

Mr. Townsend Wakes Up

by TJ Schuyler

Driving home from work Mr. Townsend felt something unusual. An acute sense of life. A sense of awareness he'd not experienced in a long time. This was a route he'd driven thousands of times, to and from work for the past 23 years. Over Western Ave, down Central, left on Elm.... Driving south on Central, jammed up in evening traffic, he was struck by a billboard for a gentleman's club on Western Blvd — Night Moves (an odd name for a place that serves lunch).

He couldn't stop thinking about it. The last time he was in a strip club it was 1981; his oldest daughter Sarah, now 29, was only 2-years old then. Since then, the only woman he'd seen naked was his wife, and the occasional full-body shot in the more scandalous rated Rs. He kept wondering which of the billboard's claims were more enticing, 'Beautiful Women' or 'Best Burger in Town.' Was he anesthetized, he wondered? Utterly sexless? He worked in an office less than half a mile from Night Moves for over 20 years and he never once considered venturing in. Had he been on cruise control? —Autopilot? What else had he missed? It was time, he thought, to open his eyes and start living more. So, he turned around and went to the club. He parked deep in parking as if someone would recognize *his* silver Corolla.

His mind raced with thoughts of young breasts, flat-stomached girls, and fat-stomached men stuffing their faces with the 'Best Burger in Town.' This was the most excitement he'd experienced since his reprobate son was arrested last year. Approaching the door his thoughts raced so fast they all blended into one, a big-breasted cheeseburger danced in his mind, filling him with joy he hadn't experienced since he was a young rabble-rouser. He paid the heavy-set bouncer and stepped inside. And there she was. Sarah. His oldest daughter. He never knew she had a tattoo.

