

Dr. Doug

by Gary Moshimer

When I got that brain tumor I hallucinated this crazy doctor. Dr. Doug. He came into my hospital room after the other doctors had left for the day. He was a fireplug, bald, said he'd played football. He spoke around a fat unlit cigar. "We're gonna kick the shit out of this fucker," he said.

He had a ray gun that he held to my head. He pulled the trigger and it buzzed. "I'm radiating!" he said. "Die, you mother!"

Then I'd climb onto his back and he'd run down the hallways with me, past nurses that never saw us, out the front door to his Porsche. He put the top down and drove fast. We stopped and got soft ice cream. He said, "Watch this," and pulled a hairpiece from the glove box. He drove ninety, and the hair flew off into a field.

He drove into the mountains and carried me on his back up through the trees. We sat on a ledge and watched the sun set.

Then he drove me to his house. We lounged around his pool with the torches going. His daughters swam and they flirted with me.

We did this every day.

Eventually I fell in love with the older girl, Mary. She had long black hair and strange gray eyes that were almost silver. The secret kisses were best when she came out of the water. She said we all return to water. I took to sinking, not breathing, and she would pull me out. It went on for hours that seemed like years. I told her when I was better I would marry her.

But when my tumor shrank, Dr. Doug went away. I asked about him, and was told they had no such doctor. I looked for his car out the window.

My mother took me home, and I brooded.

"Aren't you happy?" she said. "You're going to live."

I wasn't happy. There were people I missed. People I loved. And the impossible speed, the sunsets. The pool by night, the cool hot

kisses. The silver eyes. The sinking, breathless; the revival. I wanted it to go on forever.

I wasn't supposed to drive, but I took the car and cruised the rich neighborhoods, looking for them. I called out to many black-haired girls, but none were her. I fell into many pools, but the wrong people saved me.

Somewhere she waited. Until then I wouldn't start to live.

