

S.K.O.S.O. vs T.O.O.T.H. (With an update on Jinni of T.O.O.T.H.)

by Carl Santoro

PART ONE - The Punishment

As I lay, face weeping into my musty, uncaring dorm pillow,
my tears leaking out like bullets of various calibers,
mystified as to where the true target is,
I clench my teeth and with tightening
fists choke the blanket,
wishing it was my own throat.
What have I done?
What in God's name possessed me?
This could not have been something I brought upon
my innocent, level-headed, law-abiding self.
But yes. Yes. Dammit, yes, for sure.
I brought this whole expulsion,
this disgrace,
down onto myself.
And now, onto my father!

PART TWO - The Crime

Lazy sunny afternoon. From my dorm room,
I watch as painters outside across the lawn
take a lunch break. They are painting a temporary
8' high wooden "fence" of plywood panels
that surrounds a construction site.
I guess to keep people out and
from falling in. Half done in white,

they leave the unfinished project to go eat.

Their brushes and paint buckets beckon me.
My campaign to promote my new
"underground" club, S.K.O.S.O.
needed a lift.

I dash out and grab the white paint
and with their still wet brushes paint
the large acronym across several feet
of the still to be painted surface.

PART THREE - The Rival Club

Jinni told me she was the President
of something she started called,
The Organization Organized To Hate, or T.O.O.T.H.
I thought it might be fun to start my own.
She said it was a secret organization. I said, mine would allow
new members only if they could decipher the name I would give
it.

I then launched S.K.O.S.O.
My roommate couldn't guess it, so I told him.
That made us 2 people strong.
Jinni wouldn't divulge how many members she drafted.

PART FOUR - Interview with the Dean

Someone ratted me out that saw me paint the fence.
"What do those letters mean that you painted on our property?"
the Dean asked over his horn-rimmed glasses.
"I felt the painters were almost finished anyway. They would be
returning
to paint over that area anyway." I replied.
He held his tight, flat-topped crew-cut head in his two hands
and spoke down onto the polished mahogany desktop

like a snake hissing before a kill.

"That's not what I asked you young man. Now what do those letters translate into? Tell me!"

I told him.

"Some Kind Of Subversive Organization."

He raised from his giant tufted leather throne and in a tone usually reserved for prison inmates, shouted "That's it. You are out of here!

If you ever want to be re-installed to this college you must bring you father back here to promise me you will be at your best behavior!"

I could here a radio down the hall.

"Twenty-four more Americans reported killed in action near Da Nang, North Vietnam."

PART FIVE - Be Drafted or Enlist

Dad was separated from Mom at the time, going on five months then.

He did pull through for me though, and sat with the Dean and I and

I was inserted back into the system.

Reflecting on his P.O.W. imprisonment during his army tour in WWII,

he reminded me that presently, newly-drafted recruits were being sent to the front lines in less than three weeks.

I had already received two notices from Uncle Sam that he wanted me badly. I had to remind him I hadn't graduated yet.

After graduation I joined up rather than be drafted.

S.K.O.S.O. became replaced by U.S.A.F.

T.O.O.T.H. was still out there,

and remains today.

I figure Dad saved my skin twice.

PART SIX - Epilogue

The fence was later painted,
became weather-beaten, broken
and finally taken down.

The stain on the family
gone with it - faded like
bleached pigments can erase a
once vivid image.

A once vivid deed.

Jinni was hit with cancer in late 1999 and went through heavy chemo & radiation for a few months that winter. She then had three really good years until it came back very aggressively & spread quickly in 2003. She had just turned 57 in May & died August 2nd of that year.

