

Don't Know What's Gotten Into You, Young Man

by Jerry Ratch

I remember one of my old high school intellectual friends introduced me to what he called a real wild blond girl named Sally or Marnie or something that summer of 1964. She was tall and blond and thin and looked like a model. Boys were usually afraid to even look at her, she said. She looked hungry, and lonely, but had a haunted, sweet smile. And I took her out on my dad's boat on Fox River one night. We lay down with our heads on opposite sides of the front seat and she had short shorts on and I put my foot between her legs and rubbed her until she became wet, but we never went any further. I remember telling her, for some reason even I can't understand to this day that I wanted things to go slower. I think I said I like things to go slow. That was a new one for me. What the hell was I thinking? (Possibly you and I were having so much sex that I didn't especially care, if you want the truth!)

She took me to a party downtown in Chicago, near Rush Street. It was upstairs at somebody's apartment, and I just kept drinking and drinking all night. Then I drove home somehow, all by myself. I only remember at some point seeing a street sign, but it was tilted about 30 degrees, and I had no idea where I was. Yet somehow I made it back home to Villa Park, and in the middle of the night, my mother found me standing stark naked, peeing in the bathtub. She had to take me by the arm and put me back in bed. "Oh, Jerry," I remember her saying, "I don't know." Her head shaking. "I don't know what's gotten into you, young man."

