

Contentment

by J.A. Pak

Bob had been sitting in the car for over twenty minutes. Parked up on the next hill, he had a good view of Dulcey's house. He'd come to feel responsible for the house. Like a good family doctor. With care, houses could last forever. Bob's thinking was that a house like Dulcey's should last only as long as the love did. Another year, Bob thought, another year and then he'd repaint. Some of the upstairs window frames needed repair. He'd do it all in one go. It was a grand house and he loved the feel of it.

He started the car and drove home full of contentment.

Carol's car was in the garage. Surprised, Bob bounced into the house and grabbed Carol by the waist, giving her a messy smooch on her cheek.

"My, you're in a good mood," Carol said.

"So I am, so I am." He gave her another kiss.

"You want to go over to Dulcey's for dinner?" Carol didn't see Dulcey as much as she would have liked. With her new job at the museum and all her volunteer work, she had even less time now than when the kids had been little. She missed her piano lessons. She'd start again soon.

"When do they expect us?" Bob asked.

"Around eight. Why?"

"I wanted to know if we have time," he said. "And we do."

He threw Carol over his shoulder and took her into the bedroom. On the bed he tickled her until she was crying with laughter. And then the tickles became caresses, the fingers, lips. The love they made was very quick, very hungry. The rest of the hour they spent lying together, holding hands. They were like warm little radiators.

Rain began to fall as they drove to Dulcey's. Hand in hand they ran towards the house. Little droplets of rain covered the button of Carol's nose. Bob wiped them away tenderly with his thumb. Carol put her hand around Bob's neck and kissed him passionately.

