

Testimony

by John Riley

The next winter the house burned down. The summer before Bobby lived with us. He was short with a thick mustache and big muscles and didn't like wearing a shirt in the heat. He showed me how to make a belt snap by looping the end to the buckle and jerking it from both sides. It's trickier than it sounds when you're a little kid. You'd catch a finger if you weren't careful and have to worry about crying. I walked around snapping his belt until she yelled at me to please for God's sake please stop. "I can't take it anymore," she said. He did card tricks too but wouldn't show me how they worked. I could figure them out when I grew up. The first day he wasn't there I kept my mouth shut. The next day I asked where he'd gone. "Back to where he came from," she said.

