

THE BEIGE ROOM



Time Needs,
Aging.

Before I Can
Die,

It Promises
Eternity



A heavy lift of smoke hovered over a mass of curly, brown hair. This mop was sweaty and stringy as it fell on each side of a sunken, sick face and rested lazily on his slouched shoulders. Deep set eyes, with dark, weary shadows beneath them, peered out over sharp cheek-bones which appeared as a mountain range over the bowl-like valleys of his cheeks. Bones on each side of his face tapered into a sharply protruding chin, whiskered lightly. From his strained neck to the soles of his feet, his structure was one of skin and bones. He was clad in a grey, rumpled shirt and faded, flared bluejeans and sandals.

Dennis Mitchell, a very, very tired boy, sat slouched in the darkest corner of a dimly-lighted room. There was nothing else in the beige-colored room . . . nothing, except a conscious crying for help. He sat along and sang alone:



"I went into battle,
Got shot in the head.
No one could save me,
For now I am dead".

Time and time again he hummed, whistled and sang this rhyme. At times, he would lift his head and blurt it out as a funky tune or skip over it as a jangle, but he always turned back to his mourning cry.

Minutes seemed like hours and hours like days for Dennis but finally the cast of a door opened and in the new source of light a diminutive man appeared.

"Come along, Dennis," squeaked the orderly, "It's time to go home. Is everything all right? How do you feel about speed, now?"

Dennis said nothing, but arose and proceeded into the bright, white corridor of the sanitarium. For ninety days, he had been in this white-wash, brain-wash institute. The thought sped through his mind, 'Was it long enough? Was it enough time?' He was thanking God for his freedom but yet begging Him for help to gain the freedom he so desperately needed. He was checked out and ushered into a limousine by his father's chauffeur.

Money, ha! He was worth millions! He easily could afford his habit; in fact, he could pay for many others' habits. Now though, he wanted no more of it. He had struck nearly every vein on both his arms and legs; almost ruining them completely. Gram upon grams of speed had been injected into his body. He could be dying for all he knew. The physicians at the hospital had told him, though, that he had a chance . . . on condition that he quit doing speed, immediately. Another month and he would certainly clinch his death.

For two weeks afterward, he sweated it out. His father had given him a job on the docks to help escape the thoughts of returning to his fantastical illusionary life. He worked hard and long, coming home quite often drenched in sweat and dirt. He enjoyed the job because it took his mind off the institute and that horrid little cell with nothing but the dull beige walls staring at him.

It was a hot afternoon and Dennis was at the docks working when Frankie DiVeto approached him. "Hi'ya, man! What's happening," Frankie jubilantly asked as he flashed a peace sign with an equal amount of jubilation. He was a wiry, little Italian kid with straight jet-black hair resting on his shoulders.

"Not much, Frankie," answered Dennis who wasn't afraid of Frankie because he only dealt acid and mescaline. Dennis was deeply afraid of the other zip-freaks because of the exposure.

"Wanna cop some zip, man? It's really heavy. I got a coupla spoons here and a fantastic set of glass works. How about it?"

A bomb exploded in Dennis' head. There it was, finally. His life or death was in Frankie's hands. That one little bag of crystalline, white powder seemed to grow and grab at him, saying, 'Here I am, man, come and get me.' The institute flashed into his head and those beige walls suddenly surrounded him.

"No!", retorted Dennis. There he said it. It wasn't really that hard or

"O.K., man, you're the boss. See ya!"

Frankie turned and headed up the docks to seek a sale elsewhere. He hadn't gone far when Dennis yelled for him to come back.

"O.K.! O.K.! I'll take it," gasped Dennis desperately.

So away they went toward the toilets to make the deal and for Dennis to close the deal.



"I went into battle,
Got shot in the head.
No one could save me,
For now I am dead."

-Rocky



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