

# Agencypiece

*by Finnegan Flawnt*

The boy walks behind his mum to school. He doesn't want to be there, he wants to stay with her. She walks on a tightrope, shaking in the rhythm of the street, hither and thither, hey and hoo. She put her black high heel boots on today. The boy wonders for whom. Perhaps for the bald maths teacher with the flashing smile. He watches the tip of her heel hack the tarmac like a hoe. Like the toe walk at the school exam:

— Let's see how far you can walk on your toes, kiddo, said the examiner, a woman with a beautiful soft moustache that tickles when she kisses him on the cheek.

The boy listens to what other people think as they walk by on his way to school:

The man at the van across the street thinks *hawt mama* and *i wish i had a hammer*. He's in the Agency.

The woman behind them in the white coat with the high hair and the tiny nose thinks angry thoughts and smokes. She's in the Agency also.

The twins ahead of them, who pinch each other obsessively, both think *how do I know that I am myself if my sister looks exactly like me and always will?*

— So whazzup in class today, asks his mum but she doesn't mean it. She thinks of the job she has to do for the Agency today, and that's why she wears the high heels and the transparent top and too much lipstick.

— I dunno, says the boy. He thinks *one day I will be in the Agency*

*and I will do my job better than anyone else and mother will be proud of me.*

The woman brings her son to school. It is Monday and the weekend was good. She watched a little TV, won a few bucks in the lottery, which made her feel as if God remembered her, shagged the neighbour across the hall, a dark guy who always wore a dark suit and who was dark under his suit and made dark noises which made her tremble and like the darkness all over again just like when she was a girl and thought dark thoughts, and he gave her good dark deep dreams. Not a keeper though, just another Agency guy, probably married to an Agency chick, who worked at a desk all day building up tension and daydreaming about a life out in the field, doing good for the Agency.

Later, she will go to a prole cafe where the assassins assemble in the mornings before they swarm out like angry bees, their stingers cocked, cackling about this lard ass or that who got it in the rear or in the head.

They're at the door. The woman, her name is Olive, strokes the boy, and says:

— You be a good sailor today, Popeye, and eat your spinach.  
She wants to kiss him. The boy smiles anxiously and looks sideways:

— Not here, mom.

— Right, she says, grabs his thin arm and presses it, hard. Bye now. He runs off.

*How sad if I wouldn't return today*, Olive thinks. But that's soap talk — sad this and tragic that. Arrangements have been made. The Agency asks for a lot and gives aplenty. She hums Bill Evans' 'Never let me go' and stalks off, leaving stiletto marks on the sidewalk.

The gun sits quietly in the woman's handbag. It is cold and hard but feels good. There was action ahead, smell of powder, possibly more than one bullet ejaculated, the gun barrel no longer barren but bursting, and a woman's hot hand holding it steady, steady, steady and then limp.

For the longest time, the gun didn't want to be a gun and shot badly. It wanted to be a baton instead, bend an orchestra to its will, summon music for the Gods. But the Agency needed a gun. One day I'll be myself, the gun thinks with the glee that can only come from a task well done, from a mission in life.

Otherwise the gun doesn't do much but sit and wait for a long moment. It's an Agency gun. It serves a higher purpose as everyone must.

— The gun is an example to us all, says the president of the agency. It must be honoured. and we honour it by cleaning it and keeping it safe, he says.

The gun hopes there might be reincarnation after all with another shot not to the head but at being a baton.

