

Genesters

by Gabriel Orgrease

There once was a lake skipping stone and it skipped, five times, the end...

Ceiling fluorescents brilliant in the white space opened to the exterior of the Hog n' Bluster hero shop through the narrow glass front and shown out to the empty brick paved commons of High Street. A commons where a story is not a story unless told, though there were no comfortable words in the masonry oasis but there were signs to inform the public to curb their dogs, to avoid profanity, never loiter, no alcoholic beverages permitted and do not litter.

The Kracton Commons being at night a desolate and flat area between old brick buildings, many of them with large plate glass windows that let one in on a further depth of retail isolation, active and idle, comix, a proliferation of head shops or Buddha porn used-bookstores, houses for sale cheap -- the field of vertical masonry glowed a sickly color reflected from overhung sheet metal cornices. Paint blisters and rust holes. Locked down, the front glass door of the small sandwich shop closed, Matthew would then prop open the back fire-door to the rear alley.

As we know, otherwise without light it is black. A touch of anti-matter. It was a joke on them, a trick by a cosmic trickster -- not a hamster painted with gold spray paint stuffed in a toilet paper roll as John had said -- and a deliberate diversion from a cultural landscape of personal vacancy. It was an otherwise empty story. Everyone died Mathew thought, it seemed, for no apparent reason.

That night that he threw a rock. Glass shattered. They all ran into shadow.

There is always a curiosity to life as it occurs at the rear entry. It is

either that the box is opened and the contents let loose on the world, like a cracker jack with the trots, or the box sucks in the world, pulls on our innards like John said -- a technical machine -- compacts all down like a Faraday steam-punch-die mechanism of absolute skrunch no larger than a chicken bullion cube if not an outright chip of dinky coprolite. Or is it beef? Or all-natural turkey? Our universe a fennel seed stuck between the teeth. Push it around with your index finger, tumble it over, no larger than a sugar cube the scene melts in water -- in hot water it provides a dull broth or an overly sweet nectar to feed humping bluebirds. A dazzle or sequins, string beads and/or simply bedazzling fireworks that burst increasingly louder and louder and louder as we lean forward with our mutant arms desperate to shelter our omniscient heads from the spray of burning paper fragments. Scars, he came with scars. Too many of them for us to get wrapped ourselves in just yet.

Or the insides of the box are no larger than the perimeter at first indicates. A miniature hat box with miniature green plastic crucifixes... several dozen sacrifices, mass produced molded reproductions as plentiful as lakeside pebbles. Salvation one toke at a time.

On the nights Matthew worked, from midweek into Saturday, his hobonicious crew gathered towards midnight in the seclusion of the rear alley. They would wait tucked behind the dumpster down outside the rear door to the shop. Hunched on their knees some of them sucked cigs, swigged cooking sherry or others that set on cardboard boxes they slowly squashed flat like wet rubber pool-whales slow to go flat beneath them.

On Matthew's signal of the propped open door the crew came within to their night harbor, the white-light filled lair -- they all of them straggled one-by-one into the interior of the sandwich shop.

Inside and secure they feasted, cleaned out the place, squabbled street politics and did the important stuff of party. Feed, belch and fart.

"They are all fuckin' criminals. They is all asshole bastard cheater motherfuggin criminals from the Mayor on down." They damn well jive to talk cool and tough like this beaten' on each other. "The whole lot of them stinks right along with the pigs and the Mafioso. The Unholy Conglomerate, you know, they own us. They own America. They own the goddamned world. They own my mother. Watch the television. You can see it. Jesus spoke to me. Open your goddamned eyes. Wendell don't have a brain to piss in. Don't give me that shit. You give us half a chance and a gun and we will have a revolution. Free the people free Harwoody Park! Free beer! Free pussy!"

The shop that sold sandwiches and soup by day transformed into an exchange shop at night, left over cold cuts, mustard and mayonnaise for cheap drugs and the high of true friendship.

