Dancing on the Rhythm Bus–One Night after Leaving The Pyramid Club, 1991

by Kyle Hemmings

He keeps shining a pen light into my eyes, this big muscle dude with a green gown. I have a vague sense that I'm in the back of an ambulance.

He asks me my name. But he's already called me Mickey. So I say, Mickey, Mickey the SuperFag, Mickey, the kickass club dancer. I mean the best, the best, the …

Muscle dude says “Mickey, Were you trying to kill yourself?”

I close my eyes and imagine myself sucked through this endless internal vacuum, the same one that probably bore me without the need for a mother with womb and scar. I was born a whore. But Muscle Dude keeps shaking me, refusing to let me fall onto the safety net of endless falling. I tell him “Yes,” just to shut him up.

“Mickey,” he says, “What were you taking? Amyl nitrate?”

No, I tell him, just some barbs, yellow bees, and he called it a “Friday Night Special.” I start to fade out again.

Muscle Dude keeps shaking me.

“He called it a Friday Night Special?” he asks.

“Yeah, he called it that.”

“He…?

I fade away.

I wake up. He's still shaking me.

“What's a Friday Night Special?”

“Something to take if you never want to see Saturday.”

“I mean what's in a Friday Night Special? Mickey, talk to me.”

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“Everything. It's got everything. Every night of the week.”

The boom of his voice fades, or maybe me dropping deeper and deeper. I only want to be swallowed by this slow blackness of endless sleep.

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The next day I can't recall at all, a waste, like the flash of twenty years of my life, faces that pass you like comets in some erogenous unnamed zone of night, but they got me in some isolation room with my wrists in leather restraints. I'm still so tired, only wanting to escape this broken shell of a body.

Just to think: Only two nights before I was a greased banshee with some serious moves. I scored some great tips.

The shrink is cool and all, smooth-toned with the ability to elicit button-down conversation. He starts by asking what happened before the ambulance arrived. I tell him I can't remember everything. But this guy, I mean older, picked me up at The Pyramid, said he was in love, said his name was Mr. Stiff himself, and he stuffed my g-stings with some pictures of the true father of electricity.

At his place on Loisada, we took a shower, but he was too drunk to get hard or anything. Occasionally, one of his geisha boys came out to grab a grape soda, and behind closed doors I heard some giggling, some strange talk at the volume of moon walking.

In fact, Mr. Stiff referred to them as his Moonies. I said You mean Moonies as in Rev. Moon? No, he said, my Moonies, precious as twin butterflies. These butterflies only dance in moonlight.

Later, Mr. Stiff drowned me in heavy conversation that I could not put together, the bits and jagged glass edges, and he kept prodding me to take more pills from this flower bowl in front of us, its sides flaring out like so many lips, so many strangers I have hurt.

Eventually, Mr. Stiff broke down and said I reminded him of his son, that he had one somewhere, kept sending money to the mother until his mail got bounced back with a Return to Sender. And I was starting to get groggy, and Mr. Stiff kept saying, Don't you remember the times we . . . or how I used to walk you home from . . .

and before I passed out, I remember him saying to please call him daddy, that he didn't mean for me to drown alone, and I can crash at his place as long as I like, he never wants me to leave.

And I remember saying something about how my mother became a virgin after she had me, which was a joke I sometimes told at the club to loosen up some jaded been-there-been-everywhere fool, and then right before I hit the carpet on my knees, two of the Moonies holding hands came out and said almost in unison, “Is he alright?”

The sound of their voices echoed in my head until it reached the pitch of a siren.

So I'm telling the shrink that it was all just a fluke, that it's just one hazard of the line of work I'm in. You meet golden bulls who'll lick your hand and sometimes you meet raging boars who try to trap you up in a tree. That's all that happened. But I have to dance. I have to go back to the club. Dancing is what I am when I don't look back. When I dance, nothing can catch me, turn me to stone. It's when I'm still that life becomes a motherfucker.