

# Sleepless #3

*by* Joe Kapitan

My ex-girlfriends live in a pastel-drenched cabin on the edge of a hemlock forest in Canada somewhere, along with a few of the kids we almost had, and they all get along fine, for the most part, even tolerating the schizophrenic one, because they like to wager on which voice she'll wake up in, and they grow their own baconless food, and tend a sprawling flower garden, full of the varieties I never bought them occasionally, but mostly they are just "there for each other," "emotionally," which was always the point at which I jammed their signals and drifted down the dial to booze or strippers or coke, and that happens to be exactly what they're all talking about right now, around their campfire, with the almost-tots tucked in their bunks and the bottle of schnapps nearly empty, and the schizo pulls out the crocheted doll that looks like a little perforated version of me, and they take turns prodding its cotton stuffing with needles, and they've taken to calling it karma, while my doctor prefers carcinoma, but all I know is that their relentless stabs keep me up most nights, coughing tiny crimson droplets onto my pillowcase.

