

# Our Names Are Written In Water

*by* Dennis Hiatt

When you reflects on your life it seem like a straight path from birth to the point where you find yourself peering into the gathering shadows. Looking forward there is only darkness no insight or cunning can penetrate. Knowing this, you understand your experience, intelligence, and hard learned life facts are no more than a candle held flickering to blackness that leads to the grave.

Sitting in an up-scale Thai restaurant I ask my daughter what she thought of our family, thinking, perhaps, her young eyes could see clearer than mine. "We're a beautiful people." She paused, eyed three young women who've just entered and added, "Horny too."

Passing us in a delicate swirl of light perfume and healthy girl sweat, three bare midriff elfin, baby dykes with pencil thin eyebrows, and chic art hair cuts, swaggered in like cool young gunfighters straight off the cover of Bad Baby Butch Vogue. Half way to their table one said something with a snicker, the second looked on knowingly, and the third smiled like runway lights firing up to bring home a crippled bomber lost in the small black hours of a rain swept English night. I sighed deeply, knowing only too well I'd never again see those warm lights beckoning through the thickening fog of my middle years.

That WW2 bomber motif works well for my nosing into middle age. One engine is shot out, and I've feathered one to save fuel. The Tail Gunner's dead, and the Ball Turret Gunner's low on ammunition. The Radio Man is picking up mostly static, but occasionally the German voice of a ME109 pilot will come through loud and terrifyingly clear. They are

out there in the dark and they are hunting us. My Navigator thinks we should be over England, but the cloud cover's too damn thick to tell. I know we're lost, and, up a head, in the mist, the face of a mountain is waiting for us like the fist of God. So I'm taking the broken old girl down while I still have enough fuel to maneuver. Maybe, I can find a highway, or at least an open field. Even shot up, she's a tough ol' bird, and I've got a steady hand on the wheel. As we slip through the clouds I pray that I will see something besides water down there. Looking at the girls I think, "Wish me luck."

My daughter watching my melancholy face leans across the table and whispers, "Send them a note dad. Tell them you're not really that tall, you're sitting on five platinum VISA cards."

I blow on my soup. Smile at my lovely child, and whisper, "Die bitch."

