

# ◇ Defenestration ◇

## Volume I, Issue XII

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**Bloodline**  
by  
**Allison McVety**

As I child I ne'er forgot  
That I was probably a Scott,  
My father used to talk of kilt and clan.  
He tracked the family doon  
As far as Carlisle toun,  
But no further could a word of us be got.

My kith and kin are Celt,  
So my father strongly felt,  
Yet my name it must be said is in the Irish  
So blarney stone in part  
And with heather in my heart,  
From a baser metal I am clearly smelt

With links to Cheetham Hill,  
And a photo on the sill  
Of a woman who could easily be a Jew  
I could have been McLevi,  
But instead I am McVety,  
So I guess I'm just a product of the mill.

Yet there's no use in dwellin'  
On the sayin' or the spellin' -

You simply cannae be what you are not.

We're a mixed bloodline,

And singin' Old Langsyne

Willnae turn a mongrel into Scott.

**My Wife's Marriage, Defined In Third Person  
Hopefully Distorted, Happily Awake, And Honestly Exposed  
by  
Daniel Gallik**

He is a man  
who is, who is  
a common type  
of redundant  
expression. Am-  
bitious, an  
adjective who  
severely cries  
and weakly  
yells. He is  
very much like  
Vermont, thin  
and screaming  
toward Canada.  
He is a man  
who attracts  
visitors. He  
is a winter  
sport, spring's  
yellowing vixen,  
summer's old nun,  
and autumn's  
deadly luster.  
Read Amendment 1,  
and then, do  
not follow it  
with him. He  
will love you  
tomorrow very  
thoroughly, then  
hate you tomorrow.  
You'll cry, then  
kiss his naval,  
and take money  
from his secret  
belt. Your mom'll  
laugh in her  
grave. Your angst  
marriage. All  
nuts. He is a dumb  
American who is  
carefully distort-  
ed.

**Two Poems**  
by  
By J.D. Fuller

**WHEN IN ROME???**

One night in Spain  
I got laid in Madrid

That's what I told my friends  
But that's not what I did...

I sat at home alone  
And I wrote this instead

**Death**

Sucks. I dunwunna be  
A mummy.  
Shoot me  
Into space  
Maybe an alien race  
Will proclaim me a god  
Then again  
Probably not  
But still...

**Two Poems**  
by  
**By J.D. Nelson**

**me me me**

My other-self arrived in the post-port this morning. I was awakened from a dream by the whirring noises of the brand-new post-port I'd installed for the specific purpose of receiving my custom other-self, which I was having shipped directly from the factory to my living-unit. arrived in the post-port this morning I'd installed directly to my living-unit. other-self arrived in the post-port I'd installed for the specific from a dream by the whirring noises this morning. I arrived in the post-port this morning. my custom other-self arrived in the whirring noises of the brand-new post-port from a dream this morning.

**46**

Yellow Rabbit looked down at his erection. He'd spent the last twelve hours gluing toothpicks together to form a replica of Old Ghost Rock Tower. Crowe sat on the edge of the unfolded mattress of the sleeper-sofa he'd been crashing on. The rabbit had picked it up at the dump, so the mattress was still a little damp. Shoot, Crowe didn't mind! "A bed is a bed is a place for my head," he'd mumble to himself. He hated Yellow Rabbit's replica. He wanted to smash it into splinters, but the effects of the Mood-Enhancers he'd consumed were too strong. Too strong!

**Two Poems**  
by  
**Michael Internicola**

**BIG BLACK DICKS AND HAIRY ASSES**

for a while i was crashing at my  
parents home in buffalo. i was using  
the family aol account to retrieve my  
literary e-mails. eventually i got board.  
around two a.m. one evening i changed  
my profile to a 19 year old bi-sexual,  
big titted girl. i corresponded with  
high school chicks and jerked off  
in chat rooms. one time i even  
admitted i was a guy after an nyu student  
sent me nudes of her on a dryer.  
she reported me. i got a warning.  
i had my regulars, did it for a week until  
some guy kept bothering me with the  
little box talk. he though i was a broad.  
i asked him if he liked big black dicks and hairy asses.  
he said yes and i told him he was in the wrong box,  
wrong place, whatever. he reported me.  
after that aol turned off the service  
so that my old man had to call up that night  
around midnight and wait for their reasons.  
i was sitting on the couch watching espn.  
he came in with a sheet of paper and asked  
if i wrote, "do you like big black dicks and hairy asses?"-  
i told him only because some dude  
was bugging me and i wanted him gone.  
jesus. he told me i was too old for that and not to  
use his account anymore.  
i apologized and laughed my balls off inside.

**Good Advice**

bob said, "i can't believe you only read half  
my short story."-i told him get used to it.  
he also told me not to leave it around. didn't  
want anyone to steal the title. miami somethin'  
somethin' he called it. he did a treatment for a  
pilot but didn't even write the first show. said  
he had three meetings with hbo and everything.  
he had an idea about a bellman in a new york  
hotel. actors trying to make it. at least five words  
on the front page i never saw before in my life.

couldn't understand the meaning. he works the door at a joint i hang out at three times a week. my roommates behind the bar so i got it covered. i never pay a cent. last night when i was leaving with the fat girls he asked me, "so what you think, mike?"-i stopped, lit up a cigarette and stood there tapping him on the shoulder, "write what you know, bobby."-i said, "and don't ever fucking write what you don't."

## **Camels Light but Unfiltered**

**by**  
**Benjamin Graber**

Finally, there's something that takes me into Tom Robbins' mind—inside the place where a story can be written about a pack of Camel cigarettes and a Princess and pyramids and all the other crazy things that lunatic gets paid for writing about, while the rest of us have to sit around writing what my esteemed Welsh friend calls womaggy crap.

Having struggled to survive these past years writing such drivel, and being well paid for it you might imagine, and then again you might not as you may yourself be quite content with living a useless and unrewarding life, but if you can imagine and can make it through this sentence without a breath, how excited I was when I received the commission to write this piece about a slightly used dromedary, one careful owner. I must tell you, even though it breaks several rules to talk to you like this, that I was indeed surprised that any one knew about that whole adventure. But when the envelope came with the check for fifty quid commissioning me to relate it, I had to acknowledge that at least one wealthy patron had heard about it. Probably it was he who benefited from it but that does get a bit ahead of the story. So I will uncharacteristically pause long enough to start another paragraph and continue.

Back in the time of Lawrence, he of the TH variety, not the more erogenous DH, there was a poor Arab who wandered the desert of the country formerly known as Iraq on his camel. He actually had been born to a wealthy family of oil sheiks and spent most of his youth driving around the streets of Kuwait in a variety of expensive automobiles, but he had fallen hopelessly in love with an American woman, who turned out to be an ex-hippie chick fallen on hard times that had become a wanton woman and was selling her body in every brothel east of Soho and had contracted AIDS. Somehow Ahmed, that was his name at the time, didn't get the virus, but infected half of the royal family, leading to the precipitous drop in oil prices that at first was welcomed as the gift of OPEC but later was found to be the result of multiple dementias caused by various mutants of the retrovirus and I must say it probably is a good time to take a breath again.

So Ahmed was disinherited and driven into the desert and, having given up smoking, really wasn't familiar with Camel packs but he found a copy of Still Life with Woodpecker and fell in love, not with Princess Cheri but with the idea of owning his own camel. So he bought one, the aforementioned slightly used dromedary that had indeed only had one very careful owner. Unfortunately, the owner was careful with everything but the camel, and had sexually abused the poor animal repeatedly so that Oscar—that was the camel's name—was quite a mixed-up dromedary by the time he came into the possession of Ahmed (who by way had changed his name to Hazel by that time as he really had always felt he was a woman trapped in an Arab man's body, a fate truly not to be wished on any living being). I am concerned for your mental and physical well-being here, so decided another paragraph probably was in order.

Hazel enjoyed riding his camel around the desert. Unfortunately, the only desert he could afford to wander in at this time was just the other side of Lake Mead, outside Las Vegas, beyond the parts where even the worse failed gamblers end up. Hazel had actually stolen a few petrodollars at the time of his banishment, and after purchasing the camel he was able to go on quite the gambling adventure, but lost almost all of the money and spent the rest

of it on a limousine excursion to all forty of the legal brothels in Nevada. He was a lavish tipper and they still tell stories about some of the things he was able to perform inside those converted trailers, but eventually his money ran out and all of the places closed their doors to him, leaving him with nothing to do but ride his camel around in the desert just outside the parking lot next to the 7-11.

Having made one last unannounced paragraph leap for your mental health, I wish I could tell you that this story had a happy ending. But in fact a totally ugly half crazed genetically engineered dwarf, in the possession of a 44 magnum much bigger than either his brain or certain unmentionable parts of his anatomy, decided that Hazel's skirt was too short for riding a camel and, calling himself the morality police, killed the poor camel jockey on a very gray moonless night, making for a very un-colorful and disappointing ending to the tale. But as the fifty quid have already been spent, that's just the way it goes.

## Hot Summer Hippie Love

by  
Alison Burke

"Is this a fruit or vegetable? Mind you it has seeds in it." I looked up to see the hottest hippie ever pointing a raw green bean at me and waving it back in forth, waving like the waving of the flag that his hippie parents burned to protest Nam. He took a bite out of the bean with his sexy, full mouth and perfectly white teeth, his wild man-hair bundled back into a ponytail- the only thing associated with an animal that you could find on this guy.

"It's a fruit- a legume." That's right, I speak French!

Such went my first encounter with the unwashed, rugged, humpable hippie in my biology class. I didn't know much about him, save, his name was Mike and his ass was more spankable than that of a defiant toddler. What I could tell about him was the following; he needed a shave and definitely some better clothes. He wore one of those bright yellow beaded fanny packs that screamed, "ask me about my backpacking experiences in South America." And though I am sure his narrow escapes from the grasps of death were interesting, they were pursuing my attention not nearly as much as his sexy, good-for-mother-earth, a little too tight P.E.T.A. t-shirt. I confess I have nothing against that tight t-shirt, in fact, it makes the distance between his pert nipples and my own feel almost absent.

Often, I find myself in class starring at him, thinking about him, smelling his clothes until he pushes me away. He's so smart, so eco-aware, so against popular music- probably masturbates to Peace Corps pamphlets and Eddie Bauer catalogues. I bet he drives something ecologically sound to school like a dolphin or he attaches two giant turtles to his feet and uses them like skates. Maybe not, that's a little far-fetched, let's go with the dolphin thing.

I'm no wall flower. In my mind, I've gone over all the possible ways to trick him into going out with me someplace. Someplace where I would have the opportunity to spike his wheat grass juice with PCP or another drug that would make him less likely to resist my conservative, republican superiority. The list, though mostly endless, has included taking him to a protest, or possibly inventing a fake one. Alas, when we are the only ones there to acknowledge the plight of the elusive and endangered hippopotosquirrel, an animal that I made up just for him, he will fall into my arms desperately sad that no one seems to care about the condition of this dwindling population of three ton rodents. It is there in the grassy knolls of the National Mall that I will take advantage of his duress and make him my own. My sign, which on one side will say "SAVE THE HIPPOPOTOSQUIRRELS!" will be turned over to reveal my true intention written out, "PUT DOWN THAT PROTEST SIGN AND GIVE IT UP LIKE YOUR HIPPIE ANSCESTORS... UNSHAVEN AND WITHOUT DEODERANT." In case he likes to be tied up or just tries to run away, I will bring some rope with me. Hemp rope.

He might act like he doesn't want to be with me, running in the other direction when he sees me, screaming for help when I won't let go of his Birkenstock, but I know it's all in the game of love. Later this week when he calls the police on me for breaking and entering when he finds me in his apartment, which is just a garage he is renting with a hole in the ground for bathing, I know secretly he will be sending me that restraining order as a type of legal love letter. I will sign it with hearts around my autograph and his and send it back,

keeping a copy for myself on my cell wall to remind me of days past and summer loves gone.

## **Hindsight** by **Greg Richard Bernard**

In my defense, I'd never seen either man naked. Not that it would have helped, I suppose, what with my eyesight the way it is. But you never know, right? A birthmark here, botched circumcision there. Something. Anything. One tiny frame of reference. One little sign that would have kept me from opening my mouth.

But no.

Anyhow, I'm getting ahead of myself. What you have to understand before we go any further is that, though exceedingly rare, there are indeed non-biological twins inhabiting this earth. Hell, maybe it's not so rare. Maybe we each have one. It's a pretty big world, after all. I remember once when I was in tenth grade art class this girl sitting next to me came across a picture of some Victorian chick in one of those reference books art teachers have lying around. Emily Doubich, that was her name. The girl in my class, not the dead chick. So Emily comes across this painting and lets out this scream that nearly set off the sprinklers. And then she faints. Swear to God, faints and falls off her stool. They took her to the nurse, and I guess she got to go home for the rest of the day. I got a good look at that picture too. Uncanny. I'm not saying I'd lose consciousness over it—Emily was in drama, as I recall—but I can understand how looking at your dead twin you didn't even know you had could freak a person out.

Okay, so I guess I wasn't as surprised as you might think I'd be to discover that my optometrist, Dr. Bressard, and my college psych professor, Dr. Leach, were non-biological clones of one another. After all, the odds two people who are dead ringers for each other are alive in the same time period, let alone living in the same town, must be mathematically insane (Note to self: I should ask my college math professor, Dr. Sanderson. She kind of looks like my Aunt Trudy, anyway, so that might be sort of interesting.). But thanks to one Emily Doubich—who recovered quite nicely, I might add—I guess it didn't phase me too much.

I mean, it's not like these two gentlemen truly share me in any communal sense of the word. It's been more of a happy Venn diagram. Fall semester, 10:00 Abnormal Psychology is reserved for Dr. Leach. And every six months or so I pop in and have a good chat with Dr. Bressard. You know, check out the old 20/20.

Only I don't have 20/20 vision. In fact, in addition to needing prescriptive lenses, I have been diagnosed with a slight retinal detachment. That's why I need to go in to Dr. Bressard so often. If this thing progresses, I could go blind. And that's some scary shit, am I right?

Speaking of scary shit, I think most guys would agree with me that public locker rooms are a bit nerve-wracking. It's not our fault, mainly. I mean we're raised in this almost aggressively homophobic culture. Totally stupid. Until we're standing naked next to one another, that is. Then the imagination takes over. And every prison joke, every dropped bar of soap, every rat's tail expertly wetted and flicked against our buttocks in junior high comes rushing out from some deep recess in our collective consciousness and we panic. Panic.

So I'm at the university's recreation center getting some exercise. (Yeah, yeah, I'm getting to the point. This isn't the easiest thing in the world for a guy to admit, okay?) Anyway, I have an okay game of racquetball. I need to work on my serve, and my backhand definitely sucks, but I hold my own. My girlfriend's really good, too. So it's not like I have anything to be ashamed about. We share some water from one of those ludicrously large bottles, and agree to meet at the car after we shower. I'd rather shower back at my apartment; there's something about walking around barefoot on wet floors that freaks me out. Honestly, who hasn't taken a leak in the shower at home? And if you're pissing in your own bathtub, what's gonna stop you from draining the lizard all over the institution that's raping you with student fees, tuition hikes, and parking passes? But my girlfriend wants to go grab something to eat, so I oblige.

The locker room is actually empty when I undress. I head to the shower, do my thing (and yes, for the record, that includes pissing), and head back to my locker.

And that's when it happens.

I'm toweling my hair, so I don't see him until I'm right there. It's Dr. Bressard. And he's in the locker right next to mine. And he's buck naked. He turns, jockstrap in hand, and everything kind of slows way down. Panic time. We're the only two dudes in a public locker room, we're both au natural, and we have the unfortunate luck of knowing each other casually. And that's the kicker, right there. See, if we were teammates or frat brothers-hell, even if we'd slept with the same girl at some point in our lives-this would be no big deal. Likewise, if we were total strangers, we could throw each other a testosterone-laden grunt or involuntary twitch of the neck, and it'd all be smooth as sundaes on a Sunday. But me and Dr. Bressard, we're socially acquainted.

He makes the first gesture. "Afternoon."

"Hey," I say. And I should leave it at that. We've each made our requisite greeting. We are home free. But when he sits down and lifts his leg, inserting it into the athletic supporter, I'm overcome. The silence is crushing. It's like being under the ocean without a submarine or something. My mind starts fumbling for anything to say. Some safe, non-gay sounding locker room rhetoric. Then it comes to me, softly at first, like one of those candle-lit Christmas hymns. Dr. Bressard and I have recently met at his office, and he indicated my retinal detachment seemed a bit worse than before. It's not much, but I snatch at it, a ravenous dog.

"So, you think I'm gonna go blind?"

And it's not until I'm halfway through the word "blind" that I realize I'm not talking to Dr. Bressard, the optometrist, but instead to Dr. Leach, the abnormal psychology professor. And that my last conversation with Dr. Leach took place this morning in class as he went over sexual fetishisms, including as I now recall in painful irony, addictive masturbation.

Dr. Leach clears his throat, throws on a pair of running shorts, and makes a hasty exit.

\*\*\*

My girlfriend has this odd look on her face when I get to the car. "You all right?" she asks.

"Sure," I say.

"You don't look all right," she says. We drive in silence for several minutes. "If you need to talk, I'm right here, okay?"

"Yep," I say. But I can't talk to her. There's no way she'd possibly understand. I am, however, suddenly wondering what Emily Doubich is up to these days. Who knows? Maybe I'll look her up.

## **The Mystery of Michael Landon and the Destiny of Jon**

**by**  
**J.M. Becker**

Jon never liked being a man, so when he heard of a Shaman who could perform a sex change by only using herbs and spices, Jon stuffed a change of clothing in to his pack and headed for Budapest.

It was a long journey, filled with sunrises and sunsets. Jon rode patiently on the bus seat looking through a 19th century American West clothing catalogue. He particularly liked the long dresses and the sunbonnets. Things were sexier back then, he sighed. From his wallet he pulled a small picture of Laura Ingalls running through tall grass. He had pasted a picture of his face over Laura's so now it was Jon running through the tall grass. Jon giggled and put the picture back in to his wallet. Then, he lay his head against the glass and fell asleep. He dreamed of moving to the American West and marrying a man who looked like Michael Landon.

The bus pulled into the Budapest Bus Depot as he awoke. Jon collected his things and rushed off to the Shaman, located above a Men's footwear store a few blocks away. Jon sprinted the distance.

"He move to Northern Africa. Big sex changing business there. He follow the money." a shoe salesman told Jon.

Jon's heart sank. He was set on becoming a woman. It was the number one thing on his daily to-do list. Tears came to his eyes. Filled with anguish, Jon compulsively purchased a pair of bright pink New Balance running shoes.

"Pink laces please."

"For the lady you love?" the salesman asked.

"Yes, she's trapped inside." Jon paid for the shoes and walked back to the depot.

At the bus depot, Jon was filled with a new energy. He looked at the small piece of paper the salesman gave him with the Shaman's new address: "Tunisia- near Tunis-above Italian/American Restaurant." Jon bought a ticket to Africa and boarded the bus. More sunsets and sunrises, more thoughts of Michael Landon and sundresses, and a week later Jon was in Northern Africa.

Again, Jon sprinted off to the Shaman. And after a large bowl of fettuccine alfredo w/ chicken, his last meal as a man, Jon walked upstairs to find his destiny. The Shaman charged fifty Euros for a substance that smelled liked saffron and rhubarb mixed together. The Shaman gave simple instructions in broken English, "You rub down there. Then a women." Jon walked into the bathroom. There was a tingling sensation. He looked in to the mirror and saw Laura Ingalls, Here I come Michael Landon, here I come, he whispered. "You want femininity training? My wife, she teach you... be good woman," the Shaman yelled through the door.

"No thank you. I already know the basics," Jon yelled back.

The Shaman told Jon it would take three to four days for the procedure to be complete. Jon could already feel the change.

Walking down a rural road, breathing in the salty sea air, Jon saw a field with tall flowing grass. He thought of Little House on the Prairie and the opening scenes, when Laura skips down the hill laughing. He opened his pack and pulled out a long sundress and a bonnet. He put the dress on over his clothes and tied the bonnet tight and skipped over to the field. He skipped for hours up and down the field, laughing and singing.

Little did Jon know a pride of lions stalked his every skip. And before Jon finished saying, "Michael Landon, I love you!" he was torn apart by three healthy lion cubs.

## **The Six Beards of Henry VIII**

by  
**J. R. Salling**

While leafing through records of the Company of Barbers on another fun-filled evening at my house, I stumbled upon an unusual ordinance issued by the City of London in 1531, which denied the liberties and freedom to those with beards longer than the King's. The discovery sheds light upon an ill-understood aspect of the much studied realm of Henry VIII, the role of facial hair in fomenting revolution.

For reasons that remain obscure, Henry grew no beard at all during his infancy and early childhood. His grooming habits would change in a dramatic fashion, however, upon the unexpected death of Arthur, his elder brother, the presumptive heir to the throne. Henry, who desired to set a good Catholic example for the kingdom, allowed his whiskers to emerge, unhindered by razor or errant joust. Indeed, early in his reign, he saw eye to eye on matters of hair style with Pope Leo X, both openly critical of the choir-boy look then espoused by Martin Luther.

To the vexation of subsequent popes, once Henry noticed how Protestant-style beards appealed to the young ladies at court, being a randy monarch, his hirsute policies shifted again. He now favored the close-trimmed look, despite the fact that it made his jowls more prominent. Relations with Rome broke altogether when Henry proclaimed his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, citing her misguided interpretation of the Samson and Delilah story, something to do with sausages.

Soon parliament moved to suppress all long beards, considered seditious, if only for their ability to conceal daggers and papist relics, as well as the odd herring. Sir Thomas More objected in the strongest terms. He argued that a man's choice of facial hair should be left between himself and his maker, as interpreted by the Vatican Barbers. More was promptly beheaded.

While others rushed to swear an oath of fealty to the royal follicles, rumors began to make their way to the king that his new wife, Anne Boleyn, had spoken in admiration of mutton chops, then worn by Sir Reginald Dumfondet, Knight of the Garter and Lord of the Dance. Under torture, Dumfondet admitted to having fondled the royal shears. Both he and Anne were promptly beheaded.

Henry then married a hairdresser, Jane Seymour, a match that proved most agreeable until she died in childbirth, thus unable to complete his dye job. With such unfinished business, he wasted no time marrying again, this time in absentia. Forewarned of the cut then favored by Henry, Anne of Cleves arrived in England to greet her new husband with a proper mustache and the hint of a goatee, but, ironically, with no Cleavage. The disappointed king annulled the marriage right away, offering Anne the opportunity to return home. She opted instead for an annual stipend for lip waxing and a furnished flat in Chelsea.

In subsequent years, Henry experimented with perhaps his most unique style, the Fu Manchu. It so amused his new wife, Catherine Howard, that she saved the axe man considerable trouble by laughing her own head off.

Finally, less adventurous in his decline, Henry then adopted what he called a Vandyke, out of his fondness for butch women of the Low Countries, a sixth and final style, which managed to survive him. Although the beard fell out of favor during the reigns of all three of his children, neglected in a Hampton Court cabinet of curiosities, it eventually passed down to the second Stewart to inherit the throne of England, Charles I, who sported the Tudor hairpiece in a most reckless and cavalier manner. Needless to say, he was promptly beheaded.

And thus emerged a constitutional monarchy in the land of Great Britain like a five o'clock shadow across the Channel.

**Advice on the Debate**  
by  
**Martin Green**

I was at home trying to finish the frigging New York Times crossword puzzle when the telephone rang.

"Yeah? Oh, hiya, George. Yeah, I saw it. You're right, you were pitiful. Sure, you should have called me before. Okay, here's what you do. You wait until that prick really insults you, then you go over to him and say, 'Look, you Boston bozo, I'm the frigging president of the frigging United States. Now apologize, you stupid son-of-a-bitch.' Right. Don't worry about that. Okay, then you kick the sucker in the balls. That'll show that pansy who's tough. Yeah, you can count on it, especially the women. Okay, good-bye. And fer Chrissake, when you're not talking, try not to look as if you're constipated. Yeah, snarl and bang your fist into your hand. Okay, good luck."

I turned back to the frigging puzzle. What's the French for eraser? How the hell should I know? The phone rang again.

"Yeah? Oh, hiya, John. Yeah, I saw it. Not a bad job but it's not over yet. Okay, here's what you do. You wait until that, I mean the President, insults you, then you go over and say, "Apologize, you miserable slacker, or I'll kick your ass.' No, don't worry about that. Then you kick him in the balls. What the hell, you want to show how frigging tough you are, right? Then do it. And you don't have to keep saying you went to Vietnam, everyone knows it. Okay, good luck."

Geez, how the hell am I ever going to get this frigging puzzle done? I better turn the phone off. Ah, the hell with it. I'm going to bed. When's the next frigging debate?

The End

**Please Don't Make Me Shower**  
by  
**Todd Werkhoven**

There's been an interesting culture shift in the past couple years regarding baby showers. In the "old days," it used to be that showers were the domain of the female friends of the mother-to-be, giving the husbands and boyfriends a free afternoon to loaf around in their underpants and eat Manwich straight out of a saucepan. I call these the "glory days."

But suddenly and inexplicably baby showers are no longer just for women. If you know anyone that's about to have a baby, you've no doubt heard the phrase that sends a cold bead of sweat down every man's back: "Couple's Shower."

There are two theories about the Couple's Shower. The first theory is that it's not just the mother that's going to welcome a new baby into the world; both mother and father are starting a family together. Therefore, the baby shower should include both women and men. My theory is much more simple: women don't want to give their men the opportunity to lounge around in their underpants eating Manwich straight out of a saucepan.

I know all this from experience. I've been to a few Couple's Showers. And not only have I gone, I've held one at my house and was "asked" (read: "told") to help set it up. I was instructed to write a portion of the invitation that would appeal to the men and incite them to attend.

"Will there be beer?" I asked.

"No."

"Can we watch TV?"

"No."

"Can we play video games?"

"No. But put that in so the guys will want to come."

During the shower, I heard one of the male attendees mutter, "I was told there was going to be an Xbox here." Not only did it take tricks and lies to get men to come, but they made me do it. I sold out my fellow man, and I didn't even get beer.

With little deviation, here's what a Couple's Shower looks like: the women sit on one side of the room chatting about due dates and Diaper Genies while the men mill about in a far corner glancing at their watches and wondering how it all came to this. Every once and a while, the women will say something like, "Isn't that cute? Did you hear that, guys? Isn't that just the cutest thing ever??" and the men will nod and then go back to deducing how they can turn the green-bunny-and-yellow-duckie-adorned tablecloth into a noose.

If you've ever been to one of these baby showers yourself, it could not be more clear that

it's no place a man wants to be. For one thing, there are myriad awkward conversations involving oogy terms like "speculum" and "delivering the placenta." There's also the matter of the "cute" games that are played. And by "cute" I mean "horrifying." Games where melted chocolate bars are smeared into diapers and each person then has to smell and inspect said diaper and guess which candy bar it contains. Let me tell you: a melted Baby Ruth in a diaper is something no grown man should have to put his face into.

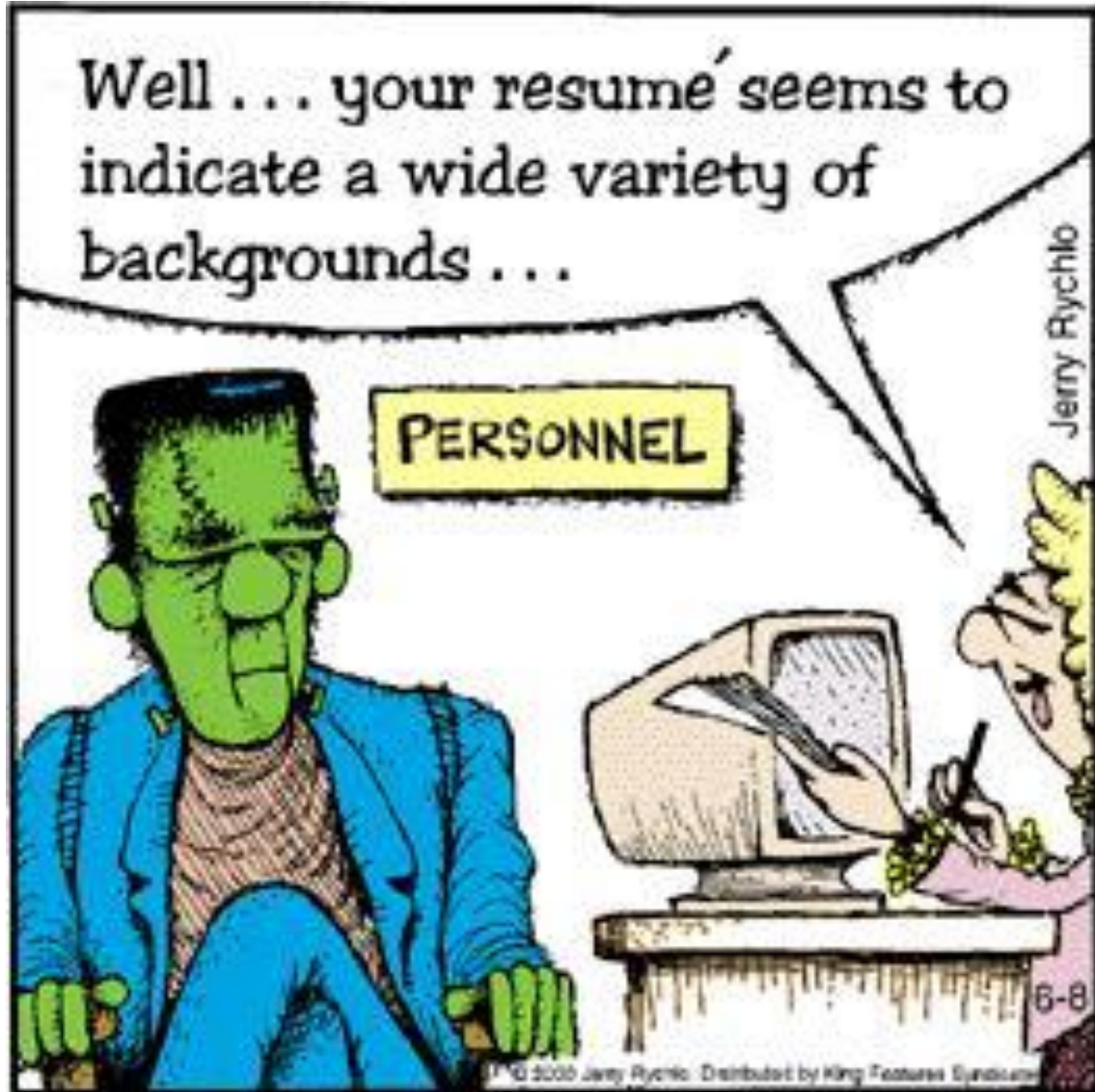
Beyond the games, there's the matter of the gifts. Now don't get me wrong: I have no problem with baby shower presents. It's expensive to have a baby, and every little bit helps. But to ask a man to sit for an hour while every gift of tiny washcloths, tiny jumpers, tiny booties, tiny beanies, tiny towels, and tiny socks are met with ear-shattering "AAAWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW!!!!!!!" is too much to ask. We get it: it's cute because it's tiny. And anything tiny will work. At the shower I attended the mother-to-be received a tiny lamp. It was plain silver with a white lampshade. no cutesy colors or animals or anything. When she unwrapped it, it garnered the same "AAAWWWW!!!!!" as everything else. You see, because it was tiny. Like a wittle baby wamp.

My dislike of Couple's Showers should not be confused for lack of support or love for the couple having the baby. I'm very happy for people who are about to welcome a new life into this world. But if men have to feign excitement, why should we be forced to attend? So I propose separate showers. The women can fawn over their cute and tiny gifts, and the men can, oh, I don't know, go to a shooting range. Or race go-karts. We'd still bring gifts for the father-to-be, so it'd be legit. Gifts like earplugs. Or a solemn promise to agree to never have a Couple's Shower when the rest of us decide to have a baby. Now that's showing support.

**Man vs. Nature**  
by  
**Daniel Willingham**



A Comic  
by  
Jerry Rychlo





## Contributor Biographies

Two significant events occurred at **Allison McVety's** birth - her sister took one look at her and howled for a dog and her father, not expecting another girl, and having no name prepared, named her after a horse that promptly fell at the first fence. Add to that a nose that inspired Concorde engineers, and you will understand why she has sought solace in laughter and writing.

**Daniel Gallik** is a poet who writes poetry that is frequently published in poetic magazines featuring large amounts of poetry. Also, he likes poetry.

**J.D. Fuller's** legs are constructed entirely out of toothpicks and white paste. This forces him to remain on the ground floor of his five-story home, as going up stairs may break his fragile leg constructions. Rumor has it that the floors J.D. hasn't been to are full of pirate treasure, a nuclear-powered robot battlesuit, and the largest collection of snuff films in the northern hemisphere.

**J.D. Nelson** is the kind of guy that celebrates Dan Akroyd's birthday and claims to speak in tongues when it's obvious he's speaking English. Funnily enough, J.D. claims that it was none other than Bryan Thao Worra that inspired him to submit some of his own stuff to *Defenestration*. And by "inspired," we mean "threw rocks at."

A novelist, **Michael Internicola** is the author of three previous novels, *Kiss Me Baby*, *Sunflowers!*, *Chaz*, and *All Our Skies Are Blue*. The poems included here are from two separate poetry books, *Malism* and *The Darkest Places Under A Streetlight*, both completed early 2004. His poems/short stories have appeared in "Caffeine Magazine," "Zygote In My Coffee," "Remark," "The Quadrangle," "Mule," "Spent Meat," "The-Hold," "Antipatico," "Lunatic Chameleon," "Kant Magazine," "Fragment Magazine," "James River Poetry Review" and "The Mosquito Lounge Review." He lives in New York City.

What can we say about **Benjamin Graber** that hasn't already been said in wanted posters worldwide?

**Alison Burke** grew up in the whack ass ghettos of Fairfax County. She was temporarily blinded by the mace of a metro cop, while trying to join the Bloodz by eating a doughnut on the platform where she waited for the train. Currently, her muse is a naked man in a trench coat living inside her brain who waits for the most imperfect times to expose himself to the world. At this very moment, she is living in her parents' house but hopes to one day make the big move into their basement, like a real adult.

**Greg Richard Bernard** lives in Bemidji, Minnesota, where he teaches high school English. When not writing (or making naked men uncomfortable), he enjoys running marathons, juggling, and bow hunting. Seldom concurrently, of course. His writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Minnesota Monthly*, *Miller's Pond*, *Poetry Motel*, *Wisconsin Review*, *flashquake*, *Talking Stick*, *Red Weather*, *Whitetail Fanatic*, *Lake Country Journal*, *Fire Ring Voices*, and in the anthologies *Poetry for Students: Volume 10* and *Chicken Soup for the Golfer's Soul*.

**J.M. Becker** showed up for four years and earned a B.S. in Business Management. Now he hates his job. He writes stories when he should be working and drinks when he should be sleeping. For free career advice email him at [jmbecker2@hotmail.com](mailto:jmbecker2@hotmail.com).

In the historical dialectic pitting the proletariat against the bourgeois, **J. R. Salling** has not placed a wager. It seems that Louis Phillippe closed the gambling houses some time in the 1840s, which encourages him instead to write amusing captions for the pair-shaped illustrations of the French king by Daumier. He is paid in bon-bons, laced with a substance that makes him think it's the year 2004.

**Martin Green** says: "I'm a retiree/free-lance writer living in Roseville, CA. Write articles for money, other stuff for fun. Write something like the 'Debate' piece only when moon is full."

**Todd Werkhoven** has taught Li'l Jon everything he needs to know about how to have a successful career randomly shouting "YEEEEAAHHHHH!!!" and "OOKKAAAAAYYYYYY!!!" in the background of terrible songs.

**Daniel Willingham** is currently 22 years old and going to school to learn what a bad artist he really is. He draws comics to escape from reality and to amuse complete strangers. He has his own website, <http://headdoctor.keenspace.com>, where he posts comics and drawings.

**Jerry Rychlo** lives in his basement with a large supply of ink pens and a huge stack of papers. If you like his work tell him at [jrychlo@county.middlesex.on.ca](mailto:jrychlo@county.middlesex.on.ca) If you don't, let him know also. (He still has receipts for the pens and papers).

**Ricky Garni** has devoted many years to the illustrated biographical study of the enigmatic early 20th century Andalusian symbolist poet CRISPY FLOTILLA. A work in progress, Mr. Garni now struggles to capture in prose the painful later years of Mr. Flotilla when, broken and penniless, the brilliant poet spent his last days living in obscurity with a cocktail waitress known only as Captain Bob.