

Distractions

it's something else

The In-Patient

Jamy looks up at the small window in the upper right corner of the room and guesses it must be dinner time soon. Did they forget about him? He hated summertime because it was hard to tell what time of the day it was. There really were only 4 times of the day: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and Lights Out. Meds were given about a half hour after breakfast and just before lights out. Some got meds every 4 hours. Jamy wondered what happened to them.

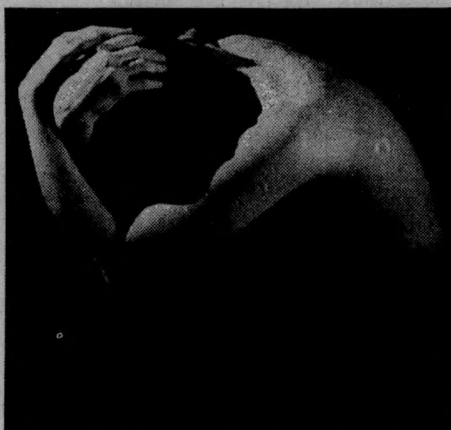
His stomach growled as the overcast sky shone through a 36 X 36cm window near the ceiling. Even when the sun shone, it never really fell on his floor; it slowly arced across the back wall. He finally got used to no longer having contact with the other patients. Actually, many of them were really crazy and he didn't care for them that much. It was being leashed to his steel bed with a wool blanket that he was still getting used to.

Jamy looks around the room, 5 x 7 meters with the bed in the middle, to facilitate restraining if necessary. There was a commode in the left corner away from the door. Where was his dinner? How long has it been since lunch? Has it only been a couple of hours? Jamy wished the sun was out, at least that way he could watch the square move on his wall.

He was glad that he no longer had visitors; he would hate to have them see him like this. Not that the dinners were much really, but he was hungry. He often thought of the free school lunches he got while his mom was on welfare. Many times he had complained that he had to ask for the permission slip in front of the whole class. The lunches really weren't very good either. That awful

macaroni wall-paper paste; at least it was always hot.

The dinner he might get tonight was rarely very warm, never hot. Kind of like the no fat, no taste microwave meals his ex-girlfriend used to take to work with her. Not only did they not taste good; they weren't filling either. Since the last riot, there has been very little protein in the food. Jamy guessed they figured that if the patients had that



PAT FITZPATRICK PHOTO

much spare energy they were getting too much food. Jamy thought about not eating it just to make a statement but it was a long cold night and breakfast was a very long way off.

FINALLY the keys rattle at the door. Jamy respectfully sits up behind his bed, and sits on his pillow, the wool blanket already folded and the foot of the bed. Cautiously the orderly walks in, wearing all white. There is some blood on his sleeve, not likely his, his hair is a little messed up. He leaves shortly after setting the tray on Jamy's bed.

Mmmmm, a few pasta noodles with powdered whitesauce (not even Alfredo) and some peas. Last night there was a piece of chicken in the noodles; no such luck tonight. In an effort to keep the patients' commode area clean; it was also their source for clean water; they had a toilet

brush and on weekends were allowed to use some cleaner to keep it from getting bad.

Soon the orderly would return to collect the tray and count the utensil - the SPORK. There was no need for a knife; the food rarely needed to be cut; it was so soft and mushy. As the sun falls behind the building, the overcast skies still deny him even the simplest pleasure of the sunset. While his tether would not allow him to get even near the window, he could look up at it at night.

He could remember being excited at the sunset, even though he could not see any reds, pinks, oranges or any fire in the sky, just the lilac and indigo sweeping through the last moments of day. It used to bring him home and put delight in the otherwise eventless day. But he could no longer remember why the

blue held such fascination for him. Perhaps if he ever got free from this place (was it really that bad?) he could find out what the blue was and maybe find happiness again. Why was he here here? He no longer knew. Why did he get shock therapy? Why did it end? Would he ever leave? When? Would he want to leave?

Jamy looks up to a break in the clouds; he sees the dark blue sky and a couple stars. Tears begin to roll down his cheeks. Emotions. Wow, imagine that. He could see, for only a moment, a face within those stars; a face with soft red hair; but it quickly faded as the clouds filled his window - and his mind; as the heavy sedation took hold. Sleep would be upon him now.

James Galton

BEAN PEACE

I DON'T KNOW WHY I LIKE COFFEE
IN A STYROFOAM CUP;
MAYBE I LIKE KILLING OFF
OZONE.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
DO YOU REALLY CARE ABOUT BUGS,
HERBS, AND HARDWOOD FROM
RAINFORESTS?
I DON'T CARE,
BUT I CARE ABOUT COFFEE —
HIMALAYAN'S THE BEST, AND
THIS LOUSY JEWELRY SHOP
WHERE I'M BOUGHT AND SOLD
LIKE A CLERK X

(WHEN DID THAT MALCOLM GUY
GET SHOT?)
FOR SIX BUCKS AN HOUR:
THEY'RE LUCKY I'M NOT A THIEF.
I COULD ROB THIS JOINT;
MY WIFE COULD USE A BIG
ROCK.
ANYWAY,
I DESERVE THIS COFFEE BREAK,
AND THE WAY I FIGURE IT,
OZONE CAN GO TO HELL.

DAN LUKIV

Elmer Fudd: On Self-Esteem

Elmer Fudd: "I may talk funny but that sets what I have to say apart. People remember what I have to say because they remember how it sounded. They may remember by making fun but it's still me that has their attention. Being inferior isn't being laughed at. It's being ignored."

trillian

Coming To Light:: Contemporary Translations of the Native Literature of North America
Edited by Brian Swann Vintage Books/Random House Inc.
Reviewer: Jethelo E. Cabilete

The cultural richness of Native North Americans has always been a fascinating subject. There has been a resurgence of interest in things "Native," especially in the realm of art, craftwork and literature. Pride in their heritage, customs and culture has been passed on from generation to generation: usually through the medium of oral tradition. Written accounts are just now accumulating to keep the particular cultural flavour of these histories in the genre of legends, myths and stories.

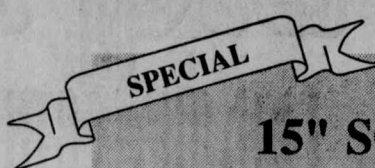
Brian Swann, a professor of English at the Cooper Union in New York and a scholar on Native North American cultures, has brought together a unique anthology of vibrant Native stories, poems and songs contributed by Innu, Aleut, Chinook, Salish, Lakota, Navajo and many others. This collection differs from some other Native North American literature in its adherence to the original oral tradition, as told to Swann. Although recounted in English, the tales in Coming To Light have kept the measured beat, style and manner of the original tales. With each selection Swann has included an introduction, history and explanation of each tribal heritage.

The tales themselves are a rich tapestry of individual tribal traditions sometimes reflect regional and geographical differences. They have been divided into the myths, legends and histories of a tribe as told to Swann by the particular talebearer of that region. We are introduced to the Ghost Dance of the Shoshone, the Great Trickster Raven, the Moon's relatives, great hunters and Native families. This is a wonderful collection of Native literature and is fine read for those who have a piqued interest in this genre.

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