By Victoria Cook, [http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html\\_dir/2007/01/11/200701110070.asp](http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2007/01/11/200701110070.asp)) that note that although “there are 20,000 to 25,000 polar bears, and they live mostly in the Arctic, in places like Russia, Denmark, Norway, Canada and the United States, about a quarter of this population lives in the U.S. state of

Alaska.” And “the International Conservation Union recently listed polar bears as a threatened species.” Couple losing ice to humans encroaching on more spaces more, space for polar bears may for many reasons become a smaller and smaller area.

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And you know, thinking about humans expanding their space on the planet and possibly taking space from polar bears, well, that makes me think of a show I saw, either on the food channel or this history channel (honestly, I can’t remember) that was talking about how when people first came to settle in America, they found that they could fish for lobsters on the east coast. People who worked there so long getting lobsters for their bosses would complain that when given food, they shouldn’t be made to eat lobster for a meal more than 4 time a week. I tell you of my seeing this in passing, because it made me think of how eager humans are to abuse what they perceive as a natural resource. These employees were angry that they had to eat *lobster* so often. Now it’s a more rare thing to order at a restaurant, and that’s probably primarily because we have just been taking them so much from the oceans that we didn’t realize that we might be upsetting the order of nature too much. I mean, my dad lives in southwest Florida, where Grouper fish is abundant, and people love the taste of them. I even head that this year there’s a fish shortage of Grouper, and people from out of state often have to settle for Vietnamese Catfish instead.

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There are many reasons why I keep bringing up the ice caps melting and falling into the arctic oceans. Consider the way our atmosphere works: it’s actually really thin, if you consider what it’s protecting (us from radiation), it’s about as thin as placing a varnish over a wooden table. The sun sends radiation to us, and thanks to our atmosphere, we’re protected from that radiation (it’s mostly reflected back toward the sub as infrared radiation). Now, because of the ozone, more of the radiation that shines down on earth actually *stays* within the atmosphere of the earth, to warm the earth (like hearing a stupid, basic explanation for global warming?).

Now, I brought up the ozone. We nationally did something to fight against the chemicals we were producing to stop increasing the size of the ozone. We worked with other countries and phased out chemicals that were damaging to the ozone. We tried to *solve* that global problem. And although NOAA (the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, <http://www.ozonelayer.noaa.gov/>) states that “the ozone layer is expected to recover by the middle of the 21st century, assuming global compliance with the Montreal Protocol,” you can still see through the Cimate Prediction Center (<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/stratosphere/polar/polar.shtml>) that the

ozone is still an ominous force that will most definitely have an effect on our climate in the years to come. But CFCs were reduced, and according to sources, human activity seems to no longer be a contributing problem with causing holes in the ozone.

Now, I know I brought up the ozone because of its effect in spreading global warming, but talking about our fights to *do* something about the ozone actually shows that we humans *can* have an impact on a global problem. All we have to do is get the rest of the world to understand that this really is a problem, and that we can still do something about it.

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## But Why Should I Care About The Poles?

I keep bringing up the arctic ice and stuff that happens at the poles. Even though I've always liked warm weather, I'm still psycho enough to crave a trip to photograph Antarctica (when I get enough money to pull it off, I swear, I'll do it). But I recently heard about land-based ice and sea-based ice. Floating ice in the Antarctic is an essential for the temperature stability of this planet, and scientists have deduced that floating ice (as it has existed in the Antarctic) will no longer exist (because of increased temperatures) within 55 years.

I don't know, that might not sound like a big deal to you, but it's an important part of how this planet stays in balance, and how we can continue to live peacefully without massive climate changes here. I know my treading down to Antarctica will be another human attempt to destroy a natural phenomenon, but if a ship is already, I'll still spend the money to see it — and maybe I'll be able to see the continent before floating ice disappears from this planet.

And things like "glacial earthquakes" occurring now are also evidence of the destabilizing of areas (not to mention of shifting ice, caused by melting ice). These things will have an effect on water temperatures around the globe, as well as water levels. If these things happen, coastal town will no longer exist — they'll be underwater. I mean, when talking about the effects of global warming, seeing the effect on the poles is a really prominent example of the effect on the rest of the world, precisely because it is so cold, and has trapped water as ice for I don't know how many thousands of years.

But the poles experience greater effects from global warming than the rest of the world, and it is easier to quantify and relate to when you see the numbers. Melting ice from the poles, which can be tracked and recorded, will lead to higher global water levels.

So let's quantify things here. The Northern Ice Cap has dropped 40% in size in the last 40 years.

Did you hear that? Forty percent of the Northern Ice Cap has melted away in the last forty years. That's a lot.

And the thing is, the sun reflects off of the ice caps and glaciers so that the temperature on the planet doesn't get too warm because of the sun. But when more of the ice melts, 90% of the sun is absorbed (instead of having 90% of the sun energy reflecting away from our planet), making the water warmer, and even melting the ice caps more.

Rivers and springs around the world come from natural glacial melting. The problem with the literal melting away of some glaciers (the receding of these glaciers) is important because 40% of all people on this planet are in areas that depend on the water flowing from these glaciers. Although water may rise in some places, these people will not have access to water the way they once did.

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Have you ever heard of “drunken trees?” “Drunken trees” is an Alaskan phrase for trees that are tilted, and growing on an angle from the ground (making them look drunk, I guess). In Canada, they will say that the periodic freezing and melting of water in the upper layer of soil can disrupt the growth of plants. But people (including Word Spy, at <http://www.wordspy.com/words/drunkentrees.asp>) will now admit that “drunken trees” are, in a northern climate, “a stand of trees under which the permafrost has melted.” The trees point on angles, in odd directions, because the permafrost that supports them is melting.



Now, what on earth is “melting permafrost?” For that matter, what is permafrost? Okay, fine, the definition from Webster's (<http://www.webster.com/dictionary/permafrost>) is “a *permanently* frozen layer at variable depth below the surface in frigid regions of a planet (as earth).” So get in the definition that permafrost is *permanently* frozen (that's why it's got PERMA in front of the word ‘frost’). As scientists have understood this earth over the years, this is an important part of how the earth works, because permafrost (since it's frozen) actually also houses greenhouse gases and the like. But scientists have found greenhouse gases bubbling from melting permafrost (Science Daily, at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2006/09/060907102808.htm>, NPR <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6098974> and the New Scientist (<http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=mg18725124.500>). They have even pointed out that Siberia's melting permafrost is yet another indication of the heightened pace of global warming. And Hell, if you think I'm only looking to snotty, or liberal sources for my news, you can even check out the story in the picture—friendly and ever-so-colorful USA Today ([---

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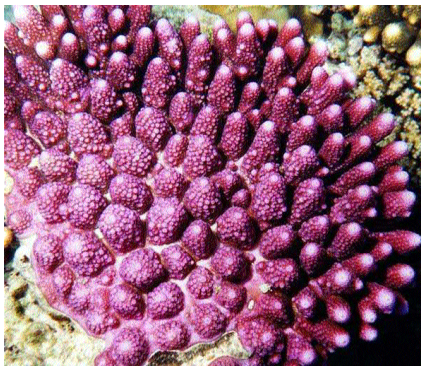


[ence/discoveries/2006-09-06-permafrost-warming\\_x.htm](http://www.ence/discoveries/2006-09-06-permafrost-warming_x.htm)), where they illustrate an iceberg melting in Greenland, as “global warming may be triggering a self-perpetuating climate time bomb.”

Permafrost also traps methane and CO<sub>2</sub>, so when Permafrost melts, even more greenhouse gases are emitted into the atmosphere, and the cycle continues to escalate.

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Thawed permafrost releases methane and carbon dioxide, and this material is not only released into the air, but also into the water. “Ocean acidification” is what they call when carbon dioxide goes not only into the air but also into the oceans. Now, I can tell you that I’d never want to swim (or dear God, *drink*) water from Lake Michigan, but water right now is becoming more and more acidic in the oceans. Coral reef systems (which are like rainforests of the oceans), with their vibrant colors and the algae living on and around them, are suffering because of this. If you see older and more recent pictures of the Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Australia) to see the differences in color of the coral, you’ll understand how coral is becoming bleached due to the acidification of the water. The algae is even less inclined to grow there with them, which has historically been a natural cover for them at times as well.



With conditions like this in the oceans, jellyfish can’t even how will this effect fish and other plant lives under water make shells.

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I’ll Huff, and I’ll Puff, and I’ll Blow Your House Down...  
Tornados, Hurricanes, Earthquakes & Tsunamis

As oceans get warmer (due to global higher temperatures and melting polar ice), the higher temperatures in the ocean water actually lead to stronger storms. When the ocean temperature is increased at all, it allows a better breeding ground for what will later become tsunamis and hurricanes.

I think over the course of my lifetime I’ve seen tornadoes increase to *insanely* high numbers. I mean, when I was a child and we went from Illinois to Florida for my dad’s business regularly (where he now lives), there was never really a problem at any time of the year with weather. As the years

have progressed, I've heard of more and more hurricanes and tornados across the states now. It used to be that just a few hurricanes would be reported on, and now we understand the meaning of 'hurricane season' (where my dad lives they'll have posts to support the palm trees during the windy months of hurricane season, to try to make sure they won't be knocked over or uprooted so easily). Look at Katrina (we all remember the damage that has yet to be repaired to a small section of New Orleans — check out photos I took a year and a half *after* Katrina hit, at <http://www.chaoticarts.org/katrina12-31-06/index.htm>).

And as I mentioned before, warmer oceans breed stronger storms... Well, Katrina, when it hit Florida, was a category 1 storm. But it went into the warmer Gulf of Mexico, which gave Katrina a chance to grow a lot stronger. It was a category 5 storm by the time levees broke in New Orleans, Louisiana.



I even heard news weather reports that 2006 set the state record for tornados in Missouri — the previous record for a single year in Missouri was 84 tornadoes in 2003 (seeing a trend with violent weather here?). By December 31 of 2006, tornados were appearing *like mad* in Mississippi. The news reports would say that these conditions are not impossible, but they *are* uncommon.

But I've been going on about weather in the continental United States all this time with bad weather. I know this was not because of global warming, but consider the 2004 Indian Ocean undersea earthquake, known by the scientific community as the Sumatra-Andaman earthquake ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004\\_Indian\\_Ocean\\_earthquake](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_Indian_Ocean_earthquake)) with an epicenter off the west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, that formed the massive tsunami that crushed Sri Lanka... On the day after Christmas, we watched on television reports of how this tsunami affected coastal communities across South and Southeast Asia, including parts of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, and Thailand. This earthquake eventually registered between 9.1 and 9.3 on the Richter scale, which made it the second largest earthquake ever recorded (<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/eqcenter/eqinthenews/2004/usslav/>) on a seismograph. Hundreds of thousands were missing or dead, and the destruction also spread to the livelihood of any survivors of the affected areas. This earthquake was unusually large in geographical extent, and scientists point to a Tectonic plate shift over a few minutes to explain the severity of this earthquake (<http://www.answers.com/topic/2004-indian-ocean-earthquake>).

This natural catastrophe occurred where events like this aren't common, and they did not have the resources to be able to do much to help

themselves through the impending crisis.

Now, this event may not have had anything to do with global warming, but consider the higher number of tsunamis in Asia recently (in the same way there are very high numbers of hurricanes and tornados in the continental United States). Science Daily (<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/05/050502192316.htm>) points out in “South Asia Disaster Shows Tsunamis Are An Ongoing Threat To Humans” that “the danger is mounting year by year, said Jody Bourgeois (a University of Washington Earth and space sciences professor who studies historic and pre-historic tsunamis), because greatly swelling numbers of people are living and playing along coastlines vulnerable to sometimes immense tsunamis. Bourgeois and others have found ample sedimentary evidence of Pacific basin tsunamis, either confined to relatively small locations or spread over vast distances.” In other words, although we can site problems in the United States due to nature’s wrath, we’re not the only ones. It’s happening around the world, from Asia to the States — even to the North and South Pole.

Now, also think back over recent years to news reports from the drive-by media (you know, 24 hour cable channels like CNN, or MSNBC, or Headline News, or Fox News, you can probably even find it on the network news shows too). When you were little, do you remember people talking about the avian flu? Or SARS? Or the West Nile Virus? How about Lassa fever, Rift Valley fever, Marburg virus, Ebola virus Bolivian hemorrhagic fever? I could go on and on with names, but I think you get the idea. More and more names for tropical-sounding and potentially deadly diseases are cropping up now. Don’t get stung by a mosquito. Wash your hands and all countertops 14 times with 6 different cleaners if you touch a chicken. I know I eat a ton of garlic to keep the bugs away (and sometimes piss off my friends), and I’m a vegetarian, so I don’t have to worry about caressing raw chicken flesh, but people are finding that they have to place more and more restrictions on what they do to protect themselves from what they used to do every day and not think twice about.

Have you ever thought about why this “new” viruses and diseases may be springing up? I don’t know, but it might have anything to do with the fact that animals are dying in their current habitats because temperatures and water conditions are changing too drastically? Could it be that the conditions that have been hastened by the changes from global warming? Some things may die in a desert, but when some areas are hit with tons of floods because of melting ice, or hurricanes or tsunamis and the water can’t be cleared away quickly enough, breeding grounds then exist for new diseases to flourish.

## Celebrities fight climate change from **The Week** (02/02/07)

Actors and rock stars are throwing their weight behind the battle against global climate change. The movement Global Cool—backed by the likes of actors Leonardo DiCaprio and Orlando Bloom and rock bands Coldplay and the Killers—hopes to get 1 billion people to cut their carbon emissions by 1 metric ton a year for the next decade. Some climatologists believe that a climactic “tipping point”—when apocalyptic change becomes unstoppable—can be averted if the world reduces greenhouse-gas emissions by 1 billion tons a year. The group’s Web site, [www.Global-cool.com](http://www.Global-cool.com), offers tips such as showering with a friend to save hot water and unplugging cell phone chargers to save electricity. A U.N. report due out this week is expected to predict an inevitable rise in sea levels due to the melting of glaciers and sea ice.

## Hot Weather, Cold Weather, Droughts and Floods

So I’ve been going on about bad weather and high temperatures as examples — wanna see different effects of global warming? News reports in January ’07 show there were freezing temperatures in Las Vegas, and New York had a 78° high. Then even hear of how cold can destroy a town — like Denver hit with so much snow that their airport was closed down, and only after *days* could *some* of their runways be operational. Because of those repeated snowstorms in Denver, there were not only people’s cars trapped on highways and later in massive snow drifts, but also pastures of cows who were stranded without food or drink (and no, cows won’t consume snow). Helicopters actually dropped bales of hay near the cows, so they might be able to survive.

In January 2007 (granted, that’s a winter month, but think about this, this is about *California*) Gov. Schwarzenegger ([http://cbs4denver.com/topstories/topstories\\_story\\_013002046.html](http://cbs4denver.com/topstories/topstories_story_013002046.html)) called for a

state of emergency in California because temperatures were 25 degrees regularly for over 6 hours at a time, probably destroying citrus crops in the state.

But wait, you thought global warming just meant that things got hotter (like I might have to deal with so much ice and snow in Chicago), right? Well, not really, because these changes in the weather can produce violent weather patterns – at *both* ends of the extreme.

Consider that global warming leads to more precipitation — use any of the tsunamis or hurricanes, which have grown so much more common in recent years, as evidence. Check out the fact that 37 inches of water fell in a 24-hour period (get a load of that, 27 inches in 24 hours) in Mumbai, India. So then also consider that those massive storms, those singular events, are where the increase in precipitation comes from.

Because there's only so much water to go around on earth (even if glaciers are melting), so if a lot of water is being dumped in *some* places on the planet in these storms, then there must be other places on the planet where less water is being circulated. So with these massive single storms, there are some other places that become more much *less* humid. Nature will even actually suck moisture out of the soil to accommodate these storms. So... a desert can have its sand, but when even more moisture is pulled from the land and the air, that sand can turn to almost larger hardened chunks of rock.

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## The Science Behind It All

Okay, carbon dioxide spikes and recedes annually — because life in earth is more predominantly in the northern hemisphere, carbon dioxide spikes in the spring and summer, and recedes in the winter. Scientists can check the levels of carbon dioxide because of testing ice core samples, and they have found that over the past 650,000 years (that's a long time) carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere has never exceeded 300 parts per million. Today, when people check, it looks like it's at almost twice as high. And those levels aren't natural, or normal.

Now, as the population on earth increases (in 1945 it was around 2.3 billion, and by 2005 it's 6.3 billion), more people will consume more energy (and create more gases that can hurt the environment). There are many issues that support this, like the fact that we as humans on this planet still use old technology (like using coal in China, for example), which may be like us humans metaphorically choose to dig the hole deeper that we're in with helping the atmosphere.

Now, since I mentioned China burning coal, I don't want you to think that it's only areas like China that are the cause of the problem. Have you ever heard of the Kyoto Protocol (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.html>)? Well, the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is an amendment to the international treaty on climate change, which actually sets up target dates for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions for any countries that sign for this agreement (the Earth Summit originally set no mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual nations and contained no enforcement provisions). It was started on 12/11/97 and actually started to go into effect 02/16/05. The United States — and yes, carbon emissions are highest in the U.S. was one of the countries that originally really pushed for this, but since the Bush presidency, the U.S. has signed the Kyoto Protocol, but has not ratified it. Actually, Bush's explanation was that the costs of following the Convention requirements would stress their economy.



Yes, that was his reason. It would cost too much.

Wikipedia even outlined ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Nations\\_Framework\\_Convention\\_on\\_Climate\\_Change](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Framework_Convention_on_Climate_Change)) that “the United States would be required to reduce its total emissions an average of 7% below 1990 levels, however neither the Clinton administration nor the Bush administration sent the protocol to Congress for ratification. The Bush administration explicitly rejected the protocol in 2001.” Throughout a lot of later negotiations, the United States delegation continued to act as observers, declining to participate in active negotiations.

So yes, the United States is not accepting any of the guidelines in the Kyoto Protocol, and the United States has the largest effect on global warming because of its emissions. The Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A27318-2005Feb15.html>) even released an article about the Kyoto Protocol the day it went into effect (02/16/05), saying, “With the United States on the sidelines, the Kyoto treaty could end up as ineffectual as the post-World War I League of Nations. But by uniting the vast majority of the world’s nations, Kyoto could equally be the harbinger of an international model that rewards pollution-cutting innovation and pushes countries and companies to pursue cleaner forms of growth.”

Dan Zinder explained in “The Kyoto Protocol and the U.S.” (<http://inside.bard.edu/politicalstudies/student/PS260Spring03/kyotocol.htm>): “In 1998 the Clinton administration signed on to the Kyoto Protocol. In doing this it committed the United States to a 7 percent reduction in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 emissions levels, to be achieved between the years 2008 and 2012. Three years later in 2001, the Bush administration withdrew the U.S. signature.” The Bush Administration was rejecting the Protocol because (particularly) countries like India and China were called “developing countries,” and they were not held to the same strict guidelines that other countries were for reducing emissions.

The U.S. is the world’s biggest polluter, and America has recently not backed pollution treaties to reduce car emissions or petrol consumption. The US alone accounted for 36.1% of worldwide greenhouse emissions in 1990 (as reported by the BBC, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2024265.stm>). When Bush was only a presidential candidate, he promised to lower carbon dioxide emissions. But shortly after he took office, he withdrew his support to the Protocol. Making this decision dealt a serious blow to the Kyoto Protocol, at a time when everyone should be turning to any option at all for helping the environment. Larry West even highlighted the future ([http://environment.about.com/od/kyotoprotocol/i/kyotoprotocol\\_2.htm](http://environment.about.com/od/kyotoprotocol/i/kyotoprotocol_2.htm)) impending issues: “Many scientists estimate that by the year 2100 the average global temperature will increase by 1.4 degrees to 5.8 degrees Celsius (approximately 2.5

degrees to 10.5 degrees Fahrenheit). This increase represents a significant acceleration in global warming. For example, during the 20th century the average global temperature increased only 0.6 degrees Celsius (slightly more than 1 degree Fahrenheit).”

This is due to not only the effects of 150 years of industrialization, but also to overpopulation and deforestation.

Deforestation? Wait a minute, I thought we humans were to ones wreaking so much havoc on the atmosphere. Well, we are, but nature still plays a part in it. We clear forsts (either to use the wood and not replenish it with more trees to help consume CO<sub>2</sub>, or to convert the land into non-forest areas). This



has a huge impact on our lives, by removing something that actually helps nature control the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the environment. Years ago I heard that rainforest land was being cleared and replaced with orange groves (you know, so thet can mass-produce orange juice from concentrate and save the American shopper a few coins). Deforestation alters the hydrologic cycle, altering the amount of water in the soil and groundwater and the moisture in the atmosphere. Forests support considerable biodiversity, providing valuable habitat for wildlife. Moreover, deforestation stops potential medicines from being found, as many cures to diseases find their base in something discovered in nature (like the rainforest). NASA (<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Library/Deforestation/>) even explains frightening possibilities: “If the current rate of deforestation continues, the world's rain forests will vanish within 100 years-causing unknown effects on global climate and eliminating the majority of plant and animal species on the planet.”

And deforestation isn't the only problem — 30% of all CO<sub>2</sub> is from burning forests (you know, brush fires, those fires that you now hear a lot about on the news, which weren't quite so common when we were little). So yeah, that does mean that even burning leaves you've raked together in the fall could be bad for the environment, but maybe mentioning those fires that destroy so many acres of forest in the States annually can connect some dots here. Know how I said that with global warming, some places get lots of single-event massive water storms (like tsunamis and hurricanes) but other places lose the humidity? These forest fires are a prime example of the effect of losing water in some places while gaining it in others. Forested land is now dryer (probably in part because of the relocation of water in other major storms worldwide), because water is pulled for storms elsewhere. Even lightning can start a massive fire now. So because global warming has been spiraling into a larger and larger problem over the years, both category 5 hur-



ricanes *and* massive forest fires have been on the rise.

So yeah, this has become a global problem. In the Amazon, riverbeds have become deserts (yes, rainforests, which have absorbed emissions and helped stabilize our planet, and slowly starting to die off, allowing for more emissions to escalate global warming). The effects can be seen all around us, from ice shelves breaking and glaciers melting to an increase in violent weather storms (like hurricanes), to massive forest fires. Couple that with the unanimous scientific understanding of the threats of global warming existing on our planet to the attempted reporting of global warming as a “theory” and not a fact.

If the news can’t give you a fair view, you could probably bet the government won’t help either. A Bush aid even edited government climate reports in ways that play down links between such emissions and global warming. So when given the evidence around us, we have to ask ourselves: do we have to choose between saving money and the environment? Well, I don’t think you have to... And if you don’t save the environment, there might not be much of a future for *anyone* to enjoy.

But seriously, things can be done to help the environment, and they don’t have to be bad things. On a personal scale, use energy-efficient light bulbs. Or use energy less (like there’s no need to leave lights or televisions on if nobody is in that room, right!). We could have more live plants in our homes, since plants absorb carbon dioxide and emit oxygen. Drive fuel-efficient cars (or use public transportation when you can). But what about energy conservation on a larger scale? Well, the Q Building from my husband’s old work (at Pharmacia, in Skokie Illinois) pops into my mind. It cost more money to produce, but the Q Building is considered 40% more efficient than similar lab buildings, which means it reduces consumption of fossil fuels and has lower emissions. Steel beams are made from 100% recycled steel, wall-board is made from the purified waste products of power plants, and the carpeting and ceiling tiles contain a large percentage of recycled material. The building is airy and well lit, and when you walk inside the building, it feels comfortable to be in (and not tight or constrictive).

I also remember watching a television show that talked about an office building in New York, which used recycled metals (by saving emissions from creating new metals) I remember even learning when we went to Shanghai and saw all of the cool-looking high rises that were being built, that a lot of the metal they use in Shanghai is actually exported from the “waste” metal from the United States, because we’re too lazy to actually recycle our excesses. Well, using existing metals to build stop the emissions from creating new metal. For this New York building, they also made a choice to use sustain-

able wood for office equipment (from forests that they know will be replenished, versus destroying forested land), to even using collected rain water from the roof for a multi-story waterfall in the main area of the building, which helps regulate the temperature inside the building without using the excess energy to heat and cool the building as much). And the thing is, the building is actually quite beautiful — and knowing that this beauty is actually existing to help counteract the emissions from human's otherwise wasteful excesses makes it that much more beautiful.



So I can't help but think of John K. Kennedy, when talking about deciding that we will put a man on the moon before the end of the 1960s, when he said that we don't do these things because they are easy, but because they are hard (Actually, I think it in his voice, that we do these things "because they are haaaaahd"). But you're right it is easier to just jump in your SUV and not think about the effects of your actions. But we can make changes, even on a personal level, and we'll find that making these changes actually produce quite beautiful results. That's when you realize that doing the right thing can actually be not only so gratifying, but also beautiful.

*Janet Kuypers* ©

Janet Kuypers  
Editor in Chief



## Glossing over global warming?

from **The Week** (02/02/07)

Half of the federal government's climate scientists say they had been ordered by Bush administration officials to eliminate references to global warming in their reports, according to a survey released this week. The poll of 279 government climate scientists, conducted by the nonpartisan Union of Concerned Scientists, was released this week during hearings by the House Oversight Committee. The panel's chairman, Democratic Rep. Henry Waxman of California, accused the administration of doctoring scientific reports to "mislead the public by injecting doubt into the science of global warming." Administration officials have said they merely wanted to add balance to reports on climate change. President Bush has acknowledged that climate change is occurring, but he opposes mandatory caps on the greenhouse gases that contribute to it.

# poetry

the passionate stuff

## Want to Play?

Christian Ward

The chess player has returned,  
an old woman dressed in Oxfam chic  
standing outside Westminster Cathedral,  
her chessboard resting on a large  
cupboard box.

She keeps her wrinkled hands  
inside her jacket, as if protecting  
the sole tools of her pleasure.

The sign on her chessboard  
says Want to Play?

but there is no clock  
but there are no opponents  
but there is no chair  
but there are no pieces



Fallen, art by Aaron Wilder

The homeless men sleeping behind McDonalds  
are being dragged away by police,  
tourists cover their eyes when they pass her.

There are no possible opponents, I think.  
I don't want to cover my eyes when I see her,  
I want to know the rules.



Far away, in Africa's heart of darkness,  
unspeakable crimes are committed.

(Listen to the ululations of Africa's children.)

There, young girls are sexually abused.

(Listen to their shrieks in the endless African  
nights. Disembodied voices weep and wail,

lamenting loudly, but swallowed up by Africa's  
miasma, noxious vapors of secret sins causing an  
epidemic of child rape.)

Throughout this vast continent, and especially in  
Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of child sexual  
abuse cases is rising.

(How do we explain such evil? Why is it tolerated?  
Perhaps, as some experts suggest, the tradition of  
gender inequality is a very important factor.

And in an antediluvian climate of bias toward women  
and girls, perpetrators are often set free.

Courageous children who speak out are abused by the  
criminal justice system, that forces them to face their  
attackers.)

South African police reported over 22,000 cases of child  
rape for a one-year period that ended in March 2005.

(Listen to the howling of Africa's children, smothered by  
oppression.)

As this secret plague sweeps across Africa, destroying and  
killing her children from sexual abuse and AIDS, the vast

fortress of silence is now under attack.

Yet I ask: Is this enough? What can I do? And what can we, the people of the world, do to save these children?

Far away, at night, I listen to the silent shrieks of Africa's children. I listen and pray and launch secret ululations,

hidden in the labyrinth of my psyche, to the Heavens, my soul screaming and on fire.

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## Suburban Evening

Sara Crawford

Outside of the coffee shop, a summer night,  
a thousand SUVs are zooming by,  
drivers are eating smashed up cows  
between pieces of bread soaked in grease.  
Are they going home? Are they escaping?  
Wal-mart and Starbucks are my scenery.  
To my left, a group of men are sitting,  
discussing business, the wives, and the kids.  
One man tells which football teams he's betting on.  
He can't wait for the season to start.  
To my left, young, blonde women smoke cigarettes.  
"So, um, like, I don't know," one of them says.  
The stop light on the street turns red.  
Cars are stopped. It turns green. They go.  
The cycle is repeated.  
I'm dreaming of Paris, New York,  
Stockholm, London, Moscow,  
Prague, Venice, Madrid, or Chicago.  
How did I end up here? Why have I  
never left? I don't want to be like the old man  
sitting at the table behind me.  
He sits in silence, remembering  
adventures he never had.  
I throw my four-dollar cup of tea  
into the trash, get in my car, drive home.

## Snow by Jamie Connell

Snow falls hard outside  
I like to play in the show  
And make big snowmen

## untitled

Jason Cimino

All Around us in the world,  
crazy death and destruction surrounds.

The world is crumbling,  
the world is slowly delapidating.

Before our eyes,  
crazy death and destruction surrounds.



## Not Another,

art by Cheryl Townsend

The speed of the city  
is swifter than my eyes can follow  
These eyes, fixated on the past,  
have forgotten how to see;  
especially, the promise of tomorrow

Looking at my window,  
bellied with sunlight,  
the new day seems invisible,  
no matter how hard I squint

Though I still wake  
to click of machineries,  
like a distance of a whisper,  
I have not moved on far

I still have nightmare residues  
of high school;  
And, in some mornings,  
they are lightnings that zigzag  
through my brain which nowadays  
has a shallow depth of erasures

In my diaries of grief,  
I have an inventory of hurts  
In my silent garden of tears,  
I keep a garland of regrets

Today, I again heard nothing,  
but the sob of yesterday,  
and its reply

I tried to cut them  
like half moons of toenail;  
but, they keep growing back  
even through the art of distraction

# The Couple, art by Edward

Michael O'durr Supranowicz



## The Day I Grew Up

Kelly Ann Malone

Scarcely fourteen, a nestling, I was told she was ill.  
My first exposure to sorrow.  
The borders of sanctuary became vague and misleading  
Tongue-tied and vulnerable, I kept silent

Fear this deep was completely foreign to me  
Unable to see her the day of surgery  
Apparently children haven't proper manners  
Told to go outside her window and she would appear

Five children gathered on chilly blades of grass  
Eyes gazing upward as if we were awaiting an apparition  
Then she emerged. She looked serene in her pale blue robe  
She waved to us with confidence, but we all felt the looming peril

The asperity of her treatment left her ravaged  
She was close to death. We suddenly obtained manners  
I was lead into her room with my brothers and sisters  
No warning. No briefing. Only stern threats from an overworked nurse

There she lay. What did they do to her?  
Her head was shaven clean, revealing the shape of her skull  
A patch on her eye and a tube protruding from her nose  
A shocking vision. She was conscious so I kept still

Forbidden from crying, my throat became sore as I forced back saliva  
Nauseous and horrified, but somehow able to keep my composure  
Instinctively I knew she waited for my reaction to her condition  
So I matured, right front of her, and assured her that she looked fine.

# prose

## the meat and potatoes stuff

Shillings

Pat Dixon

My partner, Felicity Moss, has left me both her small collection of nude figurines, which it amused her to call “my busted statues,” and her huge collection of opera books, LPs, CDs, DVDs, and autographed photos of operatic singers and conductors.

I plan to keep two or three items from each collection as mementos of her—“Morse,” as she called herself when meeting people, adding the unwritten R sound because that was how her Rhode Island people always pronounced their name. She hated her first name and would always sign herself just “Moss” on everything except her health insurance checks and tax returns. At first I called her “Morse” with a smile of amusement and indulgence, but down through the past three decades it became a matter of habit about which I was seldom conscious.

Although my name is Abigail Lewis and am happy to be called by my first name or by “Abby,” right from the first Morse would always address me merely as Lewis. At our little book store in Cambridge, it often happened that new customers from M.I.T. and Harvard would give her the title “Inspector” and call me “Sergeant”—and would think themselves oh-so-original. And Morse and I would smile tolerantly and never tell them that many dozens of others had anticipated their foray into wit during the past quarter century.

Under other circumstances, I would attempt to liquidate the bulk of Morse’s collections via auctions on elBay—something she and I each did with great success when her divorced father and my widowed mother both died a few years ago. Now, however, when I even hear elBay mentioned, I feel both sorrow and personal fear—paralyzing, heavy eye sorrow—deep gut, dry throat fear.

Morse was always the more outgoing of us. She often seemed to me like a bull in search of a china shop when it came to communicating with others. With her figurines, of course, she had a very delicate touch—almost that of a lover—and she would often talk to them in an uncharacteristically soft and gentle tone. Our customers seemed to enjoy this bullishness in her and seemed to consider her a bit of a character. Me, they considered the “detail-oriented” prissy one who could tell them to



the penny what every variation of edition and condition was worth in the eastern Massachusetts market.

Her manner was equally bullish in her eBay communications, and I gather that it was often less appreciated by those who received them.

“Lewis,” she said to me on numerous occasions, “come look at what this asshole has written back.” And I would do so, and then would ask Morse what she had written the buyer or seller that “led up to” such a discourteous response. Long ago I knew better than ask what she had done to “provoke” others. In person, Morse was such a dear woman, and I can only speculate that others, when reading her messages, could not picture her wry little smile and twinkling eyes nor hear her lightly ironic Yankee voice as I could do—and still can when I read over the handmade birthday cards and other notes she left out for me.

Indeed. But let me try to collect my thoughts about this.

Three months ago, Morse began bidding on some “bootleg” opera CDs that a person giving his or her address as “Boston area” was selling on eBay. According to Morse, these are CDs that have been made from low-quality tape recordings, which in turn were probably made without the knowledge of the cast or anyone else involved in the performance. They often, she told me, include all the coughings and throat-clearings and seat-squeakings of the theater, along with whatever applause and “bravos” an aria or duet or whatever is granted by the live audience.

When I asked her why she or anyone would pay good money for such CDs, she said, “These are records of unique performances, Lewis”—except she pronounced it “reccuds,” and she meant not phonograph *recordings* such as LPs or even CDs but something like an official historical document—or a fossil—a “record of the past” so to speak.

“Flawed though they be,” and I can hear her saying “Floored though they be” in my mind’s ear—I will not try to transcribe her pronunciations any further, as I am beginning to feel tightness in my throat and chest again—“Flawed though they be, Lewis, without recordings such as these we would have no idea”—here she said “idear,” and that will be the absolute last phonetic indication her, I promise—“no idea what these great voices of the past did with these roles. The commercially remastered 78s of Conchita Supervia, that wonderful mezzo who died tragically in childbirth, are often terrible lo-fi scratchy things, and yet they are wonders without which our lives would be vastly poorer. And these poor tape recordings, shared by collectors with each other in this computer age—or sold to each other on eBay—enrich us in ways that one cannot begin to quantify.”

Throughout her oration, I politely nodded my silent comprehension

and smiled with affectionate amusement at her self-conscious pomposity.

“Lewis, you little snip—let me make a believer of ye of little faith. I’ll play you Supervia singing Rossini’s ‘Una voce poco fa’ from his *Barber of Seville*. In my not-so-humble estimate, it’s one of the four best recorded versions of that song *despite* its condition—and I currently own thirty-eight different recordings of it.”

Others might have taken offense at being called a name like this and at being treated like a lowbrow where music is concerned. Lord knows, though, it was two-way banter, and I often inflicted my own musical preferences for Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, and Pete Fountain on dear Morse with equal vigor.

A few days thereafter, Morse mentioned that she’d “won” two of her auctions for these bootleg items but had, sadly, “lost” her auction for a *Tosca* with Pavarotti and Shirley Verrett—“that wonderful diva who looketh down on us all with her blessed smile,” she said, pointing to the framed, autographed photo of Ms. Verrett in a nun’s habit that hung directly over her head behind our checkout counter.

“Bummer,” I said without mockery.

Three days later, Morse called me into her room, asserting, “Lewis—there is a God after all—and She watches over me!”

I half expected Morse to tell me that she had just won the lottery or a sweepstakes of some sort, although we both agreed that all such are merely an extra tax on those who are bad at math.

“She maketh Her face to shine down upon me, Lewis. Look here!” She gestured towards her computer screen.

I adjusted my half glasses and bent forward.

“Second Chance Offer—Buy The Item You Recently Bid On,” I read, followed by a message addressed to her eBay screen name: “Dear gather-snomoss, Good news! The following eBay item on which you placed a bid for US \$35.51 is now available for purchase at that price, plus s&h: *Tosca With Pavarotti, Verrett . . . Act Now—This Offer Expires Soon!*”

Instructions to click on the “Buy It Now” button followed.

“It’s a flamin’ bargain, Lewis. The other poor bastard paid a dollar more for it by outbidding me! Ha! The Lord taketh, and the Lord giveth. Blessed is the Lord.”

“Maybe you could just e-mail the other buyer and ask her or him to make you a copy for half price, and that way you’d *both* be better off,” I suggested.

“No can do, Lewis,” she said. “This is a ‘private’ auction. The identities of the other bidders are kept secret from each other from the begin-

ning—maybe to protect the seller and us from the authorities—the CD police or whomever.”

And she clicked on the “Buy” button and then went to the “Pay Now” button.

*It’s your money, girlfriend*, I thought, and went back to our kitchenette to have my boiled egg and toast.

Something did not seem totally right to me, but it was another two days before I looked into it. I privately checked the bootleg CD seller’s site while Morse was broiling us some scrod for dinner and learned that the other buyers *could* be located and e-mailed by a small roundabout maneuver: I went to the seller’s “Feedback” page and read twenty-six comments left by his customers. I found that I could click on the blue “iconic” numbers to see what items had been bought from this seller as well as the blue “iconic” screen names of buyers to see their approval ratings and what else they had bought from other sellers. The privacy protection had a few holes in it.

I felt more like Nancy Drew and Jane Marple than Susan Dare, V. I. Warshawski, or the wonderful Kinsey Millhone—even though the original Nancy and Jane of my mother’s day and my childhood years had never heard of computers.

“Dinner in five minutes,” Morse called to me. “Wash your hands if you’re using that filthy computer, Lewis.” I need not transcribe how she pronounced “wash.”

Halfway through our dessert, I casually mentioned I had been looking at the bootleg seller’s eBay site, just out of curiosity.

Morse stopped eating and rested her elbows on the arms of her chair and her chin on her knuckles. She stared at me in silence, unblinking, for a good minute. I sighed and finally continued.

“The long and short of it, Morse, is that he or she seems to sell about two-thirds of the CDs on a second-chance ‘buy now’ basis to people. Or else most of the auction ‘winners’ do not bother to leave feedback about their purchases. This strikes me as a little—odd. And the average price for these ‘buy nows’ is about \$35.00, with the ‘winner’ prices being fifteen to twenty dollars less most of the time—which also strikes me a little odd.”

She said nothing and continued to stare at me with no particular expression.

I smiled and said, “It must be because I’m a Capricorn: Capricorn’s tend to be skeptical about things. In fact, I’m so skeptical I don’t believe in astrology.”

“You must be a little nervous, Lewis,” Morse finally said; “you usual-

ly tell that old astrology joke better than that.”

She was right, and I told her so. Then I added, “If you feel I’ve crossed the line, Morse, let me apologize now. I probably should mind my own business where your hobbies are concerned.”

“Not at all, Lewis. It’s good to have a friend watching one’s back. I just would have preferred it if you’d waited till I’d finished my slice of chocolate cake before bringing this to my attention.”

“So noted for future reference,” I said. “Good dinnuh. Some time I’d like it if you’d share some of your secret recipes with me.”

“Maybe I’ll give them to you for a Crispness present,” she said. But she never did. Just before Thanksgiving, she was killed—murdered, I think.

Two and a half weeks later, Morse’s three bootleg operas arrived—mailed in a flimsy envelope with no so-called “jewel boxes” from someplace in Great Britain—the handwriting of the return address was illegible. She thought this a bit odd herself, since the seller’s eBay site had stated that Boston was its mailing location.

“Under other circumstances,” Morse told me, “I’d see this as just one more ‘security device’ for sellers and buyers to avoid the scrutiny of those who squash little people while letting the corporate thieves run free. Methinks it be time to look more deeply into this matter. I’m going to e-mail some of the other buyers and compare notes.”

I thought that was a good plan.

Each evening during the next week, I either asked Morse directly if she had any update on this mystery or tilted my head sweetly to one side and smiled in an inquiring manner. For seven straight days she frowned and shook her head, sometimes adding, “No, not a peep from anyone” or some such similar phrase.

On the eighth day she located me in our book stacks, as I helped a customer find a nice copy of a John Dickson Carr book.

“When you’re done here,” she said, grinning, “I have a bit of news back on the CD matter.”

“Ten-four,” I said, holding up my right thumb.

When yet another satisfied customer left to a jingling of the bells over our front door, I hunted Morse down and found her typing away at our store’s computer.

“I hope you’re not mixing store work with hobby play on this computer,” I said a trifle sternly.

“Oh *do* shut up,” Morse answered in a humorous, theatrical voice that disarmed criticism and objections.

After a long pause she added, “This fellow writes back that he, too,

was contacted with a ‘buy it now’ notice—and that he had also been the second-highest bidder on a CD set. He’s one of the few people who’ve left negative feedback at that seller’s site. I sent letters about my suspicions to about fifty-seven other buyers, saying (a) I thought it was a kind of scam that so many of us were getting call-backs after losing an auction, and (b) I suspected that no buyer was competing against us some of the time—that we were being bid up and up and up with a shill of some sort. Either the seller herself/himself was doing it with another screen name to fool elBay, or the seller had a confederate doing this bogus bidding. You know I’m not a compulsive person, right?”

I raised an eyebrow and said nothing.

“Anyway, I’ve surfed around to other merchandise on elBay and have found a dozen other sellers who *may* be pulling a similar sort of shilling scam—stuff gets bid past a buyer’s upper limit and is then ‘offered’ as a ‘second chance opportunity’ to the poor unsuspecting clunk—who is overjoyed usually to take it. Snick-snack, and the purse strings are cut. Their mottos might be ‘Take care of the shillings, and the dollars take care of themselves.’ I made that up myself. Some day it will be Euros.”

“Do you think you want some prosecutor to investigate this?” I asked, looking at her levelly.

“Not just yet, Lewis. You may be known at the ‘detail person’ here, but I can fiddle with this investigation on my own, in my own way, gathering up more evidence. It may be that this is only the tip of the volcano, just poking up in the middle of the Pacific, and I need to get a few thousand more facts before making my case to anyone else. What’s weird to me is why so many hundreds of buyers haven’t bothered to answer my e-mails to them.”

“Maybe they think you’re investigating them—or you want them to serve as witnesses against somebody—or else they are unwilling to admit they have been fooled—or a hundred other reasons, such as they have real lives outside their computers and their elBay purchases. There’s no way of ever knowing for sure—even if you capture them and look at them face to face and grill them with a polygraph machine attached to their bodies. But I’m a Capricorn.”

Morse shrugged, typed a little more, and then clicked to send. I went back to our front counter to keep an eye on things—and read that day’s *Globe*.

An hour or so later, a pair of customers came in and asked for books about Beverly Sills. I found them a clean, cheap copy of *Bubbles*, her autobiography, and as they were paying for it, one of them asked if I might be Ms.



Moss, the opera fanatic. I told her no, I was just the jazz-loving co-owner.

"Oh," she said. "Does Ms. Moss happen to be here now?"

"Where do you know her from?" I said, replying to a question with a question.

"I'm from out of town," she said, "and one of my opera-loving buddies gave me her name and recommended this book store to me. I think they know each other from way back."

"And he said to ask for Ms. Moss?" I said.

"She. My friend, *she* said to ask."

"Sorry, then. Felicity Moss is out right now. I guess your friend probably called her Felicity—though you might have forgotten."

"That does sound like it, now you mention it. Sorry to have missed seeing her. Maybe another time."

When they left—the bland looking man and the woman with the fake blonde hair and dark eyebrows—I went back to find Morse still glued to the store's computer. I told her what had taken place and expressed concern that some people might be stalking her. Morse looked up at the ceiling for a few seconds, shrugged, and said, "How would the pronunciation of my name prove anything? If they're from Rhode Island themselves and heard it with the extra R, they'd translate it backwards before saying it—the way my family would all say Moss Code if somebody said—the other word for it."

Three days later, a different couple came in and bought a copy of Shirley Verrett's autobiography—and then asked about Ms. Moss also. I gave them the same test and even asked them where from out-of-town they were from. They told me Virginia, so I said, "Isn't that where they raise a lot of race hosses?"

And they told me no, I must be thinking of Kentucky—that was the state famous for raising *horses*. So much for them flunking Shibboleth 101.

Again Morse was only mildly interested in this linguistics lesson.

Four days later, she did not return from the fish market. I walked there and was told that she had indeed bought a pound of scrod as usual and, also as usual, had joked around with the clerk about the feds raising the permissible levels of mercury that east coast salmon could contain.

The nice Irish desk sergeant told me he could not accept a missing-person report this soon but suggested I put up some signs on a few telephone poles, the way people do when their dog or cat or budgie is missing.

Three days later, a jogger's retriever discovered Morse in some bushes next to the Charles River about ten miles away. Her face had been beaten in with a cinder block, and her clothes were torn off. And somebody had

violated her both vaginally and rectally with some sharp dead branches.

Despite the sexual aspects of the killing, I immediately thought, *Take care of the shillings, and the pounds take care of themselves*. I focused chiefly on how her poor face had been pounded with that cement brick and saw the other as a smokescreen.

I tried telling the police about my suspicions that eBay sellers had tracked her down to save themselves trouble. I am also certain in my own mind that many of the buyers she had e-mailed had just turned around and forwarded her missives to the sellers. I gave copies of all her messages to the police and told them of the two pairs of Morse-Moss customers I knew about, adding that there were perhaps others who had come in while Morse was working at the counter, perhaps the very day she didn't come home. No one scoffed at me, but I got the impression that no one took me seriously. I am pretty good at reading what people think but do not say.

I have considered hiring a private detective agency to try to follow up this angle, but I can see how difficult it would be for any private persons to get anywhere, even if their hearts and minds are committed to the task.

And I am very very afraid now for my own life. I may have to sell our store if I can't find a way to relax without three or four whiskeys and can't get a good night's sleep pretty soon.

Lord, I miss her so much!

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## ROGET'S THESAURUS

G.A. Scheinoha

"I have seen great minds fail for lack of a word."

It's hard to conceive. Einstein's Theory of Relativity lost to history because the great man couldn't find the precise terms to couch it in.

"Just one word?"

"Just the one."

Again, Freud a mere footnote. And what of Gallileo?

"A specific word?"

"Well yes. . . and no."

"Which is it? Even a specific word shouldn't be all that hard to find.

I mean, they dangle like ripe plums overhead, a cloudburst of meaning. You reach up to pluck them, they drizzle down upon you."

At this point, she, the one who's always had all the answers, or at least all the right ones, comes up short. What was it? Eight years at university? Twelve? Fifty thousand per anum? A hundred? MFA? PhD?

So much for the price of knowledge.

# part 14, the final (the June 2007 installment) of

## THE DRIVE

Kenneth DiMaggio

"It's so dark here," she said.

"It's always dark here," I said.

"I know, but..."

She now turned to me.

"It's now past afternoon. It will only be light for a little while longer. I don't want the day to end here."

This time I took her hand, and said:

"I understand."

"I know this is going to sound odd—especially from someone whose like a vampire—stop! Don't laugh! Don't! But—I'd like to see the sun set. I haven't seen one, believe it or not. Do you know any cool places?"

"I do, but there's just one thing."

"What?"

"Just promise me that when the sun does go down, that you won't bite me on the neck."

"Oh, you're lucky—Mmmm! Lucky that I'm in a good mood, because from where you're now sitting—and I don't even have to make my hand into a real hard fist—just a fist, see?"

She showed me her fist.

"I got ya," I said, quickly moving away, and awkwardly crossing my legs as I did so. That was not fair though; vampires aren't supposed to kick you in the crotch.

I was about to settle into another seat. But then I remembered, we had to watch the sun go down. Me too. I don't think I even saw a sun go down—in spite of all the times I stayed up for sun rise and sun down without so much as getting in more than a brief nap. Today though, would be my first—well almost. I did not see the sun rise—but I felt it—and it was strong enough to wake me—and let me cross woods and share the road with an unexpected and delightful visitor. One I would end of the day with. But I would likely not see her in the morning. No, I would not see her in the morning.

We quickly walked back to the car and on the way, we talked about being late for "our sunset." The real joke was in the way we both discovered (and shared) how the two of us missed a lot of so-called important dates or were late for them. I was surprised to hear that that she was like that—which is why she then confessed that:

"That art class I was supposed to go this morning?"

"Yeah..."

"Well, like—I hadn't been to it in like—two and a half weeks."

Which she quickly justified by noting:

"I had been working on my art project for that class! I had been collecting material that can be used for this art project."

After such candid admission, I could only offer one myself.

"That novel in the back seat?"

"Yeah?"

But with some suspicion in her voice.

"And, you know—the way I've been trying to get to New York."

"Um—can we just go somewhere and try to see the sun go down?"

"What? You don't think I'll do it?" I said as I started the car. "You don't think I'll get to New York? Finish my novel?"

She giggled.

"Get a job?" she added.

"You got me there," I said, after which we both laughed.

And now I began to pull out for what was probably going to be our final drive together, and to somewhere we could see a rancid, iodine centered sun dissolve.

Appropriately, the sun was more of a soft-colored rust. Less sickness, more decay—but the latter shading had more respectability about it. Was my world becoming an ancient ruin worthy of archeological study? Well, that was one way of putting it—or putting it off. There was still a lot of insignificance, or lost or unfulfilled lingering in the present; yet, there now seemed to be a temporary peace or truce made with such unfulfillment. The clapboard shingled streets were now quiet, more retiring. No one was outside on the streets that we drove past, yet front screened doors were opened and behind them, a small shaft or block of light coming from a kitchen or living room: someone was already home, resting, watching, preparing; someone who was expected would soon be home. No need to ring the bell or take out your key. The front door was open and unlocked, just as such doors had been for the past few generations when men but also women came home from a gray lighted shift in the factory. These houses, these streets, made up a simple beauty but a strong constant. For how much longer though. The rust was now turning to plum: the beginning of twilight; or that strange endless rich coloring overcast that hides the sun as it makes its exit. We would still be able to see the rust turn to asphalt: a color and image that was appropriate given our upcoming journeys. Could I still make it down to New York before this night was over? Well, if anything will get me there, it is a colossal unfinished manuscript. And the car that it also happens to be in.

And here we are: no New York, but the end of our journey. She did notice right away that I pulled the car over and stopped in front of a ten story tan brick apartment house. A few blocks away from a church that looks like a famous European cathedral. Perhaps she was thinking about her next journey: perhaps to Europe: or perhaps she is thinking about how she is going to finish her art project for the class she has not been going to in—ohhh, shut up and let her make her own mind up. Hopefully, her brief time spent with you would convince her of the need to skip more classes.

“What are we doing here?” she said. “Play a quick game of bingo?”

She noticed the several old people slumped in the fixed chairs, beneath a gray and white awning. There was also the damning designation “Senior Citizens” attached to the name of this apartment.

“Um—if you like, we can go to a casino—we’ve got a couple of ‘em. It’s the one thing this state has going for it.”

“No thanks,” she said as she followed me in to the apartment’s lobby. “But maybe while we’re here you can take out an application to be an orderly.”

“I would, but then I’d get some weird and twisted notion to wear a bedpan on my head like Don Quixote.”

“So this is what it’s all been about,” she said. Her voice seemed like it was in a long delayed answer to herself. “Attacking windmills.”

So what if it was, I thought. The scary thing was, they were not in my imagination. They were oppressively real, and they were called the Bank, the Government, and the Multi-national Corporation. She was also wrong about my attacking them. I tried that already, and to be honest, I do not think that I made much of an impression on The Paradise Casualty Insurance Company when I worked as a semi-permanent temp worker a few years back. It was so bad that they did not even fire me: I had to quit out of frustration.

Well, that was in the past. The present was now about running from windmills—and the immediate present, going to a Senior Citizen apartment complex in the downtown of a small rust belt city.

It was also a complex where I was somewhat known by one of the resident’s sitting in the lobby. He raised his hand when he saw me and called out in a raspy voice:

“Hey, Yankees fan!”

“He knows you,” the Young Artist sharply said. “Why.”

“Come on, I’ll explain when we get on the elevator,” I said.

I was hoping I could sneak in without being recognized, without having to explain what I could still not explain to myself; at least without awkwardness and embarrassment.

“This was where my grandmother lived...” I started to explain without looking at her. “I used to come here to visit her...and...”

“How long ago was that?” she said. “Ten years ago?”

“Yeah, I know...but about a month after she died, I automatically came here—forgetting that—you know—and the people in the lobby not only remembered me, but—I think they also forget that she died—and well, I knew I could not go to her apartment—because it was no longer her apartment—so I went up to the roof—where we’re going.”

Bing! The elevator chimed as the dull gray doors opened, and just in time to see our reflections as they settled into an elongated, smudgy faced distortion.

We said nothing on the way up; did not even look each other. For all the time we had been together, this elevator ride seemed like the beginning of our coming apart.

“Just wait ‘til we get there,” I tried to reassure her. “There’s a great view

from the roof.”

“And all this time these old people think you’re visiting someone.”

She sounded a bit mad, as if I had been deceiving someone.

The elevator finally stopped at our floor. We walked down the hallway for a moment before I began speaking:

“Put it this way; I never really stopped coming...and now that I’m leaving, I probably won’t be able to come back here again. I’ll be gone long enough—so that if I come back, they’ll think I’m a real stranger.”

She closed her eyes, shook her head, smiled, and then took my hand and asked:

“Is it that bad...?”

Yes, because this was someone whose flesh I would always touch with love; whose flesh I would never be able to touch again. And how could your hands ever stop reaching—for a person that you love? How much time would you need to make your hands forget? Ah, but I could not ask that from someone I was about to lose. Someone who—no—no—no—I would never forget this young artist! Never!

“It’s a great view,” I said.

I gently opened the gray aluminum door with the red exit sign above. Light slowly poured in. I held the door open for the young lady to go through.

“It’s just up a few steps,” I said.

We both giggled, as if that is all it was to reach the top—just a few small steps! That is all it took to get to the highest point in this city—short of going to Holy Land, which we would be able to see from this roof. Though, short of that, the highest point was on top of an apartment building for people who would or could seldom make the walk up a few steps. I always vowed that I would make those few steps; no matter how old I got, I was always going to keep climbing!

And now behold. For the two of us; we may have missed the descent of the sun—yes, we did. But the sky was a light but rich ultramarine—that was also dark enough to bring out the flickering beauty of the thousands of lights coming from houses, streets, gas stations, small stores and tenements in the several valley folds that rolled forth below. We both went to the railing at the end of the bunker-like doorway we stepped out of. That is where the best view was—and as for the rest of the un-fenced off roof top, three plastic mold chairs—two of which were on their sides, and a fold out card table: now sitting crookedly from its weather twisted legs.

“Well, someone else has been up here,” The Young Artist said.

“But not for awhile,” I said. “Besides, whoever party it was—it was faced away from the better view—away from Holy Land.”

“Where?” The Young Artist quickly said as she started looking for it.

“Over—”

“Look! The cross—there’s the cross!”

“There,” I finished up.

And three miles or so from where we were standing, and on the only other piece of earth or structure higher than the one we were now on, was a tall hot

white glowing cross.

"Damn...!" The Young Artist said, and then shook her head and smiled.

"What..." I asked.

"Nothing," she said. "It just seems—so long ago..."

She was right, and within the moment it took for me to agree with her, I saw this entire day flash before my eyes, starting from when I was woken up by an unsympathetic sun while I was trying to sleep off some beer and marijuana from the previous few hours; to the out-of-place, black dressed young woman that walked out from a small field of dead reeds while I was trying to take a piss!

—to the two of us getting in a ten or was it twelve year old junk-filled car—oh, we covered more of a journey within this one day than this car ever could from its one hundred eighty plus thousand miles!

Enough to junk this car. It had completed its journey. Someday, I would try to write a poem about it. The same way Turner made a masterpiece in that painting where a small steamer tows out an old sailing ship to sea to be burned—my poem would not be a masterpiece—but it would have heart. No reader would fail to see that.

"Well..." I said.

She raised one eyebrow at me; surprised that I should be the one to make our exit.

"It's getting dark, and I think this building has security at night."

"You mean you don't know that?" she said.

"I try to keep clear of the law—even the rent-a-cops," I said as we started to walk down the short flight of steps.

"Hmmm, if you can have rent-a-cops, I'm wondering if you can have the equivalent like –rent-a-crook."

"Not for me," I said. "When I break the law, it's going to be for real."

"Me too," she said.

And so, to the best of our ability, we would both break the law—but as artists. I am glad that we both realized that about ourselves as well as each other before we left. But as we left the apartment, we were still walking together. We passed a few small stores of the 99 cents variety (everything in this store priced no higher than a dollar!). And sometimes you find some of the greatest treasures in such places, and if one was open now, we would have gone inside. But no, the store was closed.

Surprisingly enough, we were now coming to a cemetery, which could also be used as a short cut to the college I had gone to; the college The Young Artist was presently going to. Yes, the way she tried to hide our parting with an embarrassed though sad smile told me that she was going back to school at this moment.

Ah, but did she know that this cemetery was unique? (And that is quite a statement coming from a graveyard connoisseur like me). What made this cemetery special, were the dozen or so graves with no bodies beneath their tombstones. These stones were mostly from the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: back when this city was just getting its start as a factory town. Well, not for some of the lads—they would skip the murky brick workhouse and sign up as a deck



hand on a clipper ship: they would know the freedom of the sea!

But only for a short time. Many of these young men who sailed out, were also lost at sea. Their graves were put up by their families; such as the marble of one stone which noted: "Ezekial Endicott presumably died on the year of our lord, 1821—lost at sea, but not in our hearts."

"Sad how so many of them never got to come back," she said.

"Sadder how so many of them never left," I said back.

"I can now see where the college is. I know the way from here. It isn't long."

"You sure?" I asked.

"Thanks," she said, "but I'll be okay. It's not over five minutes to campus—and I've got this mace, see"

After which she produced a small hairspray size can of such product attached to her key ring.

"Well now I know why you got in the car."

"No, it's not that. Even if I didn't have this in my purse, I knew about you through your poetry. I saw you read it a couple of times at The Boiler Room. Nothing to worry about."

"That—should make me feel good—but for some reason..."

"Oh, be who you are!" she emphatically said.

"And what's that?"

She just looked down and giggled. I shook my head and then quickly said:

"I feel like I should be going back to college."

We both softly laughed.

"Listen, I would not expect you to give 'em back, but you can keep the Converse."

"Oh, I was going to."

"Well, I still think you have your boots back—"

"Already on my feet," she noted. "I put 'em on while I was back in the car and you were in the church praying."

"Yeah, something like that," I said.

My Converse—or what were now *her* Converse, were tied together by the laces and slung across her shoulder. A smile and a giggle when she saw me looking at what used to be about half of all of my shoes.

And then with some embarrassment, she cleared her throat. She shyly walked up to me, her eyes looking down, and when she stood before me, she unraveled one of her scarves, and gently wrapped it around my neck. She quickly looked up, smiled with some embarrassment, but also fear—hoping that I would not explode or yell or rip the scarf off.

"Thanks," I quietly said.

She wrapped the scarf into a "coil" around my neck.

"There. Now you look more like a cowboy," she said.

"Or a biker," I added.

We both laughed, and then, *that moment*.

"Well, I..." is all I was able to say.

And that is when we both noticed that we were five—maybe seven feet apart—much too far for us to embrace—much too awkward for either one of us to step forward and give each other a hug. She had to go to her school, and I had to go to New York.

“Okay, well, we’ll probably see each other around,” I said.

“Is that all?” she said, and then sadly laughed, adding:

“No, you’re probably right. Someday, I’ll turn around and there you’ll be—but in Paris or Venice or Berlin. But right now, let me give you a hug here!”

And within less than a second, we were both strongly hugging each other; oh, more than that, much more than that!

And then she pulled away because she had to go back to school, and I had to go to New York.

But she did not leave before she shook her head, “Yes,”; convinced that someday we would meet in Berlin, Venice, or Paris: she was sure that all of our dreams would happen, because that is what you believe when you are young, and you are an artist.

And then she turned and started walking, and after a few moments, she melted into a night that seemed rich with so much promise.



## Melanie's version

I got to Merida in October, October 15th I think it was. It was all right, a bit strange. I was on my own and I was too busy to think about anything the first few days because I was finding a flat and I was walking all over the place. So I wasn't too homesick although I missed Mum and Dad after they saw me off at the airport. I tried going to lectures in the beginning but it was completely crazy. The students turned up but the lecturers never arrived and we just went from room to room and building to building never getting any lectures. So after a couple of days of that I thought, That's it, and I went to the library to do something for my Extended Essay because I was already worried, but the library was about the size of a single room, and all the books were damaged or stolen. It was so hot. I couldn't believe it. I'd only been to Spain with Mum and Dad and that was pretty hot but it was nothing like this. And the insects. You couldn't have your window open without these horrible things coming in, crickets and moths, moths the size of which you've never seen. I liked it though. It was ok. And the people were sweet. Very small and squat, but friendly enough. I didn't go out at night though. It was too scary. There were no street lamps, and it was so quiet. Anyway, no-one goes out on their own after dark, do they? Well, I was the only one there from my university. The others were in Veracruz and Xalapa in the north, and I think someone was in Mexico City, but I'm not sure. I didn't know them well anyway. I stayed around the town not doing much, or just in my flat which I got through an agency the first day which was lucky. I could cook a bit so I could live cheaply, and there were some great markets. I bought some rugs and jewelry. Then some others arrived from Portsmouth, and they were ok. They smoked a lot of grass and they didn't seem to care much about anything, but they were all right. We went out a couple of times to a restaurant and some of the bars, and it was nice to have some people from England because it was all getting a bit isolated there by myself. But there was no-one I particularly liked although they were ok. Well, there was this party at someone's house out of town. I don't know where it was. We got driven there by this guy I never saw again. He was American and he had a jeep. It was about twenty minutes out of town but the road was bad, and we went slowly because of the narrow road, so it probably wasn't that far. I didn't think about how I was going to get back. I just thought, If the others are there, we'll all go together. We'd been in a bar in town, and I'd had a couple of beers but I was sober. Outside the town it was about as dark as it could get. There were no lights at all for miles, just total dark. The stars were out, and it was beautiful. I've never seen the stars like that before, ever. It was as if someone had sprinkled sugar across black velvet. We were at this little ranch, and everyone was drinking Tequila and beer. I don't like spirits

so I just had a beer and listened to the music. They had these drums and these guys were going crazy drumming this stuff, and they had Santana on the record player, and other Latin American music. Nothing much happened. People danced a bit, but it wasn't one of those really crazy parties. Some of them were smoking huge joints of grass, and I had one puff but it was too strong, and one puff was enough, I knew right away, so I didn't have any more. Then I was in the garden watching the stars, and some other people were there. The light was very soft and mysterious, and it was a beautiful house. I don't even know whose place it was. It was absolutely in the middle of nowhere. I started to wonder how I was going to get home after a while, so I went back to the house, but I couldn't find any of the people from Portsmouth. Then someone said they'd already gone back. They'd been looking for me but they couldn't find me and they thought I'd already gone or that I wanted to stay. I'd been talking to this bloke in the garden, and he seemed sweet. He was dressed in a tennis shirt and jeans, and he followed me into the house. When he heard what had happened, he offered to drive me into town back to my flat. I agreed because he seemed all right, and we talked a bit more for a while. I had another beer, and we watched the guys on the drums. Then I thought I'd better be getting back as it was getting late so I asked Juan, that was his name, if he'd take me, and he agreed. We said good-night to everyone, but they were all pretty stoned or drunk, and they didn't really notice so we just left. It was beautiful out, cool and fragrant, and the stars were incredible. The undergrowth was buzzing with insects and cicadas. He had a sports car, and we got in and started to drive slowly down the road, which was just a dirt track, winding through the undergrowth. We drove and drove, and it seemed like we'd never get to the main road. If there was any such thing as a main road. But I didn't worry. It was warm, but not too warm, and it was a lovely night. I could see the lights of the town in the distance, so I was relaxed. It's really flat around there, unlike the north, and you can see for miles. But then he stopped the car when we were still on the dirt track and he started to talk. I listened for a while. He was talking about his family and friends and how he was lonely because they were all in the north, and how he was here and how he didn't like it. I think he was working while he was studying, but he must've had some money to have a car like that. I thought he was up to the old tricks, so I suggested we get back because it was getting late. But he just went on talking, on and on. And there was nothing I could do. I couldn't exactly get out and walk. Even though I could see the town. Then he put his arm around me, and I tried to pull away, but he said, It's all right, it's because I'm lonely, that's all. I tried to push him off but I couldn't. Then he was kissing my neck and he tried to kiss me on the mouth at the same time as his hand grabbed me between the legs, and he tried to undo my jeans. I managed to push him off and jump out of the car. I ran up the road a bit towards the town but I didn't know where I was going, and then I fell. He was onto me right away, and he rolled me over. He already had his jeans undone, and he tried to undo mine, but I struggled and hit him. Then he hit me in the face, hard, and I screamed, so he hit me again. Then

I lay still. It was like I was paralyzed. He pulled off my jeans and my panties, and he was between my legs and then he forced himself into me and raped me. I just lay there taking it. I was crying. I couldn't believe it. There was nothing I could do. At first he really hurt me. But after a while I didn't seem to feel anything. Afterwards he helped me find my jeans and he was very gentle. He led me back to the car. I think I was in shock. I just sat there crying, and he comforted me as though he was my boyfriend. On the way back, coming round a corner in the town, we hit a car and I hit the dashboard and cut my eyebrow open. There was blood everywhere. He drove me to the hospital and stayed with me while they sewed it up. Then he drove me to my flat. I never saw him again. People said he'd gone to the north. A girl once said she'd rather have a terrible scar on her face than be raped. I've got both. They say the scar will disappear eventually when the eyebrow grows back but I know it won't. It'll always be there.

## Juan's version

I hate this place. I came here because they sent me. I had no choice. My father's a lawyer and he wanted me to be one too so I can continue the business with his gangster friends and the gringos in the north with all the stuff that goes on. So they sent me here. Where the heat's like nothing else and the place is full of flat heads, those fucking indians you see everywhere. Yeah I've got a car and money and I don't need to go to school. But after a while you just want to leave. Up north it's different. I can get to California or Arizona and it's different. No fucking flat heads for a start. And California women. I don't need to say anything more. Those gringos don't know how to fuck and the women are just dying for it. Pure Latin lover. The other night I fucked this bitch real good. I was just doing the usual thing, driving around all day. Saturday. Smoked a little maria, drank some tequila, hung out with my buddies, you know, like any other Saturday, except that it's hot, you know, really hot, like it's never been. And I'm lying in my car thinking about the north and feeling lousy as hell. And someone says there's a party on over at someone's farm in the night, so we kill time, and get a little drunk and a little stoned and try to score with some of those bitch flat head women, but no luck. Evening comes and we drive over. Nothing much going on. Just a whole load of stoned guys on the drums and the garden. And I drank some more tequila and thought what a fucking bore everything was. It just made me miss the north even more. Then later these gringos show up, about five or six. White, and the girls pretty, you know, I mean sweet and clean and new. No sweat or dirt. But it's hard to get to know them, you know, they're cautious, and they're with these gringo boys, nothing tough but it's hard to get to know them. Like they're from a different planet or something. But there was one. A real beauty, in shorts and a T shirt, and she's well built but not fat, and I just start to drip for her. So I go into the garden. I see she's smoked a little but she's not stoned or drunk. I offer her some but she says she's had some beer already. We're talking in the garden and the night's going by, the cool breeze and the stars up there, and she's talking about the stars and how she can't see them like

that back home, where she comes from, England, wherever the fuck that is, New England maybe. I heard there's a state called that. Then she says she's got to go, so we go back inside and her friends have all gone. She starts getting worried but I say, I'll take you home, I've got a car. She looks at me and I can tell right there she wants it and I start to get hot for her. She's mine and I know I'm going to get her. We go to the car, and she's close to me. I can smell her, hot, driving me crazy. I'm thinking, This is it, you're going to score buddy, this is it. And I can hardly walk because I'm so stiff. So I put her in the car and we drive off. I mean if she gets in the car that's it, right? That means she wants it. So I'm driving, and it's dark as hell but I know the road. I can smell her all the time, and I'm about busting out of my jeans. She's just in shorts and that T shirt after all, and I'm thinking about her wet and ready. And I've got to do it otherwise she'll think I'm queer or something and maybe it'll get around that Juan had the chance and he didn't do anything, and people will laugh. They'll say, Hey Juan, cabron, you're a pendejo, man. You a puto? You know how it is. So I stop the car and talk to her. She tenses a little but she listens and she talks a bit. I'm releasing about how I think this place stinks and how I want to go home to the north. Then when I think she's ready I kiss her, I mean I kissed her neck. She struggles a bit as they all do, but then she lets me kiss her on the mouth. She responds so we just kiss for a bit, and then I can't wait any longer, I'm busting, so I put my hand on her leg, between her legs, and go to get her shorts off. Then the bitch starts to fight me and she tries to escape. The little bitch cocktease. She's out of the car and up the road, and I'm after her. I catch her when she falls down. She struggles a bit but then she stops, and she lets me get her shorts off, and her panties, and I can feel that she's dripping for it, I mean she's wet, wet, really wet as I put my fingers in, and then I'm inside her. I fuck her slowly in the road, and she lets me. She comes and then I fuck her again. Afterwards we lie there for a bit and then I take her home. I guess I was drunk or tired but we hit this car coming out of a street, and I'm yelling at this bastard about the damage to my car and he's yelling at me, then we both notice she's cut above the eye. There's blood everywhere, so I drive her to the hospital where they stitch her up, just like a fighter. And she's quiet and nothing wrong, and I'm thinking, This chick's ok, I might see her again, because she doesn't cry or whine when the needle goes in. Yeah, I think, I might see her again. Then I take her home, and I tell her I'll meet her tomorrow. I couldn't sleep. I jacked off a couple of times thinking about her and then I just had enough. I had to get out, drive north I mean, go home. This place can go to hell. I'm not staying any more, so before dawn I packed up and drove off. I'm never going back, and if my father doesn't like it the sonofabitch can go fuck himself for all I care. What does he know? If he thinks it's so good, why doesn't he go and live there himself? So here I am. Half way there, half way home. And I don't know if I'm going home or not. I think about her but I don't know if I want to see her again. Those gringo bitches are too weird. Ok for a fuck, and that's it. But that's all they want after all, isn't it? But she was good. Hot, you know, real hot. But I don't know where I'm going. I'll have to decide pretty soon. Or maybe I'll just drive around for a while. I don't know. I'll have to decide.



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