

Worth a Thousand Words

by John Wentworth Chapin

He tossed the sopping, warm facecloth in the corner by the shower of the hotel bathroom. The discarded towel nearly glowed against the subdued khaki of the tub and tile; it was wet, but the plush loops of absorbent goodness were thick and luxuriant enough to give the towel a fuzzy look, despite what was wiped inside the clot of cotton. He peered at his face in the mirror, sweaty and spent. He was triply satisfied: he'd come twice and he was a damn good-looking man.

Satisfaction drained from his face as he glanced over his shoulder to the bed; his therapist was holding the camcorder in his palm, aluminum legs of the tripod splayed beneath it at an angle like some uprooted monument. He walked around behind the therapist and watched the small screen over his shoulder. The sex act was mechanical; the therapist's face was hidden, but his own face was there, looking at the camera most of the time. His face was inscrutable, but he strove to remember what he was feeling as he stared into the camera while building to an orgasm. He couldn't make meaning out of it.

"This fucking experiment didn't show me shit," he said.

His therapist continued to watch his own pelvis thrusting in the foreground while his client's face beseeched the camera. "You can't see what you were feeling?" the therapist asked the client.

"Nothing," he replied.

The therapist nodded.

