

Coconut Milk

by Herbert Ramsden

When the door opened, Wentzel was in the hallway, red-faced and screaming.

I ran to him and took him by the shoulder. "Congratulations!"

Nature of my Brother-in-Law's Response: There were tears in his eyes.

"Wentz?" I said.

"Norm...she's dead."

"What?"

"The baby's head..it was so big. There were complications...I saw it all. They tried to get me out of the room but I saw it all. He split her apart like a coconut Norm! She was gone like that."

I unsuccessfully attempted to comfort Wentzel with some Styrofoam-coated coffee. A doctor came over to us, attempting comfort as well, but Wentzell was too quick. Too quick indeed.

"I don't ever want to touch that thing!" he screamed. "Get rid it or I will kill it myself!"

Wentzel's face was magenta now, his eyes blue and hateful.

Years earlier, Emily, my sister had confessed Wentzell had a pierced nipple.

"I want to go home," she had said. "People don' thave those kinds of hang-ups in Maine."

I supposed that the mature thing to do would be adoption. I thought about raising a child. I wondered how much I would need to cut back on masturbation and smoking, alcoholic delirium and bouts of frantic weeping. Wentzell would just have to calm down.

The doctor gave us a prescription and we watched a guy come out of the elevator with a fresh mop.

