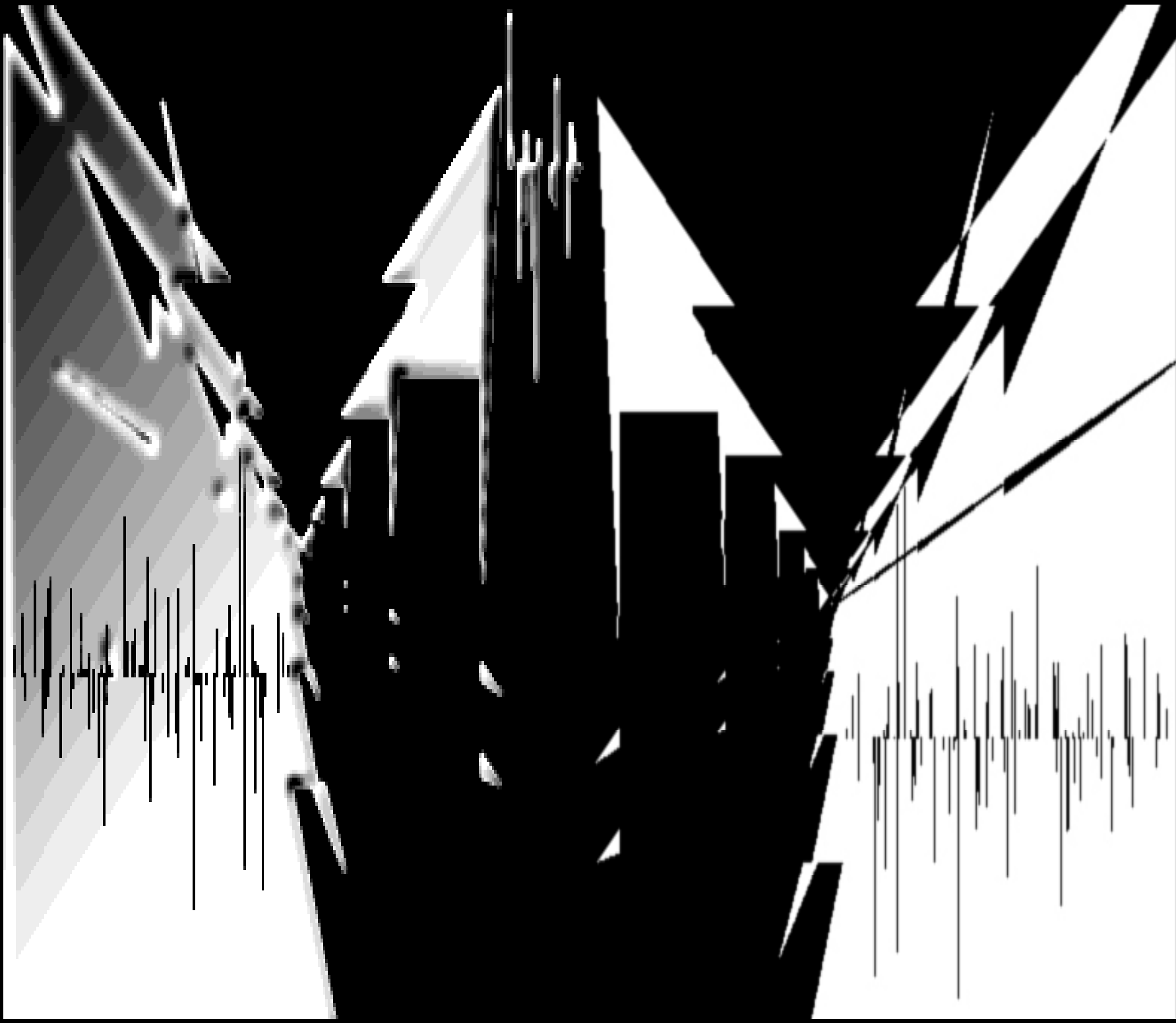


APOCALYPSE PLAYGROUND



Whine, complain & cry

Welcome to the Apocalypse Playground, a collection of stories, commentary, poetry and artwork that deals with the negative, the morose, the morbid, the bizarre and the lessons they provide.

This isn't easy. I'm sitting down yet again to write an editorial for a publication that is all but dead. You see; there's not much support out there for a publication like this. While it is a zine, it strives to be a publication of literary caliber. In my experience with the zine world I have found that unless what you write is by, for and about a particular subculture, it gets ignored. Most zines devote themselves to music. Mine does not. It gets ignored.

I had it in mind that sooner or later I could be the editor of this publication. I could be the editor, and only that, not the sole contributor as I was in the early days, and not also the graphic designer, publicist, etc. I was overlooking one crucial fact. The thing in your hands is a zine. Zines are, more often than not, created by and for their editors.

If you'll pardon my selfishness, I'll applaud your apathy. I've given up on the pretense that I'm just the editor of this publication. There isn't any response coming in from readers. I have no idea whom I'm writing to, if anyone, anymore. A scant few pieces are published here from outside sources, as there hasn't been a submission to Apocalypse Playground in months. (I haven't put an issue out in more than that long.)

So I've taken it all up myself again. I wrote much of this issue. I designed it. I edited it. Don't let that make you think it isn't yours.



APOCALYPSE

ART

POETRY

PROSE AND MANIFESTO

ESSAYS AND SHORT STORIES

THE DARK OR MORE MAJESTIC SIDE
OF THE THING WE CALL LIFE

APOCALYPSE PLAYGROUND is published bi-monthly by Dylan Kinnett to provide information and opinion of interest to the community. Opinions reflect our judgment at a particular time and are subject to change, as are our moods. All the work within this publication, unless otherwise noted, was created by Dylan Kinnett.

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" B R E A K "

Sticks and stones

have all been thrown,

and names will never save me.

*I can't land on open hands
forever.*

They're fists.

Sorry, but they drove me to it.

My clothes are torn.

My scars are shown.

I can't hide them anymore.



HOLD STILL...
Your Humble Editor
Hard At Work

*Look up, Woman and Man
sky is all you see.
You break the bread,
made up from ground
and know nothing of it.*

*Minds made the plow,
and mounds out of the dead.
Dirt knows nothing of them.
The only thing it feels is feet.*

Mrs. Loyd

A Tale of attempted robbery



A few of my classmates came over one evening to tell me that they had found a graveyard. I guess I look like I care. I told them, "Yes, I've seen it" with annoyance in my voice. I couldn't tell if they had preconceived, out of their own prejudice that I had already been there, or if they had preconceived that I hadn't but would like very much to be told about it. It didn't matter. I decided to entertain myself with these people anyway.

"Did you see Margaret Loyd?" I asked.

"Margaret Loyd. Who?"

"The one in the cage. The fence with no gate that goes all the way around the grave. Did you see that?"

"Yeah, what about it?"

"Well, don't you find it peculiar that someone would put a fence around a grave, and only one grave at that? Why that one? And why keep a grave in a cage anyway?"

"Uh... I don't know" "Neither do I." I said. I leaned in and whispered "I was going to dig her up"

Never have I seen such looks of perplexity on a pair of faces. One of them rose to close the door as if he was about to give me a stern talking-to for even thinking of such a thing. I couldn't wait to hear what he had to say.

"Are you serious?" he asked. "Is he serious?" the two conferred.

After a few silent moments of more perplexity the one said "cool!"

"Yeah," the other added. "That would kick ass. You know, she's probably somebody important, or used to be anyway. There's a building somewhere around here called Loyd-something-or-other. I'll bet she was the wife of a politician or something."

"Yes," I schemed "Excellent... We can set her up right there behind my roommate's desk, give her an office, issue mandates signed by her hand. If I ever get in trouble for anything I can tell whoever is yelling at me that my close friend happens to be the wife of a powerful politician. I

could use a little association with authority."

They laughed at that, so I added, "I've always wanted a femur." They laughed even harder and then I knew for certain that these boys were not sober.

I rose from my chair and said "Gentlemen, I need some air. Join me on the balcony if you would. We shall have to discuss this further."

Now, I should tell you about the balcony. I live on the fourth floor, with a vantage of everything between here and the mountains on the horizon, including a construction site and the security office. We can watch the world working from there, passively, as if the world were television. The only drawback to the balcony is the large number of drunkards that dwell there. They stumble up to the railings and spit. They sit down and belch beer. They wish there were more women here. What is more important, there are three floors of balconies full of such people directly below the fourth. I was looking forward to that for once. The beauty of the uppermost vantage point is that you enjoy a minimum of visibility with a maximum of range. Say, for example, that I too wanted to loft a wad of spit or an empty can from the balcony (not that I ever do such things of course). I could hit anyone I wanted to, with the right trajectory, with anything, and it would be very difficult for them to even see who it was that threw the thing, let alone throw anything back.

So we went out to the balcony. And sure enough, people were milling about below, in their various late night stupors.

"I'll tell you what I'd do..." My one companion said to the other. "I'd put that body somewhere where people would see it."

"Yeah," the other began whispering "but where."

I pretended to be half hard of hearing, half lost in thought.

"Huh, what?"

"I said where"

"Where what?"

"Where would we put the dead body

after we dug it up so people would see it"

"Oh" I said, and continued staring over the ledge. At this point I noticed the noise levels drop on the balcony below, I heard concerned mumbling. On our balcony, it was so quiet you could hear hawks screaming on the mountain, in and amongst the mumbling. The second balcony quieted down so that they could listen more carefully to the conversation on the third. I flicked my cigarette, to catch the attention of the ladies milling around on the ground, waiting for admittance to our building. They looked up. By that time the second ward was already discussing what they thought they heard the third ward say they thought they heard.

Quietly, I turned to my companions and suggested something.

"Crucify her. Right there on that field."

"YES!" The one yelled to the other, obviously quite taken in by the idea. (What can I say. He wasn't sober. It's amazing the ideas that the mind will allow itself to entertain)

"what?" the other asked, having been genuinely preoccupied. The other turned to him and boldly proclaimed "After We dig up Margaret Loyd from the graveyard, we'll get some logs, make a crucifix and crucify the corpse right there on that field."

Well, everybody heard him say that: the third floor, the second floor and the groundlings. Somebody directly below us stuck his head up and asked "WHOT Th' HELL ARE YOU BOYS TALKIN" ABOUT ? !? !"

I bent over the railing to speak to him "Ask this guy right here, he's the one that said it, and his friend." I turned to them and said, "You are a bunch of SICK little head cases, you know that?"

I had just enough time come inside from the balcony before the shower started from below: beer cans, garbage and cigarettes. I guess I was wrong about not being able to throw things at the fourth floor balcony from below. Oh well.

I H A V E A L W A Y S W A N T E D A F E M U R

The Cat

A Childhood
Nightmare: # 3



“Oh sick!” Toby yelled, “What is that thing?”

It didn't move when we touched it. Matted and sticky black hair on the thing caught in the autumn breeze. I had goose bumps. Beside the old Victorian courthouse, in the shadow of its tower, Toby and I had found a dead thing in the gutter.

“It's a dead thing” I said, in awe, never having seen anything like it before.

“Yeah,” Toby and I were whispering like children in church.

I put my hands on my knees. Toby stuck his foot under the thing, like a spatula under a pancake and flipped it so we could get a better look.

“Oh sick!” Toby screamed, and we laughed. The thing had been a cat once, not long ago, perhaps that afternoon. It looked like a cat once we had it flipped over and there didn't appear to be anything wrong with it except it was still motionless and one of its eyeballs had popped out of socket. The eye was hanging from the cat's head, attached by forbidden wiring.

Laugh and point, that's what we did. It was the easiest thing to do.

The idea that the wheel of a tire, or some other force could squeeze a creature hard enough to make its eyes pop out was so outrageous that we stood there and laughed about it for several minutes. We were uninterrupted by anything save the sound of high heels somewhere in the distance.

We dragged the cat behind the court-

house for a closer inspection. The creature was frozen in pain, stiff as a stick and its teeth were showing. Of course, there was that eye to contend with as well. Toby was still rolling around laughing at the way the cat had refused to move as we dragged it by the tail, or rather, as Toby dragged it. I was still laughing as well. Had the cat been able to see in the instant between the moment of impact and death? Did the world suddenly appear bigger or go by in a blur? What would it look like to pop an eye out? I stopped laughing.

Suddenly, I felt as if the cat were looking at me, like a cat that wants a belly rub.

“It's looking at me” I said, and Toby, who hadn't stopped laughing, clutched his gut and howled. He thought that was hilarious. I mentioned the eyeball. But I wasn't joking. I had to leave the alley behind the courthouse and get some air.

As I did. I saw a woman walking around rather frantically, peeking in all the little places I knew so well all along the street. The sound of her heels drew closer and the woman stooped a little so she could talk to me.

“I'm looking for my cat,” she said. The first thing that came to my mind was relief that Toby hadn't stepped out of the alley with me. He would laugh, that would betray the lie and make her come back there. She'd see what happened to her cat.

“Oh, what does it look like” If she didn't mention any of the distinctive features of “our” cat, I wouldn't tell her. She

said it was a black cat, young, of so-many years old, and with such-and such a name. I only acted like I was listening.

“No ma'am I haven't seen your cat. But I'll keep an eye out for him.” and with that the woman left, calling after the cat. It was then that I noticed I had been standing exactly where the cat had been. If we hadn't moved it, that woman would have found the cat, and us laughing at it.

Toby came out of the alley and said “are you gonna throw up?”

“No.” I said “are you”

“Yes,” he said “If I laugh anymore. Who was that?”

“I dunno. some lady. Look I have to go now, it's going to be dinner time soon.”

“I'll see you at school tomorrow. Hey wait till they hear about this”

“ I want to tell them”

“I saw it first”

“rock paper scissors then” so it was. We shook our fists and each drew according to our whim. I drew the paper, Toby made a rock. I won the rights to tell the story. But the victory wasn't any fun, I didn't feel very good about what we had done that afternoon so I walked home.

My feet were covered in blood.

LAUGH AND POINT; THAT'S WHAT WE DID.

IT WAS THE EASIEST THING TO DO.



Delirium Fade to Gray

Sailing on the wrong side of the sea,
which is nasty, which is mean.

I keep seeing snakes slinking away from
me.

I've seen em swim. Eels I guess they'd be,
like demons being baptized in the murky
green.

A snake for treachery, a snake for pain,
a snake with rats eyes, and dollar signs
on its hide,

a snake with secret fangs.

Those snakes in the sea, that place
supposed to be clean,
they come up in the nets and make bets
with fishermen

as to which will meet the quicker end,
and what will be the hour.

The snakes place their bets, and win
through folly, favor or foul.

And which end is best?

The snakes would like to know.

Is it swift, like a blow to the skull
or a slow moan,
alone

on the bottom of a boat

The Prostitute

A short story by
Seth Muller



“....She just wouldn’t die. She should have been dead years ago. I never saw her without a cigarette dangling from her mouth, and always present was a half empty bottle of bourbon soon to be polished off. She’s fallen down the stairs twice, and even as a feeble decrepit woman sustained no injury. She was stubborn and belligerent, and when angry would yell until she lost her voice. She lived to be 87-years-old. And we waited so long for her to die, so so long. We’ve all secretly hated her and her ill-gotten wealth. Finally, she is dead. And if God is just, she’s slowly rotting in hell right now.”

Patrick’s eulogy startled those who chose to attend the funeral of Francis McQueen. His bellowing voice and animated hand gestures really drove the point home. The way he ended the eulogy left no doubt in everyone’s mind. Patrick was bitter.

“Dear Lord, so many of us have prayed for this day to come. Thank you Lord! Thank you Jesus! Granmma Fran is dead! Amen!”

Patrick paid his last respects by spitting in Francis McQueen’s face as he breezed by the casket. He took for the Funeral Home’s front door, and left. The bright Saturday afternoon greeted him. He felt relieved. He removed his navy blue blazer and swung it over his shoulder. With one hand in a pocket, and the other holding the jacket, he strolled down Newburg Street toward his favorite restaurant.

The timing was perfect. He evacuated the funeral home before the shock of his actions wore off. A frenzy of comments rose through the congregation. Patrick did something they had all dreamed about doing in one form or another. He, the smartest and most successful of the grandchildren, the well-mannered and well-spoken one, communicated the thoughts of everyone in the room. All twenty-two people felt it their duty to attend, only because they were related to Francis McQueen by blood. And for this reason, he gave the best eulogy anyone could give.

Patrick’s delivery did have one flaw. It showed no reverence for the dead. And Joan Raikes, Patrick’s aunt, noted that she’d never once saw Patrick spit before, and therefore

thought the performance was overdone.

Patrick finished off his fries and soda at the restaurant. Two miles outside of town, his relatives stood around the grave site. They really couldn’t concentrate on the Priest’s words. Patrick’s words still floated around in their heads. Jason and Shawna McQueen bowed their heads as far as they’d go down. They didn’t want anyone to see their smiles. Jason was proud of his brother. Jason and Shawna were the only ones who knew of what Patrick would do. When their mother and father, Edward and Kathy, refused to attend, Jason and Shawna came anyway for the show.

“While some of us have unkind words for Francis, I think it’s a sad day when a family member passes. We need to remember all the good deeds and words she’s left with us.”

Some of the family members looked up, perplexed. No one seemed to remember any good deeds or words Francis left. The only thing she left behind was a \$2.6 Million estate. Still, Patrick’s Uncle Robert wanted to bring a semblance of order to the services. His anal retentive nature was shaken by Patrick’s eulogy. And although Robert secretly hated his mother, he said to his wife once, “After all she is my mother, and for that I have to show her some level of respect.”

Everyone who knew Francis McQueen disliked her because she was an unpleasant woman. The family hated her for that and other reasons. A few months after Henry McQueen’s death ten years before, it was discovered how he came to meet and eventually marry Francis. When Henry was a senator for the state legislature, he spent a large portion of time in Cleveland. Francis was a call girl there, and on one of Henry’s return visits he impregnated Francis. Henry divorced his first wife Ellen with whom he had no children, and married Francis. As a spiteful woman who gained full control of Henry’s estate, she unleashed the buried secret and shared some old letters which proved their affair. Further, she admitted to black mailing Henry into the marriage by creating a scandal to ruin his political future. She was a young, poor hooker who needed the money and security.

Francis believed any rational person would have done the same. She also believed there was love, but Henry was reluctant, and needed coaxing.

Patrick paid for his afternoon lunch and headed back to the funeral home to get his car. He made a phone call to his wife to say he was on his way home. He did have one stop to make, however.

As he drove past what was once his grandparents’ house, he thought about the summer he stayed there. When Patrick was eleven, his parents separated briefly, and a summer away from home seemed best. Jason and Shawna, too young to know what was happening, stayed with their mother. Patrick envied them greatly. He remembered the time Gramma Fran scalded him with boiling water as punishment. Forgetting about the incident with firecrackers, he assumed she was boiling the water for dinner. She poured the boiling water over his head and told him “When you play with firecrackers, you get burned.”

It was the first incident of much abuse, and normally Patrick filled with anger when he recalled that summer. After today, everything felt resolved.

“Well, I really laid it on the line at Gramma Fran’s funeral today. I wish we could get together and have a few laughs about it. I’m so glad that old bitch is dead. When the inheritance check comes in, I already know what my first purchase will be. I’m going to buy you a tombstone, and we can ditch this little stone in the ground.”

Patrick walked back to his car, but not before laying a white rose in front of Ellen McQueen’s grave. Ellen, though not related to Patrick by blood, had been more of a grandmother to him than Francis ever was. He met her ten years ago, after his grandfather’s death. Six years later Ellen died. Patrick mourned for days. Patrick was her one and only grandchild.

She was stubborn and belligerent, and when angry would yell until she lost her voice.

She had the blue eyes of Jesus and what a girl she was. Young, energetic, perfect hair, perfect body, and those eyes... Her smile was a bit off though. There was this gap between her two front teeth. It made her smile strange. It was a sin to see such an imperfect grin gaping out from under such perfect eyes. She had the kind of eyes that could bore right through a person. Her name was Alice.

When her sixteenth birthday rolled around I decided to get with the neighbors and throw a little party for her. Not much you understand, just something to say hey. Well, the neighborhood was not keen on that thought. That's when the stories started coming in.

It turns out her father's an alcoholic, which is why that gap came about. He punched her once. Alice was a troublemaker at school too, got kicked out. Her mother was dead. I didn't know that either, thought they'd just divorced or something. You know how things are now. But she was dead. Big mystery they say. And the sister, hardly a word from her. Alice had an older sister in college who came back to visit sometimes. She had become strange and quiet since her mother passed.

Well I didn't care. Strange family or not, God put her here just as sure as anybody else. Besides, on her birthday and all, you just gotta do something nice. Especially on the sixteenth, to do otherwise just wouldn't be right.

So, I baked her a cake and got her a present. Shoes, I think it was. Just before her prom the year before she came over asking to borrow a pair of red shoes to go with the dress she'd bought. (I don't want to know where the money for that came from.) We've got the same shoe size, Alice and I, so I said sure, she could borrow a pair. She returned them the next morning.

Alligator tears. She cried alligator tears when I gave her those shoes for her birthday. She teared all over the cake even. She

said that in all her sixteen years nobody had ever said happy birthday to her. She'd never had any presents before. But what she was most upset about was that she had to leave school next week and go to one of those places for bad girls. Reform Schools -- I don't know what they call them. She never told me why. Well, she cried and cried. They don't let them wear nice things in places like that.

So it was a while before I saw Alice again. About a year I guess. When she came back things were a little better for her. Her father got along with her better. I don't know maybe he missed her or something. The school taught her to work so she had money enough to get her own nice things. Some people just glow in new clothes. Alice was like that. She could have been a model with new clothes for every day. It would have happened if somebody had ever taken the time to fix that gap in her teeth. I didn't notice it so much until after she came home again. She smiled more, never smiled much before.

Well, it turns out that the cops started following her right after her release from reform school. She was really a prostitute now. That's what the school taught her. She had a pimp and everything: drugs and money. There was one cop that hunted girls like that, I guess you could say. He tied them up in his basement. Well, that cop tied her up in his basement and she didn't take it. Nobody ever hits Alice, not since her dad did that to her face. So the cop got real scared like, and kept her in the basement for weeks even. When she finally got out, Lord only knows how, she turned him in.

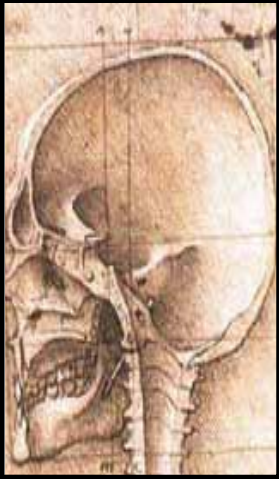
The report was followed through. Even the courts would think you can't treat a whore like that. They have rights too. She was such a pretty girl. I was sure she would win the case, which was pending. There were other witnesses, other prostitutes. I'm sure of it, but all of them were afraid. The cop threatened to kill them if they testified. When he threatened to kill Alice she didn't care.

But her pimp cared. He got to her with his ideas that the cop knew Alice didn't really care if he killed her, but the cop could hurt her friends. Especially the pimp you see. That got to her. Besides, she really did care, in there somewhere, if she lived or died. So she asked her pimp to help her hide out until the whole thing blew over. He naturally agreed.

They made this plan, the pimp and Alice. There was crack and whatever else that needed to be sold and well, Alice was a prostitute. So, they'd find a customer that night and she'd be well hidden by the morning. The money would buy a bus ticket to San Francisco where another pimp would buy some kind of fake I.D. or something.

Alice

Observations from an
American Housewife



ALLIGATOR TEARS. SHE CRIED ALLIGATOR TEARS

Alice found a man with a crack habit, used him and came back to the pimp. But she didn't have enough money. So he told her to go back to him and get more. She did. She told the man she would give him more sex if he paid her more money. He told her, he didn't have any more money.

Alice went back to the pimp, upset like you can only be when you're taking whatever kinds of drugs she was on. Sure, she was happy for a while but nothing was pretty when the fix wore off. I never saw her like that but I can imagine. Alice and the pimp decided that they had to get more money from this man. The pimp was already quite upset with the guy, who was a repeat offender to his business. So they found him a third time. He still didn't have enough money. So they tied him up and beat him up and then dropped him by the side of the road. He laid there by the side of the road for two weeks. And when they found him he had only been dead for a week so you can imagine how long he laid there on some backroad, moaning, if he could stil speak then.

This is where there's a big gap in the middle of my story. You see I moved away from the neighborhood. I didn't like it there anymore. Nobody really looked out for each other or cared much for anybody the way real neighbors should. So I moved, but before I left I talked to Alice's sister. I hadn't seen Alice in a while and I was worried. "I don't even want to say." she said, but then she told me everything you just heard about the pimp and all. Alice disappeared after that, to hide from the cop and her new crime I guess. But the cops wanted to find her for that same reasons she was gone. Because she was the only witness testifying about the whole basement affair. What;s more,The cops wanted her because her pimp had been suspected for killing that man. There was a warrant for Alice's arrest and a sopena.

Well that was the last I heard of Alice, her family, her pimp or that man. Until one day I was packing some china with the Sunday paper to send to my mother-in-law. I saw a picture in the paper that was that smile. It was her smile. I know it. Like the way a skull grins... And those eyes, you can't mistake the eyes like Christ.

Well, the paper said that an unidentified body had been found, badly decomposed, between the ages of 16 and 21 with blue eyes. I thought it could be her but what really got me was the part when they mentioned the distinguishing feature, that damned gap between her teeth. I knew it was her. They couldn't identify her because she was all rotted. No dental record matches either, becuase her father had never even taken her to any doctor before. She never even had any shots. Well, she had those shots but... Because she's still wanted for that case, and connection with the murder a mug of her is at the court house. Same eyes, same teeth but the cops didn't know. And I didn't tell them. I have enough problems in my life. I don't want to get involved.

*"Who's that in that picture on the back
of the notebook tossed across the floor?
Don't you like her anymore?"*

*Oh, she only loves me when I'm best dressed,
when I ride like a white knight savior,
and when I'm on my best behavior.*

Can't do that no more.

*So keep your cumberbund double breast,
notebooks, photos, and all the rest.
Fix me so I'm lesser dressed
and kick me out the door*

I will ride your white horses no more.

*And if I slam my hand or hit my head
on my way out, oh well.
It's only blood on the wall.*

Goats

debate over the
coming apocalypse



Someone hung a rope from one of the trees along the river. One afternoon, last summer I took hold of that rope and swung from it, screaming as the rope moaned. My body must have been a comic display as it slapped the water, back first. I was only in the water for an instant, before clambering back on land. I sat in the sun to dry for a while, and watched the river move.

This river has seen all kinds of theater. A hundred years upstream from here and eight miles away, John Brown mounted the abolitionist assault that left his body a moldering' in the grave. A man claimed to invent the steamboat, years before Fulton, right where my rope-swing was. Thomas Jefferson stood on a nearby rock and said that the view in front of me was the most beautiful he had ever seen. (Ah, if he could only smell the water now.)

I was startled to find an old man in camouflage, fishing from a nearby log. He had been watching me disturb his fish.

"You're done with that now, aren't you son," he spoke to me, without shifting his eyes from the river. "Don't think I didn't hear you scream the way you did. I can tell by the look of you that you're not the type for jumpin' out of trees."

I wondered how long he had been looking at me, and the ghosts of the army of the Potomac marched out of my mind. The man motioned me over to him with his free hand, still without looking. He moved over on the log and growled "If you're just gonna sit, you might as well make up for the damage you've done. You fish?"

As I stood to walk toward the man, he laughed briefly and said. "Well, you do now. There's an extra pole by your feet somewhere. Pick it up and do like I do."

His fishing line flicked out over the water. The reel made sounds like singing. The man stretched toward the water a little. I watched him, and it was then that I noticed that he only had one leg. Next to him, glistening in the late afternoon sun, was a silvery wheelchair. Mr. Stephens must have wheeled himself all the way from the boat ramp and along the sand toward his log. I quit gawking and tried to cast my line. It flew, and landed on the water more gracefully than I did.

The man said "You, call me Mister Stephens. What do I call you?"

I introduced myself. Mr. Stephens cocked his head slightly and grunted. "Do you see that Cambodian man over there, the man in that canoe? He's here every day at dawn, catching fish for his family. He only stays all day on weekends, but when I see him, every time I see him, he catches more fish than me. He's gonna do it again, too. Thanks to you. Your little circus act spooked the fish over to his side of the river." Mr. Stephens brought his line out of the water, empty. He cast again.

"What do you do with the fish?" I inquired. Mr. Stephens stared at the water and mumbled "I fish for fish. Hardly catch any these days. But if I did I reckon I wouldn't feed them to my family!" He made a face, as if he'd just eaten something nasty. I couldn't help but notice the stub where his leg had been. It was moving as if to dismiss the fish. "Besides," he continued, "I have plenty of food stored up: canned goods, vegetables, dried fruit, a surplus of beer -- a heap of munitions, shotguns . . . You know, contingencies for the millennium."

"What?" I wondered what kind of man I was talking to. Having read about the people that stockpile for the coming apocalypse, I braced myself for a fire and brimstone sermon. Mr. Stephens cackled at himself.

"Well, you know. You can never be too careful. They say that computer glitch is going to throw everything off. The banks could go bad. Foodstuffs might run short, riots in the street, all hell could break loose. So I bought myself a few extra things. Did you know that you can get nearly everything you need from goats? They're good to have around. They mow your grass for you, eat your garbage, and their milk is good. You can even make cheese from goats' milk."

My fishing line hadn't moved in a while. I brought it in. Mr. Stephens kept talking.

"I've got all that stuff now, so that I won't have to fight for it later, and in case I do, I've got shotguns. No telling who's gonna get

jealous because I saved up and they didn't. Did you ever hear the one about the grasshopper and the ant when you were little?"

"Yeah," I snapped. "For some reason, the ant thought this winter would be worse than any other winter, so he over-prepared for it. The grasshopper called the ant crazy." I toyed with the bait on my line a little, to make sure it was still on the hook. "Luckily for the ant," Mr. Stephens cackled "the winter was harsh."

Mr. Stephens sighed, "It might matter someday, who's a grasshopper and who's an ant. After all, the millennium is coming. The times they are a' changin'."

I flung my line back at the river, while Mr. Stephens let the slack out of his own line. Silence settled down between us. A myriad of eddies and swirls lived their entire lifetimes in the current. A fish gulped at the surface of the water somewhere.

I thought about time. Every day is the turn of a century. The millennium begins today, and tomorrow, and every day after that. Every day begins a period that will end in a thousand years, just as each day is the end of an age that began that long ago. Why make distinctions? Time is not against us, it is only our perception of its impending end that fills us with dread. It is only an inaccurate conception of time that has sickened our machines.

Mr. Stephens was still intent on the water. I asked him, "won't you feel let down? I mean, what if there isn't any chaos, pandemonium, or any of that. What are you going to do with a surplus of guns -- protect a bunch of canned goods that nobody wants? ... And what about all those goats?"

Mr. Stephens looked at me and said "I'll get drunk and shoot goats I guess."

A hundred years upstream from here and eight miles away...

"Thoughts on a Suitcase"

everything I've not forgotten and a few things I'm sure I should...

If it's clothes that make the man then I am in this box.

*I am on top of me,
jumping on my underwear just to make it fit.
I'm sitting on my suitcase.*

*There's not enough room inside, not enough time tonight,
not enough time in time and I'm sick of it,
sick of zippers that don't zip, stickers that don't stick,
and tickets - when I cash them in and try to fly I come to find
that I can only go with so much even though I came with so little.*

*I'm sitting on my suitcase and would ride it home if I could,
sail a sea of material things, leave my luggage on the shore.*

*When the door swings open on the morning light outside
I'll take my suitcase, the only thing I own,
to see another city,*

Apocalypse Playground: The darkness that enlightens.

Apocalypse Playground is not about music. Rather, it's about noise. Not movies either, rather we're more concerned with visions. We want people to see. We want people to read. We want something to be heard, and people to hear it..

Writing: Short fiction, essays and poetry submissions are the backbone of this publication. Unfortunately, they're in short supply. So get cracking! Send in your poems! Send in your stories! (Or we'll be forced to send in the clowns).

We are searching for anyone interested in writing **columns** for this publication on a regular basis. Contact AP at the address(es) below for more information. If you have an idea that you think would belong in an upcoming issue of Apocalypse Playground, let us know. Your input is needed.

Apocalypse Playground publishes **visual art** as well: digital art, photography, drawings, paintings, collage, etc. Visual submissions, of any kind are also especially needed. The only requirement is that they be no larger than 8x10 inches. It should be noted that, at present, we can only print in Black and White.

...and speaking of **photography**: future issues will artfully combine photos with poetry. We also plan to incorporate photos into articles as seen in most major magazines. **This Publication needs photographers** willing to work with us on a regular basis. Inquiries are welcome.

This entire publication is designed by the same person that writes and edits it. The editor would very much like for this to change.

Anyone with **Graphic Design** abilities who would like to show off their talents in Apocalypse Playground is welcome to do so.

The Underground Press thrives on outside input. Apocalypse Playground heartily welcomes (read - demands) feedback. You are welcome to submit any of the kind of material you see here as well as anything you don't.

APOCALYPSE PLAYGROUND

- SUBMISSIONS

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Both electronic postal submissions are accepted. Written submissions should be typed, although handwritten poetry will be accepted. Please send e-mail submissions in the message body, attached images may be submitted in any standard format. With any submission, please include a short bio and a picture if you'd like. Don't forget to include your name and address because all contributors receive payment in free copies of the issue(s) featuring their work. Preference is given to works which focus on experimental topics. An author whose work is accepted for any particular issue grants Apocalypse Playground One-time rights to publications, the work remains the sole property of the author/artist.