

# Thoughts While Hovering Over an Ironing Board - OR - STEAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

*by* Carl Santoro

Pushing the "surge of steam" button has lately  
given the mother a feeling of  
power;

She pushes a button and  
a loud gurgling sound  
dampens the spirit  
of even a 100% cotton item,  
and forces it to  
be still and  
straighten out.  
I need a button like  
this to affect my family and friends,  
she mused.

The phone rings.  
A time-bandit wants her.  
If she answers, the ironing must wait.  
Funny how the ringing today  
sounds like the phone  
in the office  
of my last job, she thinks.

*"Where's the damn fax, Carly?"*

*"I handed it to you  
on the way into your  
meeting, George."*

*"But it's not with any  
of my papers.  
Are you sure it was the..., "  
he pauses to recollect  
the all-important  
ad agency in his  
web-filled mind,  
"...the, Ackerstone one with  
the shooting schedule and  
layout all in one?"*

*"Yes, remember you laughed  
at the way they portrayed  
Douglas with the dimple  
looking like a black hole?"*

*"What? No...Yes! Well  
where in the hell is it now?  
Did I bring it into the meeting?"*

*"I'll get it...  
no one else cares  
around here."*

It was the screeching, yet  
calming voice of one of  
my own tribe  
reassuring me the phone  
would be answered.

I looked down at my daughter's  
blouse and wondered  
if I was responsible  
for what seemed to be  
a new, hot to the touch, brown stain  
near the throat.

*"Oh, the fax. He left it  
on the Xerox machine  
with the 15 copies he was to hand out."*

"Anyone, " I yelled  
down the stairs, "know  
if Dad left for work yet?"

School mornings always have  
an overwhelming urgency  
and crisis about them;  
sprinkled with startling  
discoveries from  
the night before.

"No," was the  
stereophonic reply from  
the two bathrooms.

"But the car is gone,"  
Bridget observed, "and  
his briefcase and lunch  
are  
on  
the  
kitchen table."

"He'll be back," I thought

partly distracted now  
by radio host, Joy, criticizing  
the ex-mayor for  
being funny but  
not  
having  
a  
sense  
of  
humor.

This talk radio has me  
focusing in  
too often  
on the present moment  
in a Manhattan studio  
and forgetting my life  
here  
on  
Long  
Island.

"Daddy just pulled into  
the driveway!" Jeanette declared.

