Excerpt (Writing With Wine)

by Tim Young

Sliding my fingers through my hair reminds me of the way the wine slips down my throat. Slippery. Very slippery. I do not want to think that my fingers are sliding because my hair is a greasy mess. But it is. It falls down onto my face and then I get a whiff of it or I can feel it more than I want to. It's simply another distraction. Something else driving me mad in its attempts to take my mind off of my writing. I've already disposed of my television and my ancient radio is definitely on its last legs. I'm waiting for the static to move in permanently and commander the broadcast waves so that the next time I am tempted to turn that thing on all I'm going to hear is white noise. The static of my life that not even I would choose to listen to. Forget it. I can not be bothered by the likes of modern mass communications sucking the essence of life right through my brain and clogging my nostrils so that I can barely breathe.

Damn, I joke with myself, who was the fucking idiot that bought this cheap bottle of red wine? (could it be that hot new author, Henry Jackson?) What fool wouldn't have the sense to notice that this particular bottle is nothing but red vinegar trapped in a bottle that was created to contain wine! I am so angry. But I can not throw the shit away. If I did that then I wouldn't have anything to drink and worse nothing to help advance the growing anger in my dilapidated brain that somehow is able to continue to punch the keys on this lousy typewriter. I could have at least broke down my rules for once and bought a goddamn electric typewriter. But no. I'd rather not do anything like that. I'd rather punish myself as frequently and as abusively as I possibly can. And with that comes the knowledge that this brand new story that I have been working on for the past two weeks is gonna be another throwaway! And I

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have invested of myself in this story. I have gone to the library and read several self-help books on the wonders of being good to one's self and now I can see plainly that there is not a drop of 'good' in this character I have created. He's the next thing to a scum bag. He only arrives late or never even appears for whatever social function he might be involved with and if he does he invents lies and excuses that are quite obvious to the people he was supposed to interact with. Then once he sees that nobody is buying his line he begins to roar a string of obscenities at them and invariably storms out of the room or wherever he is and if there is a door to slam, well then all the better and his hope is, of course, that if there would be some glass in the door that it would shatter into a million pieces. And, yes, I have the power to insist that there is a huge glass panel in each and every door that Mr. Madman slams as he makes his hasty exit amidst a storm of continually savage obscenities.

Suddenly I push my ass to the very back of my chair and attempt to straighten out this horrible back of mine. As I moan and grab my glass of red vinegar I see that the page of crisp white paper in my typewriter carriage is blank. My fingers have not been punching any keys at all. I see that all I have been punching is myself in the head with all these random throwaway thoughts and that I am probably my own greatest distraction. Goddamn it where is the television?! I could watch a ball game and get this much work finished. Shit. I realize I have to take a breath. My vision seems to be clouding over and I can barely feel my heart beating. I must be slipping into a coma. If I do that then who will be able to dial 911? I am unable to call out. My voice has been reduced to a whimper and my strength has ebbed and leaked onto the floor like a puddle of this ghastly so-called red wine so I pour the remaining few ounces of it right onto the floor. And next with whatever little strength remaining I am able to pull myself out of my chair, my foot will without a doubt step immediately into that puddle of horrid grape juice and I will slip swiftly down to the prone position where my head will smash to the floor and a trickle of blood will track down

from my lips to my chin only to eventually mingle with the fucking cheap wine which if I ever recover consciousness I will lap up like the thirsty dog that I am. Like the filthy alcoholic that constantly pretends not to exist within this ribcage of bones and blood.

I stop. I look down and see there is actually a small stack of papers by my trusty old typewriter. I look again and see that indeed there are words and punctuation typed all over these few pages and that with another glance I can determine that there is some logic built into the way the words are strung together. I almost allow myself to smile but I keep those muscles in check because of the 'story' if one can call it that is still in its infancy. Gestation period is not truly at an end. More birthing is necessary and some growth. I stop and am pleased for once that I chose an almost undrinkable bottle of wine. I put that detestable liquid next to the drain board in the kitchen and find what I am hoping is a much more palatable bottle. This time I choose a chardonnay. Done with red for today. I always keep, well almost always keep, at least two, hopefully, three or four different bottles of wine right on my windowsill in the kitchen. It's not really a kitchen. It does pretend to be one what with the gas burning stove and the refrigerator standing buddy, buddy next to each other but that kind of friendship is flimsy at best. They have no true connection and they know it. Hot and cold is how it is with them and there is nothing that anyone can do about it. It's a joke. One smiles and the other frowns and vice versa. The poor excuse for a kitchen sink and the window that lives in constant seclusion because the blinds must be eternally drawn. The reason is the neighbors' apartment that lives barely ten yards across the space that separates us. Those miserable bastards never close their curtains, shade or blinds. I don't even know what they have over there because I have never seen it closed. Could be another brick in the wall as far as I am concerned. I hate them.

One day I am going to stand there naked with a pile of rocks by my side as I pull up my blinds and throw the rocks like a machine gun

directly through their window smashing the thing into millions of tiny shards that are impossible for them to ever completely clean up. They will forever be running to the bathroom screaming for the tweezers so that they can attempt to, hopefully quite unsuccessfully, pull the razor sharp splinters from the bottom of their tender little barking dogs. Oh boy. This is when I could totally allow myself to let my facial muscles soar into madness. Letting the laughter rise out of me like hot magma exploding from a much too long 'extinct' volcano. And just when one might suppose that the flow has begun to quiet a bit it would begin all over again with a new ferocity. A fresh energy that spits and gurgles and soars almost into convulsions. Oh hell, let's have some convulsions, so then my body would writhe on the floor and I would see the ever present phony friends of the stove and fridge and so continue to laugh and laugh. And then the neighbors in pain would summon the police but I wouldn't let them in because I wouldn't be able to drag myself off of the floor and they would have to break the door down if they really wanted to subdue me, and if they did that I would straighten myself up in a wink and inquire to why would they want to crash into my apartment? I was only sitting here at the typewriter working on a story. I'd offer them a cup of coffee. There wouldn't be any rocks as evidence in the kitchen because they would all be across the way in the neighbor's apartment.

My ass is killing me. I gotta get up off this chair. I want a new chair. I want one with huge fat cushions and with a drawer underneath the seat so I could store essential items there so that I would not have to get up off of that most comfortable seat as I do have to get up and out of this most uncomfortable one that I still have not removed my ass from. OK. Now I have pushed myself away from the table and had to have used my leg muscles to raise this body up and finally away from my dear old table. My table. I do find I have a soft spot in my heart for this table. It reminds me of the tables that used to occupy space in one of the larger rooms at my elementary school. Not a classroom is what I'm getting at. But

the point is the wood. There is a grain to it that somehow reminds me of the movement of the ocean. I don't mean waves either but the way the sea moves out further. When one is on a boat and is looking back to the shoreline and the ocean is lapping up against the side of the boat. Those little slaps and then out away from the boat and how the water moves. The rising and falling, the stretching and tearing, the ancient knowledge contained somewhere in those primordial molecules that have bashed about the planet since absolute eons before any one-celled animal dared to even conceive of splitting in two. That's what my dear old table reminds me of and why it is the one piece of furniture I would never, ever, consider removing from my life. That is if for some reason I would pretend to understand that I would be able to move into an apartment with more than one room. That is not a dream of mine. I repeat. That is not a dream of mine. Thoughts come and go and ideas play about the mind like dandelion seeds strewn about by the wind but a bigger apartment, well that is, I'm sure, a dream for someone and perhaps many someones but not for me.

I rub my butt. I pull my pants down over my tired ass butt and rub some moisturizer on there. That's because when I stepped out of the shower the other day I noticed some sagging butt flesh. It wasn't pretty. It was similar to some stretch marks, maybe, but more exaggerated. More defined. More disgusting. So now when my tired old ass is tormenting me to lift it's sagging old self off my almost comfortable chair that I continue to sit in for the better part of the day and night, when I simply can not stand to sit another second, I jump out of the damn chair and reach for the moisturizer as I begin to undo my belt buckle so that my pants can fall to my knees or ankles depending how far apart I have my legs as I am standing there and pump the little pump that dispenses the moisturizer into my waiting hand. Sometimes left, sometimes right. Sometimes I'm too exhausted to pull them back up. Maybe I'll stand there for a little while and see if I can catch a breeze or listen intently for a few seconds to see if the phone might ring. I'd hate to

waste a good standing up. Sometimes I end up removing all of my clothes and then lay on my bed and look at myself. I like to check things out. I do like to know that I am still all in one piece. I enjoy seeing how each piece is connected to the other. Bodies are one of the few things that bring out the amazement in me, especially my own body. But by amazement, I don't want to lead anybody down the wrong path, by amazement, that does not mean that I am fond of this casement that holds me together. OK, it is cool to look at but I do not have to like it. Like my sagging butt; who the hell wants that? This skin and bones when all is said and done are not worth the price of a good bottle of wine, once it's drained of any interesting fluids and put in the ground for god's sake. And, Oh My God, some people choose to have the damn thing burned to ashes. Believe me, there is no room on the stock market for human ashes. There are no futures for those, only perhaps, an expensive urn on a relative's living room mantle. Ashes are ashes and if they are ever spilled, well one can imagine that kind of mess.