

# gravelortian part 25

*by* Chad Smith

In the dream we agree to be crash test dummies. Scientists were heading in the direction of experiments using live human subjects. They had learned all they could from the previous dummies and now future advancements in travel safety depended on brave volunteers like us. We would drive our cars as fast as we could and crash them into cement walls. In the line to get a chance at becoming experiments, mother comes and tells us she doesn't want us to go through with it. We move to the line of second thoughts then and head toward the exit. While waiting I spy a hole in the ceiling and climb up, losing my tennis shoes in the process.

I come up and out of the hole onto a village street in the middle of a parade celebrating the arachnid god. The people of the village are dressed up like spiders and dance down the street. Scraps of shiny metal tied together with animal skins and bones form the costumes. The adults are inside the bodies and hold six different children dressed as the spider legs from their sides. It is an effort requiring skill and practice. The children pull themselves up and down bending as the legs to create the spider walk. The spiders are painted in bright colors but are also grimy with some parts covered in rust, dirt and grease. Musical instruments play and the drums beat as the children sing the arachnid song.

He was just as beautiful as everybody had said. If you looked at him for even a moment your heart was filled with yearning. I don't remember what I said, but a second after I said it he punched me in my mouth. He did it in such a way that made me believe I truly deserved it. His fist broke out all of my front teeth. Perhaps his way of foreshadowing the horrors of a life spent gnashing. Taste of blood filling my mouth. Blood squirting from my nose, my eyes, my ears. Covering my face. Just like that. Everything gone with a wink. Your health, your wife, your sons, your house, your job, your town. It is

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humorous to him and most foul when you do it all yourself without his help. He probably isn't one who should be toyed with or teased like this. In the end he won't give a shit if you believe in him or not.

