

The Portal

A cool collection of short stories and poems.



Favorite Food Stories ... and more!



Chasing Dinner By Joanne Williams

“This is my first time here”, Sam said to the hostess at a restaurant on the beach.

“Welcome. This is a self-service buffet, so help yourself to anything you’d like on the counter.” The hostess responded with a smile.

Eager to see what was on the buffet, Sam walked to the counter and saw a variety of dishes that included chicken, green beans, potatoes, and more. At the end of the table he saw a crowd of people gathered around this one pot.

He peeped around the crowd and saw a special delight. His favorite was stone crabs.

As the crowd thinned out, so did the pile of crabs. “I hope that there’s some left for me,” he said.

When the crowd cleared, he walked over to the pot and smiled as he saw that there was just one left. He picked up an empty bowl and the tongs. He used the tongs to reach for the crab. The crab jumped.

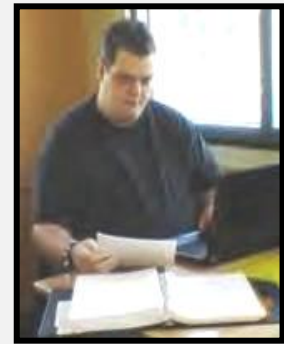
Thinking he was seeing things, he went for it again. The crab jumped again.

“What the?” he said.

On the third attempt, the crab jumped out of the pot and snapped its claw at Sam. It then leaped onto the floor, and ran down the aisle. Determined to get his prized dinner, he ran after the crab with the tongs in hand. “I’m going to get you, you clammy critter!” he said.

The trembling crab came to a halt at a corner in the restaurant. “I’m going to get my dinner now.” Sam said as he moved closer behind the crab. The crab turned around and swung its claw toward Sam.

Sam ducked and caught the crab with the tongs. The crab got loose and chopped at Sam. The crab then lunged at Sam and took the tongs out his hand. Sam dropped the bowl and dashed down the aisle as the crab chased him out of the restaurant. The crowd stood up and applauded the crab’s victory.



Flavored Tomatoes By Edward White/CP Bialois <http://cpbialois.wordpress.com/>

Jake stood over his small tomato garden staring at the plants as if they were an alien life form. The more he tried to rationalize why half his plants were dead or dying while the other half thrived, the more he thought he was going insane. No matter what he tried, the right side of his garden would grow so long and then start turning brown.

Confused, but refusing to allow the problem to ruin his day, he bent to pluck a couple ripe ones for dinner. Few things taste as sweet as freshly plucked tomatoes and his mouth began watering at the thought. He brushed aside a few leaves in search, but he couldn’t find any ripe ones on the four remaining plants.

“Now, if that don’t beat all.” He stood and scratched his head. Worse still, he had to figure out a way to tell the wife there wouldn’t be any tomatoes with dinner. He could already hear her giving him an earful about there being a handful ready that morning.

Letting out a sigh, he turned and made his way down the sidewalk toward the house. He was about halfway when his wife opened the backdoor to let their dog, Sam, out.

At seeing the chocolate lab running along the fence and sniffing, Jake couldn’t help shaking his head. Since day one the damn dog was more trouble than he was worth by tearing apart the house piece by piece. After five years of losing pillows, shoes, and linoleum to the dog’s appetite, he wondered why the kid hadn’t wanted



something simple like a fish or turtle instead of a dog.

As if he knew Jake was talking about him, Sam looked up from where he sniffed and snorted. It was his way of telling Jake where he could go and what he could do with himself while going there.

Jake returned the snort with a sharp look then the two went their own way. For whatever reason, he and Sam never got along. As much as the dog loved his son, Sam looked at Jake like little more than an obstacle. Hell, even the dog trainer was able to handle Sam. In all his years, Jake had never once seen such a strong minded dog. Oh well, at least he hadn't taken to crapping all over the house. That was something for him to hold onto.

As he neared the backdoor, his wife, Janet, stepped out and smiled at him. "No tomatoes?"

Letting out a breath, he shook his head. "No. They're all green."

Janet pointed over his shoulder toward the garden. "I think that's why."

Jake turned to see Sam peeing on the part of the garden where the plants were dying while pulling a green tomato off the vine and eating it.

"Hey! You sonofabitch! Get the hell away from there!" Jake ran towards the garden with the perpetrator in his sights.

Sam looked up at him as he finished chewing on the tomato. Instead of running, Sam waited until Jake was close enough to reach down for him. With a quick hop, Sam leaped over the garden and escaped.

Unable to stop his momentum, Jake teetered and fell into the garden face first.

Jake pushed himself up in time to see Sam trot passed a giggling Janet and into the house.



**Weird World
By Jamie White**

<http://www.jamiebmusings.webs.com>

Savara raised an eyebrow as she stared at the plate in front of her. She'd been living in this dimension for several months after falling through a portal, and she still couldn't get used to the strange things they ate in this world. She wrinkled her nose as a strange smell assaulted her nostrils.

It looked even worse than it smelled. The dark, gooey substance slathered over the meat turned her stomach. "What did you say this was again?"

Her friend gave her that look she'd begun to realize meant he was trying not to laugh at her ignorance. She'd met him shortly after arriving in this world and he'd taken it upon himself to help her.

"Chinese food. General Tso chicken to be exact."

Savara shook her head as she pondered this. Who named a dish after a military title? She suspected this Tso fellow wouldn't be pleased with the strange honor. She nodded to the wooden things sitting beside her. "And those are?"

"Chopsticks. Wow. You mean to tell me you haven't picked up any of this in the past few months?"

He stared at her with such disbelief she began to feel queasy and her cheeks flushed. "I've been busy trying to get home, remember?" She picked up the things he called chopsticks and

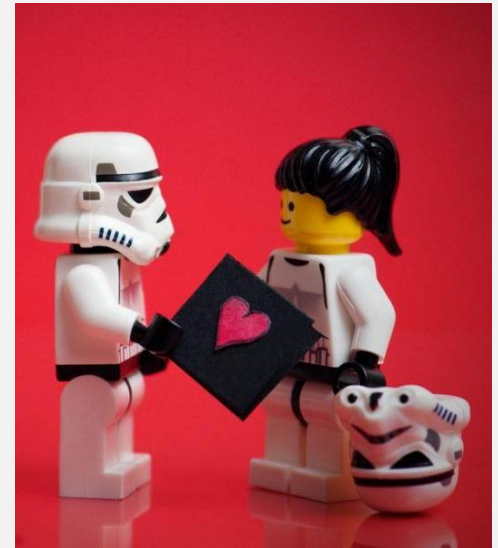
studied them a moment. "And what, may I ask, am I supposed to do with these?"

"You eat with them."

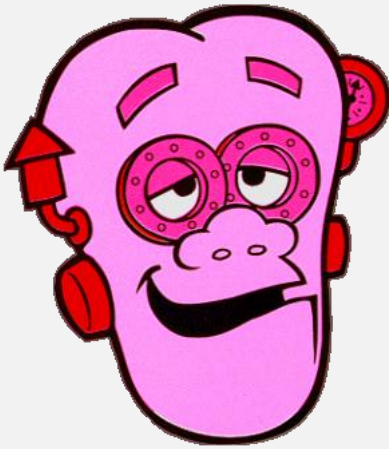
She nearly dropped the cursed things. "Excuse me?" It didn't look like any of the eating utensils she'd seen here. Still, she shrugged and stabbed a piece of the chicken with one. When he burst out laughing, she glared. "What's so funny?"

"Sorry...." After he'd stilled his laughter he explained, "you don't eat with them like that. Here, let me show you." He picked up his own sticks and demonstrated the proper use.

Savara watched a moment before shaking her head in disbelief. This dimension is weird...



*Happy
valentine's
Day!*



**The Junk Food Cereal King
By DiVitto Kelly**

*From the song, My Favorite Things,
The Sound of Music

**Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens
Bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens
Brown paper packages tied up with strings
These are a few of my favorite things**

***The junk cereal version**

**Bowlfuls of Corn Pops and Apple Jacks
Coco Crispies and Sugar Smacks
A mountain of Fruit Loops bobbing in milk
Don't want my Boo Berry drowning in Silk**

These are a few of my favorite things . . . for breakfast

I was simply known as the junk food cereal king at our house. If it was frosted, bursting in bright colors, or contained the word Sugar in the cereal title, I'd devour it. The ultimate breakfast cereal trifecta for me was Franken Berry, Count Chocula, and Boo Berry. Ah, the tasty memories.

My two older brothers were more on the healthy side of the breakfast menu, eating stuff like Shredded Wheat. Sorry Star Trek fans but they resemble

dehydrated Tribbles. I'd rather eat the box it came in. Let's not forget the non-appealing, dreary, outward appearance of those healthy cereals. Junk cereal shapes are happy and full of vitality, ranging from smiley faces to miniature chocolate chip cookies. And what about the sugary letters of Alpha-Bits? Educational AND tasty: what more can you ask for in a breakfast cereal? Try spelling words with the tasteless pellets known as Grape Nuts! News flash: There are no grapes in grape nuts! Talk about false advertising!

I can remember my childhood breakfast ritual like it was yesterday. I'd wake up, bounce downstairs and get ready to munch out on a potpourri of sweetness. One particular stretch (actually less than a week thanks to my detective mom) in second grade, I would sleep in my school clothes so I could get some extra snooze (and breakfast) time. She figured out rather quickly why the clothes she'd ironed the night before were so wrinkled.

I had my own special cereal bowl too, still do -- a stainless steel beauty shaped more like a rounded doggie dish. Hmmm. It was always a pleasure loading it up with the likes of Quisp, Kaboom! Sugar Pops, Sugar Smacks, Sugar Frosted Flakes, Honeycombs, and Trix, just to name a few.

But my all-time favorites were the monster cereals, especially Franken Berry. That big, bold artificially-flavored strawberry cereal brimming with pink marshmallows was the bomb. Even the short-lived Frute Brutes, a late seventies/early eighties fruit-flavored cereal with lime-flavored marshmallows, part of the monster-themed General Mills cereals, was tasty. Never heard of that one, eh? Trust me, I know my junk cereals!

While doing a little research on the subject, I came across this little disturbing tidbit courtesy of Wikipedia. In February 1972, Franken Berry cereal included dye that turned some children's feces pink due to an inability to break down the heavily-dyed breakfast cereal, a symptom sometimes referred to as "Franken

Berry Stool." I don't recall this ever happening; maybe I've just blacked it out of my memory. Let's move on, shall we?

Next, you poured a waterfall of whole milk; not that watered down 1% crap, but good old fashioned whole milk. I found Fruity Pebbles and Coco Pebbles, those are the cereals featuring Fred Flintstone and his sidekick friend Barney Rubble on the box, changed the color of the milk the fastest. How cool is that? Of course no unhealthy breakfast cereal was complete without digging your mitts deep down into that cardboard box and retrieving some cheap plastic toy. Bingo, it's a batman periscope. Or perhaps a colorful monster toy, space mission badge, or maybe a . . .? The possibilities were endless.

Now that I have children, I get to impress my son and daughter with my thorough knowledge of junk cereals. They're amazed that I've eaten so many of these cereals. They've asked how grandma could allow me to eat such unhealthy cereals when I, occasionally lecture my kids about healthy eating. I wasn't very convincing.

One cheerful morning, I spoke about the first time I tried Cookie Crisp, which was introduced to consumers back during the Jimmy Carter years. Good cereal. Bad president, Come to think of it, the trio of monster cereals came out during the Nixon years. What does that tell us? Hmm. Next, were the Reagan years (the 1980's). This robust decade provided cereal-consuming enthusiasts like myself with a plethora of tie-in cereals like C-3PO's, Ghost Busters, Pac Man, Donkey Kong, and even Gremilins. Yum yum, indeed. What all these cereals had in common was . . . sugar, and lots of it. I think my parents were smart enough to slip in an occasional box of something healthy to balance things out. Besides, our dentist was cashing in big time. But all good things must come to an end.

The dark times: the 1990's. It was a time of Fiber One, Kix, Total, and Special K. The amazing thing about Special K is you can consume a trough-

sized bowl and feel like you've eaten nothing. No wonder it's the official cereal for dieters. I can honestly say my oral health improved, but not my mood.

I got married in the latter 1990s (the good times). My health-conscious wife wasn't too keen on seeing all those junk cereal boxes in our pantry, so after I polished them off (I couldn't just toss them out), that was it. Cold turkey! I grumbled, but realized eating my favorite junk cereal was not in my health's best interest. We were also gearing up to do some major hiking so being in tip top shape was priority one. Occasionally I'd sneak in a box of Frosted Flakes. I'd dump the healthy cereal, and replace it with Tony the Tiger. Of course I got caught, but it was a risk I had to take.

A final mention: My brothers occasionally teased me because I not only devoured the inside contents, but read every inch of text on the outside, from cereal name to cereal ingredients, and there was always a fun story planted on the back of the box. One of my favorite pastimes was learning (and pronouncing) interesting words like Riboflavin, Niacinamide, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Thiamin, Hydrochloride, or Tricalcium Phosphate. Oh, and don't forget Folic Acid! Actually, the Phosphate thing worries me a bit, but I look at it this way. I'm thoroughly entrenched in my forties and I don't glow so I guess things are okay even after decades of eating the stuff.

I also believe this ultimately led to me reading juvenile fiction and then fiction for big people (aka adult fiction). "From Frosted Flakes to Robert Frost," I'd boast. You never know the power of junk cereal. Maybe in some way this ultimately led to me becoming an editor with a newspaper. A former teacher of mine once said "All reading is good." This is true, except some are tastier than others.

I wish I could end this on a happy note, but I can't. If you're a keen grocery shopper like me, you've no doubt noticed cereal boxes are getting smaller and thinner while the price continues to climb. Children and grown-

ups all across this great county are getting less bang for their buck. And I'm not happy!



**Night of the Clippies
(Part Two)
By DiVitto Kelly**

A half hour later, Garvey was alert, bandaged and bruised, but sitting upright in the kitchen chair drinking a tall glass of orange juice. He borrowed the phone and called Sheriff Hillman at his home.

"Hey boss. My apologies for calling you so late but –"

"No problem." Garvey could tell he just woke him up. "What's news?"

"I'm up at the Donavon residence. We've got ourselves a killer clothespin situation." The kids corrected him.

"Sorry, clippies – and they're everywhere! They almost killed me tonight. They swarm like those African killer bees. We gotta warn the town!" There was silence at the other end.

"Sheriff?"
"You're absolutely positive deputy? Killer . . . clippies?"

"I swear," said Garvey, staring at the multiple bandages on his hands.

After what he saw today, Hillman was game to believe anything. "I'll meet you at the station," said the sheriff, bleary-eyed and achy. "I'll contact the local radio station to start spreading the news."

"New York, New York." On the other end, dead silence. "Sorry boss, but you served me up a fastball right in my

wheelhouse," replied Garvey, feeling better and now eyeing a plate of homemade chocolate chip cookies.

"Fifteen minutes deputy." Hillman hung up the phone. He dressed, gave his sleeping wife a kiss on the forehead and trudged downstairs to make a Thermos-full of black coffee with lots of sugar. It was going to be a long night, he suspected.

The deputy turned to the Donavon parents. "Folks, I want you to stay indoors, don't open any windows, and call your neighbors to warn them. These things are lethal, okay?"

"You got it," replied Mr. Donavon.

"One last thing," said Garvey, "Mind if I take a few cookies for the road?" Mrs. Donavon, already suspecting the deputy had a supreme sweet tooth, bagged a half dozen.

"They say laughter is the best medicine; I say it's homemade chocolate chip cookies -- bless you both."

Residents from all over Red Orchard were ringing up the police station. Rosie, three months new as the night shift dispatcher, needed to be an octopus to pick up all the calls. The effervescent twenty-five year-old brunette originally took the night shift job, figuring it would be a cinch. And it would fund her return to school and pay the bills. During the afternoon, she went to class at the local college. At night when it was slow, which was ninety-nine percent of the time, she'd do homework, browse the Web, and dream of being a writer.

Sheriff Hillman arrived at the station first. "What are you doing here?" asked Rosie, slipping a pencil to mark the spot in her textbook and covering it with the local free newspaper.

"I work here, remember?" shrugged the sheriff. "It's okay; I know you've got school work. By all accounts, you may have the story of the decade right here in ole Red Orchard."

"What do you mean?"

“Those clippies have killed at least three citizens of this town.”

“What are clippies?”

“You know -- those things you use to hang up clothes.”

“Clothespins? We’re really being attacked by clothespins?” Deputy Garvey came through the door minutes later sporting multiple bandages plastered across his ears, hands, and a large one behind his neck. There was even a bright yellow SpongeBob Band Aid adhered across the bridge of his nose.

“Holy crap, what the hell happened to you?” asked Rosie. She rushed over and helped the deputy sit down in one of the lobby chairs.

“Are you okay,” said Hillman.

“Maybe you should go home and rest, we can handle –”

“No you can’t Mike, not this,” said Garvey. “These things are everywhere. I got a call that a bunch more people were attacked at the White Castle. What happened at Taylor Lake, did Walters find the other body?”

“Yeah,” replied the sheriff, pouring himself a cup of coffee. “Said the guy looked like he’d been shredded by piranhas – it was horrible.”

“Well, what do we do now?” asked Garvey. “We’ve got no chance!”

“We gotta put our heads together on this one,” said Rosie. Hillman and Garvey looked at the radio dispatcher/all purpose employee.

“When did all this start happening?”

“I guess last night – with Margie,” replied the sheriff as he rubbed his chin.

“Well, that meteor shower began last night. What if that meteor shower, I don’t know, somehow reacted with the metal on each clothespin?” said Rosie.

“Oh jeeze,” sighed Hillman. He started whistling the Twilight Zone theme.

“You’re a science fiction geek too?” asked Garvey, his brain percolating now with ideas. He was an avid reader of Orson Scott Card, H.G. Wells among other science fiction gurus. Rosie nodded. “Maybe you got something there.”

Rosie started pacing back and forth, Garvey joined in, albeit with a slight limp.

“Okay, okay enough Muldoon and Scully,” said the sheriff. “We need something a bit more tangible here.”

“It’s Mulder, not Muldoon,” corrected Garvey. Hillman gave the deputy an icy stare. Okay, this is what we’re going to do —“

A sudden downpour of flashing lights illuminated what seemed like the whole downtown square. The three walked over to the front glass double door, amazed by its intensity.

Hillman pressed his head against the glass, cupping his eyes. Out in the distance, he spotted something that looked like fireflies.

“What is it?” asked Rosie. Garvey shuffled his size twelve feet on over.

The sheriff remained still. “Quiet; both of you. Oh no -- look out!” All three jumped out of the way.

Like a sandstorm, they pelted the glass relentlessly. From every direction the clippies bombarded the small, one story building. Thousands pressed against the door like fish trying to escape a trolling net, pushing at the door until it started opening.

Rosie rushed over, slamming it shut with her shoulder. She locked it and took a step back. They kept coming, hitting the glass, each time harder than the next. The three heard shattered glass in one of the back offices. Hillman ran back, storming past the kitchen area trying to pinpoint the exact room. He pressed his ear against the middle room door and could hear them pecking and gnawing. The buzzing sound was intense, like bees on steroids. The sheriff bent down on one knee and saw chips of white paint and wood falling to the musty carpeting like snowflakes. Hillman called out. “We’ve got a problem here!”

Bob Fielding couldn’t sleep, tossing and turning for hours. The horror of seeing Margie dead like that, mauled by inanimate objects was too much.

What the hell could be less harmless than a clothespin, thought the electrician. It was completely surreal, like some horrid nightmare. He finally got out of bed, dressed in his flannel shirt and Dickies jeans and walked into the kitchen. He tore open up a pair of strawberry frosted Pop Tarts, stacked them and started chomping away. He poured himself a tall glass of milk and chugged it down.

Fielding slipped on his duck boots, grabbed his car keys, and walked into the garage. There in a corner, he picked up a vintage Wilson T-2000 tennis racquet, the kind Jimmy Connors sported, for protection before heading outside. The night was crisp and cool, just the way he liked it. Fielding got into his beast of a truck, a mammoth eight-cylinder top of the line black Dodge Ram 3500 four door. He pressed on the gas and shot out of the driveway. He felt like he had to do something; the Red Orchard police station seemed like a good place to start.

“How’s the door situation looking?” asked Garvey.

“It’s holding so far, but I’m not taking any chances,” said Hillman, who started layering every open crevice with duct tape. “Those little bastards don’t give up.”

The clippies continued their assault on the building. Thankfully the front door glass was extra thick, just in case some nutcase decided to fire a few rounds front and center.

“So what do we know so far,” asked Rosie, searching feverishly for an answer. “The light shower seemed to provide the necessary energy. As long as these meteor showers continue . . .”

“We’re stuck is what you’re saying,” said Garvey, who, like Rosie, was used to working the night time hours. Sheriff Hillman had already put in a full day. And despite consuming a half-gallon of coffee, his eyelids were sagging. The only thing keeping him awake was the frequent treks to the bathroom.

“After all this is over, what do you say we have dinner and see a movie?” asked Rosie. She knew Garvey was shy as an eighth grade boy asking a girl to the school dance so she figured she’d make the first move.

“Uh -- I’d like that really much, I mean very much,” the deputy replied, blushing. “I know a great new horror –

“No horror movies for a while, okay?” Garvey nodded. “And absolutely no sappy films either. I’d rather bathe in barbeque sauce and stand outside with those clippies than watch that stuff.”

“Ugh, how gross,” said the deputy. But the idea of an attractive woman smothered in Open Pit sounded . . . “Stop it – now!”

“Stop what?” Rosie asked.

“Uh, nothing,” Garvey replied, perspiring a bit. “It’s getting kind of warm, isn’t it?”

Hillman returned from the bathroom and walked over to the front door. The clippies were still swarming the building, tap, tap, tap, as they continued to ram the glass. “At least we’re safe – oh no.”

“Oh no what?” asked Garvey.

“The ceiling vent. Don’t anybody move.” The buzzing wooden objects managed to slip through the heating vent. They clipped themselves to the metal grill surface like bees gathering around a beehive. “Rosie, grab the fire extinguisher behind you, but no sudden moves, okay?”

Rosie backed up against the wall and opened the plastic handled door and picked up the extinguisher. “You know this thing expired like two years ago.”

“It’ll be fine. They’re like Twinkies, they’ll last forever,” replied the sheriff.

“I’ll get the one in the kitchen,” said the deputy.

Hillman motioned the deputy. “Good.”

Garvey tiptoed down the hallway towards the kitchen, keeping an eye on the clippies. Unfortunately, he wasn’t as graceful as Rosie, tripping over a metal trash can. Clank. The buzzing stopped. A handful shot directly at Rosie.

Now!” yelled Hillman.

Rosie let loose with the extinguisher. The cold blast met the descending clippies head on. Garvey raced to the kitchen, snagged the other extinguisher and stormed back, returning fire. Half of the clippies dropped to the ground but others attacked Rosie.

“Get them off me, get them off me!” The deputy showered his co-worker with the icy blast, coating her white as snow. A few clippies dropped like dead insects, the rest vanished in a heartbeat back through the ceiling vent.

“It’s working; it’s working!” screamed Garvey. “Take that you little bastards – no one bites my woman!”

“That’s so sweet of you deputy.” Garvey smiled. “Now keep spraying!” The sheriff ran back to his office and retrieved another roll of bright orange duct tape, a mainstay in any police station. He positioned the step stool under the vent and began ripping off strip after strip, blocking the open vent.

“Sweep up those things and put ‘em in the safe, quickly,” said Hillman. “We can’t risk opening the door and tossing them outside.”

“I think the cold stuns them momentarily,” said Garvey, who put down the spent container and grabbed the broom and dust pan from the closet. As he swept, he could see the clippies regaining movement. “Oh shih tzu.”

“Jeeze, where’d you learn to sweep?” asked Rosie. “Felix Unger, you’re not. No, I’ve got a better idea, you unlock the safe and I’ll take care of this.”

Garvey grabbed the key from the sheriff and headed to the corner office in the back. He entered the dusty room, slid some boxes aside, and opened the safe with the key. “I’m all set here.” Rosie finished sweeping the handful of clippies and jogged over. She tossed them in and closed the metal door. “Peachy keen -- now what?”

The two walked down the hallway when the taped up middle door exploded. Hundreds of clippies swarmed the small, 2000 square foot station. “Holy Christ!” yelled Sheriff Hillman. The three huddled in the front

lobby picking up seat cushions for protection. A truck pulled up near the front door.

Fielding observed the massive wave of killer clippies engulfing the police building. “Oh my God.” He saw three people waving their arms frantically inside. He laid on the deep, bellowing horn to get their attention.

“Who’s that?” asked the deputy, glancing out the window.

“Who cares,” screamed Rosie. “Let’s run for it!”

“On three,” screamed the sheriff.

“We don’t have till three; run your ass off!” yelled Garvey, trying to be heard over the intense turbine sound.

Fielding rolled down the side window a couple of inches. “Hurry, hurry!” He leaned over and opened the front and back passenger doors.

The three dove into the truck. A few clippies managed to trail inside, but Hillman scooped them up and threw them out the window. “You, my friend are a life saver,” said the sheriff.”

“More like lives saver,” joked Garvey. Fielding was about to exit the parking lot when the deputy asked him why he was out so late.

“I couldn’t sleep. And after what happened to Margie, I felt like I had to do something.”

“Well your timing was impeccable, thank you,” added Rosie, giving the man a hug.

“So what’s our next move folks?” asked Fielding, the truck idling.

“The cold seems to stun them, but not for long,” said Garvey. “Other than that, I believe the town of Red Orchard is up a certain creek without a paddle.”

“I think the key to this whole thing is tied to the meteor shower,” said Rosie. “That’s their power source!”

“So what do we do? Tell Mother Nature to chill out with the fireworks display?” said Garvey. “God don’t work that way.”

“Doesn’t,” said Rosie. “God doesn’t work that way. If we’re going to go out on a date you need to speak correctly, okay?”

“Okay -- really?” replied Garvey. “You know I think I still have my copy of

Elements and Style from high school, somewhere.”

“Then you better start brushing up lawman.”

“Hey, I think I got something,” said Fielding, the mechanisms in his brain churning. “These things are just stinking clothespins, right?”

“Yeah,” replied the sheriff. “So?”

“And what do clothespins generally do – I mean when they’re not killing people?” The other three sat in silence. “Come on, this ain’t rocket surgery.” He egged them on.

“Uh . . . hold up . . . clothes?” uttered Garvey.

“Exactly!” boasted Fielding. “So what if we create a super long clothesline out of metal wire, I mean a hundred yards long if we have to, and I run a charge to my big badass Interstate battery. We get them to clip on it, and then I’ll shock those little shits back to reality. They need to get back to what they’re supposed to do, and that’s hold up laundry, not eat people.”

“Works for me,” said Garvey.

Rosie shrugged her shoulders. “Why not?”

“And what do we use as bait – us?” asked the sheriff.

Fielding thought for a moment. “I don’t know, how about a bed sheet?”

“If this works, I’m making you an honorary deputy,” said Hillman.

“And if it fails, I’m making you the honorary scapegoat,” joked Garvey. Rosie elbowed him. “Sorry. I thought humor was always a good thing when you’re stressing.”

“And how do you spell you’re?” asked Rosie.

“That’s easy, y-o-u . . . uh, apostrophe . . . r-e?” Rosie gave the deputy a peck on his cheek. He blushed.

“Enough Mr. Spelling Bee champion,” said Hillman. “So what do we do now?”

“My store’s just around the corner. I got enough wire to circle the entire town of Red Orchard. We go there, get some supplies, then head to the high school. I’ll wrap a line around the goal posts, and let my battery do the rest.”

The whole congregation of clippies encircled the truck, pecking away. Fielding laid on the horn, startling them momentarily.

“Look at those bastards,” he said before flicking on the wipers on high, swatting them away as they cruised slowly into the main drag of town.

“It’s like a freaking snow storm!” added the deputy.

“I’m gonna pull around back of my shop and run in real quick, okay?”

“You need any help?” asked the sheriff, flinching his eyes as the clippies hit his window.

“No, all of you stay right here, it’ll be easier for me to go alone.” The clippies continued to congregate above the truck like the dustbowl over Pippen from the Peanuts cartoon strip.

“Look, I’m less than eight feet from the door. If I get bit, I’m just taking one for the team. Be back in five minutes. Sheriff, lay on the horn.”

Fielding thrusts open the door and ran over to the rear entrance. His key was already out, ready to open the lock. By the time the startled clippies prepared to attack, Fielding was already inside.

“Moves well for a fat guy,” mused Garvey.

“And you’re – that’s y-o-u apostrophe, r-e, are not too far behind,” said Hillman. “I’ve told you many times: Fudge makes pudge.”

“That’s cute,” said Rosie. Garvey looked down at his plump midsection, disappointed. “Well, it’s true, but a little exercise and less pizza can cure that.”

Eight minutes later, Fielding emerged carrying a large round object filled with wire while balancing a duffle bag of supplies on top. The sheriff laid on the horn again then propped the door open for the electrician. Fielding shot inside and slammed it shut, breaking a handful of clippies as they tried to dart in.

“Okay, I got the wire and even found an old red beach towel we can hang for bait.”

“Why a towel?” asked Garvey.

“I don’t know, maybe they’re attracted to red garments. We can use

a couple of these dead clippies to clip it up – use ‘em as decoys. The electrician felt energized, smart as a tack. “I want to see those things get justice for what they did to Margie.” He backed out from the parking lot and drove to the high school.

Fielding reached the entrance then headed towards the football stadium. “Last thing we gotta do is turn on the lights. That should attract ‘em.” He followed the curving side road until he reached the chain link fence. It was locked.

“Crapola, and I don’t think I got a key.”

“Is there another entrance?” asked Rosie.

“No, this is it,” replied Fielding.

“Sheriff, will you vouch for me if my insurance refuses to repair my truck?”

“You’re vouched.” Fielding floored the gas pedal and stormed right through the fence. He reached the pristine grass football field and headed for the opposing goal post.

“He’s at the fifty, the forty, the –”

“Shut up, deputy,” said the sheriff. The other two passengers seconded the motion.

Fielding slammed on the brakes, skidding on the slick, low cut turf. “Hand me the wire.”

“Damn this is heavy,” said the sheriff as he handed the wire spool to the electrician.

“You see anything?” asked Fielding. All shook their head, no. “Okay folks, this should only take a second.”

The electrician jumped out of the truck and dropped the spool of wire. He took the end and started wrapping it around the goal post less than six feet off the ground. He tightened the end with wire cutters then rushed back holding the spool under his brawny arm. In seconds, a few clippies appeared.

“Damn it,” said Garvey.

“No, no, we need ‘em to return – just not all at once,” replied Fielding. He placed a thick dowel in the middle of the spool, letting the wire out as he drove slowly back to the other goal post. “We’re almost there.”

He approached the end zone, parking to the right of the goalpost. “Go ahead and say it deputy, I give you permission, but just this once,” said Hillman, offering up a half smile.

“Touchdown?”

“You two finished?” asked Rosie.

Fielding shook his head. “Hand me the wire cutters.”

“Be careful,” said Rosie. Fielding smiled as he got out of the truck. He quickly wrapped the wire around the other goal post and twisted it tight, then cut the wire. He popped the hood and started hooking up the connection.

“How much longer?” the sheriff asked. He looked at the time -- it was past three in the morning. No wonder he felt like garbage.

“Almost there folks,” said Fielding as he continued worked feverishly, nipping his index finger by accident in the process. He lowered the hood when he heard the familiar buzz. The three screamed. Fielding turned around. They engulfed him – first around his face then his arms and legs.

“Stay here Rosie,” ordered Hillman. The sheriff and deputy jumped out immediately and ran over to Fielding. He flailed his arms trying to defend himself. The two picked the electrician off the ground and dragged him inside the truck.

“I’m all right, thank you both,” said Fielding, as he used the red towel to douse his wounds. “There’s something else I need to do.”

“What’s that? asked Rosie.

“Place the towel on the line, and . . .”

“And what?” asked Garvey.

“Turn on the sprinkler system. When I turn on the juice, a little water should add a shocking little punch.” He coughed, fully out of breath.

“So how do we hang up the towel?” said Hillman. “You can’t move the truck now that it’s hooked up.”

“Good point,” replied Fielding, wincing in pain. He paused, trying to catch his breath. “Someone’s gonna have to run to midfield, hang it with the clippies and run back. I don’t think I’m in any condition –”

“You’ve already done enough -- I’ll do it,” said Rosie.

“No way, I’m gonna have a girl do that,” said the sheriff. “That’s man’s –”

“Man’s what?” answered Rosie, ticked off. “First of all, put away the primitive male chauvinist crap, okay? Next, I’m the only one who’s in actual good shape here.”

“I won’t argue with that,” said Garvey.

“Sorry,” said the sheriff. “Tell me where the sprinkler system is and I’ll take care of it.”

“It’s behind the home sideline,” said Fielding. “There’s a three-quarter cement barrier painted crimson red around it. Just flip the metal cover back and hit the all the switches and turn on the spigot.”

“And the lights?” asked Garvey.

“In the press box,” said Fielding. “You’ll need the key to open it. Head upstairs; the first door you see, open it. The box is on the wall to the left. It’s got a red apple sticker on it; you can’t miss it. Be sure to turn them all on.” Fielding struggled to reach his key ring, a collection of at least twenty-five.

“Christ, you got a key to every home in Red Orchard?” said Garvey. Fielding found the appropriate key and slid it off. “Shoot, by the time I’d have found it, those little clippie shits would turn me into bones!”

“Everyone ready?” asked the sheriff.

“I’m not a real religious person,” said Rosie, “but I think we should say a prayer and hope God’s on our side tonight.”

“Amen to that,” added Garvey. “Let’s roll.”

The three stormed out of the car. Rosie sprinted to midfield. She felt terrified yet exhilarated at the same time – a strange mix. She reached into her pocket and pulled out the four injured clippies, two managing to bite her hand.

“Ouch, you little piss heads!” Rosie pried them off her now bleeding fingers and hung up the red towel. For good measure, she wiped the blood along on the wire. “Come and get it!”

Garvey huffed and puffed his way up the stairs. He swore if he made it through this horrific night, he’d get in shape. “Okay, okay, I’m up the stairs and where is the sticker? Ah, there you are.” The deputy inserted the yellow coated key and turned it. The small door opened. There, he saw three rows of switches, twelve in all. “All righty, here it goes.”

The stadium lights emitted a faint dim. The deputy expected them to turn on right away like any desk lamp. Instead, they brightened at a snail’s pace. He went over to the microphone, tapping it. It was on. There was a part of him who always wanted to be a disk jockey, barking up some classic tunes, being cool as the other side of the pillow. The deputy used to play bass in a local bar band, belting out rock and roll standards, getting paid in beer, mostly.

“Is this thing on?” He thumped the mic head with his index finger. “Testing one, two, three.” He could hear his voice echoing all over the premises. “All right folks, let’s get this show on the road and kick some clippie ass!”

Rosie glanced up, smirking, as she raced back to the truck, feeling better now that the whole field was on display. She closed the back door and patted Fielding on the shoulder. “We’re almost there.” The electrician didn’t respond. “Hey, Bob, you okay?” Rosie clutched the headrest and pulled herself forward. His eyes were closed, mouth slightly open.

She saw movement from under his jacket, then a sound like kids churning their little hands in mud. Rosie tugged him on the shoulder. Still no response. “Oh God, no.” From the top of Fielding’s jacket, a clippie emerged with blood stains around its mouth. She jumped outside on her hands and knees, almost throwing up. She tried to scream but couldn’t.

The sheriff pressed four blue buttons then turned the rusted spigot handles all the way clockwise. Garvey rumbled back downstairs where he met his boss. “We’re all good?” asked the deputy.

“I think so. Rosie should be at the truck by now,” said the sheriff. “Now all we need is Fielding to do his thing and hope for the best.” Rosie trembled, but regained her composure, finally yelling to her co-workers.

“What’d she say?” said Garvey, his hearing not especially good after years of high volume band practice.

“He’s what?” said Hillman. The two rushed back only to find Rosie in tears. Through the window, they saw the electrician’s lifeless body sitting in the driver’s side. The sheriff opened the door, spotting blood all over the interior seat. Both he and the deputy saw movement under the jacket.

Garvey put on a brave face as he stretched out his arm and reached for the metal zipper. The deputy narrowed his eyes, pulling it down. There, a baker’s dozen of clippies feasted on the electrician’s chest and gut. “Oh shit, they’re still eating him!” Garvey turned Wonder Bread white in shock. He quickly zipped it back up and backed out of the truck searching for fresh air.

The bewildered sheriff grimaced, he’d seen this before. He paused then rubbed the bridge of his nose with his thumb and index finger. “Bait.”

“Bait?” asked Rosie, horrified. “What are you talking about?”

“I don’t want to sound coldhearted, but we need to use him to attract the other clippies. I’ve got a whole damn town to save and I don’t think we can rely on a ratty old towel to do the trick. Deputy, lend me a hand.”

The two grabbed the dead man’s body and struggled to carry him to where the red towel was pinned. They set him down and made a sign of the cross, in deep gratitude for everything he’d done. The sprinkler system finally ticked and sputtered into high gear, soaking the two men as they jogged back to the truck. Rosie was still shaken up, staring out at the football field. She’d never seen a dead person before, only in the movies. In a matter of seconds, the trio spotted clippies swooping down near the body like vultures.

“There!” pointed Garvey as more descended onto the long stretch of wire. The lit field soon turned into a sea of darkness as thousands of clippies began perching themselves along the metal clothesline, throbbing and glowing like a string of Christmas lights.

“Who are you calling?” asked Hillman.

“The Donovan’s,” replied Garvey. “I want to know if any clippies are still there.” Mr. Donovan answered the phone. Both he and his wife were still awake, the kids hit the sack two hours ago. The deputy nodded then smiled, and hung up.

“Good news guys. Apparently there are no clippies up at their house, or their neighbors. Let’s hope we got ‘em all here.” The three peered out at the field. Every inch of space of wire seemed to be filled with clippies.

“So how do we do this?” asked Rosie. “He never told us what to do?”

“We’ll figure it out,” said the sheriff. “First of all, we start the struck.” He reached over and turned the keys. The big eight-cylinder engine rumbled but was running on fumes. Hillman slipped on a pair of work gloves and quietly opened the door. He rounded the front of the truck and picked up the end wire with the cutters.

The sheriff eyed the battery. He inched closer, not sure which cable to touch. “Let’s see, red is positive and black is negative – and how does this help me?” He shook his head. A wave of clippies from out of the sky suddenly pounced on Hillman like sharks in a feeding frenzy. He dropped the wire as the wooden objects gnashed and gnawed on his exposed flesh.

Garvey hurried out of the truck and swatted the clippies off his boss. “Take the wire,” screamed Hillman, covering up in a protective ball. The deputy hesitated. “Just do it!”

The deputy picked up the wire with his bare hand and touched the battery connection. Garvey felt a tremendous jolt as he fell to the ground, shaking. Rosie jumped out of the truck and rushed over to remove the wire from his scalded hand.

The deputy wasn’t moving. She started giving him CPR followed by mouth to mouth resuscitation. “Come on you!” She pressed her palms against chest again when the deputy started coughing.

He whispered, signaling Rosie to move closer to his face. “Need more mouth to mouth.” Rosie gave him a big bear hug then helped him sit up.

The sheriff, wounded and exhausted as all hell, emerged from a lifeless pile of clippies. As she helped both men to their feet, the trio peered at the outstretched wire and noticed the glowing clippies abruptly shorting out. They cascaded from the night sky, falling harmlessly onto the Kelly green turf.

“Did we win?” asked the dazed deputy, still trying to regain his bearings, his hair disheveled as he leaned against the truck. The two men limped towards midfield and stared at all the clothespins littering the football field. Fielding’s dead body was buried with them.

The next day, school maintenance raked up each and every clothespin they could find. Residents of Red Orchard were asked to do the same. Any and every clothespin was gathered up and brought down to the downtown incinerator where they were disposed of. The mayor wrote up an emergency ordinance banning the purchase of all clothespins in the town of Red Orchard. Everyone obliged.

Two months later and twelve pounds lighter, newly anointed Sheriff Thomas Garvey had returned to work, tan and relaxed from a week-long vacation in the Bahamas. His girlfriend Rosie was now a reporter for the local newspaper, but still worked part time at the police station. Former Sheriff Mike Hillman, freshly retired and fully recovered from his wounds, became a consultant for a home security company in nearby Cortland.

Garvey quickly developed a reputation for being detailed and

dedicated. He was working late as usual, alone, following up on some paperwork, the worst part of the job. Now he understood why his former boss was cranky at times, especially on a Friday night – he didn't get paid overtime. Rosie finished up covering a story at the mayor's office before heading over to work the night shift.

Garvey put down his pen and took a break. His right hand was cramping. He walked over to the front door, admiring his newly svelte frame in the reflection. No more donuts, he promised himself, again. Normally he'd be on his second Coke and package of Ho Ho's, but now it was strictly tea, perhaps bottled water and carrot sticks. He could fully relate to Camille's dieting hell, but he felt good.

There was that sound again, like someone tapping their knuckles on a dense slab of waterlogged wood. The night shift employees had mentioned it before. The sheriff wandered into the seldom-used office in the corner of the building, the official storage facility. Just then, the heat kicked on, drowning out the sound. He quickly turned it off, wanting to listen intently.

He knelt down, trying to pinpoint the direction. His hearing was never quite the same when he decided punish his Fender Bassman 100 amp by cranking out John Entwistle riffs at volume ten back in the day. Garvey narrowed the sound to the deep corner of the room. He pushed some boxes aside and saw the safe, slightly bigger than a standard college dorm room refrigerator. The sound abruptly stopped. The perplexed deputy pulled out his set of keys and selected the particularly odd-looking gold one. He placed it in the slot and turned the key. Just as he opened the door, he vaguely remembered something. Unfortunately, the shock he received from the live wire deleted minuscule memory details. "Nah."

He peered deep into the safe, left over from the previous occupant. It was mainly used to store confiscated items, but in a town as safe as Red Orchard, it was basically an antique gathering dust. Inside was the original deed to the

building and an old revolver discovered during the renovation project when it was converted from the old post office into the current police station.

Under the papers in the back, Garvey spotted a faint glow. He felt a chill up his scoliosis-free spine. "Hey." Before he could close the door, a lone clippie shot out like a bullet. The sheriff fell over backwards then scuttled to the door, closing it. He pulled out his gun and huffed. "All right you clippie piece of crap, show yourself!"

It swooped down, latching onto the back of the sheriff's neck, sampling a tasty morsel of Garvey's flesh. "Ow! Damn you!" He reached around, but it vanished.

Garvey started sweating. The sheriff wiped the perspiration from his eyes when he heard a click. The lights suddenly went out. Garvey shifted over and reached out with his arm to turn on the light switch when he felt a familiar pain. The clippie ambushed the sheriff, snapping at his fingers, drawing blood.

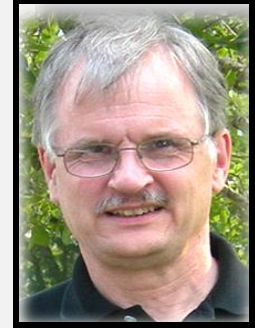
Garvey flicked the lights back on. The clippie buzzed around the room. Suddenly, there was more tapping coming from the safe. The sheriff's eyes got big. "No way, Jose."

There it was, the lone clippie sitting on top of the five-drawer metal file cabinet. It was opening and closing its vicious little mouth, breathing, like a resting Nurse shark, the gills opening and closing, pulling in oxygen. Garvey raised his gun and reeled off three shots. Pop – Pop – Pop. He turned away, dropping to the floor sensing a possible deadly ricochet. There, lying on the unkempt linoleum floor that way overdue for a major steam cleaning, was the clippie. Part of the back was blown off, the jaw askew.

The sheriff looked at the object, struggling to move. He pointed the gun barrel almost point blank but suddenly paused. For a second he felt . . . To hell with that; Garvey blasted the hell out of the inanimate object, blowing it to pieces.

Rosie suddenly burst through the door, scared out of her wits. "What the hell is going on? Honey, are you okay?"

The small room was filled with gun smoke. Garvey waved it aside and hugged Rosie. "God I really, really hate clothespins."



**To Life
By Rick Weber**

I am now an old man and have lived a full life, full in every aspect. I have experienced deprivation, humiliation, and pain but, I have also known fulfillment, acknowledgement, and joy. My youth was taken from me by a power bent on destruction when that force sent me to a place of despair. There I saw my family members die around me. Our names were taken from us and we were given numbers. I should have not made it out of that place but, I did. I did because there were others around me with the same fate who gave me hope. In the end, I survived and I knew I had to go forward with living.

I was given the opportunity to move far away from the place of my birth to a land which gave me hope. Many others, who like me, had faced the darkness now traveled into the light. We went into the sun knowing that the abyss would always loom around us.

With this new life came the responsibility to preserve what had been entrusted to us. I found my niche in the form of being a civil servant who had taken an oath to protect our new homeland. I was committed to my new position with everything my being had to offer, but I was still young and in

need of someone to help me achieve my potential.

I found this person in the mostly unlikely form of an individual. He was a man who stood only about five foot tall with a nebbish persona to match his stature. He was known to have said that he only took orders from two people, the country's leader and his wife. Yet, this man was my boss and I got to know his other side. I was recruited by him personally not too long after I set down my roots in my new home. He molded me into the professional that I would become and added to the person whom I am.

One of my colleagues remarked that one look from the boss made him feel that he was already in prison but I disagreed. He held us, his subordinates, to the highest moral and professional standards. Misjudgments by any of us would be dealt swiftly and harshly by him but yet, if one of us ended up in the hands of our adversaries, he would go to no end to rescue the person in trouble. His qualities bred loyalty, which all of us had toward him. His eye for talent ensured that we complemented each other in our efforts. He was a leader unafraid to get his hands dirty.

After working for him for several years, he would present us with what I would deem the ultimate test of our work skills and also of our souls. None of us knew how long he had been planning our mission. His obsession with secrecy was also our obsession. We never asked any questions beyond what we needed to know to get a certain job done. When he made us privy to this new operation, everyone knew that this would be the greatest challenge of our careers.

Our target was to go out and capture the man whose past actions were beyond demonic. The number of lives he extinguished and the damage he had inflicted were beyond comprehension. At first, we thought that we would simply go out and neutralize this perpetrator but we were wrong. The boss told us that this target had to be brought to justice. This order

was hard to grasp and even harder for me to believe that I would follow it. The boss, our mentor, was trusted and we would have to put our faith in him.

He was the first to tell us that this would be a most difficult undertaking in an operation which would be rife with many obstacles to overcome. He stated that our nation depended on us. To me, nothing more needed to be said. I had to put my rage and my nightmares aside. A day still does not go by when I do not have flashbacks from my dark past but, in this instance I found myself fortunate that I could draw support my coworkers who lived through the same experience. Although the boss was not one to give a shoulder to cry on, his leadership supplied each of us with the fortitude we needed.

Other entities supplied resources for our mission. The operation was to take place thousands of miles away on another continent. Our target had been in hiding for a decade and a half. Twice before he had been captured but was able to slip out of the grasp of justice. He moved like a chameleon across one continent and then on to another with the aid of others and his ability to blend into his new environment.

Our information was that our prey had held a variety of occupations from farmer to factory worker, much different occupations from the high position he once maintained. His goal to remain hidden had served him well over the years but now fate was about to intervene.

The plan for his final detention was now in motion. Our boss was its architect and he would be with us to carry it out. Each of us made our way to the site where it would be initiated. A plan like this had not been carried out before. The logistics alone were overwhelming. With the boss in charge, I felt certain that we would be successful in this endeavor.

With our target's daily routine in hand, we were ready to proceed with the operation. The location was on the street where he lived, a street ironically

named for a foreign military man who has his own tribulations. It was evening when the target was accosted by us as he walked home from a bus stop. His transfer to a secure location went relatively well and he already resigned himself to the process that awaited him even before his identity was confirmed by the team. Interrogations began prior to his removal from his adopted country to ours for the next phase.

I found the most revolting admission from this pitiful excuse of a human being was that he was only following orders when it came to his past deeds. Any vigilante thoughts we harbored were long extinguished by the intervention of the boss. We were committed to bringing him to our courts. We smuggled him out of the country and delivered him to face justice.

There was diplomatic fall out about the rendition of this man to our country. The outcry was tremendous from his adopted home rising to the attention of international circles. The reality was that the only people who missed him were his immediate family. Others hiding there from similar pasts feared for their own captures and did not care about him. For us, we had done our jobs. Our talents were now needed for other operations but this did not keep us from monitoring the defendant's progress through the criminal justice system.

Almost a year after his arrival on our soil, his trial began. After months of testimony and evidence being presented, he was found guilty and sentence to death. I spoke with my colleagues and we wondered when the sentence would be carried out. Due to the high profile nature of the case, we knew that it would be done in secret. Only one of us asked to be present. As for me, I did my job. During this man's tenure, I had seen death firsthand, many times by those who carried out his orders. I had no desire to see death again, even though death was part of my chosen profession.

Two years after our operation, the execution was carried out. His body was then immediately cremated and his

ashes were later scattered at sea beyond our country's territorial limits. In the end, he would go the way in which he had sent so many. I felt nothing for him, neither sadness nor joy from his demise.

I still grieve every day for those whose lives were cut short by this man and his co-conspirators. I recently saw a media report recounting the fiftieth anniversary of his execution. I needed nothing to remind me of that date because it was forever etched in my mind.

I once lived in darkness but I was given a second chance at life, a chance bolstered by a fine mentor. I look ahead even though my own time is coming near its end. The way along my new life has not always been smooth. I married and had two sons. Both served our country in war but only one came home. The other would establish himself professionally, marry, and give us grandchildren. My wife died a few years back but my grandchildren had children of their own.

As I stated, I am an old man but, I am still able to live on my own. Although I am alone at night, my days are filled with the laughter of my grandchildren and my great grandchildren in my home. Much of this, I owe to the boss who gave me a sense of purpose and kept me focused on that which was important. Besides teaching me my job, he also taught me about life. Here's to Life!



Poetry Corner

To Earthward By Robert Frost

Love at the lips was touch
As sweet as I could bear;
And once that seemed too much;
I lived on air

That crossed me from sweet things,
The flow of - was it musk
From hidden grapevine springs
Down hill at dusk?

I had the swirl and ache
From sprays of honeysuckle
That when they're gathered shake
Dew on the knuckle.

I craved strong sweets, but those
Seemed strong when I was young;
The petal of the rose
It was that stung.

Now no joy but lacks salt
That is not dashed with pain
And weariness and fault;
I crave the stain

Of tears, the aftermark
Of almost too much love,
The sweet of bitter bark
And burning clove.

When stiff and sore and scarred
I take away my hand
From leaning on it hard
In grass and sand,

The hurt is not enough:
I long for weight and strength
To feel the earth as rough
To all my length.

Of You and I By Joanne Williams

In a cloud of dreams
I dream of you and I
Holding hands so tight
Oh how nice
Oh how right
A partner for life
Through the struggles up ahead
Through thick, thin, and strife
No parting unless we're dead
The magic of wonders
From the day that we met
Through thinking
Yes we pondered
And now our minds are set
So let us be here together in the mist
Of this wonderful space of art
With you
The partner of my dreams
From this day let us never part

Poem to a Friend By Joanne Williams

Sitting by the window
I notice a smooth chilling breeze
The wind of spring air
That keeps my mind at ease
Blowing in the wind
I see a beautiful sight
A beautiful flower sparkling so bright
In the light
As I look at this flower
Something interrupts my thoughts
It's the color of this rose
That my sight has caught
This beautiful rose reminds of someone
special
A sweet person in mind that I see
In realization
It all seems true
This beautiful rose draws out the
picture of you.

Beginning in January 2014, meetings will be held the second Monday (6-7:30pm) of every month in the second floor conference room.

Upcoming dates: Jan. 13, Feb. 10, Mar. 10, April 14, May 12, June 9, July 14, Aug. 11, Sept. 8, Oct. 13, Nov. 10, Dec. 8.

From picture books to novels, stop by and discuss your ideas. Submit your short story or poem to be published in the monthly Portal to Michael Kelly at mkelly@broward.org.

All communications with the editor and all inquiries concerning this publication should be addressed to:

**Editors of the Portal Pamphlet,
South Regional/BC Library
7300 Pines Blvd.
Pembroke Pines, FL. 33024.
Telephone: 954-201-8870
mkelly@broward.org**

The **PORTAL** was designed, produced, and edited solely by the instructor and students of the South Regional / Broward College Writer's Club for non-profit.

The opinions expressed are those of the members of the Writer's Group, and does not necessarily represent those of the staff, administrators, or trustees of the Broward County Libraries Division.

***The PORTAL pamphlet is not to be duplicated or used for commercial purposes.**

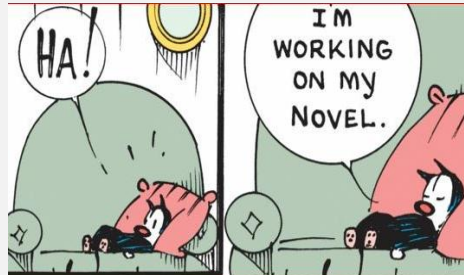
***All copyrights revert back to the original artist and authors after publication.**

Copyright 2014 –

FEEDBACK CORNER

We want to hear from you! Let us know what you think of our stories. Feel free to email Michael Kelly, head of the writer's group at mkelly@broward.org or call (954) 201-8870.

*Please specify the story and writer. Thanks!



Check out our website at www.thewritersportal.yolasite.com to view back issues and more. Enjoy!