

## Staff

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one

If a wo-man is a shell  
to be filled with what she feels,  
a man then is a stone —  
he is of earth to bear alone  
the tides and turns of wo-man's terror.  
Her wat'ry depths he does not understand — nor  
she,  
but feels the movement of the waves:  
moved by moon, warmed by sun,  
swum by lover — she wades within.  
And when she wades she wonders why  
she feels these stones beneath her feet  
for earth is masculine.  
Looks up, past waves and sees:  
the shore, the sand, the stunted trees,  
the grassy patches, rocky cliffs,  
the earth that clings and stands —  
stone arches up toward horizon.  
The sky is open.  
And water runs underground,  
and ground moves as the sea —  
it is a sea:  
of earth, of life, of molton rock  
that moves in waves and crashes as the tides.  
So dive — for sea cannot be bottomless.  
And dig — for there is water here.

Phoebe Hungerford

## No Second Chances

"Damn!" Sherry whispered as she careened down the concourse of the airport. Having been caught in traffic, she was now in danger of missing her plane to New York. "If I have to spend one more night in Los Angeles, I'll go crazy! All I want is to sleep in my own bed tonight. Is that so much to ask?" she said to herself.

As she reached the ticket counter, she nearly threw her bags at the attendant. "Here, here's my ticket," she said hurriedly. "What gate do I need?"

"Gate number 6A, ma'am," replied the attendant.

"Thank you," Sherry said as she tore off back down the long hall leading to the boarding area. As she ran, what had been a crisp ivory linen business suit became a wrinkled, sweaty mess. Her carry-on bag and purse banged against her hip as she wove in and out of the pedestrian traffic competing with her to reach the gate first. With her long legs striding out in front of her, she soon overtook most of the other travellers.

"6A, 6A," she murmured. "Why is my gate always the farthest away from the door?" Arriving at the gate, she dropped her bags and flashed the ticket in the face of the stewardess. "Am I late?" she asked loudly.

The stewardess examined her ticket for a moment; then said, "I'm sorry, ma'am, but your flight has been delayed. We should have everyone on an alternate flight in an hour or two. Feel free to have a seat in the waiting area. The restrooms are right around the corner and there's a snack bar just down the concourse.

Sorry for the inconvenience." She handed the ticket back to Sherry.

Sherry took the ticket mechanically, her mouth wide open. She had not heard most of what the stewardess had said. Her mind was still back on the words, "...your flight has been delayed." Delayed? thought Sherry. Just my luck. I hurry like mad to get here and the stupid flight is delayed. What next? Coming back down to earth, Sherry thanked the stewardess and then asked, "Where did you say that snack bar was?"

"Just down the concourse on your left." Out of habit, Sherry started to hurry toward the snack bar; but, catching herself before she started running, she slowed down to a stroll. Before she found the snack bar, she made a stop in the restroom. Looking in the mirror, she could hardly believe what had become of her since she left the hotel room. The July heat and the Los Angeles smog had combined to totally ruin her makeup. Her clear blue eyes were red, watery, and itchy. Her long blond hair was a straggly mess, hanging around her face in sweaty strings that made her look as if she just stepped in from a thunderstorm. And her suit really was a mess. Oh, great, she thought. Now when I get home I won't only have to pay cab fare, but I'll also have to pay to get this suit cleaned.

Sherry pulled herself together and made her way to the snack bar. It was a very upbeat, California-style place. Sherry surveyed the menu for a while. What I'd really like is a pastrami sandwich on rye, she thought. She walked up to the counter. "Do you have any sandwiches that don't have alfalfa sprouts on them?"

Settling for a turkey club, Sherry ordered a glass of white wine, paid for her meal, and

found a place to sit. As she picked the alfalfa sprouts off of her sandwich, she began watching the people on the concourse pass her by. People in California just aren't as interesting to watch as people in New York, she thought to herself. Just as she was making this decision, a man in the snack shop caught her eye. He was sitting a few tables over from her, and he glanced at her over his Wall Street Journal every so often.

There's something familiar about that man, thought Sherry. I wish I could see more than his eyes. Sherry looked away and took another bite of her sandwich. Maybe if I ignore him, he'll stop staring at me, she thought. Trying not to look at the man, Sherry finished her sandwich and took a long sip of her wine. She shifted in her seat so that she was no longer facing the concourse or the man's stare. As she was finishing her wine, a voice said behind her, "Well, I guess you would be old enough to drink now."

Startled, Sherry looked up. Staring down at her was the man from behind the newspaper, but now Sherry could see him entirely. He was tall and slim, with gray hair that had just about taken over his generous supply of blond tresses. Though his face showed some signs of age, his sky blue eyes looked as though they had seen no more than twenty years worth of life. The look on his face was searching, and his smile was tentative. "Hello, Sherry," he said quietly.

"Oh my God." Sherry was completely taken aback. "Dad." The two stared at each other for a moment, neither one knowing quite what to say. Finally, her father said, "May I sit down?"

"Oh, of course!" Sherry replied, flus-

tered. "Where are my manners?" Sherry's father sat down in the chair to her left. He crossed his legs, folded his hands in his lap, and looked searchingly at Sherry.

"So," he began, "how've you been?"

"You mean recently, or in the last ten years or so?" Sherry asked bitinglly. She knew it wasn't what he expected her to say, but it was out of her mouth before she could stop herself.

"Well, I guess I deserved that one," her father replied quietly.

Sherry shifted uncomfortably in her seat. Suddenly, her heart was running faster than a runaway train. As her father met her eyes, she turned away. "Sorry," she murmured. "I've been fine, Dad, just fine." Although subtle, her father did not miss the sarcasm in her answer.

"I see that time does not heal all wounds. Maybe it was foolish of me to think that it would have healed yours." Her father's voice was sad, but the hidden accusing tone did not escape Sherry.

"Well what did you expect me to do, Daddy, jump up and down and give you a hug right here in the middle of an airport after not seeing you for ten years?" Her father did not know how to respond to this question, so he said nothing.

It was then that Sherry noticed the huge lump that was developing in her throat. Oh, God, don't start crying now, Sherry Christina Livingston, she said to herself. As the emotions swelled up inside her, Sherry looked away from her father. Don't let him see you this way, she reminded herself. Don't give him that satisfaction.

Her thoughts were interrupted when her father asked, "How's your mother doing?"

"Oh, she and Matthew are just fine. I believe they're touring Europe at the moment. Sort of a second honeymoon." Sherry got great satisfaction out of letting her father know that her mother's life had gone on after he had walked out on them. She only wished that she herself had fared as well as her mom. "Yes, Mother and Matthew are ecstatically happy, even after fifteen years of marriage. They're the envy of all their friends." And hopefully of you, too, she thought to herself.

"That's wonderful. I'm very happy for her. Your mother deserves some happiness after what I put her through."

Oh, please, thought Sherry. Nice show of guilt. How disgusting.

"Beverly and I are very happy, too. We're working on our fifth year now."

"Beverly? Oh...Beverly," mumbled Sherry. Though she had taken great pleasure in informing her father of her mother's remarriage, she had never dreamed that her father might have gotten married again, too. This realization stung her. "And what does Beverly do?" she asked, a little too sweetly.

Ignoring Sherry's attitude, her father answered, "Well, she was in interior design, but she took a leave when Christopher was born. She stays home now to take care of him full time. We feel that's important." It seemed that Sherry's father got just as much enjoyment out of dropping bombshells as Sherry did. If her father had tried his hardest, he could not have come up with a statement more injurious to Sherry than that.

Immediately, Sherry recalled her own up bringing at the hands of her parents. With her father in medical school and her mother working two jobs to help pay for it, Sherry was usually

in the care of some babysitter or other. Receiving so little attention from her busy parents had left Sherry bitter. She blamed her father for taking her mother's time and energies to benefit himself, leaving little for Sherry. Surprisingly, Sherry had never placed the blame on her mother. In Sherry's mind, her mother was simply doing what was necessary for the man they both adored to get what he wanted, a medical degree. Little did we know he'd walk out right after he got it, thought Sherry sourly.

"Well," said Sherry, "I certainly hope Christopher benefits from all this one-on-one attention. You're right, it can do a world of good for a child's well-being."

"I assume you're referring to yourself," her father replied. "Sherry, you know what happened with your mother and I was neither of our faults. We had been having problems for a long time before I left. It wasn't that I didn't care about her, about you."

"Really? If you cared so damn much, why have you never taken the time to call even once in the last six years? A few birthday cards, a Christmas gift every now and then. That doesn't go too far, Dad. Tell me, did you ever even get the invitation I sent you to my graduation? Because I don't remember ever getting a response. I did graduate from college, Dad. Even without you there. Don't try to tell me that you cared. You used us. You used us, and when you got what you wanted, you left. You didn't need us anymore, so you just left. I'm sorry, Dad, I can't have this conversation anymore." Nearly in tears, Sherry started to get up.

"Wait! Please, Sherry. Please wait." There were tears in her father's plea. Sherry sat down, her head in her hands. "Sherry,

please, don't leave like this. I don't want us to part with you upset."

"Why not? It didn't bother you the last time you did it." The anger and hurt in Sherry's words were unmistakeable.

"OK, you're right, Sherry. You have every right to be angry. I don't blame you."

Sherry sniffled. "Well, thanks for that," she said sarcastically.

"What do you want me to say, Sherry. Do you want an apology? Because I'm not good at apologizing. Never was."

"Oh, Dad, please, don't put yourself out for me. I'm just your daughter. Although I know it's been easy for you to forget you had one." Getting no reply to this accusation, Sherry asked, "What are you doing here anyway?"

"I'm picking up Beverly and Christopher," her father said, looking up. "They were visiting Bev's mom in Phoenix."

How touching, thought Sherry bitterly. Though her words were spiteful, in her heart she felt very hurt and sad. Feelings that she hadn't experienced since she was a child were welling up inside her uncontrollably. To her surprise, one of those feelings was a profound desire to hug her father. She wanted to hug him and have him hug her back, in a warm, secure embrace that made up for all the pain he had caused her over the years. Of course she wanted an apology. She wanted an apology and a second chance with her father. Because underneath all the anger, she did really love him. She could almost admit this desire to herself.

"Look, Dad, I'm sorry. I'm behaving like a child. Do you think we could start this conversation over again?" Sherry smiled nervously.

Her father smiled. "Sure, Sherry. Sure we could." Her father composed himself and asked, "How are you doing, Sherry?"

"Very well, Dad. I'm in the magazine business. I do interviews. That's what I'm doing here. I had an interview today in L.A., but I've got to get back for another one in Manhattan tomorrow. My flight got cancelled, so I'm waiting for another one. How's everything with you? How's your practice going?"

"Actually, I don't have my own practice. I've recently become the head of orthopedic surgery at Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles. It's a great opportunity." As her father finished, an awkward silence fell over them.

"Well," said Sherry, "I guess a few pleasantries won't erase the terrible things we've just said to each other." "I guess not," said her father. "Look, Sherry, I...." Suddenly, a woman's voice interrupted Sherry's father.

"Charles!" the woman called. "Charles, hi! I thought we'd never find you!" A woman approached the two of them, carrying a small flight bag on one shoulder and a small boy on her hip. She put the boy down and threw her arms around Sherry's father. "Hi, honey! We missed you!"

Sherry watched in disbelief until she realized that the woman was Beverly, her father's wife. She then looked down at the boy, Christopher, her brother. Her head was spinning as she took in the situation.

"I missed you guys, too!" her father was gushing at the newcomers. Remembering Sherry, he nervously looked from her to Beverly and back. "Beverly," he began, "I'd like you to meet my daughter, Sherry. Sherry, this is my wife,

Beverly."

Sherry numbly shook Beverly's hand and mumbled, "Nice to meet you." She could not help staring at Christopher. Talking about her father's new family was one thing, but meeting them in such strange circumstances was too much for Sherry.

"Uh, Dad," she said, picking up her bags, "I've really got to go. I should check up on that alternate flight." Her emotions were swirling again. "Beverly, it was very nice to meet you. Goodbye. Goodbye, Dad." Again her glance fell on Christopher. As she imagined her father holding the little boy, reunited after his brief vacation, the tears came rushing to her eyes. "Bye, Dad, I've really got to go," she said again.

"Sherry, wait," her father said, starting after her. "I'd like to finish this sometime. I mean, I can't right now; I don't have time. We're expected at a dinner to celebrate my appointment. Actually, I'm busy the next few weeks straight. Here, let me give you my number; you can call." Sherry began to walk away. "Please, Sherry, please take it." Sherry took the business card and watched her father walk back to his family. He kissed Beverly and swung Christopher up on his shoulders. As he gathered his wife's bags, he turned to look back at Sherry.

"Call me, honey. OK?"

Sherry didn't answer. She knew if she did, she'd dissolve into tears. As she watched her father, Beverly, and Christopher disappear down the concourse, she felt like her father was leaving her all over again. She turned and started back towards her boarding gate. She ducked into the

restroom; and in the safety of being alone, she let the tears cascade down her face. After a second or two, she looked at the business card that her father had given her. Sure, Dad, I'll call you, she thought to herself. Maybe in about ten years.

Tracy Morman

#### THE KEY

I'd stare into his eyes, what would I find?  
Would there be hope and love inside that mind?  
If I looked deep into those eyes of blue,  
I'd hope that what I'd seen could only be true.  
Without a word the truth might be so clear.  
Maybe I would uncover some deep set fear.  
If I saw hate, maybe awful gloom,  
I'd look deeper into every room.  
To find the cause of a pain so brutal or deep.  
Thoughts so private, ones he needs to keep.  
I'd hope to see a smile, a cheerful gleam,  
The things I have seen only in my dreams.  
If I could find some small reflection of me,  
I'd know almost instantly I'd found the key.

Jill Maloney

## SODA FOR A BITCH

I hated her so much. That fucking fake blond with her long tan legs. I hated the dive I had to work in all spring break while all of the degenerates partied in Florida and puked their guts up.

It had to be the shabbiest restaurant in town and I had the extreme pleasure of working my ass off in it. Since all the other little morons had left town during break to fuck their brains out, I was stuck in a hick little college town running the dive the rest had abandoned. I really hated them for that. I also hated the customers who came in and demanded that I give them my full attention. I hated the fact that I was drowning in grease and no one cared. I was faceless as I cooked the food, served the food, bused the tables, mopped the floors, and smiled smiled smiled at the precious customers. I was their survival line between substance and starvation, but they didn't even appreciate it.

The bitch met her dad here for lunch one day. She had spent most of her break killing skin cells and getting wasted. I had spent most of mine flipping burgers and that's why I hated her. She had the stupidest looking little peach colored outfit on that complimented her dark skin. The thought of her lying in agony from skin cancer years from now failed to comfort me. The fact that I made money while everyone else spent theirs failed to comfort me. I was beyond comfort.

Her dad walked in and gave her a hug. I wondered what he would do if he knew his little sweetheart had spent her vacation wrapping

something other than her arms around perverted scumbags. I didn't really know that the bitch was a slut, but it gave me pleasure to assume so. I got enjoyment from so few things in that crap hole that I clung to disparaging thoughts about others in hopes that this would make me happy.

She probably was 21. That meant she got to drink her fill while throwing herself at horny men. Not like your typical female can't weasele her way into a bar and get served even if she is under 21. Hell, I used to when I was a freshman, when I had a life. Now I just make cheesburgers and serve diet soda to tan bleached wenches. I hated all females like that. I hated anyone who went out and acted their age while I was stuck in a hovel mopping up cookie crumbs.

I wiped off the faded orange formica counter and watched the bitch suck up to her father. I saw him hand her a 20 dollar bill and I wanted to scream. I got 3.35 an hour for scrubbing off the dirt rings her diet soda cup made and she got 20 dollars for smiling. Fuck it. I smiled at every customer even fucking bitches like her and I never even got a smile back let alone a tip for doing it.

The bitch flipped her sun and otherwise bleached hair and approached the counter. Before she uttered a word I knew she wanted a Diet Coke. I was right. The bitch turned around and I looked at her skinny little ass. I hated her. I filled it to the rim with Coca-Cola Classic. That's right, calorie ridden, sugar containing, regular Coke. I took it to her. Rot in hell suck ass wench, but die fat first.

I went in the back to mop up the coffee grounds I had spilled while trying to do a hundred things at once. Even so I could hear



the talking and laughing of the bitch. That's when I decided she wasn't even a college student. She was a prostitute and that wasn't her dad but a john. Yes, she was a hooker and not even a good one at that. After all, she had only gotten 20 dollars. She probably had a rare gynecological disorder resulting from her countless encounters from disgusting men infected with social diseases. The best part of it was that she had no clue that I had known the truth.

I began to laugh, obsessed with the fact that she was nothing more than a common street whore, while I had a decent respectable dead end crappy job. I wasn't tan but at least my skin was healthy. Besides she also had split ends from bleaching her hair.

Oh sure, I knew she had probably had a terrific time in Florida. I knew her dad paid for her college and probably her trip as well. However, I also knew that her peach outfit was ridiculous and that her nose was too big. I thought of all of this as I walked back up front with dishcloth in hand. I began to clean off the table next to them and try to eaves drop. Just as I did, the bitch and her father got up to leave.

"Oh Miss" she said and I turned around to meet her pathetic smile.

"Yes?"

"I think you should check your soda machine because I swear this tastes like regular Coke."

"OH, OK. Thanks."

Then I was able to smile, and it was a real one.

Sarah Knecht

## SPLAT

Characters: Niki Jones - Adult, Teen, and Child  
Viki Jones - Teen and Child  
Mother  
Father  
Psychiatrist  
Nurse

Setting: A psychiatrist's office has been defined at stage right. It is a small area to provide room stage left to enact the flashbacks. A black curtain acts as 2 walls for the office. The space is filled by two chairs and a desk, the desk is bare except for a phone. The space between the office and the rest of the stage is divided by a wall with a window.

## SCENE II

The play opens with the psychiatrist sitting in a chair with a pad of paper on his lap, and the patient, one Niki Jones (adult), sitting in a chair opposite him.

Niki: I guess the war started when Viki, the little brat, started school. Before that it wasn't too bad except for the names. Why would any parent do that to their children, who they supposedly love? Viki and Niki, ugh it still makes me sick. Anyway, where was I? Oh, yeah. The little princess, as my mother fondly calls her, started kindergarten and my life ended. Fifth grade just wasn't the same. (She gets up and

goes to the window where she stares out.)

Office (stage right) fades out. Stage left lights up. A family is at a dinner table eating. Both Niki and Uiki are children.

Mother: Because I'm working you've gotta come straight home from school and watch Uiki. She's not big enough to stay by herself.

Niki: Mom, it's not fair.

Father: Niki! Stop it now! You need to realize that everyone has a responsibility to this family. You mom and I have to work which means you are going to have to give up school activities and playing after school to watch your sister. Besides it wouldn't hurt you to do more homework anyway. Use your time to study-If you don't get straight A's you'll never get into college, get a good job, or be happy. No man wants to marry an idiot ya know.

Niki: But why can't we play outside after school. Everybody gets to do stuff. How come we can't. It's not fair.

Mom: You've gotta stay in the house because if people see you they will call the police and they will come take you away.

Niki: Where?

Mom: They will take you away to the orphanage where there is nothing to eat and they will never let you see anybody or even play.

Besides that, they will make us go to jail.

Stage left fades out. Stage Right lights up, Niki is still standing at the window gazing out.

Niki: Can you believe the bullshit parents pull on kids? Do they actually think we are stupid or what? Parents just can't understand that kids are human too. They always try those silly scare tactics.

Psychiatrist: (not looking at her) Parents seem to revert to the old standbys when they can't find a creative punishment. They've been told it doesn't work, but they still try. Honesty is important when you deal with children.

Niki: Do you have children?

Psych: (looks up at her) Oh, I make it a point not to discuss my personal life with patients, (laughing) you never know about some mental patients.

Niki: Yeah, I guess you have to be careful, someone might kill you or something. (laughing) I just thought you might be able to give me some insight into

Right Fades out, Left Lights up.

Mom: I give you everything in life. You kids have more than either your father or I had as kids, and more than most your friends. And yet, all you do is fight. Someday you

will be grateful to have us and your sister."

Niki: Yeah, well I wish Viki was dead.

Mom: Don't you dare say that, you don't mean it.

Left Fades out, right lights up. Niki is still looking out the window, the psychiatrist stares at her but appears to be staring past her.

Psychiatrist: (he doodles on a pad of paper in his lap) It's always a shame that parents try to use guilt. How is your relationship with your mother now.

Niki: It's gotten worse since the accident, she seems much more possessive. She is always calling me at school.

Psych: (talks to her without looking at her) How does that make you feel?

Niki: Usually it makes me very angry, and feel a little guilty. What's so bad is that I know I have no reason to be guilty, Right? (turns to face the doctor)

Psych: (looks at notes in his file) We have gone over this-you have no reason to feel guilty. You weren't to blame for Viki's death, either time.

Niki: (Spoken sarcastically) Yeah, we were such loving sisters.

Fade out. Stage left lights up. The sisters are now teens.

Niki: You ripped my homework.

Viki: I did not!

Niki: Admit it you little brat-or I'll smack you to Australia."(Niki slaps Viki on the cheek) "You just wait til Sunday, that dress you wanted to borrow - well forget it.

Mother enters Stage left!

Mom: What the hell is going on here? She spots Viki's cheek and goes to her. Did you hit your sister?

Niki: She ripped up my homework

Mom: I don't care, you had no right to hit her. You won't be going out tonight so you'll have time to redo it.

Left stage fades out. Right lights up. Niki still has her back to the doctor. He continuously checks his watch.

Niki: I remember one time when we were little, I came very close to killing her then.

Psych: But did you really want her to die?

Niki: No I guess not.

Right stages fades, left lights up.

Niki: Uiki, get on the chair and I'll make you fly.

Uiki: Uh, uh.

Niki: Uiki, I'm telling you that we can fly.

Uiki: Mom!

Mom: What?

Uiki: Can kids fly?

Mom: What?

Niki: You are going to get her mad.

Uiki: Nevermind.

Mom: You kids play nice, and be quiet.

Niki: Come on, Uiki, try it. Would I lie to you?

Uiki: Okay, but you promise I'll fly.

Niki: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Left fades out. Right lights up.

Psych: (looks at her with real interest) What happened?

Niki: She flew from the chair straight into a brick wall. Her screams were so loud that my mother came running down the stairs. Uiki stuck to the wall for brief second and then just slid to the floor. I ran over to

her. I really thought that she was dead. Her forehead was turning red and her eyes were open and staring straight ahead. (Niki returns to the window.) It is really a beautiful day out.

Right Fades out. Left lights up.  
(Mother's voice heard/off-stage)

Mom: Oh my God! What was that?

Pounding (steps) is heard.

Mom: What the hell is going on down here?

Niki: Mom, Uiki is hurt! (shouted with true fear)

Mother enters the stage

Mom: Oh, my baby, are you okay?

Uiki: Mommy, I flew

Mom: Why did you do that? Don't you know that little princesses can't fly?

Uiki: Niki, said so.

Mom: What did you do to her?

Niki: Nothing.

Uiki: Mommy! It hurts.

Mom: Oh, my baby.

Left Fades out.

SCENE II

Left lights up. Living room. Dad enters room  
Mom: John, Uiki walked into a wall and knocked herself out.

Dad: Why would she do that?

Mom: I don't know. I asked her and all she said was that she flew into the wall. She has a lump on her head and is talking nonsense.

Dad: Should we take her to the doctor or maybe the emergency room?

Mom: No, I gave her an aspirin, put an ice bag on her head, and put her to bed. You better go get something to eat, though, because I didn't get a chance to cook anything.

Dad: Okay, I'll be back in a couple of minutes. How about some chicken?

Mom: Sounds good.

Left Fades out. Right Lights up. Niki is looking out the window and the doctor is writing in his pad and squirming in his chair.

Psych: What did you do then?

Niki: I ran out of the house eager to tell of my wonderous skill. My friends, both male

and female, gathered about me to learn the latest skill, you see I was quite the expert on torture. Little did their mothers know where they learned those horrible acts the mothers were working so hard to suppress. My knowledge was deep and I was eager to share. If others came up with ideas I was the experimenter and Uiki was the 'guineau pig.' (said sarcastically) With my /peers I was

Psych: All children need a device for admiration from their peers.

Niki: Yeah, well my claim to fame was torture and doing any form of bodily harm while inflicting the victim with fear. One of the early techniques, an easy torture anyone could use, was what we called "gurgle." It involved pinching the nose of one's soundly sleeping victim.

I discovered that it minutes for the brain to switch to the mouth for air once the airway is blocked. This usually forces the victim to wake. Uiki would make these glorious gurling noises before opening her mouth to gulp air.

However, (Niki pauses and turns to Psych) timing was essential for a successful gurgle. One had to hold the nose high enough to prevent slippage or snotting, the horror of the torture.

Uiki would turn a glorious shade of blue when her nose was pinched.

I think her brain was incapable of thought while asleep. She would kick a little and squirm right before she woke-from lack of air, so I had a warning to duck under the bed. I could hear her gasp and sit up. She

would suck in air for awhile and then goback to sleep. I would wait until she was in deep sleep to start again.

Of course, there were times when I didn't get away with doing harm to the little princess. I guess I could

tell you about the tool shed story-it's pretty funny.

The summer Uiki started school, Dad decided to build a small tool shed in the backyard. He wanted to lock up the stuff he was worried about us getting into and possibly doing ourselves harm, little did he know then.

The roof of the shed sloped down on either side. We didn't have a swingset so we decided to use the roof as a sliding board.

Dad kept a ladder under the porch and one day the neighborhood kids got together to try the shed. We got the ladder, carried it to the shed and managed to perch it against the roof.

We climbed upon younger siblings, referred to as chickens, waited to see the injuries caused by this daring stunt.

It was great! The slide was short and the slider dropped three feet to the ground. We convinced Uiki to try it. She stretched her chubby short legs in order to climb the ladder.

However, once on the roof she refused to slide. At that very instant, Dad's truck was seen coming around the corner. Uiki began to cry.

All the kids ran as far as they could get away from the shed and Uiki. We had learned vicinity to crime caused punishment.

We watched my dad get out of the truck

and go into the house. A few minutes later he ran out the patio door to the shed. He yelled my name and I reluctantly went to my beating.

He couldn't get Uiki to come to the edge so he could get her down. He put me on his shoulders and dumped me on the roof. I yanked Uiki over to him and shoved her into his arms. Then I slid down to the ground.

Psych: Has Uiki been around lately?

Niki: No, that new medication is working well.

Psych: (looking into her file) You haven't experienced any blackouts or memory losses? Your parents would like to come up Sat.

Niki: No, I still can't handle it. She cried for so long after Uiki died and then when....

Psych: A lot of people suffer from split personalities, especially after such a traumatic event.

Niki: Yeah, but they don't become their sister. You know I think my mom liked having my Uiki around, I know she wishes I had died instead of the little princess.

Psych: Niki, we have gone over this you need to stop worrying about such things and get on with your life, their

Niki: I know it wasn't my fault, I tried to stop her and the gun went off - I didn't want to kill her. I swear I was trying to stop her.

Nurse: Doctor your next patient is here.

Psych: Okay (Nurse leaves) Niki its time for you to go back to your room. I think you can go outside this afternoon. I'll give Nurse Johnson a pass for you. You have made quite an effort today.

Niki: Thank you. I feel so much better.

Psych: Just remember, I'm always here for you and take your medication.

Niki exits stage right, mubbling under her breath.

Psych (picks up phone) Alright Miss Johnson, send in the next nut and make sure that Uh, uh, (opens file) Niki Jones gets a pass to outside this afternoon.

Tracy Riebel

## The Wild

She stalks the thicket for something to bring.  
She hunts as tradition for her lazy king.

Driven by instinct only an animal knows.  
She contemplates her kill and her fury grows.

Her thick golden hair shines bright in the sun.  
A warrior and bold this deed must be done.

In her land none compete with her beauty.  
She keeps to her place, she'll bring his gratuity.

Tom Schacht

## WRITER'S BLOCK

A pen in my hand,  
No thoughts in my head.  
No form to fill,  
It makes me feel ill.  
So many things run through my head,  
While I'm lying in bed.  
I don't understand,  
Why they don't make it to my hand.  
So, here I sit,  
There's nothing to it.  
A blank look on my face,  
I'll stare at this space,  
Until my thoughts become concrete,  
And pen and paper meet.

Jill Maloney

## Bluebird Death

Atop the roof, the bluebird sits  
He watches quiet, does not flinch  
Tall buildings round, the air so thick  
No trees in sight, no green just rust  
Where did they go the bluebird asks  
Was man not careful in his tasks  
The bluebird chokes, his eyes burn hurt  
No life around, death pain and dirt  
So soon he dies, he'll fly no more  
No birds, no bugs, no bats, all gone  
Now high above in clean sweet air  
The bluebird sits without a care

Mark Sergot

## Rain

She pulled the soggy bag off her shoulder and hoped the groceries weren't too wet. Leaving them under the stairs where it was almost dry, she carried the bicycle up the slippery wooden boards. Bike riding her shoulder, she fumbled through her pockets for the keys. Not finding them, she balanced the bike on the landing as best she could and made her way down. She fell once, scraping her hand on the splintering 2x4 that served as a handrail. Sucking at the chunk of wood now lodged in her palm, she continued tip-toeing down the treads, praying as she always did that they would not crack beneath her feet. Once down, she dragged the bag out from under the steps and, bending her back against the downpour, rummaged through it - bruising her knuckles against the tins, accidentally squashing the bread, damaging the fruit, discovering the broken eggs. After a few minutes, she realized that the keys were most likely sitting on the kitchen table where, in her haste, she'd forgotten them.

Shivering, she leaned back on her heels and thought about crying. Her watch told her that it was dangerously close to the dinner hour. Swinging her head as though her neck were a hinge, she looked slowly up and down the empty gravel drive. Glancing at the sky that had been clear not ten minutes before, she felt disgust rising in her chest. Boy, was she stupid. Boy oh boy oh boy. She allowed herself a minute to think about the extra key the Super had. She could call him from Andrea's place. He could be there in an hour. She looked at her watch again and bit her lip. Damn. Even if Super was home, he couldn't be



there in time.

Dropping her head, her eyes fell on the supposedly waterproof bag between her knees and she realized she was still holding it open - although it was worthless when it came to keeping water out, it did wonders at keeping water in. She dropped the canvas flap and shoved the bag back under the steps. Contemptuously glancing again at the sky, she walked around the building until she stood in front of the big porch that belonged to the apartment below hers. As she gazed at its cracked floorboards, its rotting supports, its sagging roof, she wiped some rain off her face and took a deep breath. She knew that she would probably kill herself. She was going to fall on her head and lay bleeding in the mud. Great pain would be involved. Good. She deserved it. Dumb bitch. Scowling, she kicked off her mud-caked shoes and began to climb.

Standing on the porch's railing, feeling it swaying slightly beneath her feet, she could barely touch the gutter with her fingertips. She grabbed the sturdiest-looking support and tried shimmying up to its top, but slipped midway and fell sprawling onto the porch. She shook her head to clear it and looked hatefully at the support. Up she stood and, attacking the support, managed to shimmy up high enough to grab the gutter when her legs slipped for the second time. She hung there for an instant, long enough to hear the gutter threaten to tear managed to pull herself up, shredding her belly on the corroded metal of the gutter. "Hello?"

"Where y'been? Phone's been ringin'."

"I was in the bathroom. I didn't hear it at first."

"Are you OK?"

"Yes, why?"

"You sound weird."

"I'm fine."

"Well y'know, it's rainin'."

"It's not raining that hard."

"Yeah, but I don' have an umbrella or anythin'." She tried to put a smile into her voice.

"Oh you are such a wimp."

"Could we make i'nother day?"

"Not many men would pass up free food

He was quiet. She took a breath.

"OK. Call me."

"Talk t'ya later."

Sighing, she put the phone down. She looked for a minute at the rain, mixing with the blood on the yellowed linoleum under the broken window. Blood covered the floor. She felt it pounding in her veins, rushing to pour out from the gashes in her body. She didn't want to know what she looked like. Her carved-up arm, she suddenly

realized, couldn't move. Limping to the window, she closed it as best she could, avoiding her reflection in the dirty glass, grimacing at the pain in her foot as it accidentally touched the water. She paused, and then forced the swelling heel to submerge itself. Stupid, stupid, stupid. Look at this place. Sighing angrily, she limped down to collect her ruined groceries.

Phoebe Hungerford

Stephanie

I saw her with a friend of mine  
Who used to be my boss.  
I hoped and prayed to God above  
Our paths would someday cross.

One afternoon I went to work  
And then to my surprise,  
She walked across the room with grace  
And looked into my eyes.

"I found out where you work," she  
said.

My heart was beating fast.  
I knew that day she'd be my girl,  
Turned out she was my last.

We dated for a whole six months  
Before she walked the aisle.  
When thinking what the future holds,  
It makes me want to smile.

A home of love, a life to share,  
Through good times and the bad.  
A family to raise and help support,  
For soon I'll be a dad.

Michael N. Schulz

MACFELL

There lies a little inn along the Tyne  
Where many go to drink the ale or wine  
Yet if it ever had a tale to tell  
It would be of a Scotsman called MacFell.

He strode into the place one stormy night  
And silence fell as he came into light  
His hat was lost, his clothes were soiled  
and torn  
No man you'll ever see could look so worn

He stood like stone, his color pale as  
death

No sound he made but for his haggard  
breath

His shirt and skin were soaked with blood  
and rain

But fury lit his eyes instead of pain

For though his life was waiting at Death's  
door

The battered Scot fell not to oaken floor  
With all the strength he had, the brave  
MacFell

Did roar an oath that shook both earth and  
hell

"I know that I'll not live to see the dawn  
For tis the final journey I'm upon  
But by the might of God or devil's hands  
Let not my soul enter eternal lands

Let not my spirit rest til I've seen  
through  
This final deed I've sworn myself to do

For care I not if blessed or damned I be  
If I might kill the theif who murdered  
me."

He pointed to a swarthy little man  
Whose heart went cold with fear, he up and  
ran  
The coward nearly made it safe from harm  
But caught he was by one great Scottish  
arm

For all to see, his murderer he smote  
Barehandedly, MacFell did crush his throat  
His task complete, he strode back out the  
door

Into the night, to be found nevermore

They say you still might see the Scot  
MacFell

A ghost upon the moore, or so they tell  
But only if you drink the ale or wine  
Served at that little inn upon the Tyne.

Andy Hitz

## Marks Millions

The scene opens at the beginning of a Comm. 297 class at Illinois State. The class is about to start a new unit on statistics. An ordinary day for everyone in class but one, Mark Paun. It was announced yesterday, (and in the vidette today) that Mark had won the Illinois State Lottery. \$10,000,000. Everyone is seated and ready to start, except Paun. Professor Isohornie prepares to start his lecture.

PROF I: O.k. class prepare for hell. Today we start statistic. (Professor Isohornies english never was very good, being a native of japan.) I see there is no Mr. Paun today. Well, some of us mus tink dat money has more to do in life dan a soun education. Well, he was not going to pass anyway. (The professor pauses and just then the door opens. There stands Mark Paun. His clothes are ruffled, his body wreaks of grain alchohol and the only thing more rediculous than his facial expression is a little paper birthday hat on his head labeled, "DUNCE". Paun staggers to his seat in the front row and tumbles into it like a load of wet laundry. There are looks of astonishment on everyones face along with a few incidents of contained giggiling. Professor Isohornie looks displeased to say the least. Paun shifts to get comfortable finally turning to his neighbor and flashing him a peace sign.

PAUN: Whats up dude? (lauphter fills the room).

PROF I: (somewhat Preturbed) Mr. Paun! We all realize your good fourtune, but if your going to disrupt my crass den prease drop de course. Some of us have not yet reached our desired level of financial stability and are depend- ing on a dgree to hep us become contributing member of society.

PAUN: (Looking confused) Well I can lend you some money man.

The class erupts in lauphter and Prof I throws up his hands.

PROF I: Mr. Paun we have lot to cover today. So I ask you either pay attention or move to Carifornia and grow Marirjauna or som ting.

PAUN: Sure man, I wanna get my degree and all ya know. You just do your trip man and I'll take notes and shit.

PROF I: (Glar'ing) tank you Mr. Paun. As I was saying, Statistic is a very h- (Pauns papers rain onto the floor) What are you doing now Mr. Paun?

Paun looks up with saucer eyes like he just got busted in the womens restroom.

PAUN: I'm trying to get a peice of paper man. I just pulled one out and all the other little bastards fell out. (Paun proceeds to lean over his chair to collect his papers. Predictably, he loses his balance and lands on his head with the desk on top of him. The class roars.) Holy shit man!! I nearly broke my NECK!!

PROF I: (Roaring) Dats enough!!!! You get out of here now!! You have dirupted my crass an ichi ichhi scratchi nippi tripppi....

PAUN: HEY MELLOW DUT MAN!! (everyone quiets except a few side splitting snickers. RELAX man! its cool. Just mellow man.(all pause) O.K. I'm ready now, continue dude.

PROF I:(looking completely exaughsted) Measurement involves the apprication of some numeric or symbolic scheme to designate characteristic of variable. AS such, it bridges the gap between...

PAUN: (rising) Well fuck this shit man I'm gonna go get some sleep. Nice knowin ya dude, Have a nice life and shit. I'm gonna move to long beach and grow pot man.

(Paun exits the room. the whole class sits in silence staring at the books and papers Paun left behind. Softly, a voice mumbles from the back of the room what everyone was thinking

VOICE: Must be nice.

Joe Gabriel

### A Possibility That Never Really Was

I awoke early to the sound of my alarm, realized that once again, I had a full, throbbing head and swollen eyes, then shook off my sadness for the moment and hurried to the shower. I took a long time deciding what to wear and finally chose a pink t-shirt, black shorts and plain, white cotton panties. I took a last look in the mirror, then unable to meet my own eyes, I hurried out of the bathroom. My mom was up and having a cup of coffee in the kitchen when I walked in.

"How come you're up so early today?" she asked.

"David and I are going to the Harley shop in Springfield." I answered, not looking at her, but pouring myself a glass of milk. "He's thinking about buying a bike."

"That's all he needs, he'll mess around and kill himself on one of those things."

"Oh Mom, he will not, he's very careful," I yelled over my shoulder as I ran down the hall to my room, grabbed my big, hot pink bag and double checked to make sure I had everything I needed. I re-counted my money carefully, then put everything back and hurried down the hall. Just then I heard a horn sound out front.

"He's here Mom, I'm leaving," I called.

"Well, have a good time, Stace."

I ran out the front door and into the mid-August sunshine. I was only a little surprised to see that David had his mother's car. Already, it was very hot and muggy at just passed eight o'clock. I was glad to climb into the car and the air conditioning.

"How are you doing?" David asked, looking as if he were really concerned.

"I'm all right," I answered, "Let's just go."

"Where did you tell your mom you were going today, David?"

"Oh, I said I had to go to court in Peoria. She and my sister were trying to decide why—they thought maybe I got a speeding ticket or something."

"You didn't really let her think that did you?"

"No, I told her that I just needed to go to Peoria and that I might tell her why someday. What did you tell your mom?"

"I said we were going to look at motorcycles."

"Great. She, I bet she loved that."

"Well, I knew she'd love that a lot more than she would the truth."

"Yeah, you're probably right. Did you get directions?" I searched around in my purse until I found the slip of paper I had used to write down the address.

"It's on University." David looked a little relieved.

"Good, I know where that's at. What's the name of this place?" I tried, but I couldn't think of it.

"We should still be able to find it though, don't you think?"

"Yeah, we're early anyway, so we'll have time to ask if we have any trouble."

We rode in silence for awhile, then David pointed to the side of the road, "My car slid off in the ditch right there one winter."

I looked at the spot he was pointing to,

"Wow, you're lucky you didn't hit that

cement thing, you could have really been hurt. How did you get home?"

"Someone stopped and gave me a ride up to the house of a girl I used to go out with and her dad came and pulled my car out with his truck." I said nothing, jealous of this unknown girl and a past in which I held no part. I wondered who she was, what she looked like, how much he liked her, what they talked about, what they did and if they ever rode to Peoria together. I had a hateful, wounded feeling in my stomach and I made myself think of something else.

"David, see the new ring I got for my birthday," I held my hand up in front of his face.

"That's kind of weird looking."

"Thanks a lot! It's a daughter's ring.

It has my birthstone in the middle, my mom's on one side and my dad's on the other." David said nothing. Although my birthday had been only two days before, he had managed to ignore it and I guess he was continuing to without even a belated birthday kiss.

We rode on and I noticed David was squirming a lot in his seat. "What's the matter David, do you have ants in your pants?"

"Very funny, my jeans are still kind of wet, I just put them in the dryer this morning."

I looked closer and was a little touched because he had worn his best Harley shirt and made the effort of drying his good jeans instead of just throwing on his paint-spattered work pants. Maybe he had dressed nervously this morning, too.

David drove on and after a few more minutes we neared the city and could see it

ahead of us. A huge church with big steeples and lots of stained glass windows rose out of the horizon, David pointed it out as the church where his parents had gotten married. A lonely feeling raced through me as I thought about the fact that we would never take sacred vows in a fancy church (or a judge's chambers for that matter.) For the thousandth time, I wondered if we were doing the the right thing, if we should have the power to chose our own fate, and that of someone else. They were mute questions put to rest by one glance of the firm set of David's jaw.

I checked the address of the place again, and the numbers came closer to matching up as we drove along. Soon we were past the number, we had obviously missed it. We drove back and forth slowly, still not seeing the number. David grew impatient and wanted to stop and ask someone for directions. "No David, we are not going to stop and ask how to find this place. We'll just find it ourselves! Look there it is in that plaza," I directed. David pulled in and drove up to the sign that listed all the occupants of the plaza.

"What's the name of the place Stacey?"

"I can't remember," I answered.

"Well, there's an OB-GYN. That's probably it."

"Yeah, you're right." We pulled around and parked the car.

I clung to David's hand as we walked into the office. I froze the minute I stepped inside the doorway. Everywhere I looked there were very pregnant women sitting uncomfortably on the waiting room couches. This couldn't be it! I stood there awkwardly, not knowing

what to do. "David," I whispered, "I don't think this is the right place."

"Go ask," he hissed back. I went up to the desk where the receptionist was sitting. Embarrassed, I said,

"Hi, I have an appointment for eleven o'clock, but I'm not sure I'm in the right place."

"What's your name, honey?" I told her and she looked at her book. "No, I don't see your name." She lowered her voice and said, "I think you might be looking for one of the offices in the back." I thanked her, grabbed David's hand and hurried out.

David and I got back in the car and once again drove over to look at the sign. "David, please. Let's just go home," I begged, knowing what his answer would be.

"No, Stacey. I'm sorry that happened, but you know we're doing the smart thing." There it was again, the word "smart". I've always been such a "smart girl," so how come I'm in such a stupid mess, I wondered. I looked up at the sign again and recognized the name I was looking for. David and I drove around to the back. I was relieved to see that there were no protesters standing between us and the "smart thing."

We opened the door and immediately I knew we were in the right place. Instead of huge pregnant women, I saw scared young girls. The room was small, but every inch of it was crowded. David and I went up to the desk and I gave my name. The receptionist marked that I had arrived and then looked up at me expectantly. "Urine please," she said loudly and I blushed furiously as I dug the morning's sample out of my bag, praying that David

wasn't looking. She gave me a clipboard with several forms to fill out and then David and I made our way to the back of the room where we found two seats where we could sit side by side. I busied myself filling out the papers as David read the pamphlets from the clinic. I was embarrassed to discover that you could hear someone urinating in the bathroom right across from us. The door opened and a girl walked out carrying a dixie cup full of liquid. I was glad I had brought mine from home and didn't have to carry it through a crowded room.

I continued filling out forms as David read them over my shoulder: Yes, I was over eighteen, No, I did not have history of diabetes or heart disease, My last period was June second it was normal and it lasted five days. I answered question after question until I was finished. Then David handed me a pamphlet, "Here, I read this and I think you should, too." I read through it and was glad to see that it involved him too. It said something about what a hard decision this is to make and it thanked the other person for caring about her (me) and for bringing her (me) here. I looked at him trying to decide if he was trying to tell me that he cared. Unable to tell, I looked at the people around us. There was another couple around our age close by and several young girls with their girl friends. Everyone looked uneasy and shifted awkwardly in their seats. From the front part of the room, I thought I heard my name, but I wasn't sure so I chose to ignore it. Then I heard it again, louder this time. "That's you, Stace." I stood up. "You'll be okay," David whispered. "I'll be right here

waiting for you." I walked to the front where a lady in white was holding the door open for me. I went in with her and sat down in front of her desk. She began to fill out a receipt,

"That'll be 250 dollars please," she said.

"Oh no, I forgot, just a minute." I got up from my seat and went back out to where David was. I bent down and whispered to him. He pulled out his wallet and handed me the money. I kissed him quickly and went back up front. I waited for the locked door to be opened and then went in and took my seat. After she gave me my receipt, she led me to another room where they were going to draw blood. The girl that had been sitting with her boyfriend near David and me was already there. A young man was waiting for me with a big needle. He tried my left arm first, but he couldn't get anything, so we switched arms and I watched as he plunged the needle in. Afterward, I was handed a chart and led to a door with a couple of chairs beside it. I took a seat and waited until the door opened and my name was called again. The room contained one chubby lady, a table and a T.V.-like screen. The lady instructed me to jump up on the table, take down my shorts and lie still. She applied a cold jelly of some kind to my stomach and I suddenly realized that I had to go to the bathroom. She ran something back and forth over my stomach while she watched the screen. I looked, too and was relieved to find that I could see nothing that resembled a baby.

When she was finished, she handed me a paper towel to wipe off with while she wrote something on my chart. I quickly dressed and asked to use the bathroom, luckily there was



one in the same room. I was then showed to a hall with a long line of closed doors and a row of chairs. This is where I would do most of my waiting.

I took a seat and noticed that I was once again by the girl I had seen in the waiting room. On my other side was a girl who looked about fourteen. She seemed really calm, but I wondered if she was as nervous as I was. There were about ten of us sitting there, everyone lost in their solitary thoughts. One lady with a wedding ring wiped tears from her cheeks. Everyone was quiet and, I assume, sad. Then an older girl came and took a seat two or three down from my own. She was wearing a big, bulky sweater with a Batman button on it and reading a Batman book. She began speaking to everyone and no one around her about the Batman movie. I resented her for intruding on my thoughts and for making everyone nervous and uncomfortable with her stupid chatter. I knew I was waiting to see a counselor and I wondered if she would be able to tell that I wasn't 100 percent sure of what I was doing. I think I secretly hoped that she would stop it, that she would say that she knew it wasn't what I really wanted.

After a very long time, a door opened and my name was called. I walked towards the smiling woman and entered the room. I don't really remember what questions she asked me, but I remember smiling my best fake smile and repeating things that David had said-not a good time for a baby, have to finish school, can't afford it. Evidently she was satisfied because she handed my chart back to me and was about to lead me to the next room when I asked to use the bathroom. She smiled and said,

"It's right through there. I remember having to go the bathroom all the time when I was pregnant." I smiled back at her, but it was a smile that faded when I closed the door.

In the next room I was given a faded, flowered cotton robe to put on, along with a rope belt to hold it closed. I changed in the bathroom and joined a room full of girls in variations of my costume. There were blankets to use if you were cold and a television to watch if your mind wasn't already occupied enough. Early afternoon soaps were on, broken into segments divided by baby food, diapers and baby shampoo commercials. I avoided everyone's eyes and we all seemed to shrink into ourselves, all except for the Batman girl. She had put her sweater on over her robe and was still chatting away. She hoped this wasn't too big of a deal, she had to go back to work the next day. She worked for her step-father and he thought she took the day off to go shopping with her girlfriends. God, how I wanted her to shut up! I watched as girl after girl left the room until finally it was my turn. This was really it.

My stomach was in knots and I dug my nails into the palms of my hands as I followed the nurse into a little room with a table, a desk, a stool and a very bright light. I climbed onto the table and put my feet in the cold stirrups as she told me to. Then the doctor came in. He had curly, gray hair and a gold stud in his ear. He introduced himself and went right to work, without having looked at my face. He felt my stomach and then lowered himself onto the stool at the end of the table, "Well, you're definitely pregnant," he said from below. "I know, that's why I'm here," I

thought to myself. The nurse held my hand as the doctor began. He explained everything as he went along, but I didn't really want to hear. I just wished I were somewhere or someone else. A million thoughts ran through my mind and I wished the nurse would let go of my hand. I didn't want to be comforted by someone I didn't know. A whirring sound began and I stiffened. The nurse spoke sharply to me,

"Stop breathing like that or you're going to get sick! Breathe evenly." She gripped my hand harder saying: "It's almost over, it's almost over." Finally, it really was over.

The nurse helped me up and into another room. It looked like the furniture section of Sears, with rows of recliners. She helped me to a chair and I was given some medicine to take. From time to time someone would come by and check on me as I "recovered." Then, to my amazement, a nurse began passing out soda and cookies. "God," I thought, "Who would be hungry?" Just then the Batman girl asked if she could put some in her purse to take home. I was sickened.

I sat there a little over an hour, impotently wondering whether or not it had been the right thing to do. I thought about David out in the waiting room, what was he thinking about? I looked at the girls around me and I wondered about their situations. I sat quietly as hot tears ran down my face. Soon I was able to change and I went out to meet David. We walked out together, leaving behind a possibility that never really was.

Jodi Smith

Leaves

are like

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uniform

spread

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Falling  
leaves

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