

startled her until she grabbed her picture from my hand and ran away across the tiles to a change stall where she began furiously yanking on her clothes. She ran out of the change room with her sweater on backwards, her shoelaces undone, and wearing only one sock, the other sock abandoned in the stall. I watched it all and then dressed myself slowly and carefully and then left.

Today she came again. Today it was different. Today she was dressed; dressed in those same drop waist jeans but wearing a khaki t-shirt that was cut short below her breasts. I was naked; I hadn't even taken my towel out of my bag yet. She ran up to me as if trying to reach me before the towel was out and she yelled "Hi, Hi, Hi. How are you today? DO YOU LIKE MY TATTOO?"

Her tattoo was clean of scab today; there was absolutely no crust covering it and the purple and green cobra was bare on her stomach. A set of ugly red

cobra eyes peered out from over her belly button, two unmoving dots just staring at me while I was naked and her saying, "Hi Hi Hi. How are you today? DO YOU LIKE MY TATTOO?" I couldn't speak; the cobra eyes were staring at me. I grabbed my shampoo bottle and I held it out in front of me; it covered almost nothing but I felt a little better though I still couldn't speak. Then she gave a bored shrug of her shoulders and walked away. She had her hands pushed deep into her front pockets and whistled leaving the change room. I put my clothes back on and I left the change room too. I walked home and said "hi" to three people on the way.

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Second Place Prose Winner: MARK SILVERBERG

DESMOND & TRACY & TED & CHERRI

- I can't believe I have to write a 4000 word essay, Desmond said, I don't even know 4000 words.
- I love you, Tracy said, (removing raw silk panties)
- Not here, Robert Frost might notice. I don't want to make the wrong impression.
- You can only think of yourself. What of all the starving masses? and cloud-masses? and treacle-masses?
- Perhaps you are right, perhaps I was too hasty (removing raw silk shoes). I just want to see how my IBM shares are doing, won't be a minute.
- I've already checked, the Dow Jones is down 20 points.
- 20 points, Jesus Christ! I knew I should have sold. Why can't I listen to Ted. Ted knows about these things. He is a wise man, wiser than us all, wiser than us all put together. What is the Dow Jones, anyway?
- How the hell should I know? Listen, it's getting a little cold around here without my raw silk panties, I'm just going to wait behind that blackboard to block the wind, let me know when your ready. In the meantime I'm going to take a test on Personal Growth.

* *

"All Desmond can think about is the stock market and sex," Tracy said. "I'm sick of it. I'm trying to form a life for us, put down roots, build firm foundations, bla bla bla. Its very bothersome, as you can imagine. And for that matter, who would name a kid Desmond?"

Desmond was sick of University. He took all his books and all his notes to the center of the backyard and lit them on fire. Desmond was fed-up. And for that matter he was tired of sleeping with Tracy.

"Who can sleep with a girl named Tracy?" he mused, "I keep thinking there should be more letters in her name, at least an 'e', it ruins everything."

* *

Desmond decided to quit University and go fishing for at least 3 years. "It builds character," he told Tracy. "I will return a new man. And besides that I'll have a lot of fish to show for it. Perhaps even some bass. You like bass, don't you?"

"I suppose you're right," Tracy said, (imagining herself sauteeing beautiful and endless bass bodies beneath an illuminated ceiling.)

"I will wait for you, whatever you decide to do. I will sit in the parlour and read this copy of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* until you return. I hope you find what you are looking for, and always remember to keep the fish in adequate freezer facilities."

* *

Ted was tired of playing the stock market. He decided to go down to the Three Clams Cafe to hear the great jazz saxophonist, Julien "Maimonides" Griffin. He noticed that Tracy was sitting at a table by herself.

"Tracy," he said, "what are you doing here? where is Desmond? and why are you dressed in nothing but random pages from Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*?"

Julien stepped to the stage amid great applause. He picked up the microphone and said "Thank-you. I will now play a piece for you which I like to call 'My Cat is Red'."

Tracy broke out in hysterical sobs. "It always reminds me of Desmond" she wept.

Ted put his arm around Tracy. "You shouldn't be alone at a time like this" he said.

* *

Ted and Tracy sped through the Ozarks in Ted's new Chevrolet.

Ted said "I'd offer you some clothing, but all I have is my own Arrow shirt with the new Mark V collar, and besides you look so beautiful wrapped in books 4 & 5 of the *Idylls*. Half-nakedness is a quality I much admire in a woman (three-quarter-nakedness isn't too bad either)."

Ted reached over and leafed through a few pages.

* *

At the fishing hole Desmond met Cherri, a cabaret dancer who was down on her luck and had decided to go to University to study Buddhism.

"Man is trapped in an endless cycle of birth and death," she told Desmond. "Life is illusory, our goals are meaningless. Can you unzip me, I haven't been out of this cocktail dress in 4 years."

* *

Ted and Tracy relaxed in Ted's half million dollar chateau deep in the Ozark mountains.

"Is that a priceless Ming vase over there by the window?" Tracy asked.

"Yes. My grandfather left me this place," Ted said. "He made a fortune in take-out chicken. I remember he used to say to me:

"Teddy, there is a lot of money in this world, and fortunately most of it is mine. And get your hands off that priceless Ming vase! What do you think it is, a toy?" Ted smiled, remembering.

"I have this recurring dream," he said "where people are holding an auction for all the valuable items in this house, and no one can hear my bids."

"You should learn to relax," Tracy said. "I think I have a book on Stress Management here somewhere."

She fished through her fishnet bag. "Here it is — *Seven Ways To Manage Stress In Four Easy Lessons*. Lets see — Lesson One: Nitrous Oxide: Friend or Foe."

MARK SILVERBERG is a fourth-year English/Creative Writing major. In addition to several mag credits, he is the author of *Asleep Inside An Agate Stone* (Some Bees, 1988).

poetry
&
Art
winners
on
following
page

Judges:

Poetry and Prose: Mary Jankulak, Stuart Ross
Art: Brian Krog