

Attempted Innocence

by Jerry Ratch

When they first met at the bar, right away
he was sweet on her.
He drove an old oil-burning Buick or Olds,
going down the road like a smudge pot.
He never kept food in his car,
where it would get hot and spoiled.
He only picked nice fresh day-old food
right out of the trash bins.

I remember him talking a cop out of a ticket once
near the Grand Lake Theater,
after turning left across a double yellow line:
"I just lost everything in a divorce," he said.
"Can you give me a break?"

And you know what? It worked!

At that point in her life, I think she was open to
surgery without anesthetic, if you want the truth,
even though she knew her way around the Sizzler
herself.

"I remember that salad bar," she said. "It was the only salad bar
I've ever seen that had caviar. I loved that black caviar.
They put it up on a corner, and I could barely reach it."

But everything changed when she saw an ad that read:

*"Apprentice Needed to help create order out of the chaos of the
creative lives
of an artist and a writer. Pay low. Rewards immense ..."*

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“As soon as I saw the ad, I knew I had to apply,” she said,
“I thought so little of my life.”

