

laundry

by Rene Foran

She tended to worry a lot for a kid.

She'd lie awake at night afraid to listen to the sound of her own heart beating, worried that it might stop.

She'd once read the Time-Life Encyclopedia on The Universe and became obsessed with the woman from Alabama who was singled out, by a rock from a far place, in her sleep.

So, she'd lie awake in her own bed looking up at that place in the ceiling where *her* meteorite would surely fall through, and beg, " Oh crap, not tonight I have art class tomorrow."

As she got older, every book, movie or newspaper article told the story of someone, roughly her own age, dying young.

Seemingly healthy young adults wiped out before the age of twenty by leukemia, brain tumours and third rails.

And so she became convinced that every stomach pain, headache or leg cramp was the onset of her own unhappy ending.

She avoided trains like the plague.

She hated that she worried so much, yet found herself drawn to the very things that caused her to worry.

Freak accidents, natural disasters, incurable illnesses...
chain letters...

She would often think as she read that slogan on the dry cleaning building off of Speedwell Avenue, "Deposit Your Worries Here"

Oh, if only there were such a place!

And how busy it would be!

She imagined overstuffed sacks of worries, pinned up with huge diaper pins, thrown into big canvas carts and wheeled off by conveyor belt to some dark, mysterious tunnel where they'd be cleaned, steamed, starched and pressed into strength and hope.

Such a place would be magnificent, she dreamed...

completely forgetting for a moment what it was that she was worried about.

