



# Distractions

it's something else

## THE CANARY

"Watch it buddy!" shouted a large man hurrying through the crowd on the street. Sil was the unfortunate "buddy" and found himself shoved to the ground, tasting the dirt on the sidewalk. As he raised his head, he saw a small canary painted upon a store window. He regarded the canary curiously for a moment, then smiled and stood up.

Sil walked into the store, the door slamming shut behind him. The faces turned to him with expressions suitable only for someone who had murdered their children. Reddening, he spoke meekly, "Sorry."

Disgruntled profanities escaped various mouths, soft enough not to be heard clearly. Sil gave his own response, in sign language, but she had already turned around.

He walked over to the glass case which served as a display for a collection of exquisite and probably expensive jewelry. One clerk, who had a snobbish air about him, glided over on his polished shoes.

"May I help you sir?"

"Oh, my name ain't Sir, it's Sil."

The clerk thought the response to be mildly peculiar, "Very well... Sil is it? Yes. Is there any way I may help you?"

"I'll have one canary please." Sil said, forming a big smile.

"A canary? What do you mean a... canary?"

"A canary," Sil said and made flapping gestures like a bird, "Just one please."

The clerk thought for a minute and decided that this was some kind of joke, and began to make flapping gestures of his own. Sil nodded.

"Right. Right. Canary. You know, tweet, tweet?"

"Are you aware that this is a jewelry store?" the clerk snapped.

"No it's not. It's a pet store." Sil said matter-of-factly.

"You think I don't know what I sell? I own this fine establishment, and I sell jewelry. I have diamonds and rubies and emeralds and bracelets and necklaces. But no animals!"

"Will you get a bird in your window!"

"A jewelry store," the clerk confirmed.

"No pets?"

"No pets," the clerk said in a soft voice hoping that he had finally gotten his point across to the simple-minded individual standing across from him.

"Well how come you got a bird in your window when you don't sell no birds?"

"It's just a symbol! Now please, either buy some jewelry or leave. You are making a scene."

Sil turned around and looked at the other customers who were staring. He grinned and waved. Then he turned around and faced the clerk again with dead seriousness.

"A symbol for what?"

"Pardon me?"

"A symbol for what?"

"You mean the bird?"

"Yes the bird! What's it a symbol for?"

"I don't know."

"What do you mean you don't know? You flash a picture of a bird in your window and you don't know why it's there? How can you not know what the picture on the front of your own bloody store means?"

"It was there when I bought it."

"And you didn't ask?"

"Why would I?"

"You bought a store that had a symbol painted on it, probably with great sentimental attachment to the previous owner, and you never took the time out of your hectic schedule to find out what it means?" Sil turned and faced the people watching. "This man has the nerve to display a feathered friend in his window, yet is too incompetent to learn what it means with respect to the store. Is he so careless? Is he so heartless? Only interested in money and not significance of such 'minor' details as the symbol displayed so shamelessly in his own store window? Would you buy something from this fraud?"

"He's right you know" said a small man to the clerk who appeared beside Sil.

"It's not important!" pressed the clerk, but was met with grunts and frowns of disapproval (the grunts coming from ladies mostly). "Right. Ok. Let's all come back to my office and I'll contact the previous owner. Settle this posthaste."

The clerk moved off to the back of the store and the crowd followed like a pack of dogs chasing a steak. The clerk flipped through several address books until he finally found the name and telephone number.

"You watch. It won't have any meaning. Probably just a picture," he muttered.

Using the dial phone, he rang the number and waited. As it rang, he tapped his fingers on the table impatiently. Then his face brightened up.

"Yes, Joe? This is Bedford from the store. Yes, the jewelry store... No, I am not asking to marry your wife again... Your daughter?... No, no. I want to know about the bird you had painted on the front of the store... Right... No, not the turd, bird, B-I-R-D... Right... Yup... Really?... Is that so?... I didn't know you could do that with earwax... but... please sir I don't... No, I don't know what it's like to have dentures... The bird... Right, what does it mean... It does?... Thank you very much, and tell your mother to hang in there... Yes, you have a good day too, sir... Bye..." Wiping the sweat off his forehead, the clerk sighed in relief. "He sold the store because he was getting old in his years. Well, he's on now. Now that that mess is done with, I can tell you what the bird means. He said it stands for... Wait! Where is Sil?"

"Who?" said one person.

"What's a Sil?" said another.

"I don't know any Sil."

"Nobody but us."

"Come on, quit stalling."

"We dint wait arend fer nut'n."

"Quiet!" yelled the clerk "Where is Sil? I am not going to tell anybody until I find Sil. He's the bastard that started all this."

"Oh, he waited in the store. Said he didn't like a crowd, he did."

"What? Waited in the store? Right then. Let's go tell him," Bedford said and directed the group out of his small office. When they came out, the store was a mess. Broken glass lay all over the floor, cases had fallen over, and all the jewelry was gone. A small stuffed bird, similar to the one in the window, hung from the chandelier.

One of the customers turned to Bedford and smiled, "Methinks he got tired of waiting."

C. Murphy

(untitled)

Silence, puddles,  
the tap of worn soles  
on them  
with  
towering wood skeletons  
and  
a silver disc  
hovering

clouds  
sky  
stars  
drops from a grey  
blanket  
tightly stretched

hat in hand  
with  
wetting hair and  
a hand in a pocket  
while it came down  
but never landed

Shuffling  
breathing  
taking drags  
evaporating the water  
on the paper  
on the filter  
then  
throwing it down  
the grate and  
going home

fin.

Alex Madson



S.L.

"Woman Must Bear Child"

Although  
the rights you declare  
are supposedly your own  
Woman must bear child  
regardless  
of all the unwanted and unloved  
undeserving and unappreciated  
offspring...

You matter not-  
We own the fetus in your womb  
Religious right the child  
without purity  
allowing unwanted kids  
to shrink  
into oblivion  
Being starved  
beaten and raped  
Misguided  
into a world  
they'd never travel...

Woman Must Bear Child  
absolutely  
Decreed your rights our own  
Headlessly  
your pleas fall upon  
foolish ears  
Save the baby  
Abort your rights  
forcefully  
In blind arrogance  
we obtrusively pray and protest  
that your soul not be saved  
but the unwanted fetus  
will be, righteously...

## WUSC

World University Services  
of Canada is hosting  
an information session

Presenter: Lisa Pitre of WUSC  
Place: Alumni Memorial Building  
Date: October 3rd, 1996  
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.

For more information please call the  
International Student Advisor's Office  
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## ATTENTION

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- provide scholarships, bursaries and subsidized tuition
- liaise with the Student Union, government and much more as well as try to bring mature & part-time students together from time to time for a little fun!

We are NOW accepting NOMINATIONS for a full SLATE of officers  
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Director: Student Affairs, Director: Social & Promotion, Director-at-large  
Each candidate must present a completed Notice of Intent signed by a nominator and  
a seconder A.S.A.P. to our RETURNING OFFICER,  
Judith Potter at Adult Learner Services in the Wu Centre

Letters of Intent can be obtained from the C.A.M.P.U.S. office at SINGER HALL 154

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