

◇ Defenestration ◇

Volume II, Issue II

Table of Contents

Gary Konas, "Playing the Field"	2
Greg Scharf, Three Poems	4
Shawn McLain, Two Poems	5
Alex Keegan, "It Was A Dark And Stormy Night"	6
Frances Gapper, "The Poetry Course"	11
Mary O. R. Paddock, "911 Transcript"	13
Pete Butler, "A Word of Horror"	16
Rob, "In The Lap Of The Gods"	17
Sylvia Son, "Frank"	21
Travis Thomas, "The Management Training Seminar"	25
Dan McLaren, <i>A Things You Should Know</i> Comic	29
Jerry Rychlo, A Comic	30
Ricky Garni, "Crispy's Saturday With The Revolutionary"	31
Contributor Biographies	32

All content is © copyright their respective authors.

Playing the Field
(A Country-Western Waltz)
by
Gary Konas

Time for Monday Night Football,
Snuggled up by the tube
With your hot-handed jock
Who's a bit of a boob.
But you don't ask his IQ
As you slip to the floor,
It's another great halftime,
The two of you score.

Tuesday night you get back
From the art picture show,
This guy loves Fellini,
He worships Truffaut.
Got a hint of a paunch
And he sure ain't no stallion,
But you find yourself moanin'
In French and Italian.

Wednesday—out countin' heaven's stars.
Thursday—out hoppin' seven bars.
Just remember one thing
'Bout your lovemaking crew:
While you're playing the field, Hon,
The field's playing you.

Friday night, out again
With your phantom from work.
He's a senior V.P.,
It's your fifth year as clerk.
Well, he says it's been fun,
But the missus got wise.
Gotta say adios now,
He hates long goodbyes.

Then it's Saturday night
And you're chilling the wine,
'Cause your truck-driving sweetie
Is due any time.
Oh but six turns to eight,
There you sit by the phone.
Might as well pop the cork, girl,
You're dining alone.

Sunday—looks like Chippendale's packed.
Monday—once again you get sacked.

Time to wake up and see,
Play the vamp or the shrew,
While you're sampling the field, babe,
The field's sampling you.

Though they're sending you signals,
You're ignoring the cue,
While you're playing the field, Hon,
The field's playing you.

Three Poems
by
Greg Scharf

Considering Marriage

My back is killing me
and there's nobody here
to rub it.
Maybe this is why men get married,
but then what do married men do
about the constant pain
in their ass.

Epitaph for Ronald Reagan

If only Nancy
would have told him
to "just say no"
to the dying
of the light.

Early Morning Sacrilege--for Mel Gibson

Alone in her room
body splayed on the bed
early morning ecstasy of
Saint Theresa rays
shooting through cotton blinds
dreaming of little angels
with big long spears,
her arms flapped out
like Christ on the cross
thinking, "God,
I need to get nailed."

Two Poems
by
Shawn McLain

A hole

You sir
are indeed
the eye of the fart

I can smell
the color brown
when you speak

Work

*Why can't I just sit
my ass for a little bit
to write some bullshit*

Nothing forced
comes well
as much as writing
is supposed to be enjoyable
I can't help but feel
I need to clock in
and out
once in a while

It Was A Dark And Stormy Night
by
Alex Keegan

It was a dark and stormy night as Dierdrie Maple, disturbed, stirred in her sleep. Was that a creak on the stairs? As lightning flashed ominously across the night skies, as the wind howled, as the leafless branches of the mysterious, animal-like elms in the garden scratched at the feeble glass of her bedroom window, she woke properly, thinking of Nigel, his warm, incredible kiss, his dark, brooding eyes. Finally Dierdre woke fully. Yes, there was a creak, a definite creak, but it wasn't on the stairs, it was in her room! My God! Dierdrie shot bolt upright in the bed, reaching beneath her pillow for her hat-pin.

"It's only me, Auntie Dee!" said a sweet, soulful voice.

"Oh, it's you," Dierdrie cried with relief.

It was Annie, her six year old, curly blonde-haired niece, tragically orphaned less than three months ago. Dierdrie had taken her in, promising the authorities that she would bring her up as a Christian and teach her to sing like Shirley Temple.

"What is it child?" Dierdrie queried softly. "Did the nasty storm-man frighten you?"

"Yes, Nanch," Annie confessed in a whisper. "I wath fwightened by the funder and by the whiteling."

"Oh, child, my child!" Dierdrie cried out agonizingly, "Come here and share a Jackson moment with your dear old, silly Dierdrie-poops! I'll tell you a bed-time story. It will be a thriller." she added humorously.

Sweet little Annie climbed up into Dierdrie's huge, soft bed and snuggled against he aged relation's ample bosom. "Nanch," she cooed softly, like an almost falling asleep child, "You mustest be the best Nanch in the ho wide worl." And promptly, as if by magic, she drifted away to the land of Nod.

The next day, rising early and briskly brushing her teeth, Miss Maple had a sudden moment of foreboding, an acute anxiety not brought on by her reflection in the mirror. Something was wrong, something seriously bad. She wracked her brain.

"What can it be?" she queried her reflection perplexedly. "Last night, when the storm was at its highest, little Annie came – "

"Oh my God!" she cried in anguish, "It's Annie. She's GONE!"

She wiped her mouth, rinsed twice, then rushed back to the jasmine scented boudoir. "Annie! Annie my precious!" she called desperately, but there was no reply, no answer, no sweet response from her little darling.

Oh, Annie!

Dierdrie dressed quickly, tidied her hair, then searched carefully through the house. Nothing! There was no one anywhere, absolutely no sign of the sweet, innocent little Annie, nothing but a single, golden red curl alone on a lilac pillow.

"Oh, Heaven," wailed Dierdrie pathetically, "Where, oh where can you be, Annie?"

No one replied. There was just the sudden emptiness of the old manor, the creaking of the eaves. But suddenly, like the night before, Dierdrie sensed, somewhere, somewhere, there was something. Fear flashed momentarily across her eyes, but was replaced immediately by a look of steel, one of total British resolve. Like Churchill, like the Queen, Dierdrie took a deep breath, stiffened her sinews and faced whatever dangers were to come. "Oh," she whispered weakly, "If only Nigel were here now, with his broad, manly shoulders, with his calm but determined manner."

Saddened, by the absence of her good fiend (but could he be more?) but resolved, Dierdrie calmly considered her options. What precisely had Annie said to her in those darkest, frightening moments?

"It's only me, Auntie Dee!" she had gently whispered in her sweet, soulful voice.

Why Auntie Dee? Annie had never called her Auntie Dee before. Was it a secret code? Was Annie trying to tell her something?

And then Annie had muttered sleepily, "Yes, Nanch, I wath fwightened by the funder and by the whiteling."

But Annie had never lithped before!

"Oh, my God!" realized Dierdrie suddenly, "Annie was drugged!" She had stumbled into Dierdrie's boudoir in a desperate attempt to avoid the inevitable, but it was already too late, too late! But why, then had Dierdrie not realized something evil was afoot? She had always prided herself on an acute awareness. She was a sharp-eyed and sharp-eared as a prairie dog so why had she not been alerted to the dangers about to overcome them?

The Horlicks! Of course!

As Annie had snuggled close into Dierdrie's chest, Dierdrie had reached over and taken a draught from her nightly Horlicks. It had been too hot to drink earlier, and Dierdrie, had left the drink restlessly, fitfully, trying to ignore the storm, the creaks on the stairs, and sleep. "OH," she spluttered meaningfully, "I woke when Annie came in, and then I drank from the mug. That was drugged too! That's why I can't remember telling Annie a bed-time story. It all fits!"

Dierdrie was thinking this, trying to make sense of everything, when she heard a car coming up the graveled drive. She looked from the window. It was Nigel's car, her good, good friend, her warm, companion. She was so glad to perceive his arrival. Perhaps he could help. She moved to go downstairs and as she thought of Nigel, a surge of something quite unladylike passed down her quivering body.

"Nigel! How nice to see you!" Dierdrie laughed cheerfully as she opened the door. She stopped when she saw the state of her friend.

"Hello, Dierdrie" Nigel relied heavily. "I have some bad news."

"What is it," queried Dierdrie, a gasp in her voice and her hand to her mouth. "Oh, but forgive me, please come in and I shall make us some tea."

"There is no time for tea!" exclaimed Nigel manfully, but a little rudely. "For God's sake, woman, the file has gone!"

"The FILE!" exclaimed Dierdrie, "Oh my God!"

Suddenly heavy music, dark, foreboding lurched into the hallway.

"What was that?" asked Nigel, bewildered, rushing past Dierdrie.

"I have no idea," answered Dierdrie in a confused, faint voice. She strode purposefully after Nigel but even in such desperate times she could not fail to notice the solid squareness of his frame, his fine haunches.

"It's coming from the drawing-room" Nigel's voice echoed oddly ahead of Dierdrie as she followed, "It's in—"

And suddenly he was silent, horror-struck.

Dierdrie arrived and put her feminine hand on Nigel's bull-strong arm.

"What is it?" she whispered breathlessly.

"I, c-c, " stuttered Nigel. Dierdrie had never seen him so desperate, so shocked, so lost.

"What is it my darling?" she purred helpfully.

"B-B-Black Magic!" announced Nigel, finally regaining his sturdy, Yorkshireman's gritty balance. "The fiends have returned!"

Later, over a good cup of tea (and four of Mrs. William's excellent bakestones) Nigel explained.

"Dierdrie," he began seriously. "You have not lived in Poppy Nettleton all that long, but 'tis a mysterious place, some say with links back to the beginning of time, and to the Witches of Zoking!"

"The Witches of Zoking?" Dierdrie responded disparagingly, "But they are mythical! They're silly stories like those of the bogeyman. There was only ever one witch, and she was only called that because of her dress sense. She lives in obscurity now in Norfolk!" she added.

"Oh, if only it were true," sighed Nigel. He was so resigned, so soft and gentle, that Dierdrie wanted to hold him there and then. Propriety prevented her.

"Tell me more," she offered.

"Well," Nigel began carefully. "It all happened a long time ago..."

"... and that is why no person called Annie, at least no maiden, must ever be allowed to sleep in the village, especially on a dark and stormy night."

"Oh Dear Lord!" exclaimed Dierdrie, "but my newly adopted child, is called Annie!"

"No, she's Pixie," retorted Nigel.

"Annie," insisted Dierdrie gravely.

"No!" announced Nigel his voice almost roaring. "It cannot be!"

So Dierdrie explained how Annie had made her promise not to use her name in front of other people. It would be their little joke, she had said mischievously. Little did Dierdrie realize she had been duped. Slowly she explained to Nigel, about the drugs, the Horlicks. She had thought Mrs. Williams had slipped something into the supper drinks.

"What time was this?" Nigel asked suddenly.

"What time was what?"

"You said Mrs. Williams made your drinks..."

"About ten PM," Dierdrie explained.

"My God, it's worse!" Dierdrie's companion shouted.

"Why, man! Tell me immediately!"

"Mrs Williams was found murdered yesterday evening!"

"Oh my!"

"At six o'clock, Dierdre. At SIX o'clock!"

"But!"

"Exactly," Nigel exclaimed. "So who was it made your Horlicks?"

"And who made these bakestones?" Dierdrie added ominously.

"I can answer that," said a familiar voice from the doorway.

They both turned.

"Nigel?" Dierdrie said, both horrified and perplexed.

"Yes!" this Nigel said. "And I am the real Nigel."

"Prove it, you villain," the first Nigel said standing up and brushing bakestone crumbs from his thighs.

Dierdrie was torn, suddenly helpless, very much a frail woman.

"Think, for God's sake, Dierdrie, before it's too late!" the Nigel in the doorway begged. Dierdrie paused. There was something in the voice, a plaintiveness that made her want to believe in him. She reached out a hand, still undecided when suddenly there was a strong gust of wind and the French windows burst open, a small pane shattering.

"Yes, do " said a child's voice, but parodying, malevolent. "We the inheritors of Poppy Nettleton, would love to hear your final choice!"

"My final choice?" exclaimed Dierdrie in a bewildered gasp. "Why?"

"Why? Because we know who you are," sweet Pixie boomed from the French doorway, "Hello Annie!"

"But how? How did you discover? How did you find out?"

"It was easy, once my twin brothers agreed to help," laughed the delightful little girl, her dress whipping in the wind.

"So Dierdrie only pretended to be drugged. It was all an act?"

"Yes, Inspector. And that is how she was able to slip out of the house and murder poor Mrs. Williams."

"But that was at six, wasn't it?"

"No, another ruse," explained Nigel as Dierdrie stood there horrified. "Miss Maple shot Mrs. Williams in cold blood, then turned her wristwatch back to 6PM before smashing it. So we were misled into thinking she had died almost five hours earlier than she really did."

"Forensics would have spotted that," added the inspector.

"Yes," agreed the other Nigel, "But by then it would have been too late. Tonight there was to be an eclipse of the 19th Full Moon with Pisces rising. The full metamorphosis would have taken place, and The Witches of Zoking would have been unstoppable."

"We can only thank-you, thank-you all," said the inspector, and his portly assistant nodded. They took away the fuming Dierdrie.

The Poetry Course by **Frances Gapper**

Given the amount of time Brantley had been down the hole, it was amazing his single, lidless eye could still focus.

Well it wasn't really a hole. Once you got through the entrance tunnel it was more of a lair. With big rooms, some carpeted and furnished, others never used. A suitable residence for the last of the dragons, which Brantley sort of was, although after centuries of interbreeding he didn't look much like a dragon, more (but still not very) like a human being.

It was home, but gloomy. To save electricity, Brantley kept the lights and the fridge switched off. His computer was powered by wind energy - a small turbine in the overgrown garden, only just visible to passers-by.

Brantley was waiting to hear from the Arval Foundation. He'd applied in January for a place on a course in Advanced Poetry and now it was June, only a month till the course. Perhaps he should just assume his application had been successful. He'd sent ten pages of his epic poem about Griffin Drake, his uncle, and a writing history of twenty pages, describing his own years of struggle, the creative blocks, the rejections by publishers. He'd considered editing it down, but had decided not to.

Two things in particular were now worrying Brantley: (1) he snored, as do all dragons, and he might have to share a room, according to the brochure; (2) the course tutors were Osmund Scarlet and Nina Horner. Brantley might say Oswald by mistake and then Osmund might be offended. Well at least Nina was an easy name to remember. She wrote sonnets and villanelles, about canaries, bats and nightingales. Brantley preferred runic verse, if he was honest.

But an Arval course! People's lives were transformed by going on Arval courses. The tutors recommended their work to agents. They became part of the literary world. And so might he, why not? A dragon writing dragonlit. Splendid for blurbs.

Thinking that the post must have come by now Brantley put on a wide-brimmed hat with a gauze veil, to protect his eye from insects and specks of dirt, and went to check the box.

It was terribly bright outside.

The box was empty. No confirmation letter from Arval. No books from Boudicca.co.uk. Nothing.

Brantley felt depressed and lonely. He decided on impulse to ring the Arval centre.

He collected the brochure from his bedside table. Then with all the details to paw, he tapped in the number.

"Excuse me. I'm very sorry to bother you. But..."

The calm administrator asked his name and said she would look at the database.

Seconds later: "No, you're not on the course," she said. "You haven't been chosen. But you're on the reserve list."

"Thank you very much," said Brantley, and put down the phone. He sat stunned. Then a tear fell from his eye.

Not chosen. Reserve list, what did that mean? Hanging around waiting and being humbly available, in case someone dropped out. Faint hope.

The phone rang. But it wasn't the administrator ringing to say she'd made a mistake. It was Aunt Julia.

"Hello," sobbed Brantley. "Yes, very well thank you, Aunt Julia. How are you?"

Aunt Julia was only a dragon by marriage—she'd been Uncle Griffin's eighteenth and last wife. He'd left her a very nice lair, fully furnished and heaped with jewels. Brantley didn't grudge her one single garnet or bit of rose quartz. Uncle Griffin couldn't have been easy to live with: he'd hatched in a bad temper, which hadn't improved over the next thousand years or so. He'd also been something of a Bluebeard. One room still remained locked, its key hanging in the kitchen cupboard. Aunt Julia's incurious temperament, plus her philosophy of 'Let sleeping or possibly dead dragons lie,' had promoted household harmony during Uncle Griffin's lifetime, while enabling her to survive into widowhood.

"Brantley, what's wrong? Is it that back incisor?"

"No, but. Well. Oh Aunt Julia..." It all came pouring out.

"Who are these people?" she boomed. "I've never heard of them." Aunt Julia didn't read poetry so this wasn't really surprising, but it made him feel slightly better.

"Look here, Brantley. They obviously realised they couldn't teach you anything. Because you're a much more Advanced Poet than they are. You're in a higher league altogether."

"I don't think so, Aunt Julia." Sniff. "But thank you."

"Griffin always used to say how good you were. And he ran a flying school!"

Brantley slept well that night and woke resolved. He emailed the Arval centre to let them know his decision and asked them to send back his deposit cheque.

Then he sat on a tree stump in the garden, watching the seeds blowing down from the wych elm in their little round paper cases. Remembering a riddle popular in the Drake family: I have a single, lidless eye. Who am I?

London, the riddle-solver might say, or a lighthouse. Those were both good answers.

The postman came by, whistling - "Morning Mr. Drake." Brantley said hello. He watched the seeds, the clouds, a beetle in the grass. His mind went still and then he thought of a new verse for his epic poem. It just came to him, without any effort, like a flower unfolding its petals in the light.

911 Transcript
by
Mary O. R. Paddock

"911. What's the nature of your emergency?"

A whisper, a murmur, a whimper, a squeak and silence.

Michael, the 911 dispatcher, was not having the best of nights. He'd bounced a check at the gas station, was fighting with his wife, gotten the paramedics lost during his first hour on duty, been yelled at by his boss, and had a headache.

This was not the night to screw with him. And he would tell everyone so later, over several beers at the bar.

"I'm sorry. I didn't get that. Please repeat."

The whisper increased, but only enough to make his headache worse.

He got "possum" out of it this time.

He sighed, though not audibly, having mastered this very necessary skill during the first month on the job. "I'm going to have to ask you repeat yourself again, Ma'am."

Hope to God, I've got that right, he thought, remembering the last time he mistook a man for a woman over the phone. The boss yelled at him for that too.

The woman (he hoped), who sounded possibly elderly, settled for a stage whisper.

"A possum. There's a possum in my front yard."

"Ma'am? A possum?"

"Yes. It's a possum and it's eatin' my garbage..."

He tried to keep the irritation out of his voice, tried to stay professional. Ma'am. You've dialed 911. You know that right?"

"Yes."

"So Ma'am, a possum eating your garbage is something Animal Control handles. Not 911. We deal in emergencies."

"Oh. It *is* an emergency." Her whisper grew louder, slightly indignant.

Michael didn't try an inaudible sigh at this point, he just let fly with a loud noisy breath. He lit a cigarette and concluded he was quitting this job at the end of the shift.

Yes, he was.

If his wife didn't like it this time around, she could get off her fat derriere and get a job herself. He'd had it.

So he put his feet up on his desk and let the conversation run to a natural conclusion. She was very likely just lonely and Michael was just burned out. They needed each other in a co-dependent sort of way. It would be fodder for a good story later, if nothing else.

"How lady? How is vermin eating your garbage an emergency? Is he sick?"

"Nooo. At least, I don't think so..." Some scuffling on the other end of the line as she apparently went to look. "No. It doesn't look sick. But it will be worse than that soon."

"Worse?" Wasn't just being born a possum bad enough? "How?"

"It's eatin'... deeeeemons." She squeaked out the last word.

"Excuse m—what?"

"I said, it's eatin'... demons." She was speaking in a near normal volume. Her voice was childishly high, like she might giggle, drop the phone and run off to play any minute. She was either elderly or five years old. He was pretty sure she wasn't five.

"Demons."

"Yes."

Holy Batshit Batman! A full moon. It had to be.

"And umm.... How did demons get in your garbage?" He blew out a trail of smoke, trying for a smoke ring and failing. He erased the attempt in mid-air and prepared to try again.

"I put them there, of course. How does anything get into the trash?"

"I see. And were these demons in your refrigerator first?" He sniggered. That was a good one. He'd have to be sure and tell the guys he said that. He sucked on his cigarette, held the smoke in his mouth.

"No. They were in my husband."

Michael choked, smoke spewing from his nose and mouth; he cleared his throat, trying not to jump to conclusions. He jumped anyway. Finally, he croaked out, "In your husband? Ma'am where is your husband now?" He rubbed at the prickling hair on his forearms.

The guy was probably asleep in the next room. Maybe he was one of those old men who snored loudly, watched TV all day, walked around with pee-stains on his pants, and ignored his wife. She could still just be lonely...

"Oh in heaven, I'm sure. After all, the demons are in the trash now where they belong."

Michael sat up. His feet fell to the floor with a thump. "Okay. Ma'am. Just exactly what is the possum eating? And I don't mean the demons. I mean *exactly* what is he eating?"

"Oh. I think he's eating a spleen right now. He looks to be done with the intestines. It's the heart I'm worried about though. That's where they live, you know."

"Ohhh.... My.... God...."

"I *told* you it was an emergency."

"I'll have someone out there in a few minutes. Don't move, okay?"

"Oh. So you can save the possum then? It's not too late?"

Michael wrapped his hand around his head, trying to stop the Grand National winner of galloping headaches from blurring his vision while he dialed up the police station and the ambulance barn on different lines.

"I think everything is going to be fine Ma'am, but I'm sending out some folks to check up on him just to be on the safe side. I'm going to keep you on the phone until help gets there. Okay?"

"That's nice of you. We wouldn't want those demons to get out again, would we?"

"No Ma'am. We wouldn't want that at all."

"I'm glad I called."

Michael didn't say anything, he just dialed.

A Word of Horror
by
Pete Butler

We felt this story deserved a bit of an explanation. So here's what Mr. Butler told us upon submitting this particular piece:

"I would like to submit the ultimate piece of flash fic: 'A Word of Horror.'

"It is one word long.

"The story behind the 'story' is a series of emails I exchanged with Pitch Black, editor of Horror Garage. I was inquiring about whether or not he'd consider flash fic for his publication. In the process of telling me 'Yes, kinda,' he commented 'I once contacted Kurt Vonnegut's agent, asking for a ONE WORD horror story. I received no response.'

"Naturally, I interpreted this as the challenge it was clearly meant to be.

"I sent him his one-word story. He was amused, but chose not to run it.

"At the time, I insisted that I be paid the SFWA minimum professional rate of five cents per word, which came out to \$0.05 for the piece; I assume that's why he declined.

"In contrast to every other story I've had published recently, it has nothing to do with lawn mowers.

"Anyhow, as a great philosopher once said, enough jibber-jabber. I offer for your consideration . . ."

A Word of Horror

ntehFUTREst00pidgramarnazisrNERFEDntehwayutalxonIMistehwayutalxnRLnitT0TLYROXX0R
ZD00DZ!!!1!!111!!!!!!111!!11LOLOMGKFC

"[A translation for readers who would rather claw out their eyes than decrypt the above: 'In the future, people who complain about the spelling, grammar, and punctuation (mis)used by their fellow on-line denizens are outlawed. 'Internet-speak' becomes standard English usage. And it totally rocks, dude!']"

In The Lap Of The Gods

by
Rob

God was standing at the window of his office looking down on the Earth and feeling quite omnipotent when the door opened and his supervisor walked in.

"Thought I'd just pop my head round and see how you're getting on," said the supervisor. "How are your dinosaurs?"

"Oh," said God, "to be honest I became bored with them so I wiped them out a few million years ago. Couldn't be bothered to evolve them much further. Developed some of them into birds though, just for a bit of practice."

"Ooh, that's a nice twist, dinosaurs to birds. Can they fly?"

"Most of them," grinned God, "but I thought I'd mix things up a bit. I've got birds that fly, birds that walk, fish that fly and birds that swim."

The supervisor rolled his eyes. "Listen, don't go playing silly beggars just for the sake of it. It's all right to experiment a little but you mustn't pull any stunts like that in your final exam. What took over after the dinosaurs then, insects?"

"No, not exactly. I've got insects in abundance. They're a touch on the small side but evolving nicely. I thought I'd throw in a few mammals and see how they get on. I've got some pretty cool primates at the moment if you're interested."

The supervisor peered down at the Earth. "Good grief, look at all those funny little primates running around wearing clothes. They look like men and women. Are they intelligent?"

"Well, they know about the Big Bang but they haven't figured how we did it yet."

"Very good. You sure you can handle them?"

"Of course, I made them in my own image!" said God proudly.

The supervisor rolled his eyes again. God was a star pupil, but it wouldn't do to let him get too big headed. "So, what do you call them?"

"Man," said God, with a tinge of embarrassment.

The supervisor laughed, "How original! What, even the women?"

"That's a sore point." God frowned. "It was ok for thousands of years but the last lot have been really bitching about it, what they call Political Correctness."

"Ooh, Political Correctness?" said the supervisor, with more than a hint of sarcasm. "Fancy name for bitching!" He peered down a little closer, then turned to face God. "So why all the different colours, hmm? You know the rules about that sort of thing."

"Oh that," spluttered God, rubbing his hands together, "well, I had them all in one place to start with, all looking and sounding the same, but it got a little dull. So I migrated them, separated them for a while, let them diversify. Ended up with mostly whites and browns and a few shades in between. Now they're pretty well everywhere."

"And? Any problems?"

God crossed his fingers behind his back. "Umm, a few minor ones, nothing I can't handle."

"Such as?"

"You know what these advanced primates are like. Always fornicating or fighting."

"Tell me about it," said the supervisor, increasingly concerned that God was getting more than a little ahead of himself.

"Well, religion mostly," said God, waiting for the slap on the back of the head.

Thwack! The supervisor slapped God on the back of the head.

"Don't stop now, you can't be in any more trouble than you are already so you'd better tell me everything."

God wasn't sure where to start. He decided to get the worst of it over with. "I know how this will sound, but it's not as bad as all that. I mean, I'm not saying it's all running smoothly but I can fix it, I know I can."

The supervisor's eyes almost double-rolled at this point, fearing the worst. "You haven't been down there, have you?" he grimaced.

"Only a couple of times, really."

Thwack!

"OK, let me see, well once as Jesus..."

Thwack!

"...and then there was Muhammad..."

Thwack!

"I think that's about it."

"Keep talking," said the supervisor.

"I'm having a little trouble with the Arabs and the Jews, can't seem to stop them fighting. Just when I think I've calmed them down they start fighting again."

"And how do you propose to solve that one?"

"Well," God took a deep breath, "I thought if I just popped down there..."

Swish! (God ducked.)

Thwack! (The supervisor caught him on the way up.)

"OK, well, I suppose I could wipe one of them out?"

"Can't you think of anything more constructive? We are talking advanced primates here, not dinosaurs."

"No, not really. I'm open to ideas."

"You know I can't just give you a solution, you have to try to work it out for yourself. Have a think about it. Give them a few hundred years and see what you can come up with. If they're still giving you trouble after that come and see me. What else have you got?"

"Umm, you remember what I said about them fornicating?"

"Go on."

"The primate population is a little ... out of control right now."

"How out of control?"

"Six billion and rising."

Swish! Thwack!

"And just how fast is it rising?"

"Estimated to hit 9 billion in about 50 years," said God, taking a slap mid-sentence without moving. "Those are their figures, not mine."

"Good grief, how do you propose to feed and water them all on a small-to-medium sized planet like Earth?"

"I'm working on that one."

"Listen, I know you're progressing well for your age, but you really must learn to be patient. It's not me you need to worry about, it's the director. If he finds out you're in this mess we'll both be back to playing harps for a while."

God swallowed hard.

"It's almost lunchtime," said the supervisor, "still another few million years before the end of the shift. Plenty of time to turn things around. How long since the last catastrophe?"

"About 65 million years."

"In that case they're about due one. Have a think about it. Kick one off before lunch and see how they're doing when you get back. Try pestilence, a natural disaster, or a well placed asteroid. Or if you think you can handle it, experiment with an extraterrestrial invasion to

reduce the population and get them all working together. The guy in the next room has some pretty lethal aliens you can use."

"Thanks, I really appreciate the suggestions," said God.

"Just don't overdo it," said the supervisor over his shoulder as he was leaving. "I'll pop back and see what you're up to this afternoon."

God pulled a lunch box out of his desk and picked up his coat. Stopping by his terminal on the way out, he ran his finger across the buttons marked 'Pestilence', 'Asteroid', 'Alien Invasion' and 'Natural Disaster'. He hesitated, unsure which to select. Discounting them all, he pressed 'Global Terrorism' and strode out to lunch.

END

Frank
by
Sylvia Son

April 14

Last week my roommate decided to skip out while I was in classes. I walked in and found his room empty and half the furniture that was his taken as well. There was a note on the counter telling me he was sorry but he couldn't handle my nit-picking and drinking out of the milk carton. Also, my roommate added, rent was due.

Oddly enough I wasn't annoyed. I didn't really care much of him since he "accidentally" dropped one of his sneakers in my tropical fish aquarium after I told him to keep the noise down on the TV while I was studying.

I put an ad out and one responded.

His name was Frank and he was an octopus. No really. A real octopus with the 8 legs, suckers, squirry ink and other stuff. Like I said, an octopus that lived in a 2x3x7 foot fish tank.

I was surprised yesterday when I got a call that someone answered my ad for a new roommate. Cool. Then I was surprised when I sat across the large glass tank, bubbles floating to the surface. I was curious and rather perplexed to see an octopus wanting to rent a room. Granted his credentials were very good. He worked at the marine biology department at the university and then the zoo aquarium section as one of the Creatures of the Sea Features. He was the third octopus on the left that performed the trick of unscrewing lids of large plastic jars to get to the fish at 11:00 am, 1:30 pm and 4:45pm.

So not to be rather blunt, I asked the large glass fish tank why he wanted to live here.

His reply. Frank lifted a piece of paper sealed in a sandwich baggie and dropped it on my coffee-table. I picked up the wet plastic and read the note.

Why not? My money's good.

Good enough. Since he was the strangest roommate I've ever had, but I needed the money and his references were good.

Frank seems to be adjusting well to the move and he's helping out with some of the housekeeping. I don't know how he's able to do the laundry but I'm not complaining. He somehow got the stain out of my blue jacket.

Yesterday, Frank suddenly asked about my fish. He was curious with what kind of fish they were. I don't know. I think one of them is a goldfish and I asked him why. No reason, he said. Kind of suspicious. I'll have to keep a note on that.

The guys came over for the hockey game.

I pushed the tank next to the couch so that Frank could face the TV set and see the game.

He was a Tampa Bay Lightnings fan while I was a Toronto Maple Leafs fan.

I was a little concerned when they met my new roommate for the first time. I thought they might tap on the glass aquarium or play with the water filter or poke him in the water.

Despite the differences in team preferences the guys got along with him I think they were very impressed by his knowledge of the game and his wild stories during his time working at the research facility. Actually I think they were starting to like Frank more than me.

"Hey man," Kevin said. I was pouring cheese onto the nachos and Kevin took another beer from the fridge and popped open the bottle. "Why didn't you tell us you got a new roommate a week ago?"

I shrugged. "I didn't think you'd understand."

"What's that suppose to mean? You think we're some sort of speciest? That animals and people shouldn't co-exist together?"

"No that's not what I mean."

"Maybe you're the speciest. You know Frank is right, you're rather uptight."

Huh? Frank is talking to the guys about me?

April 29

In the beginning I thought it was kind of cool having an octopus as a roommate, but lately he has been starting to get on my nerves. Not little quirks. I mean really pain in the ass annoyances.

Yesterday when I came home from classes I opened the door and noticed something was different with the apartment, but I didn't know what it was.

The couches were still against the wall. The coffee-table in front of the TV was untouched. I craned my head to check the kitchen and nothing was out of place. So what was different? I shrugged aside the nagging doubt and I stepped onto the carpet. My foot connected with water and made a muffled squish noise. I looked down and saw an inch deep puddle of water and seaweed and something else soaking my sock covered foot. I scanned the floor and saw the trail of water travel in the direction of the hallway and to the bathroom. Soft splashing noises from probably the bathtub were behind the door.

"Frank!" I yelled. I opened the door and sure enough there was Frank was lounging about in the tub.

Frank, in his usual laid-back kind of way explained that a crack formed in his aquarium and started to leak all over the floor. Because a replacement wouldn't show up until tomorrow he needed a place to keep wet.

How was I going to take a shower? I was about to suggest he sleep in the sink but I remembered I eat and wash the dishes there and no amount of bleach would remove the miasma from my mind.

April 30

This day started off badly. I woke up got out of bed and stumbled into the bathroom. Then as I was shaving in the mirror I sensed something was out of place. That I wasn't alone.

The silence was cut by a splash and then a series of air bubbles in water. I turned around. Someone was behind the shower curtain. I pulled it back sharply and there was Frank curled up on the bottom of the tub. I screamed in shock, Frank turned red and I stormed out of the apartment refusing to listen to Frank's explanation.

The afternoon was a little better. When I returned from classes the floors were mopped up and cleaned. The bathroom as well and his new tank was sitting in a corner. I felt a little embarrassed for yelling at Frank for something he had no control over.

Frank was not in his tank that evening. Still at work I guess. I looked at the kitchen counter and saw there were three phone messages on the machine.

The first two were from banker informing Frank on the latest services for his credit card. The third was from Kevin who had apparently come in earlier the day to help move the new aquarium tank in.

"Hey, Jon it's me." Kevin. "I just called to check to see if the aquarium is fine. It was so heavy I was a little worried that it may have cracked when I bumped it against the couch. But seriously, I think you shouldn't have yelled at Frank that way. It's not as if he purposely set out to make a mess."

What? Since when did Kevin muster the energy to ever do anything? He was and is the laziest man I have ever known. He never even showed up to help me when I first moved in here and here he was calling in to lecture me on my thoughtlessness.

He's always nagging me about drinking milk straight out of the carton. He thinks it's rather unsanitary. He's an octopus and he's accusing me of being unsanitary? He says I leave my shoes all over the place and he wants me to lower the volume on the TV because the vibrations are agitating his tank. Plus his half of the fridge is starting to make my butter smell like fish.

And what's worse, he makes more money than me and actually rolled eyes at me when I was late for rent.

"You know," my girlfriend said while we watched *Desperado*. "You're being too hard on Frank. He seems like a nice fellow." Great, now my girlfriend is taking his side.

May 4

I woke up suddenly to strange wet sounds.

Slurp! Squish! Splat! Squish squish squish. Splash! A long pause and then another long splat across the floor followed by a series of quick little wet slap noises and then a splash. I wasn't really sure what that was. I was half-asleep and I was too comfortable in bed to care. I finally closed my eyes and went back to sleep.

I finally got out of bed and stumbled blindly to the bathroom. After that I walked across the

living-room to the kitchen and muttered a good morning to Frank and then walked past my fish.

I stopped, turned around and stared at the glass box. My aquarium of fishes was empty. Frank actually ate my fish. Ahhhhhhhhh! I ran to the edge of Frank's tank and knocked on the glass.

"I can't believe you," I said. I waved my arms up and down like a bird. "You ate my fish! This totally violates the boundaries of the apartment agreement." Frank's response was to shift into another colour. "Don't you dare turn purple on me. I know did it."

What could Frank say? He *did* do it.

May 6

It has been a tense couple of days, and quiet. Since Frank ate my fish neither one of us are talking. It gets kind of weird waking up each morning and getting the silent treatment from him or his famous coffee. It's even worse at night. After he came back from the zoo he went to his aquarium without saying a word and went to sleep. It's kind of unnerving that he won't even apologize for something he did. Yes, I know he's an octopus and eating fish is what he does, but could he at least leave the animal behaviour at the zoo? And I know I was overreacting over something I wasn't overly attached to. I hadn't even named them. I would forgive him if he would at least apologize.

I woke up to find him gone. His aquarium was gone. Even his coffee machine was gone. There was a note on the kitchen counter. It said he was moving back to the ocean because I was too intense.

Oh yeah and the P.S. on the note said that he did eat the fish and overreacted and that rents due tomorrow.

The Management Training Seminar

by
Travis Thomas

My boss Fred's face used to get really red when he talked about his boss, whose name was Dick. I know that was his name, because Fred used to say it a lot. Dick this, and Dick that. Sometimes he called him Dicky, or Dicky-boy, or Duck. Sometimes he called him Duck-Dick.

I liked Fred, even if he was a little bit repetitive. Fred used to tell me the same things two or three times in a row. Fred always had me sit right next to him at our department meetings, saying he wanted to be sure I could hear him clearly.

One day Fred came to my desk and said I was going to be promoted, because Fred was leaving the company. I asked him where he was going and he said "anyplace." Fred told me that Dicky-boy had asked him who his replacement should be, and Fred recommended me for the job.

I was disappointed that Fred's face wasn't turning funny red that day. In fact, he looked really happy and was talking in a gentle, soft voice.

I asked Fred what I would be doing, and Fred told me that I would be doing his old job.

Now, I have to admit that I had not been paying much attention to Fred's various comings and goings and ramblings, and I told him as much. His face started to get a tiny bit red in the cheeks at that point, and he said "Yeah, I kind of noticed that." But he said everything would be OK, and that he knew I would do a great job for Dicky-boy.

I asked Fred what I should do first. He just smiled and looked at me for a long time. Then he said "Follow your heart, buddy. Just follow your heart."

Fred said we were going to have a special department meeting. When we walked into the meeting room, there were a lot of people there. Fred announced that he was going to be leaving the company "to pursue other oppor-fucking-tunities."

Fred said that I was going to be his replacement. The people in the room looked at Fred, then they looked at me, then they looked at Fred. It was funny the way their faces just went back and forth, back and forth, like they were all watching a tennis game. One guy started to laugh, but after a while he quit. A short fat guy got up and walked out of the room without saying anything. A tall lady asked Fred if he was telling a joke, or something to that effect. Fred smiled and smiled. After a while he said, "If there are no more questions, then I'd like to end this meeting. Bon voyage!" I never saw Fred again.

I liked being a manager right away. There was an old lady that sat outside my office and she liked to help me. At first I thought she was my boss, but she said she wasn't. I asked her if she knew what I was supposed to do, and she said maybe I could start by checking my mail. The mailbox was around the corner in the mailroom.

It had been a couple of weeks since I became a manager, and I noticed that the mailbox was really full. I picked up all of the inter-office mail envelopes that were in my mailbox and started carrying them back to my office. Another fellow, I think he was also a manager, saw

me and said "Looks like you got a lot to do!" and seemed to admire me for that. That's how I first figured out that if you have a lot of inter-office mail envelopes people think you are doing a good job. That made a lot of sense to me.

Another thing I liked about being a manager was all of the stories that people told me. People would come into my office and tell me a story about their job, or about their life. Sometimes it was a short story, sometimes it went on a bit. But I enjoyed listening to them. They were really nice people, but I couldn't remember their names very well. So I gave them little nicknames in my head. There was Tall Lady, and Curly Hair, and Blue Shirt. I didn't see Blue Shirt very much, just every couple of weeks or so. I saw Tall Lady a lot, and she told me a lot of neat stories about her job.

After a while, there were some long silences, and I figured she wanted me to tell her a story too, so I would tell her about my day, and things that had happened to me. But sometimes people would ask me for advice, like I was their father or something. At first I used Fred's old line and said "Just follow your heart." Then I realized that people wanted me to give them an answer that was a "Yes" or a "No." I wasn't sure what to say. I would tell them to ask the old lady outside my door, but then the old lady told me "I'm going to have to refer them back to you on these issues."

One day I was looking out the window when Curly Hair was asking me a question, and I had an idea. There was a big stop light out there. It so happened that the light was green when there was a silent part in the conversation, so I said "Well I think we should just go forward. Let's move forward on that." Curly Hair looked surprised at first, then he said "Um, great. Yeah, that's what I was thinking too, let's move forward." Then he nodded and smiled at me, so that made me happy. After that, I always looked out the window when people told me their stories, and if the light was green I'd say something like "Let's go forward. Go, go, go!"

Another thing I liked was all of the mail I got, because I got to file things. The papers I would get in the inter-office mail envelopes would not always be the same color. Some would be white, others blue, occasionally a pink or yellow. So originally, I had the idea that I should file them by color. But after a while, I noticed that my "white" file was getting really thick, and the other colors were still not very full at all. So I had a new thought: I labeled one file folder "Mostly Words" and another one "Mostly Numbers", and started filing things that way, based on what was mostly on the paper.

After a while, I noticed that people didn't come by to tell me stories about their day quite as much. And I wasn't getting quite as many of the inter-office mail envelopes. In fact, one day Sister Mary Fran, who did the mail runs, said "Hardly anything for you today! People forget you're here?" Then she laughed but I got a little worried. That day, I addressed fifteen inter-office mail envelopes to myself and I put some papers from the "Mostly numbers" file in the envelopes. I put them in the out-mail box in one of the offices down the hall. Sure enough, the next day I got them all back and Sister Mary Fran said "Huh! Looks like they found you!" and then I felt better.

After that, I never let a day go by without addressing some inter-office mail envelopes to myself. At first, I would put some kind of recent paperwork in them, but after a while I didn't put anything in them at all. I also started sending them from different locations, because I enjoyed walking around and saying hello to all the people. I would drop some off at Receiving, and take another stack over to Marketing, and still have a handful left to leave off in Human Resources. Sure enough, they would all come back to me. I couldn't help

strutting around with them a bit when I picked them all up in the mail room. "Looks like I got a lot to do," I'd say, or "Looks like they found me." People would smile and nod when I said that stuff, and that made me feel happy.

I think I got a little carried away with the inter-office envelopes. At one point, I figured out that I had 447 interoffice mail envelopes in circulation, originating from various points of departure within the company. Sister Mary Fran evidently went to her boss and demanded help, because she couldn't keep up with the surge in volume. So they hired a part-time assistant to help carry the mail. At that point I realized I had better quit sending inter-office mail to myself.

They actually fired Sister Mary Fran over the whole thing. They thought she must be getting senile, since there was practically nothing for her assistant to do. That's kind of a shame, since Sister Mary Fran was so close to retirement and all.

But this isn't really the story of Sister Mary Fran and all of her various problems. I really wanted to tell you about the Management Training Seminar.

One day this guy stopped by my office and said that I needed to attend a Management Training Seminar. I think he might have been that Dick fellow. I really can't see why Fred always called him Prick, and Flick, and so on. He seemed really nice.

The Management Training Seminar was in a fancy suite at the Regency Inn across town. The seminar leader was a guy named Rick. Rick had long brown hair that was tied in a ponytail, and the biggest beard I ever saw. He had us all sit in a circle on cushions on the floor, so we wouldn't have any barriers between us. Then he told us that he was here to help us with management problems, using his new approach. It was called "The Eight-Ates" approach. He built his approach around eight words that ended with "ate". For example, there was Investigate, and Delegate, and Cogitate, and some other words I can't recall at this point. So Rick asked us to each identify a problem that we had, and then we would "run it through the process", as he liked to say.

There were a few people that talked before me. None of their problems had anything to do with inter-office mail, or filing. They all had interesting problems, but they all seemed to be problems that were sort of like bragging. For example, this blue-haired guy said "I'm ashamed to admit that I'm a workaholic. I just can't let go of work, even at home on the weekends." And a pretty lady I saw around the office sometimes said "I'm just too hands-on. I work and work to get everything just right for the company. I guess I'm just too perfectionistic!" And Rick smiled and said "good, good, right" and then he would "run it through the process" with them, to teach them how to Delegate, and Separate, and those other -ate things.

Then Rick came to me and said, "So, what problem can we help you with?"

I had to think a long time about that.

Finally I said, "You know, every since I was a small child, as long as I can remember, I've had this problem. It's hard to describe. You see, for all of my life, at the very edge of my perception, just barely audible, I can hear-somebody screaming."

"As long as I've lived, it's been there with me, and if I just stop and listen—really listen—I can always hear it. It goes on and on. And for all these years, it has never really changed.

Maybe it has become a little more hoarse and desperate as the years have worn on. I don't know." Then I sat down.

There was kind of a silence after I said that, and the other people looked at Rick, then at me, then at Rick again. It was funny, just like with Fred. Finally Rick cleared his throat a couple of times and said that he was sorry he hadn't provided enough structure, and that it was his fault, but could I identify something that was a little more work related?

So I said that I was too much of a perfectionist, that I couldn't delegate, and that I was having trouble letting go of details. Rick smiled at me then, and said, "Good, good. Let's run that through the process."

A Things You Should Know comic
by
Dan McLaren

Things You Should Know

By: Dan McLaren



Jokes turned to tears when Mayor Kartwright discovered they were NOT novelty scissors.

A Comic
by
Jerry Rychlo



Crispy's Saturday With The Revolutionary
by
Ricky Garni

Crispy's Saturday With The Revolutionary



11:00 am

still angry about the fact that blueberries cost \$5 for about nine of them. and I don't want to eat yogurt that has blueberries in it. and I don't like the fact that the yogurt is spelled 'yoghurt', and that they have one flavor that is called 'cappucino mist'. still hate coffee and cappucino even more, although I have never had cappucino. I still like the word 'sanka' but I still hate the fact that 'espresso' doesn't have an 'x' in it. it should.

11:30 am

still angry at the lady in front of me in the grocery store who had about 39 lbs of strawberries that she said cost \$2. and I am still upset that she said that I should try the other brand - they are only about \$4 for about five blueberries.

still don't know what a bluet is. don't know where blue jay way is. 'cuttlefish' I think is an octopus.

12:00 pm

went outside with my pick ax (\$5), seriously, and went wild! those weeds that surrounded my blueberry bush should have left town when they had the chance.

I screamed out TAKE THAT every time. very sweaty.

12:05 pm

looked really hard at that neighbor with her pansies and wind chimes. sweated some more. looked at the worm and couldn't wait to give it a little pick ax action but changed my mind at the last moment, because of that awful movie with all the blood I saw last night on the telly.

12:30 pm

the sun comes out. gorgeous weather.

12:32 pm

went to the park.

listened to a cuban revolutionary who told me that red harvest was dashiell hammett's finest work. he had beautiful eyes, which made me think he could be a revolutionary, but was 17 years old, which made me think he wasn't a real cuban revolutionary.

12:35 pm

the sun goes back in. stupid sun.

12:45 pm

kicked the soccer ball with the cuban revolutionary for ten minutes. revolutionaries adore soccer. a mi me gusta. accidentally kicked the soccer ball into his testicles, which he later told me were referred to as "huevos rancheros" before the revolution.

1:00 PM

went to church.

Contributor Biographies

Gary Konas holds a Ph.D. in English, which leaves one hand free for writing. He once published a story about a robotic Albert Einstein, unaware that it was science fiction. He is an expert on musical theatre who has met his hero Stephen Sondheim, despite a restraining order. He has shown his love of musicals by recording an album of show tunes on a pipe organ; he has shown his ignorance of country music by writing "Playing the Field." In his spare time, Gary collects great wines, classic films, and mediocre student essays.

Greg Scharf lives in Los Angeles, CA above a garage; sort of like Fonzi but without the chicks (perhaps because he barks at his neighbors and talks to their dogs). He hates people who record their outgoing answering machine messages in the third person, and so he feels a bit like a hypocrite right now. You can read some of his other poems in upcoming issues of *Mouseion*, *My Favorite Bullet*, *Spent Meat*, *Lunatic Chameleon* and *Underground Voices*. His website: <http://nauseaabovehedge.com>. He's starting to dig this whole third person thing and just might continue talking this way for the rest of his life.

Shawn McLain claims that his family thinks he's childish for writing these poems. Oh well!

It has been determined, through the wonders of science, that **Alex Keegan** is, indeed, absolutely insane. Also, Alex calls this particular story "a piss-take on every mistake in writing," which we find amusing because it rhymes and contains the word "piss."

Frances Gapper lives on a very isolated, bleak moor, euphemistically described by tourist guides as England's Last Wilderness. She now only communicates by email and semaphore. Her short story collection *Absent Kisses* is advertised on the Amazon.co.uk website as being 'In superb condition - unread' and 'Unwanted Gift - never read'. She has no useful advice to offer.

Mary O.R. Paddock says: "I've had short fiction and poetry published at such e-zines as *Flashquake*, *The Anti-Muse*, *Another Realm*, *Long Story Short*, *Reading Divas*, and *Kota Press*. At present, I'm possessed by a murder mystery/ghost story and, as I'm 25,000 words into it and still losing sleep, it must be here to stay. I've also completed one science fiction novel that is still in search of a market."

Pete Butler lives in Pittsburgh, where he is developing the Shoulder-Mounted Dachshund Launcher, a terrifying weapon which he is convinced will revolutionize modern warfare. Interested parties are invited to visit his website at <http://blairhippo.com/>. Third-world dictators welcome!

Rob is a blind, one-legged treefrog living deep in a forest in Papua New Guinea. When not climbing trees, playing the mandolin, chasing newts, or holding an umbrella, Rob enjoys hopping up and down on a keyboard to see what it spawns. In his spare time, Rob likes to lie motionless on his back, whistling, and staring at clouds. Rob is also a keen campaigner for amphibian rights. If Rob were a person he would lead a mysterious life somewhere in England with his wife and kids and Sony Vaio, close to some trees.

Sylvia Son doesn't want to be typecast in whatever she chooses to do. She wants to be free to roam like free-range chickens exempting the slaughterhouse death part, because that would be bad.

Travis Thomas is really a lot smarter than he looks and sounds. He dreams of someday becoming a paid assassin, but realizes he will probably always remain an enthusiastic amateur. He was recently quoted as saying 'You can lead a horse to water, but you can't just shoot it for no good reason.'

Dan McLaren is now 21 years old. "What a fun age" He thought to himself... He died later that week. Also check out www.freewebs.com/neopolitoncomics to see what he, while alive, called "my mini-not-so-great-'zine."

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 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.