

Tumultuous Cracker

by Shawn Misener

The mustached old man with no legs is planted in the lawn, furiously digging holes big enough to plunge his hands into and pull out the birds. Behind him a gigantic dog sleeps and snores like thunder. The whole scene smells like paranoia.

The birds shake themselves clean, little plumes of dirt exploding like popcorn above the man. He laughs and his nervous voice bounces through the holes he's dug, blasting immense sonic tunnels that startle the dog awake. The birds flee to the clouds and the man curses through his nose. He quickly tucks himself into a ball and rolls away.

"Who awakens the Tumultuous Cracker?" booms the elephant-sized hound, rising to his feet. He leans over and methodically sniffs the holes, lingering over some more than others. The man barrels into a shrub carved to resemble Jesus and holds his breath, trying not to whimper in fear.

I stroll out of the kitchen door holding two growlers of blueberry lemonade, suddenly aware that what I believed to be a pleasant pastoral scene has transformed into a violent, David Lynch-type circus. The massive dog roars and bites the head off of the Jesus bush, causing the man to roll away with astonishing speed.

"This isn't what it looks like, Sonic!" bellows the dog, bounding after him. "Those birds weren't my friends! Why are you afraid?"

I observe the trail of dust that rises in their wake as they merge into the horizon. There's a chance the birds will return, and with them the old man and the dog.

