



**KOL**

# Kol

Yeshiva College Literary Journal

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Fall 1992 Spring 1993

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New York, NY 10033

This marks the first time in three years that *Kol*, The Literary Journal of Yeshiva College, has been published. It is our sincerest hope and desire that it will re-inaugurate a long-standing tradition on the Yeshiva College Campus.

The Editorial Board of *Kol* would like to thank our Faculty Advisors, Dr. Joanne Jacobson and Dr. William Lee, for their help and guidance throughout the past year.

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\* Winner -- English Department Writing Contest

Some pieces may contain language or subject matter which some readers may find objectionable. The Editorial Board felt that since such material appears in the voices of personae and does not necessarily represent the views of the authors or the Board, the preservation of artistic intent and integrity warranted printing such material as originally written.

Coverphoto  
Joel Haber

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## The Albatross

Often, to pass the time on board, the crew will catch an albatross, one of those big birds which nonchalantly chaperone a ship across the bitter fathoms of the sea.

Tied to the deck, this sovereign of space, as if embarrassed by its clumsiness, pitiable lets its great white wings drag at its sides like a pair of unshipped oars.

How weak and awkward, even comical this traveller but lately so adroit -- one deckhand sticks a pipestem in its beak, another mocks the cripple that once flew!

The Poet is like this monarch of the clouds riding the storm above the marksman's range; exiled on the ground, hooted and jeered, he cannot walk because of his great wings.

-- Charles Baudelaire  
(1821-1867)

## THE SPEAR WARRIOR

*Daryl Jay Victor*

And Retu swore,  
Swore on his idol of the Spear god  
That he had seen the great white beast  
Flying overhead,  
With feathers of silver metal  
And a voice of an elephant.

They had laughed at his dream,  
Saying he was no seer,  
Until Matummake the Blind  
Said his vision was true.

Matummake said he knew it was a true vision  
Because he had once spoken to  
Ornakka, the high preistess,  
Now long dead,  
Who had said she was told of the white devils  
Which controlled the great bird,  
From her grandmother.

Retu now raised his spear  
And spoke endlessly about the great rewards  
The white beast would bring  
To those in the village who believed.

He spoke of the great gifts  
He had seen in his vision,  
And he imagined the great lands  
The white bird could bear them to.

And he prayed to the gods  
That his vision would be real in his lifetime  
So he could partake in its bounty.

And he was answered, swiftly.  
But the rewards for belief were death  
And enslavement.

Ashamed of his vision,  
He chucked his spear at the ghost bird,  
But it did not bleed nor cry in pain.  
It merely loomed above Retu  
Like a cliff of smoothest stone.

Then with a scream, the bird flew,  
Carrying Retu's children along  
To a place beyond his vision,  
Beyond his help.

Retu cried for three hundred days  
And three hundred nights  
Until his eyes were as useless  
As his vision, and the spear at his side.  
Then, he retired with Matummake the Seer  
To the cave of the Old and Blind,  
Where no man lives.



*Illustration: Daryl Jay Victor*

## **THROUGH THE WINDOW**

---

*Joel Haber*

On the tour-bus, Jewish boys  
stare out through the fragile windows  
at the Arab boys opposite.

In the Hebron of the Intifada,  
those Arab boys hurl stones at the bullet-proof windows  
which tint their enemies faces.

They ambushed my uncle in Gaza  
Last year. Shot him in the back of the head.  
He died. Doctors transplanted his heart  
To save the life of an Arab.

As our bus pulls away, I m surprised  
by a young Arab boy just outside my window  
who raises an open hand to me as a sign of peace.

I return his gesture, my heart full of hope,  
but I m afraid he couldn t see me  
through the shading of the plexiglass.

## **NADIA**

---

*Ari Blech*

Her name heard in the streets  
a whisper, a plea  
whistling through the trees,  
Nadiashda.

A breeze blows, its message felt.  
In response, impatient blades cut the air  
-- and yet it seems out of order  
the green, hunched, back bent  
preparing to be stirred

Ground swells. Footsteps:  
thud or pitter patter?

cracked earth, forced smile  
blood-tears at its sides

as it chants Nadiashda.

**DELIBERATIONS***Michael Z. Kellman*

Teetering on the brink  
 Peering over the edge  
 Frozen with doubt  
 Glued to the ledge.  
 Shall I dive, do I dare  
 Step over the line?  
 Plunge into the abyss  
 Leave life behind  
 Indecision grips me  
 holds me fast  
 Step away, she cries  
 leap now, leave your past  
 Wavering, tottering  
 I lose my resolve  
 my feet slip on gravel  
 my foothold dissolves  
 She has killed me, I cry  
 my fate has been spun  
 Indecision s decided me  
 My life is done.

**BLESSED BE MY CHILDREN***Wigdor Butler*

We stand enclosed in a scant circle like Shakespeare's witches,  
 as we strike mechanically, in silence, at the crippled pigeon.

Sharp pieces of gravel plummet one by one into the intruder,  
 piercing its body; blood stains its down.  
 The bird flutters spasmodically, desperately.

It stares at me with a black glassy eye.  
 I feel its fear, hear the screams trapped in its head.

Don't look at me! I don't see you. I can't stop.  
 They're making me! . . . More stones, More stones!

The bell rings.  
 We line up from shortest to tallest behind the black marble column.  
 As we march from the playground I impulsively pick a pretty white  
 lily for my teacher.

**S.O.S.***Josh Mayesh*

His suit is pressed, tie . . . straight.  
 He's cute. Just ask him.  
 He trades important stories of voiceless matters  
 and remembers none.  
 He hob Nobs with high society.  
 He's astute. Just ask him.  
 His shoes shine, car . . . sleek.  
 He walks with wondrous women's waists.  
 He's truth. Just ask him.

He squashes an Ant beneath his foot.  
 He didn't hear its roar.  
 He wouldn't hear its roar.

His stare is bold, smile . . . wry.  
 He's sure. Just ask him.  
 His path is strewn with faces that would like  
 to be met.  
 His name is known throughout the land.  
 He's demure. Just ask him.  
 His voice is smooth, manner . . . cool.  
 He drinks with devils and divine.  
 He's pure. Just ask him.

He lifts a broken shell from off the beach.  
 I hear the sea!  
 I hear the sea!  
 But what does he see?  
 What does he see?

**NIGHTMARE***Mordechai Torczyner*

A desperate heat  
 lashes my heart,  
 spilling scarlet stains  
 slicing cracked  
 parchment skin.  
 I cannot, will not,  
 cry out in the night,  
 it hurts too much  
 to scream.  
 Legs pumping, smashing bare feet  
 to moist earth,  
 chest heaving, glistening muscle,  
 pounding thrum-thrum-thrum, but  
 am I running away,  
 or running to,  
 arms spread wide to welcome  
 it?  
 I cannot know the obvious answer.  
 How can I be what  
 cannot be? All that  
 can be? Can I  
 be?  
 Questions, cumbersome ropes  
 twisting about my  
 slender neck, I  
 cannot  
 will  
 not  
 cry out in  
 the  
 night.

## THE DEPRESSING SEARCH FOR REALITY

*Judah Libin*

Dance and frolic in the misty valley known as  
Nirvana.  
Scream and run from the blue prophet called knowledge.  
Then lift the fuzzy hems of the strange garment.  
Call out to the powerful god who resides in a  
penthouse office somewhere in Seattle.  
Search the bottoms of your briefcases for lost bits  
of your life, somehow misplaced.  
Who will turn over the tape of time when this side is finished?  
Not me; I am preoccupied in writing self referential sentences.  
Let the deity in the clouds tend to his own music  
This is my turn to transcend.



Photo: Joel Haber

## THAT PERFECT NIGHT

*Daryl Jay Victor*

There he stood,  
Simply crying into his hands,  
Into that perfect night  
For writing poems about  
Love and the loss of innocence.

And the freezing wind howled  
Like a banshee  
Wailing for some lost lover,  
In unison to his racking sobs,  
As it embraced his form,  
Shuddering from pain and grief.

At a distance they stood,  
Holding back their comforting arms,  
Knowing that he must do this act  
Of anger and relief.

And so he cried  
Over the loss of father and grandfather  
Into that perfect night  
To become human, to become a man.



## MEMORIAL PARK

*Joel Haber*

The budding flowers and fragrant grass hid  
A plastic bag with the corpse of her kid.



*Photo: Joel Haber*

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from Good Readers and Good Writers

Literature is invention. Fiction is fiction. To call a story true is an insult to both art and truth. Every great writer is a great deceiver, but so is that arch-cheat Nature. Nature always deceives. From the simple deception of propagation to the prodigiously sophisticated illusion of protective colors in butterflies or birds, there is in Nature a marvelous system of spells and wiles. The writer of fiction only follows Nature's lead.

. . . There are three points of view from which a writer can be considered: he may be considered as a storyteller, as a teacher, and as an enchanter. A major writer combines these three -- storyteller, teacher, enchanter -- but it is the enchanter in him that predominates and makes him a major writer.

-- Vladimir Nabokov  
(1899-1977)

## SMILING JOHN

Howard Katz

The lawns were wet from yesterday's soaking and my feet were already shriveled from the dew and stagnant water seeping through my tennis shoes. I don't understand how the sun could have shined so brightly that I had to squint even while I wore sun glasses, and still I had to wear a flannel shirt buttoned to the neck; I used to keep my collar propped up for extra warmth. At this time last month I unsnaked garden hoses, naked except for a pair of old cut-offs and my shoes. Within an hour, children from the building would run out and play in the sprinklers screaming and laughing and sometimes they were crying although I couldn't tell what from. This month they never ventured outside even though the sun dared them to. They knew it lied to them, kids know, and it would take more than a brightly painted sun to fool them.

I never took notice of this myself; I, the groundskeeper, who spent most of my time outdoors. I kept watering the flowers that refused to grow and grass that grew in fear of some demon below it. I never really noticed how fast the grass sprouted because the cutters came every Monday to cut it down, but I heard them complaining to each other that the lawn had become completely wild. On my third week of work one of them approached me, cute thing, and she asked me why I had to water so much. The grass doesn't need it. She didn't say this directly but used cunning. She joked, Are you drowning the evil grass? This was my summer job I answered back. Whether the damned grass needed water or not I was paid from 6:30 till 3:30 every day, forty hours a week, to soak the lawns and pick up trash. Besides, the grass was probably seaweed -- reroute the Atlantic onto the fields, and still, the grass would thrive. Still, I never noticed summer's disappearance.

I wasn't in a position to. My job depended on the killing heat of the sun to insure my position as a necessary part of the maintenance team of my apartment complex. Not much of a team really. It's me and Raoul; he's Argentinean. The man patrols behind a vacuum cleaner all day, but he's talented; he feigns hard labor perfectly.

I took my first couple of days instruction from him. He said to make sure I was always under the boss' nose and I would have an easy time. So long as he knew where you were he didn't bother you. To be frank, my job wasn't the type to allow me to be on top of things at all times. I was skeptical on how it would be possible to look busy all the time while I watered lawns. Raoul insisted that I should never become invisible, ever. Don't dive into the bushes and cop a few winks he advised me. I ignored him outright and did just that. For almost half the day I disappeared, and pursued my dearest interest. At midday I reappeared and rotated the sprinklers.

I finished and began walking off to take lunch when Mr. Solomon the superintendent, my boss, came after me. Where was I slacking off? Where was I all day? Why wasn't I working? I pointed to the lawns and demonstrated how well soaked they were by pressing my foot into the ground and letting a small puddle form in the depression. He accused me of slacking and began on a tirade. I don't know how he did it but he convinced me that I was doing a terrible job. I feared he might fire me. I was

infuriated, I was doing an amazing job. The lawns looked beautiful; half were soaked, drinking the water of life, and the other half was well on its way. I went to college; I know how to water lawns. I watched Mr. Solomon reenter the apartment complex and cursed him. After lunch I stood on the fields, miserable, and watched the children play in the sprinklers all day.

The following day I complained to Raoul and he told me to take it easy. Just water the lawns, and stay in sight. I resigned myself to do this, and stood on the main lawn the entire day in full view of Mr. Solomon's office. I did nothing the whole day except rotate the sprinklers round once, and watch them. I kept waiting for Mr. Solomon to come out and berate me again but he never came. The following day was the same. And so was the next. I realized I would be left alone to water the hedges in peace so long as I remained in full view.

When Mr. Solomon didn't appear, I relaxed; maybe one day soon I could start catching naps in the hedges again. But just as I was letting the water run onto the ground and daydreaming about long afternoon dozes Mr. Solomon snuck up behind me, quiet as a terrorist, and spat a tirade into my ear. The kids were quick to surround me, gleeful at my misfortune. Why aren't you doing your job? Do you think I pay you to slack off? I thought, you Bastard! I've been standing in front of your window all day! I figured the man is crazy, evil. I wanted to ignore him but the bastard was just the type to fire me. Even worse, the children were already coming up with sing-song rhymes to celebrate my humiliation. They all shared the same look of cruel contempt reserved for other children whom they decided, using some harsh Darwinian criterion, unfit to join their games. Mr. Solomon walked off, and the children, finally bored with me, returned to the sprinklers to play.

That's how my first month went. My friends, the fools, envied me. I played along -- oh, I enjoy, I enjoy the fantastic life, but secretly I hated my fate. I was haunted by anxieties, vague yet fierce.

The next month, this month, July, I came up with a plan. Break the sprinklers, then fix them. I spent hours on my knees in the mud tinkering with metal valves and hoses. I created a precise and elaborate system where the streams would overlap at just the perfect amounts. On the third day I felt comfortable and pleased with myself -- the sprinkler system of Southgate apartments had been transformed into a work of art; DaVinci, Rembrandt, could have done no better. Mr. Solomon appeared behind me yelling, anyway. I smiled like a hyena and said, I'm glad to be back, and thought, I'm going to murder you. My eyes burned. I must have frightened him because he grew angrier and angrier and finally stormed off. I can be really expressive with my face sometimes.

Mr. Solomon didn't bother me again for quite a while. I did my job. I wasn't worried; it was my second month here and I felt secure that I could banish Mr. Solomon again, if need be. But something kept bothering me. Then I realized that the sprinklers were missing the children. No matter how much I wandered around and occupied myself with arcs and water pressure I couldn't get them out of my mind. It was pretty cold outside and the sprinklers were liable to be as enjoyable as electrocuting yourself. Still, I knew they would come soon and everything would be normal again. But we had been

hit with an early fall; the heat never came and neither did the children. Soon I forgot about the heat and began to wonder why was I watering the grass if there were no children. They were as important as anything else. If the children didn't need the sprinklers then neither did the grass. The thought hit me all at once early in the morning when a few people had gone to work. I stopped hauling out the hose and stared at a puddle in the grass and just wondered.

Suddenly as if in response to my thoughts, the puddle beneath me brightened and diffused itself into a rainbow and then seemed to collect itself again into a bright white flash of light. It hit me full in the face dizzying me from the rush of heat.

Heat! I looked up ready to blind myself with an authentic summer sun -- ready to disprove the necessity for children. A huge metallic cylinder floated lazily a 100 feet up above me. A beer can. A hot air balloon in the shape of a beer can. I couldn't make out the label because it greedily concentrated all the sun had to offer turning it into a huge reflector -- shooting its light back in every direction. I looked around, and the entire field was dappled by bright cylinders of light that shoot off like flash bulbs every time they hit a puddle. There were puddles everywhere, my puddles, and the puddles engendered many flashes -- I could feel the strength of the heated air as the balloon floated over my lawns. I hollered at the balloon with all my body. I wanted to salute it. I wanted to prostrate myself to the damn thing. The balloon and I were co-conspirators; we would bring summer back despite its treachery. I waved my hat frantically over my head and howled. If that thing were a moon, I would have been its wolf.

I waved powerfully, exulting, until the balloon passed over my building and out of sight. The bright cylinders of light persisted for a few moments more; then we were abruptly cut off as they too fell behind the building. Cold air streams sinewed in around me; they seemed angry at their former banishment. I felt them through my shirt, through my skin, and felt them lodge in my chest. My body registered the shock of betrayal before my brain had had a chance. I jammed my hat on with the peak on low; only the ground was visible. I dropped the sprinkler to run back to the valve and twisted it with violence. I circled the building hoping to catch a glimpse of the balloon; would I manage to push out the cold? But the balloon had disappeared.

I started jogging briskly to the other side of the building when I caught someone waving at me out of the corner of my eye. He was on the ground floor and sitting behind some shrubbery that lined his patio. He kept waving urgently. I came over to him, and as I came through the shrubs I saw a man in a wheelchair plastered with fluorescent purple decals declaiming various surfer mottoes. He asked me if it would be a problem to take out his trash. I quickly said no it wouldn't. The cripple looked tired out. He hadn't shaved in three days at least. His pony tail hung half out of its elastic. He wore a stained undershirt and tattoos snarled at me from under the edge of his sleeves. I suspected he didn't smell much different from the trash. I asked him if he saw the balloon overhead. Must have missed it, he said. He didn't look too concerned.

I went over to the dumpster and threw out his trash and then started trekking back to the main lawn. Again he beckoned me over. I went to him, and he asked me to help push him over the elevated threshold to his apartment. I did so and planned to leave when he commented on my blue lips. Would I like something to warm myself? He

wheeled over to his kitchen and came out with two glasses and a bottle of Canadian whiskey in his lap.

Meanwhile I had seated myself in the small living room, and felt my tools, my wrench and my Swiss Army knife, rubbing up against my thigh. I pulled them out and placed them on the table. The carpet had tire marks all over it. Understandable I suppose, but there was a triangular impression right in the center of the floor. I took

a closer look and recognized the distinct markings of an iron. Directly above it hung an immobile ceiling fan covered with blackened balls of dust. The entire ceiling had blackened dust on the stucco. He must smoke a few packs a day. He put the glasses and the bottle on the table. He casually remarked that his name was John. Sorry there's no mixer. ran out during the night. I had coffee in mind when he offered me a drink. I asked if it was a bit early in the day for this. He assured me that it was still late night for him. He would be going to bed soon. These were night caps so to speak. I told him to make me a small one, and I watched him pour me three fingers into a water glass. Then he leaned back into his chair and toasted to my warming up. I drank quickly -- something about him made me want to drink quickly and move out. I felt a flush rising in my face as I put down my glass. John gave me a tired smile and nodded.

Clearly you're a man who enjoys to fuck. Don't look surprised or offended now. I don't have the strength this late in the evening to

argue, and it's not my main point anyway. Just know that there are no secrets in apartment buildings, every little detail magnifies to obscene proportions, you especially, waving your hoses all day in front of everyone. So you see, I really know quite a bit about you; your sitting here confirms my beliefs. I know that I want to tell you about last night, brother, about myself, because as of now there's no one else left here.

Despite my obvious condition as a man unable to perform his most basic function the ladies still find me very attractive. It's always been that way and a little thing like a wheelchair won't ever change that fact. So last night when my girls Corine and J.J.

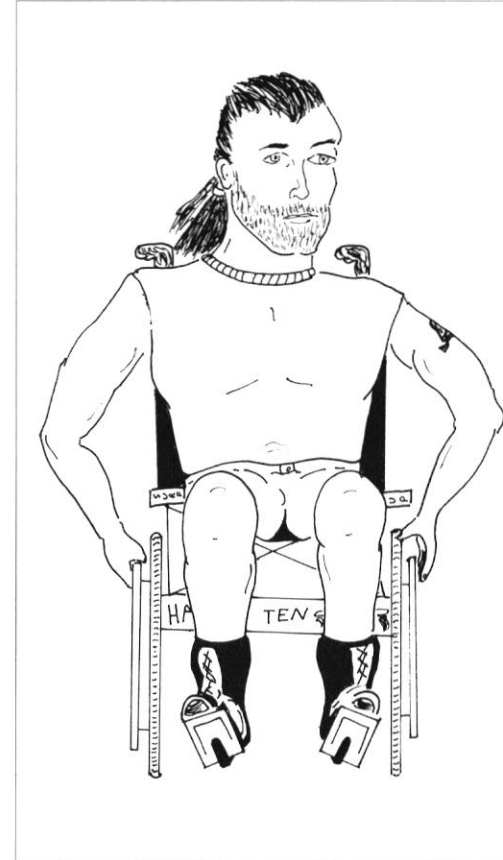


Illustration: Daniel Sentell

stopped over with a bottle of homemade Italian wine it looked as if it were going to be another typical night. Have you ever seen J.J.? Legs that start and never end I swear. Corine s a sweetheart -- shits chocolate and cums honey; don t let her expression fool you.

We had a few glasses together and as usual they started acting a little wet in the attic. They started getting all affectionate and kissing me, saying how cute I was. Always a trip. Then the glass door slides open, the one you pushed me through, brother, and Mike struts on in.

Mike s a man heading South -- or so he would like you to believe. The truth is, he s never been South nor does he have any idea of what the South is like. I can tell you, brother, there are events in life where every detail will be as clear fifty years from now as they are today. When the Bulls hauled me into the pen time slowed enough so that I could take a sketch pad and draw every hard line my eye came to contact with. I ll never forget anything, nothing. When I ask Mike a simple question of what type of cell he was in I expect a definite answer. No, he s never been South. Don t let his act fool you. He d never last more than a couple of days. He wouldn t even make a good wife; too thick necked and stupid. There s no place for him down South, except maybe down under it.

I knew what he wanted as soon as he came in. Maybe he wanted to prove he couldn t make it down South. Everything you wanted to know about him could be read at a glance. That s why J.J. and Corine wanted to have nothing to do with him. A man that easy to know isn t worth knowing -- speaking both in the practical and biblical senses if you know what I m driving at brother. I see you do.

However, Mike is a man who has helped me out when there was no one else, and as you can see by my situation I am a man whose needs are plentiful, and I appreciate what Mike has done for me. When he came in, I smiled, and told him to make himself comfortable. Then like an ass I gave him a drink, just like I offered you, and told him to have a few. Now I don t mind drinking, as you can see, but I forgot that Mike is one quarter Indian. In fact, you can t really see any Red blood in him at all -- except when he drinks. Seems he inherited his grandfather s intolerance for good rye.

You can see where the evening s heading -- two chicks hitting on a cripple while the Indians are getting ready to go on a raiding party. Still, when the whole thing did blow up the scene was so pathetic that i have to laugh.

I had forgotten about Mike, quite naturally, as Corine and J.J. were really occupying all my concentration. It s amazing what being crippled can do for a woman s inhibition or the erasure thereof. Maybe deep down their just afraid of getting knocked up or some other such inconvenience. No such threat from me, and before I can say Let s wheel into my room, they ve already gotten themselves into all these outrageous positions on my chair. Like I ve said before brother, the state you see me in is a mere technicality, I ll always be a man appealing directly to the hidden part of a woman.

I m sitting there with my hands full when I hear this loud thumping noise across from me. I look up, and there s Mike in his glory stomping the floor. That didn t bother me too much as we re on the ground floor, but when he looked up I knew I was in for a rough time of it. I saw that he really had no idea who he was, and that Indian blood

in him was trying to tell him. He kept saying, I have to hurt myself. I have to hurt myself, over and over again. Then he started to hit himself over the head with beer bottles.

Of course, the women were completely out of it. Mike was doing his best to make sure everyone was having a real pleasant evening. At first I let him run his course. I figured it would be the best thing to do under the circumstances, but instead of cooling down he got hotter. He took a cigarette, put it out on his forehead, began howling and running around the room. J.J. tore into the bedroom and Corine, well, I haven t seen her yet. I tried calming him, shouted at him. He looked at me and I don t know what he saw -- wasn t me, that s sure. He attacked with such a scream I was sure that bastard Solomon would hear from the boiler room he hides in all the time.

I just remember being kicked on the floor and Mike yelling some back-assed Indian gibberish. He kept kicking and yelling; limbs were flying everywhere. Then he just spun around and ran out. Me and J.J. sat and listened to the Bull s sirens coming closer. Seems our neighbor alerted an entire division because two minutes later we were overrun by them. Of course they asked me the basic questions -- the first one being who was my assailant. Didn t say a word. No, I m not going to make the Bull s life any easier. I m never going to send a brother down South. They put me in an ambulance, patched me up, and that was the end of it.

J.J. stayed with me the entire time. One minute she s wetting her pants like a three year old and the next she s my mother stroking my hair telling me it s alright, it s alright. I should have sent her home right there. Instead I let her keep stroking me and then she started in on me about love. Did I love her? Now brother, you can suck, fuck, and good luck but don t talk to me about love; I told her so much. Well, she saw herself to the door in a hurry. I thought, finally, it has come to an end.

The door didn t have time to stop rattling before someone s knocking and hollering my name. I could tell by the voice and accent that it was that nig-nog Solomon. I open the door: what s going on? he screamed. Always bringing in trouble. Always having parties. Always making noise.

Brother, I know my rights, lord knows I ve had them read to me enough times, and I know that nig-nog had no right to talk to me the way he did. I just stared at him all cool and gave him one of those looks. Do you know. . . No, I can tell by your face you know what I m talking about.

He went on his way without much more trouble. That s how you have to do deal with the man -- do nothing and he can do nothing to you. Besides, ho knows that the entire building knows his business in the boiler room. We have a sort of a mutual agreement.

You would think, that s it then, no more. Am I right brother? Seems as though they planned the perfect end though, right when I had no more strength anywhere in what s left of my body. Two faces show up at the patio door, the one you helped me through, and I recognized them -- J.J. and Corine s little girls. I told them to come in; they slid the door open and started yelling I had a ripped spinal cord. John has a ripped spinal cord! Nah nah n nah nah! John has a ripped spinal cord! I swear it hurt more than the accident itself. Everything I thought I had built up around me lay at those kids feet. Look around brother. Look at the shit. I carry it around in bags. This is what it s all about.

I m just a cripple -- an insect to be tortured by children. Like I was a goddamn spider they caught or something. They plucked off my legs. They plucked off my biggest leg of all. Now I m just what you see. A drunk in a wheelchair ready to pass out, or on if the case may be.

Up until a point I used to have an incredible daydream, last month really, it included yourself brother. I was one of your plants out in the flower beds -- a special breed -- the Smiling John -- every day you would water me, feed me, and then on day near the end of the season I would be ready to harvest. Only instead of you pulling me up I would pull myself out and walk from the ground a free man. Brother, this year I stopped seeing myself as the seed and recognized the weed that I am. There s only one way I m leaving the earth a free man now.

You look a bit surprised; maybe you haven t been shown your job description yet -- although I m surprised you haven t figured it out by now. I m sure that when you spot a weed you don t hesitate to rip it out. If you haven t seen one today then either you re turning a blind eye or else you don t have one to turn. What do you think -- all you had to do was stand outside all day and act like a life-guard filling a pool, and watch kids play? The kids aren t kids anymore. I ve been down South too. They aren t coming outside anymore. Did you notice that? Because they can t, and neither can you, brother, now that you see where your real job has to be done, do it. Look outside, it s raining, your job is finished there. Take the razor in the bathroom, and we ll make it look like a suicide together. If you walk you ve put the blade in yourself regardless. Don t say anything just yet, think. Have another drink if you like.

I sat there in a state of panic, and for a moment I couldn t decide if it was from this suicidal womanizer across from me, or that I had forgotten to shut off the sprinklers, and Mr. Solomon was sure to have my head. I quickly tried to shrug off the sprinkler dilemma, ashamed of my pettiness. Still, I felt paralyzed with the knowledge that they were spraying their water uselessly.

I began to shift in my seat getting ready to say something, hoping that these movements would dislodge my tongue. John stared at me with a growing intensity, his eyes becoming clearer and sharper until it seemed all traces of the whiskey had left him. He kept growing livelier right in front of me, a medieval artist would have painted his portrait with a gold halo around him, and yet he wanted me to slice him down. It was too much and I began to say so when an urgent tapping at the patio door interrupted my first word.

John let out a short bark to whoever it was to go away. There was another series of hurried knocks at the door -- they sounded juvenile -- and I had a terrible premonition as to whose they were. The door slid open jerkily and two little wet heads peaked in around the curtain. Instantly I knew they were J.J. and Corine s little girls. They began chanting: You have a ripped spine. You have a ripped spine. I started towards them and they let out little shrieks and ran off. I didn t dare look at John straight in the eyes; there was no telling what horror I would have seen on his face. Maybe enough pain to get me to kill him. Instead, I gave a quick nod in his general direction and chased after the little girls.

Cold air and water slapped my face, waking me up in a sense, I hadn t noticed

how numb I had become. I felt freed and instantly hated myself for running out of there; I knew this pursuit was just a pretext. I spotted the girls rounding the side of the building and began running after them. I had no idea what I would do to them if I caught them. Maybe all I wanted to do was to scare them into not bothering John anymore. I heard them shrieking and figured either they were genuinely scared of me or they had run into one of my sprinklers. Not that it would make much difference now -- the rain was coming down pretty hard.

I turned the corner and saw the object of their shrieks. Mr. Solomon was yelling at them as they ran farther away from the building. It seemed they had trampled a couple of flower arrangements. I was about to ask him to help me catch the kids when I realized why he was out here in the first place. He turned and began to twist shut the water valve with a force I knew was meant for my neck. I began to back away slowly, carefully, but not soon enough as he spotted me just as I was about to disappear around the corner, looking the guiltiest, and I knew I had caught him full in the middle of a vicious daydream.

While staring at me his face contorted several times and the rain water running off it looked red. Before he could start yelling I blurted out that John was trying to kill himself. It didn t look like he heard; his visage became fiercer and darker as the rain fell harder. I repeated my statement again and waited. Mr. Solomon turned around sharply and began striding off along to another part of the building. I followed behind him, unable to do much else knowing that I was at his will. He stopped at another water valve and began twisting it shut. I almost exploded from the nervous energy inside me, and I realized that part of it was because I could no longer picture myself twisting those shut off valves; I hadn t the power to shut anything anymore. I told him that I could do it, and he kept on ignoring me. Then I told him that I had to go, and he turned around smiling at me savagely. I reached into my pockets for the wrench necessary to close the valve properly, and discovered that I had lost it. No, I remembered that I had placed it and my Swiss Army knife on John s kitchen table. Without saying a word I walked away from Mr. Solomon to John s apartment now completely unsure of my next move.

Halfway over there I stopped myself because I couldn t think anymore. I needed to speak to someone who could maybe help me piece together this pathetic mess. I wanted to speak to someone who was familiar with the apartment and knew how it worked. I decided to track down Raoul and consult him: if anyone, he would at least have some vague notions. I found him on the third floor methodically dusting fire hose boxes that were already spotless. Without hesitation I began to tell him the story quickly. For ten minutes I rambled; many of the connections seemed confused and grotesque characters paraded in and out of my mind with little or no stage direction. He listened to me calmly from behind his vacuum cleaner, nodding every so often. I finished my piece by asking him what to do about my job and John. He told me to take it easy.

With that last word from Raoul I went with little choice back to John. I went outside to his patio door, knocked and almost walked away as soon as I rapped on the glass door. I heard some movement inside, and decided to keep waiting. The drapes were drawn and no matter how much I squinted they wouldn t let me see in. I stood there for two or three minutes before I slid the patio door open, letting the escaping hot air send confused shivers through my body, and walked in.

John lay on the floor, right in the center, covered with blood from a cut, cuts, from I couldn't tell -- there was blood, and a woman, slumped over him covered in more blood. I looked at the table where my knife and wrench should have been and I only spotted the wrench. I felt something rising in me. I heard sirens outside growing louder. I heard John's voice in my head; I looked at his mouth but it wasn't moving at all. I scanned for the knife but couldn't spot it. I began to lift the woman's body, and she let out a scream, and I screamed too, much louder.

She stared at me, crazy eyed, not with a questioning look, but with a savage declaration that I recognized with a shock that made me freeze. Her gaze didn't falter during the rest of the events that followed: There was hard knocking at the door. Paramedics! I heard men shout. The door flew open and black coated men rushed in pushing me from side to side until I was held still by one of them. They took the woman, her eyes still wide on me, to another corner of the room; the rest of them tended to John. They began applying compresses, checked his signs, and stuck a needle into him. Nothing happened for seconds, and then his eyes flung open wide and locked onto me like he had been staring at me all this time.

The whole room followed John's gaze to where I stood blinking furiously back at him. He cleared his throat, and it sounded like he was gargling blood. He stopped trying to speak, collected himself and with all his strength stuck his hands out to me. He held a blade, my Swiss Army knife, in his left hand, and then pointed it to himself. Then he died.

The police came in shortly after. They and the attending paramedics paraded into the bathroom for a conference. After about a minute a pair of officers emerged and strode directly over to me and one put a pair of handcuffs on my wrists. Did I have a statement? I looked at my fragmented reflection on the cuffs and said nothing. I hadn't time to figure out what had happened to me but one fact was as plain as the stares trained on me -- I was heading South.

## A RATHER FISHY STORY--KOSHER STYLE

*Ari Blech*

I hate Gefilte fish. No, I mean it, I really do. I'd rather eat spinach, veal, almost anything - including the tuna casserole my sister made which even Mamma wouldn't eat to save her feelings, and which, by the way, the dog ate, and he don't look too good - rather than eat Gefilte fish. As you can imagine, this would mean a pretty strong dislike to Gefilte fish. Snails, lobster, crab, now that's good food. Of course, I wouldn't know, being Jewish and all, but I've heard that those foods taste real good and looks, why I drool just at the sight, specially if they're fresh. But fish -- the very thought upsets my already upset stomach (I snuck a piece of that casserole, and in all fairness I have to side with the dog).

Now, like all boys, when winter comes, mittens on, I sneak out to play. Like all boys I have snowball fights and like most boys, (more than once) I've tasted a little snow. Now that's food. Then I come home and -- when my little sister rats on me -- I get yelled at. And what do they offer me, instead? Gefilte fish. Go figure. For twelve years I've been trying to understand my parents and I'm still stumped. I mean, Gefilte fish! Now, I'm no angel, but what, I ask you, did I do to deserve gefilte fish? You'd think I was a terrorist or somethin, or at the least a bandit like Jesse James or Billy the Kid, not a pudgy, squat 13-year-old with mousy brown hair and braces. Now for those of you who're sharp you might've noticed that I'm 13 and before I said I'd been tryin' to figger out my parents for 12 years. Well, the truth is the first year was peachy. My parents and I got along great. Any time I cried they were there. The formula got a little boring, but at least it was tasty. Then they started in with solid food -- by the end of the year, I swear it, they were force-feeding me gefilte fish. I have real painful memories of their high-chair hijinks and to this day wake up in a cold sweat just thinking about it. Brrr. Gefilte fish, what could I do? Lucky I was clever. I'd pretend to drop the fork I was holdin' by accident or, when Mama fed me, I'd knock the fork out of her hand. I did everything -- I made faces, funny noises, I even threatened (by sign language, of course) not to talk for another year (which in those days was a threat cause all parents were trying to show off how smart their babies were) -- but it was useless.

So now I no longer even bother to fight it. I sit back and swallow my misery, delivered in jelly-filled jars three times a day. And I realize that my parents are as cold-blooded as the fish they feed me.

## LESSONS FROM THE ASHES

David E. Rozenon

That earth is drenched with the blood of six million souls, that land filled with villains, with inhumane culprits. Such was the reaction of virtually everyone within the Jewish community with whom I had discussed my plans of spending the summer in Berlin. I would never set foot on that soil, never purchase a product from them. You don't understand the implication of your action.

The comments would not end; the criticism grew more and more bitter. The mental baggage with which I set sail far outweighed the two suitcases which accompanied me. The guilt invoked by the authors of these conversations almost served to prevent me from boarding the train at London's Victoria Station which would ultimately bring me to Berlin.

Weeks prior I had tried to psychologically prepare myself. Yet all I could think of were the human fumes which escaped from the chimneys of Auschwitz, knowing that every time I would glance atop a German roof that is exactly what my mind's eye would see. I attempted enacting conversations which would not begin with, "What did your father do during the war ... how many lives did he ruin ... how many souls did he kill?" Trying desperately to imagine myself on the busy streets of Berlin, all I could see were the SS pointing a gun at a little child who had his arms raised pointedly toward the heavens. Don't shoot. I cried. He was already dead. Every street sign was a fascist slogan; every scream announced a Jewish death. I was toying with flames that would set me afire, metamorphosing me not into a victim, but a culprit, my hands stained with blood; my body clothed in an unbreakable bondage. I was guilty and knew my accuser. Six million pure souls stared at me with their bony hands pointing at my naked flesh. A familiar face gazed at me with utter incomprehension. Every scene, every image, every sentence I ever read describing German bestial inhumanity now ran uncontrollably through my mind. The angels of death pointing to the gas chambers; the abuse, the rape, the torture...naked bodies piled on top of each other, limbs scattered as though parts of useless toys. What was I doing? Where was I going? The memories. The pain. The gas chambers releasing vapors of venom. The bodies. The souls. They were right, how could I forsake the others? Unprepared, I boarded the train. I was heading toward the devil's inner sanctum.

\* \* \*

1942 - His gaze was mesmerizing. He lay there. Was he dead? His body seemed so shrivelled, every bone protruding from his naked flesh. Yet his eyes. His clear blue eyes stared ahead unblinkingly.

The rows of coarse wood lined the walls of the huge, inescapable shack. One long plank on top of another. The human beds lay without stirring. There were perhaps two hundred of them. Maybe more. It was midnight. The barking of the German shepherds could be heard all night. The dogs would not stop screaming. The molding wood had long ago stopped creaking under these weightless bodies. The ghosts had long ceased moving. The fields were flowerless; only the gray puddles lay as a testament to the bones of the burned human flesh. At times orders would be heard, shots fired. Soon, new lines for selection would be formed. The fires were ready. The doors would shut. Humanity was dying.

It was almost fifty years later as I turned the corner on Kurfurstendam. The new Jewish Community Center was rebuilt from the ashes of the glorious synagogue which had once stood there. As I entered the library, three thick volumes attracted my attention. Each one was simply entitled *Yizkor - The Memory*. My hands swept across the pages of these voluminous books. Name after name. Soul after soul. Body after body. Millions gone, their

memories only recalled on these uncountable pages.

And he stared. He stared so intently, his eyes expressing everything that he himself could not. The scars on his body told stories no words would ever be able to describe. The eyes suddenly met mine, beckoning for me to come closer. I shook my head wildly, and heard a foreign voice escape from within me. We live in different times, I pleaded. We must move on. We can no longer hide behind the shadows of the Holocaust. Europe is reuniting. The German economy is intimidating the world. We must learn to live with them. We must.

Come closer, the almost inaudible voice of death muttered to me. Do you see what they have done to our people? Do you know how many of us march daily to our deaths? How could you come back here? How could you?

But we must move on. We cannot live in history, I nervously replied. The economy of Israel depends on Germany. We cannot isolate ourselves.

His eyes grew moist. The look of death had suddenly disappeared. Israel, the man said, almost unbelievably. You mean there is a state?

From the ashes of the Holocaust the state was born, I hurriedly answered.

And now you return to Germany? He asked me angrily.

I closed the book, attempting to shut him out of my mind. Yet he would not leave. He kept on talking. I walked silently under the oak trees along the Unter Den Linden. As I approached the Brandenburg Gate, I heard the voices of thousands of Nazi soldiers. Death to the Jews, and Tomorrow the World, they joyously sang. Pictures of Hitler were everywhere. There were thousands of them. Perhaps millions. I had no escape. They were heading right toward me. I tried to move, and could not. Their guns were drawn. The singing grew louder and louder, until it totally enveloped me. They were everywhere. yet their faces were those of angels. Suddenly, I was no longer afraid. They probably just need a cause, I thought to myself. They were all just a few feet away. And then it happened. Their faces suddenly changed into those of demons, their rifles drawn. They were ready to fire. There was no escape. Then I saw his face. He looked exactly like the pictures I had seen of him thousands of times. Without thinking, I approached him.

Why have you done this to us? I asked him. What can possibly justify shattering millions of lives?

His silence struck me. I do not worry about lives, he quickly answered. I worry about the Fatherland.

But Germany used to be identified with the foremost philosophers, educators, scholars. People the world over respected the Germans for their genius. Post-war Germany is now eternally to be identified with death, destruction, and the holocaust. You have destroyed every positive image of your Fatherland.

His sinister smile worried me. His voice was filled with confidence as he replied. These fifty years have meant nothing. As the world concentrated on Communism, European political unification, and nuclear disarmament, we rebuilt the world superpower. His infamous black moustache moistened, as raising his voice he screamed, We will show the world who really is the eternal, universal leader. As we regain what is rightfully ours, the world will watch with amazement. Our constituencies will be far greater, our armies far stronger, our technology far more advanced. If we cannot take the world through weapons, we will capture it with the strength of the German mark.

I would not draw back. Silently we stared at each other. There were so many questions I wanted to pose to this embodiment of evil. Yet none came forth. His malignant eye kept staring at my Jew-covered head. He whispered something to the soldier at his side.

The Fuhrer wants to know how you survived, came the murderer's question.

I never forget who I am, came my reply. Suddenly, I heard a murmur of voices behind me. They were all chanting something which I could not understand. The Nazi

emperor turned white. His words dripped like venom, but none of the soldiers could hear him. He wiped the sweat off his face over and over with the red handkerchief one of the soldiers had given him. And his voice produced no sound. No one heard him.

The voices behind me grew louder. I wasn't afraid. The Nazi soldiers began retreating, their banners no longer in the air. The man I took for dead when I closed that Yizkor book now stood beside me. His bony fingers suddenly shoved me forward. Show those bastards we are still alive, he screamed at me. Tell them that they could not kill us...Do not run from them...demonstrate the strength that we have as a nation. The sounds behind me grew even louder. I tried to pull back; to run from the crowds of the Nazi soldiers. The man I took for dead had a firm hold on me. Do it for all of us, he whispered in my ear. Never allow them to repeat their tragedies...teach them who we are, he screamed over and over.

Will that bring you back? I asked, my voice breaking.

No, but it will allow you to go forward, came his answer.

The Nazi voices grew silent. The sounds behind me were deafening. I turned around. The Reichstag was burning. Pandemonium was breaking loose, but the loudest sounds came from behind a door which I feared to open. The sounds were driving me mad. I turned the handle. Millions of naked Jews stood under the showers, soap and towel in hand. They all stood ready.

The dead man was awaiting me.

I screamed, yet like in a bad nightmare, no sound escaped my lips. I pointed over and over at the gas chambers. Finally, with all my energy I yelled. Get out of there. They are going to kill you.

They do not hear you, the old man told me.

But how, how do I tell them that they are about to die? I pleaded.

You should have spoken to them long ago.

I watched desperately as he joined the others in the showers. The door was shut. No longer were the voices screaming.

I found myself in front of the Reichstag. Several thousand people stood with me, candles burning. Millions of young Germans have never seen a Jew, the familiar voice repeated. We must teach them who we are...not allowing anyone to misrepresent us.

I looked up into the withered face of the man who had become a part of me.

In the background, I could hear the faint sounds of the neo-Nazi gangs, with their fascist slogans. Dressed in SS uniforms, they handed out pamphlets, calling for the death of the Jew.

I joined the thousands screaming.

## WAITING FOR THE BIG ONE

*Ari Rosenstein*

The two men stood on the dock overlooking the quickly darkening lake. They both wore old blue dungarees and held a pail of ice by their sides. One grasped two fishing rods in his other hand. An old fishing boat floated near the dock, just under them.

It's gettin' pretty dark, the man with the rods said.

Yep, the other answered.

You still think we should head out? the first one asked.

His friend turned to him and then back towards the lake. What do you think?

Both men looked upwards at the ominous clouds slowly covering the blue sky. Thick black shadows gathered at the far end of the lake and a distant thunder rolled over the outlying mountains.

I think we can manage a few quick bites. Rain's supposed to hold off for another couple hours, the man with the rods said.

A couple hours, huh? the second man asked skeptically.

Ain't never gonna get the big one just hangin' out all day. C'mon. The man with the rods put down the bucket and began to prepare the boat.

I don't know, man, his friend complained. It's starting to look pretty black out there. How 'bout we just hang out for a bit, to see what'll happen.

The midday sky had approached the darkness of dusk; the remaining gray clouds turned black as the men watched and more thunder rolled in the distance.

I just felt a drop, the second man said. I'm leaving. He turned to leave, and as he did, the storm began.



*Photo: Joell Haber*



## RUMINATIONS OF AN EX-BOYFRIEND OR: THE NIGHT GOD CALLED

*Anonymous*

So it's Thursday night and all of your friends have gone to see their girlfriends. But not you. You have had bad experiences with the opposite sex (truly opposite) and decide to "stay in" (as if that were some fate worse than hell). You don't want to brave the cold because, after all, it is January. You don't need the pretension, the caked faces, the fake smiles, and the sub-zero gusts on the tip of your numb nose. You want to simply cozy up on your cold tile floor, by the uncontrollable (because they're controlled by the university) heater. You have a desire to be smarter than your peers, so you've become a voracious reader. So you slip into some comfy PJ's and peruse your book collection. . . Hmm, Ezra Pound's Poetry from Prison--too esoteric; The World's Finest Literature--too eclectic; How about Webster's Thesaurus--too wordy!! What to do, What to do?! Nothing to read. You let out a feigned sigh of exasperation (it was too exaggerated to be real) and drop your head to the ground; as if you're the world's brightest reader and are disappointed because you have been jilted by the lack of worthy writings.

So you choose an alternate course--you write your English Lit term paper. You plop your posterior on your chair and commence the pondering. What to do, what to do?! Such brilliant talent just waiting to write, and a lack of worthy topics--as if you've been jilted. Jerked back into reality by the loud clanging of your phone (it can't be for me), you exclaim, "Thank the lord. . . divine intervention."

Hello?

Neil, hi, it's Rebecca.

The Rebecca that you went out (as opposed to "stay in") with? The one with the super-white teeth, and the big bright pupils (she'd always wanted to be a teacher). The one who you wanted more than anything in the world to KNOW, but yet respected her decision to wait. And then she discontinued your relationship after three months--right out of the deep blue.

. . . Yes, *that* Rebecca. How the hell are you Neil?

Uh. . . fine. What's up? Why do you sound so gloomy (definite portent).

Well, she said, I kinda need a shoulder to cry on.

(you think: that's not exactly where I had in mind). Well that's what I'm here for.

Neil, . . . oh Neil, I feel so ashamed.

Why--you answer, fearing you know all too well what she'll answer.

Oh, I don't know. I just feel it.

(well, I'm beginning to *feel* it myself Bitch, now you gonna fess up or what?) Would you like to talk about it?

Well, uh, well. . . Oh Neil I had SEX.

And mixed with the sounds of her tears dropping, is a thunderous "Thump," as your heart drops into your stomach.

What, you say, (genuine exasperation)--You had sex!?

Oh Neil. I barely knew the guy, and now he won't even talk to me.

You ask her to hold while you go to the sink to vomit--luckily, your heart is now in its proper place once again.

Listen Rebecca, you shout, clearly indicating your pissedness, I don't know why you called me but I, for one, don't want to hear your fucking bullshit. I'm not in the mood to depress myself. You know how much it would hurt me--Goodbye!!

You slam down the phone thinking, I guess I'm not the greatest ex-boyfriend that ever lived.

### End of Episode

So much for divine intervention. You sit down again in your chair and attempt to apply yourself to your Lit assignment. But, naturally, your mind is crazy glued to the Rebecca incident. You were polite and considerate and what did it get you? Well, you *did* learn a lot about self-love. And what did this new guy get--his name was Mike. He went out with her for one week and pilfered her carnal worth. Where, oh where, is Justice?

Now, the night is totally wasted. You can't think, can't function, and can barely hold your hand steady to light that damned cigarette. You decide to go to sleep. Actually, not a particularly difficult decision because you realize that when you sleep there will be no jilted lovers, no pilfered purities, and most of all No Mike. You remove your pajamas (depression always resulted in "sleep naked" night), and as you are about to close your eyes something hits you like two thousand pounds of rectangular cement blocks. Wait. Wait. Wait just one second. Sleep to avoid pain. You've heard that idea before. Wait. I know. It's from English Lit class. Yes, you vociferate most joyously, I've got my topic.

Now you leap out of bed, and excitedly run around your room until you stop to make sure your door is locked. After all, what would your friends think if they saw you dancing naked alone on a Thursday night? Anyway that's not important, because you've got an idea for your paper.

### End of Episode

Here's your idea, you're talking to yourself because you're really excited. I'll start with what happened tonight and tie it in with Shakespeare's sonnet about dreams. The teacher probably won't accept the long preface, but I'll try to convince her. After all, that's what the sonnet means to me and that's what the assignment is all about. That's all you say to yourself for the time being.

You reach for your anthology to find the appropriate sonnet and flip through the pages. Wait a minute. . . What's going on? You've read all of Shakespeare's sonnets and you haven't found what you were hoping to. This can't be happening. Was it all just a dream (the sonnet you were thinking of)? You start talking to yourself, this time out of a nervous panic. Where is that damned sonnet? I could have sworn that we read a sonnet that implied the safety and temporary comforts of dreams as opposed to the rude reality of consciousness.

Then in a flash you are inspired once again. This is your last hope. Maybe, just maybe, it is by one of the other *S*'s. You return to the monotonous turning of pages, but are rewarded almost instantly, as before your eyes appears Sidney's sonnet #39. You read the first two beautiful words. "Come Sleep." Oh Sidney, I love you. There is a god!!!

### End of Episode

# **How Do You Relinquish A Dream?**

*DorChelst*

How do you relinquish a dream? Multiple visions dance behind my eyes. My head swells. Let me do ALL. Then, reality balls up its fists and hits me squarely in the ego. I must relinquish. I have no other option.

My directions are infinite, while my time is finite. I mete out precious minutes plodding along each path, ever aware of my sluggish progress. At this pace, I will not reach any goal. I am spread too thin. I must concentrate my efforts.

But, how do I choose which goal to abandon when I cherish them all? Will I calmly unclench my fist and let one quietly slip away? No. I will fight bitterly as life strips me of my aspirations. I will fight like a baby in a candy store, grabbing and devouring everything in sight, clumsily eluding parents for as long as possible.

If they catch me, then they will see a furtive animal replace the clumsy child. They will try to reason with me. Give it up. After all, how many butterflies can you chase? Then, I will craftily hand over the bulk of a dream, while retaining its essence safely cached away. Later, when no one is looking, I will take it out and build it up once more.

How could I bear to part with an ambition? Upon seeing a fresh work of fiction, an innovative theorem, a revolutionary invention, I would inevitably think, it could have been mine. I would cry over spilt milk until the room stank.

Perhaps, as I inspect my ambitions, some will prove illusory. Maybe, I will recognize that a path leads nowhere. Why should I cry over spilt water, since it would only wash away my soul's turmoil and evaporate?

Unfortunately, all my aims seem palpable. Sometimes, I can almost taste them. Each vision hums a special song within me, together forming a sonorous dirge to lament the imminent approach of Reason.

I wish that I could steal Hermes' winged slippers and race down all my paths straight to their destinations. Instead, the swift tread of a criminal will have to suffice. Who knows? Perhaps, I shall elude Reason for a long time.

