

# Suicide Machines

by Christopher J. Snyder

“Oh, you can get undressed in front of me . . . yeah . . . yeah . . . I got raped by my father, and my marriage is a failure . . . mm-hm . . . you want to borrow some of his books? He's my son, after all . . . that's right . . . we lean on the possessive a little *too much* in this family . . .”

“I've known people who've tried to kill themselves . . . I found out in therapy that my dad molested me *before I could talk* . . . I'm sorry, but seeing you makes me feel 'preyed upon,' and I have homicidal and suicidal feelings . . . Don't be jealous of that guy I went to Bennington with, sure all he writes are '90s high-brow stases, but he works really hard, and, besides, he's been inside me, and I'm loyal for life . . .”

“Joshua had a good time . . . yeah, I lost my virginity in a ménage à trios when I was 14 . . . he liked watching me do it with his wife . . . Granddaddy didn't like it when I changed my name to 'Leaf,' but Jacquie and me wanted a 'family' name . . . sure, she didn't work or go to classes the last years we were in college but I was one of 11 people to make Phi Beta Kappa at the intrinsically-difficult-to-go-to Univ. of Chicago so she and I (*blows out breath*) can afford to have a baby at 22, I mean . . . why make *sense?* (*rolls eyes*) That's so 'conservative.' (*giggles*)”

“You had to do something back then, so I joined the Coast Guard . . . I was like 'Ma, I don't want to be a dentist, I want to be a lawyer!' . . . I was like, 'Ma, I'm not going to live in the house after law school, I'm going to live with my cousin across town' . . . Guisepe could've been such a good ball player! Man, you should've seen him . . . welp, he got his girlfriend pregnant, and it was 1975, so . . . I had to marry your mother — my sister's friend — seven months before you were born, in 1972 . . . so much for his full-ride to Univ. of Arizona scholarship! He drinks 36 beers a day . . . hello? Oh. (*blinks*) I thought you hung up on me. (*laughs to himself — then, as though*)”

*he was continuing the laughter-spurner:)* Hey, did I ever tell you about the time Ronny bought a boat made out of — ”

“I think oral sex is when you *talk* about sex. I get picked on all the time . . . I think Jain's pronounced 'JAIN' . . . I think Latin's pronounced 'LAD-DIN' . . . I'm a 'BABY' soul, no longer doing the necessary thing and making human smoke and taking carrion comfort from the heat . . . Fall asleep drunk, wake up still drunk, I guess! I'm 'NEUROSIS' incarnate . . . I can't even sit still, or work, or rest . . . I think I'm not going away! Thanks . . . for not calling me a *pest*! I'd hate to be dodged . . . I've got nothing to live for, just an emptiness inside fed by Brill-Cream get and Honda Accord and CB coat trappings . . . ah! I'll put my feet up and pronounce the note in everyone's name *wrong*. It's. Not. My. Fault.”

“Yeah, they do that all the time, wait 'til the woman's in the shower to bust the house . . . Your uncle told you it happened to your second cousin? It wasn't an *accident*. And I didn't get it from Hunter S. Thompson, either . . . Well, you probably noticed it said MCLEAN, VA in the 'pic book' of incoming students. MCLEAN HIGH SCHOOL is where the CIA wives teach! Don't say you weren't warned . . . it says so, right out in the open: 'MCLEAN, VA' like 'DULLES CORRIDOR' might as well say 'FORT BRAGG, MARYLAND' or fucking 'NORAD, COLORADO' . . . what's a matter, can't you read? All's fair if you don't, um . . . you know . . . catch it . . . and, um . . . thanks for saving my dad a third of the year tuition! Sorry you had to give up your single room. I know I *said* I knew it wasn't a double, not a *suite*, but still, you could've *checked*, and that's *your* fault, not *mine*, you'd have to *tackle* me to get me to own up to it, and don't lay a *guilt* trip on me, because I got on the phone and laid one on *you*, lying where there was no *point*, no *reason* to doubt me or think I *would*, 'cause technically, you *still* didn't have to have other things to think about and *fail* to see *this* comi — ”

