

Dead Batteries

by Steve Young

She woke before the sun was up to brew a pot of coffee. His eyes blinked open as he lay in bed smiling, smelling the fresh coffee mixed with marijuana smoke. He walked to the living room and sat next to her on the couch. He rested his head against her shoulder. She held a small joint to his lips.

"Coffee?"

"Please"

As the sun came up he smoked and read on the porch. Inside he could hear the sounds of house cleaning. He put his head back and fell asleep just as his old vacuum started to bump against the walls.

The sun was in his eyes and his legs were still sleeping. He shuffled into the house but could not see. She had shut the blinds, no lights were on, and she had used duct tape to plaster junk mail over any of the cracks where light could come in. When his eyes adjusted they saw her on the couch, naked. She was in a fetal position and crying.

"Hey girly."

"Mmm."

"Are you okay?"

"Mmm."

She slid off the couch and crawled to his feet. She wrapped her arms around his legs and started to beg for forgiveness. He knelt down to pull her hair out of her face. He wiped tears from her chin as he pulled her to her feet.

"Stand up."

"I'm so sorry."

"What are you apologizing for?"

"We need new batteries."

"Come sit on the couch, girly. Try to stop crying. Why do we need new batteries?"

"It's, just, you've been so tired lately"

"But, that's not your fault."

"I know, but I thought maybe the dead batteries around here were draining your energy. I put them all in a grocery bag, and threw them in the canal while you were asleep"

She started to cry uncontrollably as she buried her face in his chest.

"I'm sorry you married a crazy girl, but I just can't help it."

He wrapped his arms around her and pulled her in. He held her there for a long time. He held her there tightly, knowing it was long past time to let her go.

