

# Me. You. Love.

*by* Rick Rofihe

My wife, Ellen, spends \$300 a month on her face. Her gym costs \$180, Pilates \$300, personal trainer \$300.

## **UPSTAIRS—Phase 1 (Fall):**

Demolish tub, sink, shelving & shower.  
Build one dormer window.

We rent. \$5000. She pays half. But we own a small house near New London, fixing it up. Fifteen minutes past there, almost three hours from here.

Build new shower with tiles.

Install freestanding sink & water-efficient toilet.

Redesign & build shelves/cabinets for towels & bathroom supplies.

On average, \$1000 a month for Ellen's clothes. Hair, another \$300. I pay the phones, but she pays utilities, about \$150.

## **UPSTAIRS—Front Bedroom (facing lake):**

Demolish skylight. Build two dormer windows to replace it.

I know Ellen used to spend \$500 on her face. She does say that now she tries to keep \$200 back for *emergencies*, but I'm never sure if that's really the same \$200 she might not now be spending on her face—"How do I look, David?"

"Great! OK!" Really, she does. Everywhere. Always.

Manicures? Pedicures? What—say, \$35 two or three times a month?

**UPSTAIRS—Back Bedroom (facing garage):**

Demolish north skylight. Build two dormer windows to replace it.

Replace south skylight with new skylight.

Eating, in and out, about \$1700, at least, for both of us—we split it. Over a year, travel works out to \$500 a month each, local transportation another \$250 each. Entertainment, tips, say a thousand a month—more or less we split that too.

“David! I'm starved!” That's Ellen coming back now.

“We'll order in,” I say. “I'll take care of it.” She's too hungry to argue. She agrees.

New roof. New, better quality shingles.

Married three years now. No kids. Not yet.

**DOWNSTAIRS—Phase 2 (Spring):**

Expand Kitchen.

Demolish existing kitchen.

Extend kitchen out into yard—square footage to be determined (accommodating 50-foot setback into design & back toward garage, to the depth of the existing washing machine closet.)

Concrete footing under new kitchen extension.

New glass door out to porch toward lake.

Wall of windows facing lake and wrapping around side yard to wall.

Install kitchen cabinets, stove, refrigerator in “L” formation.

One or two windows overlooking back deck (depending on cabinets.)

A story was told to me once, a true story. I could point out to anyone where the whole thing culminated, just as it was pointed out to me. A nice guy, good-looking, good job, good background, good prospects, and no problem with women—he always could have, and had, his pick. Until one day he notices a woman in his neighborhood, and, first look, her face fixes in his brain, I guess, and all other women become, pretty soon, unsatisfying. He withdrew, like a monk—*almost* like a monk.

On one hand, he must have been saving himself, everything in himself for this woman, until, whenever, he saw her again. But, one night, he can't stand it, being alone, the mental tension, maybe, and the physical. So he goes—he had no need to, I understand, at any other time in his life—he goes to, I don't think it was an inexpensive establishment, some kind of house of prostitution. He's shown women to choose from—and there she is!

Did he choose her? That's what I asked. Yes. And then I asked, Does he marry her? No, no, no, he does not marry her.

Revisit plumbing.

Make sure all plumbing is up to date.

New water heater.

New water filtration system.

Possibly new toilet in downstairs bathroom.

Try to increase pressure in upstairs bathroom.

Anything else? Well, Ellen has medical and dental coverage, but there's probably a couple of hundred dollars outside of that. And New York—probably anywhere, really—can vacuum the money, if you've got it, out of your pocket as you just walk down the street, so, in a month, \$300? \$400? Oh—and she gets a maid in one day a week, \$65 each time.

In my own case, before Ellen, of course there was someone else. She—well, she was someone who I felt as if I'd always known and always would. And I think she felt the same about me.

I want to think that, wherever she is now, she understands why we couldn't go on like we were, that no good would come of it, almost nothing happening, hardly anything getting done day after day together, just each of us thinking the same thing: Me. You. Love. So I left.

There's the bell. "Ellen! Food's here!"

