

A Look In the Mirror

by Robert Crisman

Roanne was nearing the end of her road. Tricking and *chiva* had chewed her right up. She needed a little surcease from sorrow.

She called Donny, the guy who'd slurp the sludge off the soles of her shoes for the chance to get next.

He knocked on her door with some trepidation. He hadn't seen Roanne in some months and she hadn't called. He knew what she was doing, of course, and figured he had an idea of why the call came.

Which meant that maybe she'd come home at last and to stay. Hope springs eternal...

When she opened her door though, *Jesus*, he hadn't imagined the road was *that* rough. The *chiva* was *eating* her, man! The light in her eyes--*way* down past dim.

He'd never seen her like this and he was aghast.

He tried to cover it up. The look of horror--an implicit critique of her life, after all, and she wouldn't have it. She might even send him away! Donny would rather have somebody chop off his dick.

He smoothed his face over as quick as you'd snap your fingers. Roanne had quickened his reflexes over the years. He still wasn't quick enough, though. He might now be sporting a mask on top of his neck, but she'd caught the flash before he'd had time to paper it over. And she knew her Donny; the mask itself was a tipoff to thoughts he had bouncing around in his head--given this context, for sure.

It got to her too. That flash of horror as well as the lie that replaced it were mirrors of sorts, and both told the truth. The truth made her sick. But then, in a blink, *rage* shot right through her. Rage, that finely honed tool of denial of whatever is heaped on the plate.

Fuck Donny, him and his funnytime looks.

She stuffed her rage under rubble and rocks and, in its place, she trotted out eye-rolling, detached *amusement*, false as all hope.

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This dork's...*sensibilities*, man.

And now, her grin and cocked eyebrow--these let him know that she'd caught his ass out. The grin was more sneer than a smile. And then came the snort of dead laughter that let him know that she'd rather fuck goats than give him a taste for his trouble...

This, to maybe the last guy in town who might want some.

Still though, he'd give her three hots and a cot till she'd rested up for the next round of war.

Three hots and a cot and the hope of some surcease, you know?

