

# It's a Wonderful Life

*by* Jake Barnes

Tree trimmers are in the big walnut tree in the back yard. One of our cats goes back and forth inside the house from the kitchen to the door that leads to the garage. He doesn't like the noise. He doesn't like strangers in his back yard. My wife is making lunch. I suggest leftover pizza. We are going over to the neighbor's house for pizza tonight, my wife says. I tell her that's okay. I like pizza.

It's a strange day. My wife drove my truck down to the "farm" over by the BART station. It's a vegetable stand, but the owner actually grows his own produce on about an acre of land not far from where we live. He bills it as "the last farm in Fremont," and so it is. The fresh vegetables are wonderful. His avocados, which he purchases from wholesalers, are great also.

The tree guys know what they are doing. They start by trimming off a big branch on a huge black walnut tree that my wife says has been worrying her for ages.

We took a walk this morning. We walk around the neighborhood on days when my wife isn't working, varying our route from day to day. We always check out Missy's house to see what atrocity she has put in her front yard that day. Her house, inside and out, is a folk art museum. Some of the "art" is pretty good; some isn't.

We also keep an eye on "home improvements," front yard landscaping projects, some good, some bad. Missy has a life size cow at the front of her house, but you can hardly see it for the overgrown foliage.

It's lunchtime, and I discover that my wife has made cheese and avocado sandwiches for us. "No pizza?" I ask. "No pizza," she says. I

take a short nap after lunch and awaken to a song a chainsaw is singing. I find the cat under the bed in the spare bedroom.

