Morning

by stephen hastings-king

He wakes up in his stuffed chair with a start and a snort.

Next to him is a cereal bowl piled with cigarette butts.

Beyond the window is the oppressive loveliness of another day.

This morning, his eyes are a little too big for their sockets.

He considers going back to sleep.

On the television, a round woman sits amongst the mannequins. She wears a headband. She describes some awesome jewelry.

Again, there is a dull pain in his neck and an acrid taste in his mouth

He fishes around the cereal bowl for a duck. He finds one. He holds it up, examines it. Not too disgusting. He lights it.

Through a thin trail of smoke he looks at some awesome jewelry.

He searches for the telephone amongst the cushions, then amongst the piles of newspaper on the floor around the chair.

He takes a drag on the cigarette fragment and swears to himself.

It is 9 am.

He decides to get a beer.

On the way to the refrigerator he thinks: Once this bathrobe was white.

There is a lite beer amongst the rotting summer squashes.

He kicks the door shut, pushes the pizza boxes back on the kitchen table and steadies the beer as he opens it.

From the other room, the voice says that any look can be dressed up with pendants.

He reaches for his earlobe. He takes a drink and winces.

He begins an idle search through the pizza boxes. He finds a slice. He examines it. He cannot be sure how old it is. The closes it back in its box and looks toward the living room.

He says: The fucking telephone has to be here somewhere.

He shuffles back to the chair in front of the television set.

He leaves the awesome jewelry behind and flips to a rerun hockey game. He finds the predictability of its excitement to be reassuring. He prefers that time of day.

He fishes around for another duck. He finds one. He holds it up, examines it. Not too disgusting.

He lights it and settles in.