

Plantar Fasciitis

by Carl Santoro

"That's funny. Sounds. Like. A plant. Yes. One discovered perhaps by Darwin."

"Could be a character in a Star Wars movie, if you ask me."

He looked at her foot.

"Cost me a hundred bucks, these New Balance nursely curiosities. Huh, new balance alright. I feel as though I'm falling backwards when trying to walk forward," she whined.

He took a sip of his Guinness stout. The TV over the bar caught his eye.

"I'm still on a news fast. I'm not even watching Erin Burnett at seven," he shouted over the increasingly loud country music. He placed the large glass down in the exact center of the cardboard coaster.

"Wow, I know that's big for you. You'd give up Erin Burnett just like that?"

Tightening his lips into his face, he puckered out, "Yep," and nodded affirmatively as he lifted the glass displaying a grimace of faux pain .

"Do you remember I tried that for almost two weeks?" she asked.

"I lost a good fifteen percent of my brain I figure. I had trouble remembering what channel CNN was on."

"Oh, that's funny," he replied. He paused now and stared into his beer.

"You're funny. I wish I could write more "funny" into my stories.

"Don't you writers use pot any more?" she asked.

"I'm on a pot fast also. Just want to see if the every day vanilla version of me has what it takes. Sadly, I do miss the psychedelic crutch though."

"How many fasts are you ON!?"

"Well, the news one is a priority and it's my..."

"Really!", she interrupted. "What is it? These four hundred dollar orthotics add pain instead of reducing it." She pushed back the tall

stool to stand on the ball of one foot. In the murky darkness below, he could discern the uncaring black tongues of the hopelessly fashion-challenged black footwear overlapping her black slacks.

"And so the other foot has to suffer as well, because they make you wear a pair, so you don't develop a lop-sidedness. Ouch! Damn! I'm positive the heel is even more inflamed! Whoa..."

She reached back to support herself from falling and the stool was gone, ironically replaced by the passing arm of a gorgeous redhead.

"Oh shit. Sorry!"

"That's fine, hon," the woman replied instantly, smiling through her leather vest, obviously offering a kind dispensation to the awkwardness. But when Fasciitis let go, they both noticed Red's Sam Adams escaping over the glass rim, somewhat reminiscent of a frog's tongue, lashing out to baptize both of their hands with a foamy brownish puddle.

Fasciitis hurriedly reached for a napkin from their small corner table. Red waved her hand, "Don't fuss, hon. I just lick it off like tequila." And as Kenny Chesney could be heard singing, "She's Got It All" both Fasciitis and Guinness looked at each other and agreed.

People starting breaking out in spontaneous dancing. The noise level was probably exceeding legal.

"Yup, well like I was saying, or going to say, this is my "ostrich phase." Maybe all the horrors I hear and read about every single day will finally go away," he shouted leaning into her ear.

"You're kidding right?"

"Yeah, well I know they'll still be there. I mean...I KNOW! But I gotta say, I feel as though I've done a week of meditation. I'm less anxious, more relaxed and focused. " He lifted his drink and took a long pull.

"Sounds heavy," she responded.

"Well, nobody gets maimed, if that's what you mean." His Van Huesen covered elbow sabotaged him as it slid out from under his person and cascaded over the rim of the wet table top.

His comment, coupled with this Marx Brothers-like slip, made her laugh so hard and loud that it filled the room with arresting rapid-fire cackles. A peacock in distress. Or so the patrons first thought.

"You know, you can be very funny without that controlled substance. The beer suits you well."

They laughed into each other's face, lifted their drinks and made a toast honoring the idea of more peace and less pain in the world. "Here's to us and to now and to those of us who can make peace happen!"

"And without pain, " she added. She kicked off her shoes.

"Do you wanna dance?" she asked.

And dance they did.

They looked over at the bar.

Red looked back at them, held up a straight-armed fist over her head, and winked.

