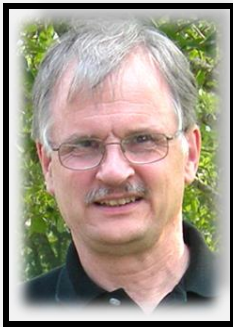


The Portal

A cool collection of short stories and poems.



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

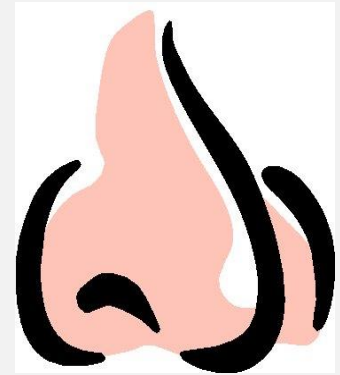
tenure, I had seen death firsthand, many times by those who carried out his orders. I had no desire to see death again, even though death was part of my chosen profession.

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!



Harold's Nose
By DiVitto Kelly

Harold Reimer, peculiar extraordinaire, was always told he had a wire loose somewhere in that mathematically gifted head of his. His fellow accountants where he was employed voted Harold most likely to mate with a computer. But if he ever did get married, no doubt HE would be the 'national average' with two-point five children.

On one peculiar morning in late October, the fifty-two year-old Wally Cox clone noticed a thick black protruding nose hair. He hated trimming nose hair too. Lately, it seemed to make him twitch, whether he was using a new fangled, battery operated trimmer or a pair of mini scissors. After extensive calculations, he reluctantly made an afternoon appointment with a nose specialist. Trimming nose hair shouldn't be an ordeal, he postulated.

Harold arrived thirty minutes ahead of time, just in case. Harold specialized in 'just in case' scenarios. After filling out a sea of paperwork, the receptionist escorted Mr. Reimer to room four. Along the hallway, Harold gazed at 8x10 mug-shots of celebrity noses, ranging from Jimmy Durante's famous honker to Pinocchio's wooden snoot.

Harold sat down and methodically explained his dilemma to Doctor Maxwell Bunda, a seasoned professional, mid-height and rotund with twenty-seven years of experience. The doctor didn't think it was a big deal, probably just overly sensitive nerve-endings embedded in Harold's middle

aged schnoz. He'd seen it before lots of times, although Harold's nose hair, particularly the one sprouting from the left nostril, seemed to have a distinctively strong disposition.

"Mr. Reimer, I'm having a bit of trouble," said the doctor, struggling with a petite pair of scissors. "I may need to break out the Weed Eater!" Harold made a gulping sound. "Just kidding Mr. Reimer, everything will be fine."

The doctor retreated back to his office and returned with a brand new wire cutter. He dipped it in disinfectant and snipped away. "Wow; that was a tough one." He noticed Mr. Reimer spasm and shudder. "Are you okay?"

"Uh, yes . . . shouldn't I be?"

"Of course," replied Dr. Bunda.

"You're all set for now. "Just want to take a gander at this Godzilla follicle of yours -- I'll let you know."

"Let me know what? Am I okay? I'm not going to die, will I?"

"Mr. Reimer," the doctor replied calmly. "I just trimmed a troublesome nose hair; you're fine." Harold nodded, reluctantly convinced . . . almost.

Later, the doctor examined the feisty follicle under a microscope. He was vexed and perplexed. The follicle was stiff yet bendable, almost like . . . wire.

"Darla?" the doctor called out to the receptionist. "Please tell my next patient to be a little patient." Doctor Bunda snickered, thinking that was clever. "I need to reexamine something a bit more closely."

"What's the problem?" asked Darla, freshly hired from a temp agency a month ago. The regular receptionist was out on maternity leave.

"Well, I've got a real head scratcher here, a problematic proboscis if you will. This guy Reimer's got super human nose hair – like electronic wiring; very strange."

Harold stopped off at the corner supermarket near his apartment to pick up groceries before returning home. After dining on broiled trout and steamed broccoli, Harold showered, flossed then proceeded to reexamine his annoying nose hair situation.

Using a magnifying glass, he spotted a dense hair; it appeared to be the same one the doctor removed only hours before. Harold retrieved a pair of needle nose pliers from his hobby model tackle box and returned to the bathroom. He clamped the tip on the hair precisely, took in a deep breath, and yanked.

"Oweeee," he blurted out. His lips began puckering up like a fish. The vision in his eyes suddenly got all blurry. When he attempted to remove the hair again, his ears wiggled and his feet started tap-dancing.

"That was freaking weird," said Harold, who'd never ever cursed a day in his life. Using freaking was exceedingly risqué lingo for the accountant. The nose hair was still there, only longer now and the tip looked frayed. He tugged at it more. The color suddenly changed from black to bright yellow, like it was some sort of . . .

"Wire? Is that a freaking wire?" Harold stammered and sputtered. "I said freaking again!" Something was askew with Mr. Harold Reimer, and he knew it.

Harold reached for the flashlight below the sink. Pressing against the mirror and gazing deeply into his cavernous snout, he spotted what resembled more wires. Suddenly he started hearing clicking, like moving parts, followed by a whoosh sound. He detected small colored lights. Suddenly, a puff of light gray colored smoke emanated from Harold's ears. Either a new pope was elected or Mr. Harold Reimer had blown a gasket in his seriously bad combed-over head of his.

Harold began to feel queasy and lightheaded. He sat down on the toilet seat, flummoxed. Out of nowhere he had a runny nose. Harold placed his index finger just above his lip. The wetness was thick, black, and oily. That's when Harold fainted, landing flat on his back.

"Overload, overload," sounded a tiny voice. A stream of miniature dancing diodes with working arms zigzagged in and out of Harold's nostrils, laboring

frantically to restore the prototype artificial person known as Harold. Actually, the official name was HR1, but government scientists thought a proper name was in order. There were two-dozen others issued HR1's throughout the country. A streak of oil began dripping out from both ears and the eyes were spinning around like a roulette wheel.

"Clean up this mess," barked a hot, glowing red diode, sporting a pencil-tip sized hard hat. "Come on, chop-chop!" A trio of bright blue pulsating diodes soldered, screwed, and slapped together HR1 in a New York minute.

The eyes weebled and wobbled before settling down, the ears cleaned up, along with the protruding wires "Almost there boss," called out a beaming green diode.

Harold's arms and legs began to tremor. One eye opened then the other. The accountant stood up, slightly lightheaded, confused, and dumbfounded. "That was quite bizarre." Harold peered into the mirror again, feeling hung over, whatever that meant. Harold never consumed alcohol, but he'd read about it and seen it in movies. The disparaging nose hair had completely disappeared. Was that a dream, he asked himself?

Later, Harold got into bed, worried. He was trying his darndest to remember. His thoughts were foggy, but something about wires kept popping into his hard drive of a brain. He twisted and turned all night. For the first time since forever, Harold Reimer decided to call in sick. He was out of sorts.

The phone rang. As custom, Harold picked it up on the third ring. "Uh, hello?"

"Hi, Mr. Reimer? This is Doctor Bunda. Could you please stop by my office this morning as soon as possible? I've made an interesting discovery."

"Is it bad?"

"I don't think so, more on the weird side I'd say."

"How weird?" Harold asked, fumbling with the phone cord.

“Like Twilight Zone weird,” replied the doctor, who asked the receptionist to clear his schedule so he could fully concentrate on Mr. Reimer’s nose situation.

Harold hurried over, catching the 9:20 bus six blocks from his apartment. Twenty-five minutes later, Harold arrived at the stand alone building, painted in dreary drab gray. Doctor Bunda popped open an ice cold natural cherry soda and a package of frosted cherry Pop Tarts and sat down in his office. He’d been up since four AM and needed a junk food pick-me-up.

“Good morning Mr. Reimer,” said the receptionist, a touch hung over from celebrating her twenty-second birthday last night. “The doctor is waiting.”

“Waiting? He’s been waiting . . . for me?”

“Oh yeah,” she replied, perking up after a shot of espresso. “He said you’re quite the unusual case.” The doctor popped out of his office, wiping off the red sugary grit from his hands to greet Harold.

“Hi Mr. Reimer, take a seat.” The doctor had compiled a list of questions in the wee hours of the morning and attached them to a clipboard. In a quirky way, the doctor felt invigorated by this mysterious patient. Usually, a nose is a nose is a nose.

“Is right here okay?” asked Harold as he pointed to a chair. He accidentally bumped into a small wood table, a stack of Golf Digest magazines spilling all over the floor. “Sorry.”

“It’s okay, Darla will lend a hand. Shall we begin?” Harold nodded okay.

The doctor took out a vibrant red Sharpie marker and cleared his throat. “Alrighty then Mr. Reimer, did anyone – a brother, sister, or friend -- I don’t know -- ever place wires up your nose when you were young?”

“Uh . . . no.” Dr. Bunda checked ‘no’ on his sheet.

“Do you like sticking things up your nose?” Harold nodded no. Doctor Bunda continued. “Have you ever gone in for any type of brain surgery? Again, Mr. Reimer answered no. The doctor

rattled off a few more ‘left field’ questions.

“I appreciate your patience Harold, only one more to go.” Harold sighed.

The doctor cleared his throat again. “Are you, or have you ever been . . . a robot?”

Harold crinkled his face. “A what?”

“Just kidding, Harold,” mused the doctor. “But seriously, your nose hair is quite . . .”

“Is what?” asked Harold, hanging on the doctor’s every word.

Darla barged into Doctor Bunda’s office. “I’m sorry, but they --!”

Four men, dressed in sharp charcoal gray suits, stormed into the office. Two men quickly escorted Harold out; the other two forced the doctor into his comfortable leather chair. One of the men, tall, solid build, spoke in a voice so resonating and deep it made the windows vibrate.

“You will not pursue this situation any further, do you understand me?”

The man vice-gripped the doctor’s hands together.

“You’re hurting me.”

“Excellent, then I’ve made my point loud and clear.” The other man towered over the doctor like a giraffe. He took out a gun and pressed it directly on the tip of the doctor’s nose.

“Uhhh . . . you’ve made your point quite well,” replied the doctor, shaking his throbbing hands in pain.

The deep voiced man got right up in the doctor’s grill. “Not – another – word.” The trembling doctor, with beads of sweat pouring down his chubby face, acknowledged the threat one hundred percent. They quickly vanished, joining their cohorts in an unmarked white cargo van.

The other two men sat between Harold in the middle bench seat, windowless on each side. “So Mr. Reimer, nice day, ain’t it?” said one of the men wearing sunglasses, talking in a tough guy cartoon voice.

“I’m not so sure,” Harold replied. “It’s supposed to rain tonight with a better than average chance of thunderstorms, followed by patchy fog, which could

lead to traffic congestion for the morning commute, which in turn . . .”

“Shut up, putz,” said the man, gritting his crooked coffee stained teeth.

“The other gentleman, more calm and sophisticated spoke. “Mr. Reimer, I want to assure you there is nothing wrong with your health. In fact, you are a picture of perfect health. There is no need to see a doctor – ever. He leaned in with his narrow yellow eyes. “

“But what about my nose?”

“You have no issues with your freaking nose nerd man,” said the tough guy, “Unless I blow it off with my Glock. You understand me? Comprehend?”

“First of all that’s redundant and two, you shouldn’t say freaking,” replied Harold, his common sense thought process misfiring a bit. “The connotation is you really want to say the F-word, and that . . .”

“Shut up dweeb,” he answered, “Or I’ll personally rearrange your circuits -- oops!” The other man elbowed his partner’s ribcage.

“No need to get hostile,” said the other gentleman. Harold sighed. The man proceeded to flick open a gleaming eight-inch switchblade and placed it under Harold’s throat. “Now I’m fairly confident that Mr. Reimer here thoroughly comprehends the situation at hand. Am I right?”

Harold cleared the frog in his throat. “Uh huh.”

“Good. Well, here we are Mr. Reimer. Remember, mum’s the word.” The tough guy brandished his gun again.

Harold jumped out and powerwalked to his apartment building, fumbling for his keys. He stepped into the elevator and vamoosed up to the seventh floor. Waiting in the lobby was a pizza delivery man holding a rumpled box. He had long scraggly black hair, a hat, and khaki shorts. The man’s plump build looked familiar.

“Pssss. Mr. Reimer, it’s me, Doctor Bunda.” Harold looked over, puzzled. He wasn’t friends with any pizza delivery man. In fact, he’d never

ordered pizza before. The man took off the hat and flipped his wig.

Harold's eyes widened. "Are you nuts? Those guys will kill us both!" A man stepped off the elevator. "That'll be ten dollars sir," said the delivery man. Harold, suffering from 'dull thought comprehension' stood there speechless then finally caught on.

"Sure thing, Mr. Pizza delivery man. Let me retrieve the money that it is in my wallet which is inside my apartment. The stranger looked over, thinking he was overhearing a couple of complete dill weeds.

Harold proceeded to open the door and entered. "Okay, here you are pizza man sir."

"Never mind that, Mr. Reimer," said the doctor, slamming the door shut, and flinging the box to the floor.

"Harold, I think you're wired. And I don't mean strung up on hippy lettuce or something." Harold offered up a perfectly executed blank stare. The doctor picked up a chair and tilted it under the locked door knob just in case.

"Does the term artificial person mean anything to you?" Harold didn't say anything. The doctor snapped his fingers. "Mr. Reimer?"

"Uh, well, after much calculating last night I came to the conclusion that --"

"And that is?"

"I've never ever made a doctor's appointment until I went to see you and -- I always seem to stay the same. Even my hair never changes."

Doctor Bunda didn't seem too surprised. He asked Harold to sit down. The doctor took out an otoscope from his jacket pocket and examined Harold's eyes, ears, nose and throat. All seemed normal. "Hold on." The doctor took a deeper look into Harold's right ear. "What the heck?"

"What is it?" asked Harold, already nervous.

"I see a light of some sort. Wait." A little green diode abruptly spilled out of Harold's ear and landed on the tile floor. "Where'd it go?"

The two scurried around on their hands and knees looking for the BB-

sized object. "There!" yelled the doctor. "Harold, get me a pair of tweezers and a plate, preferably white."

Harold followed the doctor's instructions and returned. Doctor Bunda carefully picked it up and placed the diode on the plate. The two sat down and stared at the light. It started blinking. "What is it?" asked Harold.

"How the hell would I know Mr. Reimer; it just came out of your freaking ear!" The light started blinking faster -- and faster -- and faster. Harold felt queasy. "Are you okay Harold? Mr. Reimer?"

"Please do not say freaking. Please do not say freaking. Please do not say freaking. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. The green diode started screeching -- louder and louder. A distress call? The doctor placed his hands over his ears, but the piercing sounds kept getting louder.

Suddenly, it stopped. Then Harold's head exploded. It rained multicolored diodes all over the kitchen. There was no blood, only frayed wires and unrecognizable mechanisms spread out on the white tiled floor. A gargled voice seeped out from the quarter-sized speaker.

"Sorry Doctor Bunda, but I won't be able to pay you." Harold's speech slowed and slurred before stopping. His headless body spontaneously began flipping and flopping around and around, kicking over chairs until it finally sputtered out. There was a knock at the door. Doctor Bunda heard voices. He ran for the hallway closet and hid.

Click, click, click. Someone jiggled the lock; the other pushed the door open, the propped up chair sliding harmlessly on the hardwood floor. Doctor Bunda peered out through the slats of the closet door. Two men, both dressed in dark charcoal gray suits surveyed the mess. The one wearing mirrored sunglasses sent out a text. Five minutes later, two men garbed in sleek white outfits entered the apartment. They rolled out a black body bag, lifted the mechanical man into place then zipped up. A little sweeping

and vacuuming followed and they were gone in ninety seconds.

The other suited man heard a creaking sound. He retrieved a gun with a silencer, turned around and fired. A second later, Doctor Bunda's lifeless frame struck the door, thrusting it open. The dead egg-shaped body landed with a thud.

The other man wearing sunglasses answered his cell phone. "All set. No witnesses."

"And the receptionist?" asked a voice from the other end of the call.

"Done," said the man. A man clad in dark blue moving attire showed up with a large refrigerator-sized box on a dolly. "Pack up fat boy and make sure he's never found." The mover nodded.

"Not bad HR-1," said the man with the gun. "You lasted eight years, four months, nineteen days, six hours, and approximately twenty-four minutes. I believe that's a record for this model."

"What about the other robots?" asked the man wearing sunglasses. "They're starting to malfunction. Are we talking total recall here?"

"Funny one, Arnold. Now let's get some lunch."



The Librarian By DiVitto Kelly

Late November, Saturday evening, fifteen minutes to ten. Andrea Murphy was wrapping up her first full week as librarian at the Birch Mills Public Library

located in the historically mundane town of Boonton, Ohio. A horrendous thunderstorm rolled in, cutting off all power. No worries, fifteen minutes and she and her colleague in circulation would on their way home.

The emergency lights flickered on, almost useless in the antique bubble gum hued brick building, three stories tall and impenetrable. It was once a bank, constructed during the latter part of the Victorian era, circa 1893. Outside, deep green ivy crept up along white painted gutters stationed on each corner of the square building, surrounded by semi manicured hedges, pines, and maples. Fallen trees and heavy limbs scattered across the main road. The cobblestone parking lot was a mess, flooded and now blocked off.

Three strangers entered just as the circulation manager prepares to lock up. "I'm sorry folks, we're closing up shop," said Daniel Hubbard, head supervisor. He'd been with the county library system going on twenty-seven years.

"I just need to use the phone fella," said the slender man, late twenties, grungy with medium cropped orange-blond hair. The other man, five foot-seven tops, was a near younger replica of his brother, only slightly skinnier. Both looked like a decent hot meal had eluded them for some time. The woman, disheveled with long hair past her shoulders, offered up a half smile. Their faces looked harsh, a result of a year-long binge on meth.

"Over here at the information desk sir," pointed Hubbard. He turned his back, ready to shut down the computers when the elevator opened. Just then, the man pistol-whipped Hubbard, knocking him out cold. Exiting the elevator, Andrea witnessed the brutal act. She screamed. The man turned and pointed his revolver at the woman and instinctively fired. The bullet ricocheted off the tile wall, just below the elevator button plate. Andrea darted back inside, frantically pressing the close button; she must have hit it a dozen times. The elevator moved in

slow motion. "Come on, come on!" Andrea screamed.

Andrea got off at the top floor -- the third floor. "Why are they doing this!" she cried, running for her office. She closed the door, locking it.

The three were running on empty: no money, no home, and no future. Their killing spree began in Missouri, shooting an elderly couple dead for cash in some non-descript rural town. They dipped south into Tennessee holding up liquor stores in Jackson and Knoxville, then shot a gas station attendant too, stealing his cherished 1985 black Mercury Marquis. The younger brother joked no one should ever die over a freaking Marquis, but the man stubbornly refused to give up his car keys.

The trio headed east to Bullitt, Kentucky, robbing a bait store then a diner in the early A.M. They jammed a bunch of doggie bag Styrofoam containers with food and a case of Coke before taking off, eventually lodging in Alexandria, a town near the border of Kentucky and the Buckeye State, Ohio.

"Good to see we're finally making the news," said Dennis, more or less the ring leader. CNN was following the story, trying to piece things together, but offering up only vague descriptions of the perpetrators. Allan, whose real name was Albert – he hated Albert, polished off a Frisbee sized whole apple pie and washed it down with a Coke. He belched, then sat on the bed, legs crossed, still wearing his black work boots.

"Get your stinking shoes off the bed, don't you know nothin about manners?" blurted out Al's girlfriend Carol, a beauty school dropout and part time prostitute. They met at the local KFC while Al worked the drive-thru; one of a long string of jobs that never quite panned out.

He purposely flipped his heavy boots onto the floor, nearly waking up his older brother who snored like a chainsaw. Near dawn, the sound of

screaming police car sirens racing by outside the dumpy motel made Dennis nearly leap out of his worn jeans.

He rubbed the sleep out of his bloodshot eyes. "Time to move, Bonnie and Clyde." He popped open a Coke floating in the watered down ice bucket. Al slung his tattooed limb over his girlfriend's narrow shoulder; she'd twisted and turned all night like a snake. It was the one thing Al couldn't stand about Carol. That and her snapping gum habit. Next stop, a historically quaint town just north of Cincinnati.

Andrea tried the phone again – still dead. And her cellphone? "Shit, I don't believe this, where's my freaking cell!" Through the open atrium she could hear the three talking. She kept running it through her brain – who would want to break into a library? A passionate reader maybe?

The librarian closed the door and scurried around her office. She spotted a flyer pinned on her wall. The Birch Mills Library proudly presents Civil War artifacts and a rare signed copy of Moby Dick by Herman Melville. That can't be it, Andrea thought. Those three didn't look like the reading type. And she was near certain that the three could have given a rat's ass what happened at Appomattox on April 9, 1865.

In fact, she was fairly certain they were rather pissed off at the outcome. She opened the door and crept out of the room. It always smelled musty inside the longstanding brick building no matter how many windows were open on a crisp fall day or how many cans of air freshener were sprayed. Maybe a goo crop-dusting of Lysol would do the trick.

Dennis ambled around the circulation desk and took a gander at the cash register. He pushed a handful of buttons but nothing happened. He pounded his bony fist on the key pad. "Damn it, we need the key."

"You're not gonna find any cash in a freaking library," said Al, exasperated.

“Why not grab us some computers. We can pawn a few laptops instead?”

“What about blondie upstairs?” asked Carol, drawing out a fishing knife she’d stolen from a bait shop. “Want me to take her out?”

“That would be so romantic,” answered her boyfriend. “Hey, the couple that kills together stays together.”

“More like natural bored killers,” smirked Dennis. “Look, the phones are dead, but she might have a cell. Why don’t both of you go handle it?” The couple grasped hands and strode to the elevator.

A pool of blood lay next to Hubbard’s throbbing head. The circ manager forged every ounce of energy to open his eyes as he lay on the sandpaper colored carpeting that still smelled like mildew. The smell of flood water just never goes completely away. He focused, watching as two people got onto the elevator. It took a moment, but the incident – the people needing the phone. “Oh no -- Andrea.”

The two miscreants got off on the second floor, greeted by rows of dark wood bookcases that housed the adult non-fiction collection along with a token shelf of books in French and Spanish. The reference desk was a dated, hand me down model. There was a lone desktop computer and a small collection of ready reference materials.

“Check all the offices,” said Al. “I’m sure we’ll be able to snag some laptops.”

The two split up in opposite directions. Carol followed a narrow hallway to a dead end office. She jiggled the door handle then pointed the knife inside the lock. “Easy peasy,” she uttered as the door popped open. There were two light wood desks stationed back to back with older model desk top computers. By the look of the monitors even Carol could tell they were outdated.

Al was in no mood to spend any substantial time at the library – any library for that matter. It felt like Kryptonite to the high school dropout. At least it was warm and dry; they had

nothing to worry about. He poked around the bookshelves, randomly snatching books, reading the title then tossing them aside. He walked over to the atrium, getting a whole view of the building.

Al called down to his brother. “Any luck with the cash register?” He heard a string of cursing. His older brother was a maestro at cursing, slinging lines of expletives with heavy metal gusto. “I guess not.”

Dennis marched over to the circulation manager, nudging him in the back with his pointed brown boot. Hubbard didn’t move. Playing possum seemed like a safe bet – he hoped it might even save his life. “Get up dill weed,” said Dennis. “Come on fat ass, where are the keys?” Hubbard prayed, keeping his eyes closed, hard.

“He’s out for the count Den; try his pockets,” Al said, his voice echoing throughout the atrium. Dennis dug his dirty hands into Hubbard’s windbreaker pockets. Bingo.

Dennis raced back to the cash register placing the key in the appropriate spot. The drawer popped open. “All right, here we go.” Dennis’s enthusiasm suddenly dropped like a stone. He grabbed the cash, quickly counting it -- a paltry sum of twenty-seven dollars plus another six dollars and fifty cents in quarters.

“What the hell are we going to do with all this change?”

“Hey, we can use it for tolls,” joked Al, a wise-ass screw-up supreme.

Dennis crammed the minuscule wad of cash and change in his front pocket, dropping a few quarters along the way. He was irked. “We need to make some cash quick; did you find any computers up there?”

“Not yet,” Al replied. “Let me see what my woman got.” Dennis acknowledged then headed behind the circulation desk to inspect the line of cubicles.

Andrea had to do something. She wasn’t the type who was gonna wait around to be executed. Finally, the light bulb went off: drop something heavy on Al’s head, just like in a cartoon. She

was a big Bugs Bunny fan after all. She tiptoed to the law section and struggled to pick up five Martindale Hubble Law Directories. The books weighed a ton; probably cost a small forest of trees their lives. You’d spot them lined up on bookshelves in those slimy late night slip and fall lawyer commercials; the pros that bask in the primordial ooze alongside used car salesmen and beltway politicians.

Andrea planted herself right above the scumbag. She extended her arms over the edge then whistled like a bird. He looked up only to be greeted by the cascading volumes. All five books pummeled the scrawny man right in the kisser, breaking his nose as his head ricocheted off the metal railing. He was knocked out cold. Andrea didn’t see Carol but knew the imbecile was on the same floor. She was next.

Andrea was fairly intelligent, getting good grades at Xavier University in Cincinnati. After graduation, her first job was as a copywriter working for a midsize advertising company. But after five years of coming up with clever taglines for meaningless products, Andrea quit.

Seeking something with a bit more substance, she joined the Army – her two older brothers and father served. Her mom was terrified something would happen to her only daughter. Andrea spent a tour of duty in Iraq – mostly out of harms’ way, before returning home due to an injury. She moped for the next six months not sure what to do. A good friend of Andrea’s who worked at the town library suggested a change of professional scenery might do the trick. Being a librarian seemed like a cool gig – and rather safe, excluding occasional paper cuts. Andrea returned to school in the fall, taking most of her classes online. Working at the town library felt right. She was near family and friends, and started writing about her experiences overseas. Whatever happened this evening, Andrea was not going down without a fight.

Carol called out for her boyfriend. The scraggly woman managed to find two laptops and a couple of desk

printers. She placed them in a metal rimmed cart and pushed them towards the elevator. Andrea took the stairs to the second floor. She peered out the doorway and spotted Carol. One thing she didn't want to happen was for the beauty school reject to broadcast that Al was laid out cold. Andrea's squeaky LL Bean duck books squished and squashed with every step she took. She contemplated taking them off but it was too late. Carol turned around as she waited for the elevator.

"So there you are missy, you gonna try and stop us?" boasted Carol, flashing a crooked tooth grin. Her face was pot mark city with a few freckles thrown in for good measure. At one time she may have been a looker, but those days were history.

"I'd like to think so," answered Andrea, as she rolled up her sleeves and walked towards Carol.

Carol pulled out the slender bladed fishing knife and stepped closer to Andrea. "A whittle ole librarian gonna hurt me?"

Andrea moved in, glaring at the woman. Carol lunged forward with the knife. Andrea blocked the feeble maneuver with her arm then let loose with a lethal roundhouse kick that flattened Carol in a heartbeat. The rubber soles on her duck boots even made a squeaky sound as her left foot met Carol's unflattering face. "Two down, one to go," Andrea uttered. Her heart rate eased a bit.

"Better work on your math, honey," said Al, his face bloody and his eyes teary. He whacked Andrea square in the right shoulder with a wooden chair. The librarian fell to the ground in deep agony. Her shoulders, specifically the right one, had been separated twice before: once in combat, the other playing soccer at college. This made it a painful trifecta.

Al was about to stomp Andrea in the back when she knocked him off his feet with a sweeping kick. Al fell flat on his face, blood pouring out of his busted snout again. Andrea jumped on top of the man and pummeled him with lefts

and rights. "Like I said, two down, one to go."

Andrea ran upstairs to her office and retrieved a roll of duct tape, trampling back down to where Al and Carol lay comatose. She bound their hands and feet, slapped a piece over their mouths then dragged them into the small conference room.

The librarian heard Dennis call his brother's name. She exited the room, locking it, then headed up to the third floor. Andrea peered over the edge and spotted Dennis. He was standing over her co-worker with the gun pointed at his body.

"Hey Al, Carol, where the hell are you guys? You better not be doin it in a library; that'd be just plain wrong."

Dennis sensed something was askew. He knew there was someone else in the library. He'd hoped his brother and skanky girlfriend could have taken care of the situation, but the guy could be as dumb as a bowling ball.

Dennis grabbed Hubbard by the collar. "All right my friend, wakey-wakey." He slapped Hubbard across the face, pulling him to his feet. "Playing possum fat-boy?" He grabbed him by the upper arm and walked him over to the middle of the lobby.

"Hey librarian, you hear me?" bellowed Dennis. "Show your face or I'm killing your friend right now." Andrea remained still. She'd dealt with plenty worse in Iraq, but had a gut feeling this guy was serious.

"Tell your friend up there you're a dead man if she don't give herself up." Dennis took his gun out and pressed it against Hubbard's temple.

"Andrea?" Hubbard called out. The blood was still moist on the side of his balding head. He called out again. "Andrea? I think this guy really means it." Dennis fired a shot at the ceiling. Hubbard almost fainted.

Andrea's heart dropped. She peeked just above the railing -- thank God her friend was alive. Andrea finally answered. "Alright, alright."

"Even a college girl like you understands the international language of violence," said Dennis. "Come down

so we can have ourselves a little chat right here in the -- what's the name of this place?" He choked Hubbard's shirt collar harder wanting to get a response.

"It's the -- Birch Mills Library," uttered Hubbard, feeling woozy. His last conflict of any kind was way back in fifth grade, arguing which duck would win in a fight, Daffy or Donald. His money was on Daffy -- that fowl was completely insane.

The elevator door sluggishly opened. Andrea stepped out and stared at the dirt bag. Dennis raised his gun and whacked Hubbard on the head, knocking him out again. Her friend slumped to the ground like a duffle bag of full of laundry. "Now it's just you and me."

"A little unfair don't you think?" asked Andrea. "I mean you have a gun against me -- a helpless female."

"You ain't so helpless -- looks like you took care of my posse pretty good and quick. I'd say we're about even."

"What do you want?" asked Andrea, thinking if only this scumbag didn't have a gun, she'd beat the crap out of him.

"Actually, we just wanted a place to crash, you know, rest up a bit before we visit grandma." Dennis broke out into a wise-ass grin.

Andrea sighed. "Why don't you get your friends and please leave." She concentrated on the gun. The chambers appeared free and clear of ammo. She took a step closer.

"Whadda say you tell me where the nice, expensive electronics are and we'll be on our merry way, unless of course you have a hidden stash of money somewhere here."

"It's a library; there's no money here except what's in the register," said Andrea. "And you already got that." She wasn't about to divulge the four brand new staff iPads safely locked up in her office. "Of course there's the --."

"The what?" asked Dennis with an anxious twang.

"The safe," said Andrea, saying the word with a bit of apprehension.

"A safe, here?" Dennis perked up with thoughts of stealing some real dough like an outlaw.

“Well, this used to be a bank a long time ago,” Andrea answered. There are stories that there’s money still there. We’ve been instructed to never ever open it.”

“Where is it – now!” He pointed the gun straight at her. Empty chamber. Now she was certain this loser was shooting blanks.

“It’s in the back, right behind the circulation desk next to the supervisor’s office, but I need the keys.”

Dennis grabbed the keys from the cash register and threw them at Andrea’s feet. “Here, now open it.”

Andrea picked up the keys and walked over to the safe, clearing out a pair of chairs and a small table with a vase of fake flowers on it. She inserted the appropriate key into the slot. On school field trips Andrea would show off the two-ton heavy metal fortress. She even stuffed a few of the original moneybags with newspaper, making it appear like they were filled with wads of money. The kids always got a kick out of that one.

Like a strip tease act, the librarian slowly opened the square door, teasing the drooling criminal. She played up the weight of the door, moving it slower and slower. “Sorry, it’s really, really heavy.”

“Come on, come on.” Dennis’s eyes grew bigger. He was desperate to hit the mother load. The vault was dark as he peered in. He flicked open his lighter. The small flame fell upon the worn bags inside. Dennis felt like he was in a western, robbing the ole town bank. The only thing missing would be a celebratory trip to the saloon and sucking down some rotgut.

Andrea opened it a little more. Dennis stuck his face inside. Andrea whipped around, kicking the man in the back, thrusting him right into the safe. She quickly closed the door with ease, locking it before Dennis knew what hit him. Dennis cursed but followed on his natural instinct to open the moneybags.

“What the fu--?” He reached in and pulled out nothing but crumpled up old newspaper. His eyes turned to fury. “You conniving bitch, I’ll kill you!” He

lunged over to the safe door and tried to open it. “Open it up now!”

“Now don’t make me shush you,” said Andrea, toying with the locked up lunatic.

Dennis ranted and raved, pulling and tugging at the handle. Andrea stood there smiling like Jerry the mouse had just bamboozled Tom the cat, again. Then the bad library puns started.

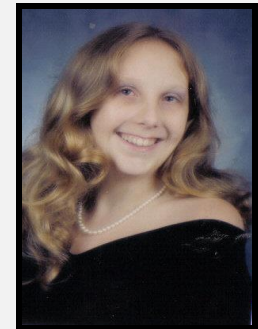
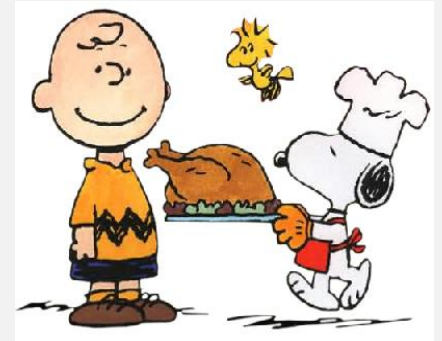
“Mr. Dennis, it looks like you’re very overdue -- for prison.” Andrea smiled. Dennis cursed.

“Oh, you’re interested in books about prisons? That would be in the three hundreds -- 365.973 to be precise. I’m sorry? How long can you check them out? I’d say three to five . . . years. Anything else I can help you with?”

Dennis reached the boiling point. He bellowed out a string of high octane expletives. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a bullet. He inserted it in the chamber and aimed at the lock. “You’re dead meat, librarian!” The gun fired. The bullet ricocheted off the solid fixture and surround walls, before finally striking Dennis in the temple. He dropped to the floor, dead.

Andrea pressed her ear to the vault door. Not a sound. She went back to help her co-worker up and headed outside in the brisk night air. The rain had stopped but the roads were still a mess. They hailed down a tow truck who radioed the police. The kind gentleman took Mr. Hubbard to the nearby hospital where he was pronounced okay, minus the throbbing headache. Andrea stayed behind and waited for the police, who showed up eighteen minutes later. They tallied up all three criminals: one dead; two now on their way to prison.

After the police had left, Andrea stood alone in the lobby. She took in a deep breath, reflecting on her harrowing ordeal. Her eyes circled the old building and she thought about her Army friends overseas. Returning to combat was out of the question, but at least she had the excitement of being a librarian.



**Uncle Max’s Gift
By Jamie White**

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

I hate that doll. From the moment I opened up the package, I could tell there was something not right about it. It felt weird.... evil. As I stared into those creepy, blank eyes, I couldn’t help but feel a cold chill run down my spine. No one else seemed to notice, though. I wanted to toss that damn doll right then and there. Unfortunately, I knew if I tried, my parents would’ve flipped out on me. And besides... what was I supposed to do? Say the doll was scary? They’d think I was crazy... or at least sneaking scary movies at my friend’s house. I also didn’t want to hurt Uncle Max’s feelings by telling him I hated it. He was always my favorite uncle and we were very close. We always had fun together and usually he was great at picking out presents. So I sucked it up and thanked him for the devil doll.

Looking at the doll was bad enough. Then I found out it could move and make sounds. As the little troll skated across the floor, it's choppy movements and creepy music made me want to run screaming from the room. The weird thing is, everyone else liked it. They actually thought it was cute! I tilted my head, noting how the lights around its eyes formed this kind of demonic look. Why couldn't anyone else see that?

Later that night, I had a hard time sleeping. The doll seemed to be watching me. I got up, slowly walked over to the dresser I had set it on. I didn't want to touch it, but I had no choice. I had to put that thing somewhere where I couldn't see it. I moved it behind a bunch of pictures and turned to go back to bed.

I woke up the next morning, feeling much better after a full night's sleep. I actually managed to forget all about the doll as I stretched, yawning slightly. I stood up, putting on my slippers and bathrobe to warm up a little. It was kind of cold out that morning. As I reached for my doorknob, I stopped, looking around the room. Something wasn't right.

After a minute, I saw it. The doll. Somehow it was now sitting on top of my television. Had I dreamed about getting up and moving it? No, I had definitely woken up last night and moved it behind some pictures. I decided it was time to move the doll to a more out of the way spot. I took the doll and set it on the top shelf of my closet. I even tossed a few old sweaters I never wear on top of it. *There. That should do it.* Satisfied, I turned around and hurried to the kitchen for breakfast. I remembered we were supposed to be going to my grandparent's house for their own holiday party. It was one of my favorite parts of Christmas. They always had great food, lots of music and there was always lots of cousins my age there to play with. Forgetting all about my new toy, I hurried to eat as quickly as possible and then finished getting ready. *This is gonna be so cool....*

We finally got home at about 9

o'clock that night and I had to hurry up and get ready for bed. As I opened my door, I let out a scream. Sitting on my bed was that horrible little troll doll. My parents raced in, asking me what was wrong. "The doll!" I pointed at it with shaky fingers. "It moved!"

"What do you mean 'it moved'?" My dad raised his eyebrow at me, looking at me like I had just lost my mind.

"Daddy, I swear! Before we left I put it in my closet! I even had a bunch of sweaters on top of it and now it's on my bed!! It did the same thing last night." I turned to the dresser, pointing at the pictures. "I moved it behind those and this morning it was sitting on the TV!"

"Sweetie, I think you're letting your imagination run away with you. Were you watching scary movies at Amy's house again?"

"MOMMY! I'm serious!! And I only did that one time!"

"You did that a week ago! A doll can't move by itself, even ones like that. You still have to press the button to make it move. Why were you trying to hide it anyway?"

"I promise it moved, Mommy! The doll scares me so I put it where it couldn't watch me but it moved!! Now it moved again. I don't like it!" I was so scared, I was almost crying. My parents looked at each other a minute and then my Dad spoke up.

"Alright.... We'll tell you what. We're going to take the doll and put it in our room, ok? We'll show you where we put it and in the morning, you'll see it's still going to be there."

"Ok, Daddy". I was just glad to get that thing out of my room. It almost felt like it's eyes were following me wherever I went. I could swear it was smiling, too. I ran to my bed and grabbed the doll, handing it to my mom and followed them to their bedroom.

"Now let's see...." My mom glanced around the room a minute before walking over to their bookcase and set it on the top self. "Here. This is where it's going to be, alright? You'll see... tomorrow morning it will still be there."

I didn't believe them, but I nodded anyway. "Ok, Mommy. Good night.

Night, daddy!" I turned and hurried to my room, eager to be as far away from the doll as I could get. I got ready for bed and climbed under the covers, pulling them all the way up to my chin and looking around, wishing I still had a nightlight.

It took awhile, but I finally managed to fall asleep. When I woke up the next morning the first thing I did was look around my room for the doll. Seeing it was safe, I got up and left my room, heading into the kitchen. "Good morning." My mom was cooking eggs and my dad was buttering up some toast. I breathed deep, almost forgetting about the bad dreams I'd had. Everything smelled so good....

"Morning sweetie." My dad set down the knife and walked over, giving me a hug. "How'd you sleep?"

"Good." Suddenly, I remembered the doll again. "Did it move?! Where is it?"

My mom turned the stove down a little, continuing to stir the eggs. "It's exactly where we left it, just like we said. You see? Nothing to worry about." She must've seen I was still nervous because she added "If you want, we'll keep it with us one more night." I nodded. I was in no hurry to get that thing back. I didn't care that it hadn't moved last night for them.

Two nights later, though, and it was back. This time, it was sitting on a chair in the corner. I still couldn't get over the feeling that it was watching me. Scared, I picked up a jacket and covered it up again. I laid down in bed, pulling the covers up high and watching it.

Just as I was starting to fall asleep, I heard it, the choppy, robotic sounds of it moving across the floor. Then the music started. I couldn't even scream I was so scared. I watched in terror as it moved closer to me, it's eyes lit up like the demon eyes I'd seen on all those Halloween pictures. I tried to move, to run for the door but I couldn't. It was like that doll had put a spell on me. I started breathing fast and shaking as the lights around its eyes got bigger and bigger. The doll seemed to get bigger too. It finally reached my bed and the light spread out away from the

doll, moving towards me. I tried to scream again, to let someone know what was happening, but I couldn't get a sound to come out.

The next morning when my parents came in to wake me up, all they found was the troll doll laying on my pillow.



The Lawman of Tangia Part 3
By Edward White/CP Bialois
<http://cpbialois.wordpress.com/>

No matter how hard he tried, Luke couldn't get rid of the sensation of falling. Each time his body told him he was about to fall, he tried to straighten and lean the other way but it never lasted for long before the feeling returned. To him, he was laying on a inflatable mattress in one of the inns he frequented in the towns. It didn't make any sense why he would fall since he never moved from his back, but nevertheless the feeling refused to subside.

A faint electronic sound repeated several times, but it sounded miles away. Hearing it repeat began to draw his attention towards its source. The more he focused on it, the more the sound resembled a whiney of a horse.

What is that?

Luke opened his eyes and tried to sit up only to find himself in the saddle of his cyber stallion. It took him a moment to gather his senses and look around at his surroundings. Straightening his back and moving his head sent a surge of pain streaking through him. He rubbed the back of his head and

wincing again at the rough texture under his fingers.

"Great. Just great." Letting out a sigh, he tried to force the pain away so he could assess where he was. It took a few seconds, but his eyes settled on the large, half-buried metallic capsule in the back of the cavern. Although his memory was still coming back to him, he remembered seeing it before... what? *Before I passed out? Before I was knocked unconscious? Damn it!* The sudden rush of blood to his head from his anger sent another bolt of pain through him but at least it wasn't as bad that time. The one bright spot was the dust squall had passed and the brightness of the sky told him not much time had passed.

Letting out another sigh, he pressed a button to disengage the belt on the cyber stallion and climbed down as carefully as he could. If nothing else, he hoped to avoid another spasm of pain. As soon as his feet touched the rock ground, the cyber stallion turned its head towards him and let out a plaintive sounding whiney.

Luke paused a moment to look at the cyber stallion. Once again, he wondered if the damn thing was alive, but shook his head to clear away the thought. Still, he rested a comforting hand on the mechanical beast's flank. "Easy now, I'll be right back."

He looked into the cyber stallion's blue glass eyes for a moment then turned towards the capsule. He approached it with his hand resting on the butt of his pulse pistol strapped to his right hip. While not as powerful as the plasma rifles, it was more than strong enough to take care of any creature he came across on Tangia.

He took a deep breath and reached out towards the control console. It only took a couple of seconds for him to see the power cells were drained, but the manual control should still work and the hatch somehow faced upwards. His hand rested on the inset red button that was standard for all Earth ships. Hoping the pod was empty, he pushed the button and stepped back.

The sound of a dozen locks and seals releasing filled the cavern, followed by a loud clack and release of pressure. The hatch lifted a couple of feet before it caught on an outcropping of the cavern wall and came to a stop.

Luke reflexively covered his mouth and nose, expecting the stench of decay and rot to come pouring out. To his surprise and relief the air didn't change aside from the rush of stale oxygen from the capsule's interior. He muttered a thanks to the universe before crouching low to look inside.

A square storage container sat strapped into the seat reserved for a crewmember or passenger after abandoning ship. Seeing it gave him pause as he tried to remember if there'd been a recent interstellar incident in the last couple of months. Given how efficient the space vessels were anymore, incidents were nearly unheard of. But why would anyone jettison a storage container? Given the strangeness of his discovery and lack of destroyed ships in the interstellar messages, he thought about leaving the capsule and forgetting he ever found it. Unfortunately, his curiosity won out and he unbuckled the straps and pulled the container out.

It was heavier than he expected and used both hands after nearly dislocating his shoulder to finish pulling it free of its resting place. Once it was on the floor of the cavern and he was breathing heavy, he noticed the locking mechanism. A DNA based scanning lock with scanner for a thumb.

Of course. Luke turned to the cyber stallion. Eyeballing the storage compartment in his mind's eye, he decided the container wouldn't fit, which meant he had little choice but to try opening it.

Not liking the way things had turned, he pulled his pulse pistol from its holster and made certain the setting was at its lowest before taking aim. As he pressed the trigger button, he hoped the energy blast wouldn't damage whatever was inside.

A bright blue flash lit the cavern along with a whooshing sound like the

air was being cut followed by the smell of burning ozone and metal. It took a second for his eyes to adjust following the flash. But when they did, he smiled at seeing his aim was true. Kneeling next to the container, he lifted the lid and stared at the contents.

Luke reached in and lifted the brass jar out of its resting place in the foam padding. Something about it seemed odd as the jar only weighed a couple of pounds. That meant the container was heavily shielded, but against what? An uneasy feeling of possible radiation sickness swept through him. Fighting back the growing queasiness in his stomach, he put the jar back in the container and closed it. The computerized whiney of the cyber stallion echoed his thoughts. What did he just find and why couldn't it have been Bailey instead?



Enjoy Some Thanksgiving Poems!

Thanksgiving Day by Lydia Maria Child

Over the river and through the wood,
To Grandfather's house we go;
The horse knows the way
To carry the sleigh
Through the white and drifted snow.

Over the river and through the wood,
Oh, how the wind does blow!
It stings the toes,
And bites the nose,
As over the ground we go.

Over the river and through the wood,
Trot fast, my dapple gray!
Spring over the ground,
Like a hunting hound,
For this is Thanksgiving-Day.

Over the river and through the wood,
And straight through the barnyard gate!
We seem to go
Extremely slow,
It is so hard to wait!

Over the river and through the wood;
Now Grandmother's cap I spy!
Hurrah for the fun!
Is the pudding done?
Hurrah for the pumpkin pie!

Thanksgiving Time

When all the leaves are off the boughs,
And nuts and apples gathered in,
And cornstalks waiting for the cows,
And pumpkins safe in barn and bin,
Then Mother says, "My children dear,
The fields are brown, and autumn flies;
Thanksgiving Day is very near,
And we must make thanksgiving pies!"

Author Unknown.

Thanksgiving

The year has turned its circle,
The seasons come and go.
The harvest all is gathered in
And chilly north winds blow.

Orchards have shared their
treasures,
The fields, their yellow grain,
So open wide the doorway ---
Thanksgiving comes again!

Old Rhyme.

The First Thanksgiving

When the Pilgrims
first gathered together to share
with their Indian friends
in the mild autumn air,
they lifted the voices
in jubilant praise
for the bread on the table,
the berries and maize,
for field and for forest,
for turkey and deer,
for the bountiful crops
they were blessed with that
year.
They were thankful for these
as they feasted away,
and as they were thankful
we're thankful today.

Unknown

Join the Writer’s Portal today!

Beginning in the month of August, meetings will be held the second Monday (6-7:30pm) and fourth Thursday of every month (1-2:30) in the second floor conference room.

From picture books to novels, stop by and discuss your ideas. Submit your short story or poem to be published in the monthly Portal 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/Broward College Library
7300 Pines Blvd.
Pembroke Pines, FL. 33024.
Telephone: 954-201-8870.
mkelly@broward.org**

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call (954) 201-8870.

Please specify the story and writer. Thanks!

*The writer’s group meets the second Monday of every month from 6:00pm – 7:30pm and the fourth Thursday of every month from 1:00pm – 2:30pm. Thanks!

Remaining 2013 schedule

Nov. 18: 6pm-7:30pm

Dec. 9: 6pm-7:30pm



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