

Inevitable break down

by Rich Haber

As I approached the dawn in her eyes, uncontrollable fear made me giggle. When she picked up her suitcase, turned to face me, redness erupted in her eyes. Clutching myself now would be useless; I spoke of fate, of frowns on rag dolls, of no balms in Gilead.

Chiming clocks in the foyer and bedroom made apology impossible so I shot her and stuffed her body in a suitcase. When I opened the door her father walked in and asked the inevitable. I looked into his eyes realizing he was already dead of adipose poisoning. There was no cure for it so I dragged both bodies out to the back forty, buried them in the same grave.

On the way back to the farmhouse, I began to giggle again. By winter I'd have to kill myself or dig up the bones and crush them to powder. So many stupid people make that mistake; the cops find the skeleton and the stupid people go to jail.

I went to a drum circle next night under the full moon in May, scotch broom and lilacs blooming. You don't inhale such aphrodisiacs without losing your balance. There were children of druids and pagans and *stregas* from lands over the sea, lands beyond lands. We joined in circles, burning wild sage-wands picked that afternoon, fresh and clean from the surrounding desert. Drums played themselves, incantations low, slow and steady, inexorable, irresistible. Fire dancers whirled, strangely tuned and choreographed by things that burned green on the ends of devil sticks, on staves, chains and wire. Young girls danced between flames, circling the central campfire with spark-longs bursting upward from crackling logs. Coyotes and skunks, eyes glowing behind desert bushes and brush watched us, hypnotized by rhythms, fire, palpable earth magic.

Long past midnight, the ghosts of Mauryana and her father appeared in the campfire's dying embers. I ran screaming into the Truckee River, its icy waters from the Sierra Madres flowing past the tents of lovers in full embrace, past seasons and memory, into Pyramid Lake, Lahontan, Walker, Little Tahoe. In the secret lake that accepted my unholy spirit I drowned again and again, waking, gasping for air before being dragged under yet again. I long for mercy and humility but Satan vomits and laughs at my entreaties.

