

Broken Bulbs - Chapter One

by Eddie Wright

And here I am again.

I chew my nails. I tap my foot. I chew my nails. I sweat. I bleed. My nose bleeds. It drips. I drip. I'm dripping through my chair.

Drip.

Drip.

Drip.

I wipe it. I smear it. I wipe again. My head is throbbing. From inside. The wound. Like a golf ball. It pulses.

Pulse.

Pulse.

Pulse.

It squishes. It's wet. Something's gonna grow. Something. Hopefully. Something's gonna be born. Be alive. It's alive. It should be alive. I should be alive. It's dead. Dying. Dead.

The mummy wrap 'round my head is soaked with dirt and blood. It needs to be changed but I'm sick of it. Sick of this. It covers my eye. My right eye. Half the world is gone. Only the left side exists.

I chew my nails again. Bite 'em too low. Too short. They hurt. They bleed. They drip. I drip.

Drip.

Drip.

Drip.

RING RING RING RING RING RING

The phone. "Yeah?" It's her. Does she have one? Does she have a new one?

"I Scooby Dooby do," she says. Cute.

"I can't keep going. It's dull. It hurts. It's boring," I say. "This one's got nothing. It's no good. It's no good! It's all gone now. It's all dried up. I need something more. I'm sick of these same ones. I need

something else. I need a new one. Just one new one. I need one new one.”

“Ya know what ya gotta do, baby-boy,” she says.

“I know I know I know...”

She owns every bit of me. She knows this. I know this. My head, especially knows this.

She tells me the way. I listen. Barely. I'm outta my chair and into the mess...

The unfinished.

The wasted.

The nothing.

I step over the birdhouses and the spice racks and the painting of the naked one-eyed lady and the blueprints (for whatever the hell it is) and the charcoal sketch of the evergreen and the books bookmarked halfway through and the plaster cast of the dead squirrel and the overexposed photo of the tiny cabin. I walk through a stack of “Meat is Murder” flyers. I wipe my bleeding nose on a “Fur is Fashion” t-shirt. I knock my shiny new mountain bike over and I'm into the closet.

Iced tea. Iced tea is all. At this point in my life iced tea is all I am right now. It's all I have right now. It's a delicious treat. Its deliciousness is powerful. It's the powerful powdered goods and into the mug it goes — scoop after scoop.

“Uncle Franky Rules!!” That's what it says on this mug. That's what a cartoon dinosaur tells me every time I sip the drink. It was a gift from my nephew. I forget how old he is but I scoop anyway — scoop scoop scoop — spoonful after spoonful goes in, way more than the recommended amount. I don't care. I like it. I like it sweet. I like it good. I like when it rots. It's rotted now. It hardly hurts now. I think its dead now. I think I lost it now. Do I care? Do I need it? Do I need anything? I just need this. This pulse. This pulsating...ness? Pulsatingness. In my head. I need pulsatingness.

I grab some water from the dead flower, the one I grew during the gardening phase. I dump and stir with a pen. The iced tea is sludge. It's good.

"Maybe you can..." she begins.

"I CAN'T!" I yell into the phone. "It doesn't work for me anymore! It's dried up I said. It's dull I said. I hate it and I want a new one!" I drop my head into my hand, "Please. I need it. I'm serious this time."

"FINE FINE FINE!" She shouts and hangs up.

My eyes meet with the monitor on the desk. The blinking cursor. The flashing fucker.

"A Big Pile of Misery: The Life and Times of Dusty." That's what it says.

My reply? "Open up and say, AHHHHHHH..." and I boot the bastard. It pops into sparkly sparks on the ground. The cracked screen flickers and goes black.

And I'm off to the diner to meet Bonnie.

