

DICKEY DEW

by barry graham

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One of my father's friends never had a name so everyone called him Dickey Dew because he said that's what everyone called him after he got his balls shot off in Vietnam. I used to sit on his lap while they played five card draw and he would pretend not to see me sipping from his can of Pabst Blue Ribbon.

My mother walked into the kitchen as I set the beer back down on the table, and I got scared and spilled it all over my lap and down my pant leg. My father always laughed when people got scared. Some of the beer spilled on Dickey Dew's pants. He told me to play his hand while he tried to convince my mother to clean him up. I had four to a flush and a pair of tens. I dumped one of the tens, missed my flush and watched my father rake in the pot.

"You're a brave little son of a bitch."

I knew I wasn't. It's just easier to fuck up when the cards you're holding don't belong to you. Besides, if it was my money I would have kept the other ten and beat my father's sad pair of sixes.

Dickey Dew came back to the table and realized I just cost him forty dollars.

"You dumb little bastard, you play just as stupid as your old man."

He picked up a knife lying on the table, held it level with my eyes, then leaned down and thrust it in the side of his own leg. My father laughed, and I cried as I reached under the table and felt piss running slowly down my other leg and mixing with the puddle of beer still underneath my chair. Then Dickey Dew started laughing

too, as he pulled the knife out and cut a straight line down his jeans and folded them back to show me his wooden leg - one more thing that got shot off over in the jungle.

My father was the only one who made a dime playing poker at his table. He probably would have won even if he didn't teach me signals so I could let him know what everyone else was holding every hand. He kissed me on the cheek, and sent me to bed with my ten dollar cut.

