

Summerset Bangs from Oldtown

by Sean Brown

There was blackberry pie and huckleberry wine and little Maria with her summerset bangs. Life lived out loud with a smile and a song and a purposely carefree disposition. She walked in the rain and didn't mind getting a little wet. She kept her books dry though, always kept those books dry. Twisted sideways smiles with the gutter punks and the winos and the junkies, she was an Oldtown Darling.

A walking contradiction in a dreary city of fantastic losers; she always had a kind word for those down on their luck. She was sunshine in the form of an adorable high school pixie. She held her face to the rain and smiled at the sky, and the sun smiled back at her, she was just one of those originals. She'd dated a rich boy from the West Hills, but he couldn't dig her moves. She'd dated a beautiful boy from the neighborhood, but he just brought her down, he cramped her style.

She won a scholarship to go out East for school, but she promised she'd come back. Oldtown would always be her home. Her proud papa threw an amazing party to see her off. First just family, and then later the neighbors stopped over for congratulations and cake. Word got out and friends came, people from the community came, they all came. There was drinking and dancing and laughing on a rare warm night. Outside, under the stars, they all smiled. Everyone felt good about life; someone was finally getting out of Oldtown on their own terms, someone of whom they could all be proud.

No one noticed the moment she left, though they felt sad because they'd always thought she'd at least say good-bye. It came as quite the shock when they found her three weeks later stuffed in a tattered canvas duffle bag, eyes glued shut and fingertips cut off, in

the dumpster behind the Alexis Café. The police called her just another girl from Oldtown.

