

Saved (Seven-Fingered Jesus)

by Shawn Misener

Believe me, I would run if I could, but there seems to be a low haze of molasses clinging to my ankles.

The axe murderer is still hidden by the fog, yet I can hear his boots as they trudge a few yards behind. He's singing Brtiney Spears in a chipmunk voice and keeping the rhythm by swishing his weapon back and forth through the swamp.

Hit me baby one more time. . . There's something ahead, some neon blue haze mutating and reaching out from the condensation, a wild and rambunctious cousin to the fog, a wobbly blob of funky color. As I slog forward the shape gains form: Jesus himself, replete in a shimmering powder bathrobe and dancing the shuffle, his smile delineated by a thin line of black lipstick.

I suddenly wish I had been baptized, that my parents hadn't been eco-terrorists, that I hadn't stolen that candy bar from Wal-Mart three years ago, that I hadn't had so much unmarried sexual congress. Behind me the axe murderer screams like somebody's jammed two bratwurst in his eyes. His singing is done for the night.

Jesus holds out his right hand, beckoning me to approach with seven fingers. The weight has lifted from my legs, and I'm doing cartwheels in space, laughing like a maniac.

