

Short Stories

Ramblings^{of} a Lucid Madman



BOBBY W. LEE

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A collection of short stories and poems

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Why do you read? Someone asked me this once and I was instantly dumbfounded. How does one explain, I thought. So I sat and thought about it in great depth. What I came up with to simplify all the reasons into a nutshell was that reading takes you out of yourself and yet into yourself! Confused? If you don't love to read then, probably so. Everyone is different so I will try to explain my personal reasons. Reading turns on the switch to my imagination which is like a time machine. It can take me anywhere I let it. My subconscious mind provides the props and angles and the movie plays out in my conscious mind. The script is transferred through my brain by way of my eyes and there you have it, living technicolor action. Hey, it works for me! Not every writer can trip the switch but when I find one who does I read savagely, like a drowning man fighting to grab a life raft! I have been known to walk through a library pulling an interesting looking title here and there, scanning a few paragraphs and rejecting or keeping till I have eight or ten keepers and then devouring them in a few days. Nowadays it's like my dreams have come true with Ebooks and I feed on them like a shark on a school of fish. Don't get me wrong, I love a good movie! But I'll take a good book over them anyway, my imagination as I read far surpasses anything Hollywood can toss my way! I don't know if any of you feel like this, but I have a good hunch a lot of people are like me. Nothing beats a good book and when you finish it you want more, more, more! This love has led me to write and I hope somewhere someday my work affects someone the same way the great authors I have read and loved affected me. It's a marvelous world that is yours alone in how you interpret a book, a super personal experience like nothing else. Here are a collection of my short stories so far, they are what they are. You be the judge, my job is to entertain and I hope to hit that mark. Best Wishes, Bobby W. Lee

The Cave

Pink amid orange swirled with pale blue and gauzy white streaked the sky as dawn faintly

painted the morning's canvas above. Bream made feeding rings in the small pond beside the alabaster stepping stones leading across it. Shimmering dew drops clung to the leaves and pine needles. A lone hawk soared above the tall oaks in search of a morning rabbit to feed its young nestled high in a tall pine. The world was coming to life with the arrival of the new day's sun. A faint breeze stirred, faintly scented with pine and honeysuckle fragrance, drying the dew. The young vampire sat watching till his skin began to steam from the sun's early rays then rushed back into the cave that had been his sanctuary the past few months. Gaining the cool dark confine of the cave he savored the image and remembered what it had been like to be human. To walk in the sunlight feeling the warmth on his face and the rich nutty brown it had turned his skin in the summers, the feel of sweat popping out on him as he had worked in the fields, the hum of June Bugs and bees flying to and fro. He sighed heavily. That was all behind him now, the night was his life sharing her dark secrets as he wandered, moving from village to village slaking his horrible thirst. He had been nearly caught and killed at first, the blood lust making him sloppy and careless, but he had learned caution and stealth stealing a single victim at a time instead of rushing in like a wolf in a sheep pen. He had wiped out a whole village right after being turned, killing right and left, the killing madness on him as he chased down the ones who tried to run. He hadn't fed till every last man woman and child lay dead. Then bloody and spattered with gore he gorged himself on blood, sleeping through the day in one of his victims huts, sheets pulled over the windows. A neighboring villager came to buy chickens that day walked onto the horrible scene then ran all the way back to his village for help. They had arrived with swords and pitchforks and started searching the village for survivors, luckily for him they mistook him for a victim. They piled all the bodies (him included) in the big longhouse they used for village meetings and trading. Night was approaching as they rounded up the last of the bodies and set fire to the longhouse. Smelling the smoke and feeling the blast of heat from the approaching flames, he awoke and slipped unseen out a window. He had very nearly been burned and he learned to control the killing madness through practice and began taking single victims in stealth attacks rather than the frenzied slaughter of the first village. He became an expert at stalking and picking off villagers that strayed out of sight of the others. Silently he killed and dragged the bodies off into the woods scratching leaves and dirt over them and ripping out chunks of flesh to make it appear as if a cougar or bear was the culprit. From village to village he moved, taking one or two here and there. Still young in his vampirism, he hunted to survive. Some nights he would play on the stones crossing the pond running back and forth across them at dizzying speed, then walk them on his hands, cavorting like a young foal in the moonlight. This was his place, where he always came back after his roaming sprees. It was secluded and beautiful and he longed to roam it in the daylight.

He lay sleeping in his cave, dreaming of playing by the pond in the daylight amid the flowers and tall weeds. He never heard the grim party of villagers with their sharp sickles and wooden stakes as they silently crossed the stones leading across the pond to the small path leading up to the cave. Entering the cave one man accidentally knocked over a small rock leaning just inside the mouth. Just a small click but he heard it like a boulder crashing through a thicket. Instantly he was awake and aware! Smelling the fear coming off the villagers in pungent waves. He sprang from the wooden coffin sitting in the small cavern to the left of the large main cavern and as they were lighting the torches he took them from behind. Silently and swiftly he killed all five before they ever knew he was even close by. Slaking his thirst he retired back to the coffin to wait for night's release. When it came he took all the bodies out of the cave and weighting them with stone he sank them in the little lake. Standing beneath the weeping willows he thought for a long time. Then silently he ran to the village and like a marauding tiger killed every last man, woman, and child. Working quickly to beat the dawn he piled all the bodies into the chapel and after dousing it with kerosene he found by the mill set it ablaze. He waited as long as he dared to make sure the flames were going strong enough to complete the job then rushed back to his beloved cave. No one was going to take his home! He would kill them all if they came! He sat watching the sun rise until his skin began to smoke then went back to the little coffin to sleep the day away and dream of playing in his beloved home in the sunlight.

Bobby W. Lee

Tick Tock

He sat there. He could do nothing else, his once powerful proud Mustang was now twisted ravaged metal and plastic wrapped around him. He had hydroplaned running about 80mph on a lonely road in Mississippi coming home to Atlanta from the casino. He felt blood running down his chest and back, a small hot tickle in contrast to the burning in his neck where a shard of windshield protruded at a crazy angle. The blood oozed around the glass welling up on his shoulder then trickling down, his heart pumping it slowly out of him. Only an increment at a time but the jugular was nicked and without help it was only a matter of time. He didn't know, all he knew was that he was trapped. He was pinned in his seat like a fly caught in a spider's web. He knew he hurt in several places but he couldn't check himself. The passenger seat was folded over onto his right side pushing him into the crushed in driver's door. The steering wheel had snapped off and the column was shoved into his ribs on his left. He couldn't tell if he was impaled or if his ribs were just broken. He couldn't feel his right arm at all but he could wiggle all his toes and all the digits on his left so he doubted he had spinal injury. His head had hit the windshield and throbbed something awful and he could feel blood drying on his face. "No haircuts for a while!" he thought then laughed insanely, the pain in his side and chest racking him. Pushing the pain down inside him to his core he squirmed and struggled for a few seconds but it was useless. Tears welled in his eyes as the pain re-consumed him and at his helplessness. There was no way he was getting out of this without help. If he concentrated he could think above the burning waves of pain but the jolts that came every so often scrambled his thoughts and made his muscles jump involuntarily. He looked around using only his eyes to find something, anything to help him but even if there had of been it would be of no use to him. The seatbelt and wreckage had him clamped firmly. He could only see the demolished interior and the trunk of the large oak the Mustang had stopped against in the early morning light. "Surely someone will come along!" he thought but in the back of his mind he knew the odds were heavily against him. He wondered how far off the road he was and tried to remember what happened but could not get past the car lightening up and going sideways. "Help me!" He shouted as loud as he could in his sorry state, knowing he ought to save his breath and that there was no one to hear him! Panic set in and he screamed till he was hoarse ignoring the waves of pain. Sobbing now he muttered, "Please God, somebody help me." he blacked out for a few seconds it seemed and when his eyes opened he recognized a pungent smell, gasoline! "No, no, no, this can't be happening to me!" he thought. He had so many things to live for, a good job, money in the bank, a promising future with his fiancé! "God, I'd trade it all right now if I could just get out of here!" he thought sobbing. "Really!" the voice was real and right in front of him! He flinched and opened his eyes. Sitting on the crumpled fender one leg out straight and the other bent with his hands clasped around the knee was a man. Thirtyish with streaks of grey in his temples, medium length black hair, a sharp prominent nose, with thin lips curled in a sardonic smile. He had not heard him come up but in his state that wasn't so strange he thought. "Help me! He croaked. "Well that depends," said the well dressed stranger, hopping off the fender and walking around to peer through the hole in the spiderwebbed windshield at him. "Are you really ready to trade all that to leave here?" Not thinking that he had never uttered a word out loud, He croaked "Yes!" he shut his eyes and braced himself, knowing that any movement was going to hurt terribly. A few moments went by and nothing happened. He opened his eyes and the stranger's face was only an inch or so from his. He could feel his warm breath on his skin and their noses were almost touching. "Are you really sure that's what you want, I wouldn't want to twist your arm or anything!" the stranger said his grey eyes staring into his own intently. The stranger abruptly threw back his head and laughed long and hard! "He's insane," He thought. "I'm being rescued by a madman!" The stranger picked at a nail on his left hand with his right thumbnail, "Well?" The stranger cupped his chin in his hand, first finger curled over his top lip and thought about it for a minute. "Why not, he said, Why not indeed!" With that he jerked the driver's door off the side of the mangled car causing it to rock a little, sending excruciating waves of pain through the trapped victim. He lost sight of him as the stranger walked around the back of the car. The car rocked again as the stranger ripped the passenger door off the hinges and tossed it over his shoulder as if it were a ball of paper. "This is not right!" He thought through the haze of pain as the stranger ripped the passenger seat from the rails in the floorboard and sent it sailing after the door. He blacked out and when he came to he was on his back, staring up into a blue autumn sky with wispy cotton candy clouds floating over. His neck

burned horribly and his ribs felt crushed and broken, every breath a symphony in pain. But it was nothing compared to the burning pain creeping down his neck and starting to flow through his body. His eyes opened again and the stranger was standing above him at the top of his head looking down at him. "You can scream ,it's okay, we all do when it starts taking hold. No shame in it ,just let it rip!" he said. His eyes burned with a queer light. "A few more seconds and you'll start to feel it happening ,try not to fight it, it's a little easier that way. It still hurts like hell though! That's it ,just breathe deep ,it will all be over soon and you'll feel better!" he tried to concentrate on the face above him but the burning became molten and coursed through him in agonizing jets, his traitorous heart pumping it onward. He screamed and thrashed and screamed some more! Then it felt like a cold bubble around him shrinking inward dissipating the heat and freezing him through and he screamed until he blacked out. "Easy ,easy !"He heard through the frozen mists, .then everything went black. He floated in the mists with the feeling of height, sailing like a hawk ,peering downward not knowing what he was looking for but elated with no pain only joy and exuberance washing over him knowing he was flying. Then something snaked through the mists below him, He dodged but couldn't escape the blood red arrow with the small line hooked to it. It struck his breast but there was no pain, only a tugging sensation. The line tightened and started pulling him downward, slowly at first then rapidly. He plummeted through the icy mists downward into the blue and toward the green and brown earth rising to meet him. A body lay beneath and he fell into it with a sickening crunch as it enveloped him. His eyes flew open and once again he was staring at the blue autumn sky with the wispy clouds above. The pain was receding in waves liken to cymbals being struck repeatedly with whisks. He felt a cold strength pour through his body and he moved first his fingers and then his toes. Gasping for air, He sat up! The stranger stood a few yards away. "About time, He said, I thought maybe my aim was off a little. But I see it's you after all!" he looked around himself taking gulps of air to quiet the hammering of his heart and clear the fog from his brain. A short distance away the Mustang sat flattened into the oak, debris scattered everywhere. "Where am I, what happened?" he asked bewildered ,jumping lightly to his feet. "Don't worry about that right now, things will come back to you but don't try to rush it. It's enough to know you belong to me and we have things to be done. Give yourself a few minutes to get yourself together then we have to go."The stranger said with a not so pleasant smile. Who are you? "he asked. "Oh I think you know that one! "The stranger replied and this time the smile was pure evil as the strangers pupils narrowed to slits like a cats.

Bobby W. Lee

The Rock

The old man sat thinking about what had happened. Skirting the razors edge between sanity and madness. He had lost everything he held dear in this world. Every loved one gone to dust or deserted him. It didn't matter anymore. The old man had lived long enough that to go on was only a redundant cycle of meaningless chores. He served no purpose for anyone anymore other than his own agenda. His body was failing him growing weaker every year that passed but his mind was ever active. Too active. He found he slept less and less and thought more and more. He'd lie awake reliving his past and thinking of the things he could have done, should have done ,till he would realize the sun had come up and he would rise ,shower ,dress himself and make his coffee. Never breakfast ,hedetested eating but one meal a day. That was enough to sustain him and keep his heart beating. He would pass the day muttering to himself and walking through the empty house surrounded by his material things that mattered naught to him now. He decided that he was an island, or rather a rock poking above the sea with the waves crashing onto him day after day, slowly but surely eroding him away into sand on a beach somewhere. His faith in humanity was long gone and anyone who tried to talk to him or visit, he sent on their way with a barrage of cursing! "Don't bother me, I'm busy!" he would scream at them. After a while no one even tried and he was left alone, the people around town saying he was crazy as a "Betsy Bug". He didn't care, he had no time for their drivel. He was oblivious to them most of the time what few ventures he made into town to pick up what meager supplies he needed. His truck sat in the driveway, the tires gone flat. He didn't care, he didn't drive it anymore. He had parked it fifteen years ago when he came home from the funeral and it had sat there ever since. The inside of the house was the same, the only things moved were in the bedroom, bath, and kitchen where he spent his time. Everything else was just as it was fifteen years ago ,just covered in more dust. No matter, wasn't being used anyway. No time for such

nonsense as that. The waves beat down and he held his ground ,slowly slipping away. No matter. Once a week he would walk to the cemetery on the other side of town. He would visit a certain grave and sit there on the grass for a while,muttering to himself, then abruptly get up and hobble back home. The kids around town were scared of him and would scatter when he came by. They would hide and throw rocks at him sometimes striking him in the back or hips. No matter. He would shout at them something unintelligible and give them the gnarled finger over his head, never stopping. He barely felt it anyway, his brain churning with activity. He didn't have time for trivial crap like that, he was too busy. His evening meal consisted of either chicken noodle soup or spaghetti-o's, one or the other for fifteen years now. Coffee was to him like water and he drank it almost continuously. It was his main expense. He burned very little electricity, he didn't use the lights anymore, and the propane tank still sat half full fueling only the pilot lights, he didn't run the heat anymore either. He scarcely felt the cold anymore and when he did he pulled up a thin ragged blanket around him. Lost in his own thoughts he was busy and didn't have time for meaningless crap as the waves beat down upon him washing a little more of himself away every day. The mailman had started leaving just the electric and gas bills as this was the only thing the old man would take out of the mailbox anyway. He watched in his mirror every day as the old man hobbled out to the box and his heart was sad for the man. He tried to make conversation several times but the old man would curse him vehemently so after a while he just stopped trying and just checked every day to make sure the old man was okay and not lying in there dead or something. He would pull down a house or two and wait to see the old man come out. He had a charitable heart and worried about the old skin flint. Twice he had his wife to make apple pies and he would leave them on the doorstep, but the next morning they would still be there and the old man ignored them. He racked his brain with ways to approach the old man but every attempt was met with the same reaction and the mailman didn't want to agitate the old man into a heart attack or anything so he quit trying and just went back to watching. One morning two young Jehovah witnesses were coming up the street as the mailman sat waiting for the old man and the mailman was curious as to how this would work out so he watched closely as they approached the old man's door and knocked. The screen above their heads blew out from the shotgun blast and the two ran for their lives. The mailman couldn't help but chuckle even though he knew it was wrong. A few minutes later the old man came out minus the shotgun and hobbled to the box like nothing had ever happened, got his mail and hobbled back. The mailman thought about it all day and discussed it with his wife when he got home from making his rounds. She pointed out that the old man might have missed accidentally and that the next time someone knocked it might not turn out so well. The mailman doubted the old man meant to shoot them or they would probably be scattered across the yard but he worried that his wife might be right so he dropped by the Sheriff's office and told one of the deputies on duty about the incident. The deputy said he would check it out and that he would give the old man the benefit of the doubt and just talk to him about it. The mailman was relieved and felt good about doing his civic duty. He went on about his rounds and then went home to his wife and waiting supper. He was in the shower when he heard his wife yelling for him to come here and watch this. He threw a towel around himself and walked to the living room where his wife was glued to the T.V. "Oh my God!" She said, tears streaming down her face. He looked to the screen and saw that the police had a house surrounded and was waiting for the SWAT team to arrive. Suddenly it sank in, it was the old man's house! He sank down in his chair and put his face in his hands. "What have I done?" he asked to no one in particular.

The old man was drinking coffee lost in his thoughts. The waves were crashing down and there was only a small piece of rock left. Someone banged on his door hard and hollered something at him. He stood up, shotgun in hand preparing to shoot the top of the door again when someone kicked in his door and ran toward him. The old man reacted and blew the deputy back onto the porch. The old man muttered and cursed, he didn't have time for this kind of foolishness! The waves crashed down washing the last little piece of rock away to become sand on a beach somewhere. The waves turned into tiny pinpoints of red light bouncing everywhere and the old man stood up,shotgun still in hand, and smiled.

Bobby W. Lee

Chance Encounter

The damp woods were silent except for the sound of crickets singing in four/four time. Nothing looked familiar, this was not his neck of the woods. He must have strayed far from his usual haunt. He rolled over and got up, brushing the damp leaves and forest loam from his scratched, scabby, and naked body. He looked at the sky, estimating it to be around 8 or 9. He hated when this happened, he had no idea of how far he had roamed or how to get back to the hollow tree he stowed his clothes in. His nose, keen as a wolf, was human now and no use to him. All he had now was human attributes other than strength, speed, and stamina so he put the latter two to work for him and trotted toward the rising sun. It was as good a direction as any.

Coming up a hill, he came out onto a two lane black top, right seemed a good choice so he trotted that way looking for a familiar sign. She came around the curve running way to fast, texting her Mom, letting her know she was headed back from her vacation in Canada. She made the curve barely and slowed a little, dividing her attention between the cell and her driving. Normally she was a lot more responsible but she was tired and driving through the wilderness for such a long time made her careless. She topped the hill glancing at the cell, when she looked up there was a naked man in the road running! "Oh Shit!" Instinct made her foot jam the brake pedal and the old Cutlass Supreme lurched sideways, rubber screaming and smoking, and began to spin around and around. He heard the full throated growl of a big block coming behind him and started veering for the white line and shoulder. He realized at the last second it was flying and at the first sound of rubber he dove into the ditch, the back end of the Cutlass barely missing him as it spun past in a cloud of blue smoke and rubber dust. It caught traction and jerked around to a stop pointing back in the direction it had come, smoke billowing past it for several yards, curlique lines of black on the asphalt trailing it's path. "Oh Shit that was close!" Looking around for something to cover himself, he jumped up and sprinted to a bush growing just off the shoulder and ripped a brushy limb off, holding it in front of him. Scrambling back up the shoulder he ran to the vehicle to check on the passenger. She sat in shock, adrenaline still coursing through her body in electric waves, face white and drawn! For a minute she didn't even realize the man was at her window, saying something. "Are you okay?" ,finally reached her ears sounding tinny and distant through the glass and roaring of blood coursing through her. He was staring at her with warm brown eyes that reminded her somewhat of her Mom's chocolate lab. She cranked down the window on the Cutlass. "What, oh I'm okay, what the hell Dude, do you always run down the middle of the road naked!" she snapped, more mad at herself than anything. "I almost creamed your ass!" Grinning sheepishly, he broke the stare looking downward and muttered, "Sorry, got drunk last night and some friends thought it would be hilarious to put me out naked in the middle of nowhere." He had used this one many times. "How far to town?" he asked. "Don't know, I'm not from around here, but I got some clothes and towels in the trunk if you're not some deranged psycho or rapist." she said meeting his eye and peering intently. Something about him made her relax her guard and after checking the Cutlass to see if it would crank, hopped out. "No, nothing like that, just your average guy a little hung over, naked and a bit hungry," he laughed with an ear splitting grin. She rummaged around in the trunk and found one of her terry cloth beach towels and tossed it to him. "Hop in and I'll give you a lift into the nearest town, if you behave I might even spring for a teeshirt and a pair of shorts." He wrapped the towel around himself and said, "Thanks, I'll pay you back." She grinned walking to the driver side of the Cutlass, "No need, if it were me in your position, I would hope you would do the same for me. It ain't every day you get to rescue a naked man in the Boonies!" His smile broadened as he got in precariously. She fired up the Cutlass and they headed down the road. The cell buzzed and she checked the text from her Mom, then called her back, explaining the situation and leaving out several details. Mom scolded her about picking up hitchhikers and made her promise to check in every fifteen minutes. "Sorry for all the trouble, my names Mike, by the way!" he apologetically offered. "Sue, no trouble." she flashed a smile at him as she spoke. She liked this soft spoken well mannered guy in spite of the odd circumstances that had thrown them together. She glanced over at him, he was cute she thought in a scruffy kind of way. Those warm brown eyes, thick head of chestnut hair, and roman nose set above full lips. He caught her looking and she blushed and looked away. Smiling to himself he studied her out of the side of his eye. Sandy blond

hair, green eyes that were mesmerizing ,perky little nose, and a slight scattering of freckles across her nose and cheeks gave her a saucy intelligent look. Eye dipping lower he noted her slim shapely figure and long muscled legs, clad in black tank top and brand name blue jean shorts, she was a vision of loveliness. She felt his gaze and blushed even more furiously!

"Morden, straight ahead,ten miles, "She proclaimed when she saw the sign. They pulled in to Morden. She drove until she found the local retailer whipping in a parking spot midway down a lane. Hopping out she leaned back in the door and said,"Medium, right ,unless you want to come in and try something on." "Uh,I think I'll just wait in the car unless you just want the attention!" he quipped. She laughed," Be back in a few." A few minutes later she showed back up with several bags in hand. "I hate to go to this retailer ,I always buy everything except what I went after!" She burst out laughing at the quizzical look that came across his face ,"Don't worry ,I remembered." and tossed him a pair ofcamo shorts and a bright yellow tee with a smiley face in black on the front ,"Just in case you decide to jog!" Mike laughed easily and hopped out pulling the shorts on under the towel .Tossing the towel into the back seat he pulled on the tee, giving her a good look at his muscular torso ."Here," she said and handed him a pair of black flops with the Velcro fasteners,"Barefoot is not the way to go unless you're at home or on the beach!" He thanked her and tried to get an address from her to mail a check, but she would have none of it. He turned to go but she called him back and asked where he lived and how far. He told her and she said,"Look, I don't ordinarily do this but seeing how I almost ran you down, let me take you to lunch and I'll drive you home." He started to decline but wanted to spend time with this fascinating woman. "Okay", he said after a moments thought, "If you'll let me pay you back for the clothes and take you to supper!" "Deal!" she exclaimed and pushed the passenger door open with her foot. They drove until they came to a little diner outside town and went in. He couldn't help but notice her beguiling back silhouette as he followed her in. They took a little table by a window. The young pregnant waitress came up and took their order of burgers and cokes. Through lunch they chit chatted about work, different movies and books, and several other topics. Mike was astounded at the things they had in common and as she paid the check and they left,he realized that this woman had him smitten, he felt like he had known her his whole life. She was having similarideas ,thinking about how intelligent and easy to talk to he was. She made a mental note to make sure he got her address and number. She checked in with her Mom and away they went headed to Mike's place. As they pulled in Mike invited her in to his small but modest home. He showed her where the bathroom was and handed her some towels and a washcloth and told her to make herself at home. When she was in the shower, he went to his study and pulled open the drawer,pulling out a stack of bills. Thinking better of it, he smiled and put them back ,grabbing the checkbook and scribbling out a check. This way, she has my number and address ,he thought. That made him thinkof his clothes and cell, stashed in the woods in the hollow tree. After her shower they sat and talked some more overcoffee ,Mike getting her phone number and home address. They took Mike's truck and went to a local place that served Greek and Italian cuisine. After supper they went to a little bar and had cocktails, enjoying onean others company. The afternoon was waning toward dark when they got back to Mikes. He began to get nervous about the approaching night. No need, after saying their goodbyes and an awkward first kiss, she climbed in the Cutlass. "The next time I see you, Mister, you best be wearing clothes! "She joked as she backed up and pulled out. Mike grinned and waved. After she left, he showered and took care of a few chores. As the sun slipped down to the horizon he slipped on a pair of blue jean shorts and headed to his tree at a slow trot. Three quarters of the way there he stopped, seeing a familiar sight through the tree line out toward the highway. Sue's Cutlass parked off the road in a little clearing beside the road. He glanced anxiously skyward but he still had just a little bit before the moon came up so he slipped quietly to the car and looked around nervously, praying nothing bad had happened. He saw movement up ahead out past the car in the woods close to the creek so he crept up. Keeping cover between him and where he saw the movement he inched forward till a sight made him almost gasp aloud! It was Sue! And for some reason she was pulling down her shorts! At first he averted his eyes thinking she was taking care of a naturecall ,but when she pulled her shirt over her head and started pulling off her bra ,curiosity got the better of him. He crouched and watched. She stripped down completely folding her clothes and undies and placing them in a bag that she pushed under the passenger seat of the Cutlass. She then locked the car and carefully placed the keys in the forkof a small tree maybe thirty yards from the Cutlass. Then she sat down on the ground. The first pains of the change

racked Mike's body and he fought mightily to keep from crying out, then horror struck him as he realized he was way too close to Sue for this to be happening. Facing away from her direction ,he jumped up and started to run to try and put distance between them Behind him she screamed "Stop!" And he ran like he had never run till the pains caught him again and he fell headlong into the dirt winded and changing, no stopping it now! He just hoped it was far enough! Agony racked him again, just a few more minutes now! Something burst out of the brush and ran up tohim ,he could feel it scrutinizing him and he sobbed as he smelt a familiar perfume. Rolling over and looking at her with his dirty tear streaked face, he squinted to focus as the first rays of the moon beamed down and washed over them. "Something about her eyes," he thought as the change came. She laughed full and throaty, then threw back her head and howled as the moonlight brightened and they changed together.

Bobby W. Lee

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Mega Data

It only took a few seconds,a little bit of static on the screen that would be explained away as a solar flare,or a camera glitch,or any one of a dozen other logical, benign explanations but what it really was, was a message. An inexplicable amount of data shot straight through your eyeballs, if you were unlucky enough to be watching, bypassing the brains natural sorting system and implanting a complicated series of instructions direct into the nucleus of your grey matter! There was no warning and there was no defense, if you were watching t.v. or on a computer, laptop, pad, or whatever, you were infected. Instantaneously with no appeal, no cure, no anything except follow the order to kill or destroy whomever or whatever was downloaded to your cerebral cortex. The bad thing was that the infection for lack of a better term, didn't take away your aversion to do evil, it simply overrode it and no matter how hard you fought it mentally, it inflicted enough pain, paranoia, or instability that it won each time, every time! You didn't even know about it till, BAM, you had done whatever was ordered! It was a global epidemic, the apocalypse had started. Panic and survival mode kicked in across the planet,society broke down into small armed pockets, almost overnight chaos took over as elected officials were killed or went into hiding though a large part of the worlds governing force was eradicated in the first onslaught. Only a small handful of people even knew what had happened. They had been watching for it and when it started they sprang into action nullifying nuclear threats, biological threats, and where they could warning key officials of imminent threat, and taking over key military establishments. It was hard not to depend on the electronic devices the world had come to use to run itself but after several of the New Order commando's lost their lives the rest of us became very adept at improvising diligently. Not doing so resulted in permanent deletion. Our New Order Society consisted of a handful of the smartest computer geeks that ever picked up a keyboard. They had stumbled across the message before it was activated by programs that guessed likely scenario's and figured probabilities. The rest of us were recruits that had enough sense to know to listen to the "smart boys." They planned the missions and we carried them out. We were a hodgepodge made up of Army Rangers, Navy Seals, CIA, FBI, and a few other agencies. This was a war we could ill afford to lose, but first we had to figure out who it was at the top of the evil we were against! We knew the cause, but the goal and who was behind it eluded even the smartest of our Brainiacs. All we could do was try to nullify as much of the threat as possible and wait for V.D.(Villain Dog our pet nickname for the unidentified culprit) to make a move. There was little way of knowing where the next threat was coming from because the enemy was anyone from anywhere, it could be anyone from a child to a little old lady. If they (anyone) showed signs of hostility, we wasted them pure and simple. Innocents were killed sometimes but there was simply no way to tell who was just just fed up and pissed off and who was a real weapon of destruction so to be fair we wasted anyone committing violence. We kept a small army busy just disposing of the dead. Not pretty,but vital to survival. Most of the time I was to tired to think or worry

about it, but the few times I did it almost made me crazy so I mentally made it into a video game to distance my mind from the horror of it, I was good at first person shooting games and before this war began would spend hours playing them on the old Xbox I had owned. That seemed ages ago though in reality it had been less than a year since the infection. You just never knew, the lab rats as we affectionately called them, just switched on. They might convulse or roll their eyes to the back of their head, or they might not do anything but get that blank no-ones home stare and then go hell for leather to complete their programmed mission. I had gotten pretty good at spotting them but I took no chances, at twenty two years old I wanted to live, badly! One of my buddies taught me a valuable lesson about survival by getting his brains blown out when he waited to long to see if a young woman was having an epileptic fit or switching on. I never waited after that, freak out around me and I blew you away, no questions asked! At first we spent most of our time defending different key positions but as we stripped the computer systems out and reverted them back to manual operations we started taking the offensive and actively hunting lab rats. Sometimes the Brainiac Boys would send us on covert sniper assignments to take out key targets, how they figured these things out I don't have a clue. I just followed my orders and trusted that these guys knew best. This was my life and till we could break this thing and destroy it whatever it was, it was going to be the only life I had. I had gotten close to a nurse for a while, she took a bullet out of my shoulder for me. She was pretty, brown hair and eyes, a body to die for, and a sweet personality. I was crazy about her. After a couple of dates we made love and I was going to ask her to move in with me but one night she switched on and tried to kill one of the Brainiac Boys. She was blown apart by machine gun fire. I bout went crazy for a while. I won't tell you her name, it still hurts to bad to talk about her. I won't say her name aloud even to this day. So here I am doing what I do, making the best of it. The other day we were at a missile silo de-activating the computer controls and a group of kids came up, I say kids (most were my age) cause I feel a lot older than I really am. Anyway they gathered up and were curious about what we were doing. My Lt tells them to fuck off, nothing to see here and all of a sudden two or three switch on at one time, we wasted the whole lot of them! This was the first time we had seen this, more than one switching on to the same agenda at the same time and place so we reported it pronto to the Brainiac Boys and did several sweeps in that area taking out all the lab rats we could find. A while back we had a close call when one of our trusted soldiers switched on and tried to take out Lt's barrack. One of the guards was alert and took him out with a superb long distance head shot just as he was rushing in Lt's barrack door. We try hard to get each others back. Most of the time we succeed, sometimes we don't like the time a little old lady with a vest full of explosives walked right up to one of our briefings and blew away several officers and some bystanders. We train hard and we're diligent, it helps keep us alive. We use radios and headsets to communicate and we've managed to accumulate aircraft from pre-computer times. As the Brainiac Boys screen and conscript more able bodies our ranks are starting to swell too. Some say this was a one shot deal, others say it is the first step in a coup, in any event we are here pissed off and ready to fight. There's a lot of things unexplained but I leave the daunting task of sorting it all out to those better qualified, my job is a lot better! It's fairly simple, take back what we can and exterminate the lab rats.

Today we are at the Pentagon, some of the Brainiac Boys are gingerly extracting information from the computer banks into printed material which is then packaged and loaded into vans sent to different New Order strongholds to be processed and deciphered. Our job is simple, guard the Brainiacs and help load the vans. We establish a routine for this taking alternating shifts between the eight of us. The day progressed without incident and we started getting ready to move it out. I walked over to an adjacent building to take a whizz and as I was zipping up a blast went off throwing me face down in the dirt several feet from where I had been standing. I immediately secured my weapon and crawled on my belly to cover, a large chunk of concrete thrown from the blast. I made it there and crawled behind it rising to a crouch and peeking around it. I couldn't see anything but some scattered debris, the smoke and dust was still to thick. I tried to hit Lt on the radio but the concussion had wrecked my radio. I waited a few seconds the took nervous peeks around toward the blast site and scanning beyond it trying to locate the hostiles but saw nothing. An eerie quiet had fallen and the only thing I could hear was the pounding of my heart in my chest, my mouth and nose was full of concrete dust with an acrid cordite taste. I blew it out and spit several times clearing most of the gritty substance. The noise of rock hitting rock grabbed my attention and I

peeked back around. Somebody was trying to crawl away from the blast site so I took a deep breath and ran in at a low crouch, weapon at the ready. It was one of the Brainiac Boys, how he had survived the blast was a mystery. He was bleeding out the ears and nose but very much alive though stunned and groggy. I grabbed the back of his coveralls and dragged him through the rubble to my spot behind the chunk of concrete. A telltale puff of dust beside me as I started around alerted me of a sniper's presence. I checked him down for injuries but other than the bleeding he seemed okay albeit stunned and groggy. I warned him about the sniper and told him to stay put as I ran to another chunk trying to draw fire and pinpoint the hostile, adrenaline surging through me. I saw the puff of dust just ahead of me and seconds later I heard the distant crack of the rifle. The sniper was out to my left so using the available cover I moved to the right in a widened circle to come around him. I knew he would be expecting this and I dropped and belly crawled back across to the left using a small drainage ditch for cover. It was risky but I could only hope the sniper was not high enough up to see me and get a shot. I would be easy pickings lying on my belly! I made it out to a stand of trees and circled in from the left. Sure enough the sniper was easing around toward the direction he thought I was coming from, using an abandoned truck for cover. I crept up to within a hundred yards of him, his back toward me. He must have thought about a counter sneak as he started to turn to look back towards my direction but it was too late. I put three rounds into his center mass and when he went down I aimed carefully and put one in his skull. It exploded in a red mist, my AK with its hot loads doing a number on him. I dropped down in place waiting to see if I drew fire but after twenty or thirty minutes I walked up and took the Browning sniper rifle and stripped the corpse of extra ammo. Still cautious I crept back to where I had left Brainiac Boy. He was sitting up behind the chunk rubbing his head still looking a little dazed. I shared a drink with him from my canteen and handed him the AK. I showed him the basics on it. We slipped out and checked the blast site for survivors but the only thing there was useless parts of weapons and scattered body parts. Not a pretty sight, I had grown close to some of those guys but there was nothing I could do for them now except live and get payback. We started out on foot, me leading and Brainiac(I didn't know his name and didn't want to) following a couple of yards behind. At first he had tried to stay beside me but I quickly squelched that notion, no sense both of us getting killed if we drew sniper fire! So a little crestfallen he brought up our rear. I pushed forward till I knew we were well away from the zone, then hunkered down and waited watching our back trail to make sure we weren't being followed. If we were they were damn good, I didn't notice anything suspicious. Luck was with us, I walked up on an old National Guard Armory and after breaking in and looking around came up with radios and headsets and five grenades. The rest of the weapons and ammo had been scavenged already, just luck I stumbled on these lying under some rubble overlooked. Leaving out we were hailed by some local vigilantes but after a brief explanation without key details(they had heard the blast) they let us pass without incident. I slid the pin back in the grenade, put it in my leg pocket and moved us out to a wooded hilltop to camp and call in a dust off.

Lt was KIA so I dialed in the Captains frequency, hit him up and giving a brief sit rep settled in and waited for dawn, the agreed time for the dust off. Breaking out some chocolate bars and jerky I shared a meal with BrainiacBoy washing it down with swigs from the canteen. The Huey came in at dawn, Cap jumped out and as they were loading Brainiac on board de-briefed me and gave me back my AK. They tossed me out a Alice pack and Cap gave me my assignment along with a 9MM Browning equipped with silencer and Pachmyer grips. I was to recon the area and give daily reports. So I saddled up with my gear and waved off Cap and the Huey and double timed it back to a shelled out building close to the Pentagon where I could observe from a distance but in good range for the sniper rifle. I inventoried the Alice pack, food, water, extra ammo, a pair of multi-purpose binoculars(night vision or daytime) a range finder, a black uniform with matching ski mask, yellow smoke grenade, red smoke grenade, and joy of joys; a half pint of Jack! Somebody loved me! I found an old canvas fold out chair across the street from the building and carried it up, I was good to go. I took a pull or two of the Jack then screwed the cap on and secured it in my breast pocket. I settled in getting comfortable in the fold out chair and started scanning the site with the glasses. Nothing stirred and nothing moved. This went on for a couple of days with me reporting in. The third day I had a new Lt to report to so I adjusted to his frequency and reported in. Still nothing, I was getting bored. After breakfast on the fourth day I had action! A beat up Chevy van pulled up a few blocks away and a tall black man, a short crew cut Russian, and an oriental woman got out and

headed over to the site on foot. I radioed in to my Lt but he told me to just observe for a bit. They milled around for a few minutes with the black man pointing and motioning at different spots. My radio crackled in my ear and my Lt excitedly told me to terminate all three, absolutely no survivors! I eased the Browning up and dialed in the scope. Putting the crosshairs right over the black man's right ear, I squeezed one off then swung and put one in the back of Ruskie's neck. Swinging back I desperately searched for the woman in the scope but couldn't find her. I leaned the rifle up and checked with the binoculars but still couldn't find her. This was turning to shit real quick! I picked up the Browning and took out the motor in the van then laid the sniper rifle down and picked up the AK running down the steps of the building and out onto the street keeping cover between me and the site. On the way I gave Lt the sit rep. He came back and told me to take out this target at all costs! Okay, you don't have to tell me twice! I zig zagged to the site keeping my eyes peeled and just as I stuck my head around a building I saw movement. I jerked my head back which saved my life. The bullet meant to take me out striking the wall where my head had just been. I dropped and stuck the AK around the corner firing a couple of rounds without putting my head out to aim. I took a deep breath and sprinted across the opening to my right sliding in beside a curb. She must have ducked back when I had fired the AK, I could see the side of her leg from my new position so I aimed and put a round in it. She dropped like a stone, her Beretta 9mm clattering out into the street. I got up keeping the business end of the AK on her and slowly approached. The grey eyes staring back at me showed no fear! I hit Lt on the headset giving my sit rep. Terminate with extreme prejudice came the order. I raised the AK taking aim. She actually smiled. My finger tightened steadily on the trigger but at the last second I backed off. There was something about her! "Give me a reason not to pull this trigger." I told her flatly. She just shrugged. "Last chance!" I told her. She gave me a look that dripped pure venom! "You people are wrecking the purity of the new world, a world without war and hate and suffering!" Somehow this kinda made sense to me, I motioned her to stay put and walked over and picked up her pistol, checked it to make sure it still worked then slung the AK over my shoulder. Holding her Beretta on her I quickly frisked her and satisfied she had no weapons I shut my headset off. "Who do you work for and what do you mean?" I quizzed her. She studied me with painful curiosity. "Let me stop this bleeding and we might talk." I cut a strip out of my shirt and tossed it to her, she made a tourniquet and wrapped it around her leg above the entrance wound. I fished around in my fanny pack and found one of the morphine needles tossing it to her. She stabbed it in and hit the plunger. Her pupils dilated as the stuff kicked in. I gave her a sip or two out of the canteen and squatted a few feet away tucking the Beretta in my waistband at my back. "What do you know already," she asked quietly. "I don't know shit!" I replied tersely. She laughed, it was beautiful and melodic. "Then you are probably better off for it then, are you sure you want to know?" she asked. "This war started a long, long time ago before we were ever born. When the Nazi invaded Europe during World War II, sacking the museums, churches and monasteries, they found an ancient scroll. It was directions for communicating with an alien race, they just didn't know it at the time. No one really knew what it was. Germany's top scientists worked on it secretly for years and when Hitler died one Nazi scientist took it and all the files with him to Sweden when he fled. There he unlocked the mystery years later and sent a message out to a distant planet. The reply came in the form of a set of directions detailing a way to communicate via computer and satellite. Information was given to this race and they developed their own way to eavesdrop on our world while we were oblivious to them other than a few mishaps (Roswell, for example) and random sighting of their spy craft. The Nazi got wind that NATO was on to his alias and was about to arrest him for war crimes so he destroyed all the evidence a few days before his arrest and took his secret to the grave leaving our world vulnerable and unsuspecting that due to his madness we had hit the top of their charts as a hostile take over with them holding all the aces. What you've been seeing is the softening up of our world for their arrival. You can't stop it and the only thing your people have accomplished is to make it a war instead of an occupation." She had said a mouthful and I sat mulling this over. "If there was no resistance, they had promised to end suffering and war and hunger, now they have to squash your resistance to be able to control the planet. You fools don't know what you've caused!" I put one between her eyes. Cutting my headset on I radioed Lt and requested a dust off. He asked if I had terminated the Tango and I affirmed. The dust off was set for dawn and I set out to pick up my gear. Damn these lab rats! I picked up my gear and weapons and humped out to the LZ to wait for my whirlybird. Now I knew what the Brainiac Boys knew, or at least the gist of it. Villain Dog had an identity now but a fat lot of good it did me. I had no face to place the

name on, just my mental image of what an alien was supposed to look like. At least I knew what I was about to be up against. My chopper came and took me back to my base. After de-briefing I stowed my gear and hit the showers. After chow I hit my bunk and sipped on my bottle of Jack till my eyes got heavy. The next few days were R &R so I put on some civvies and headed out to the beach, swimming and sunbathing while my mind processed all the implications of what the female lab rat had told me. I jogged down the beach loving the feel of the wet sand slapping against my bare feet, then swam in the salty water some more. My body was sweetly sore and my brain was so sharp it shit razors. Returning to the base I checked in with Lt and he informed me we had a briefing with the Cap at 0900 so I went to chow, showered and turned in. Tomorrow was a new day.

Bobby W. Lee

The Yellow Cat

I was fishing down by the lake in front of my house the first time I saw him, just a yellow Tom moving silently through the woods beside the lake. Nothing apparently unusual about him except he was minus a tail, occurred to meshed disappeared from sight and I went back to my fishing. Two small bass later I headed back up to the house. I put my rods and tackle bag up and took my bass out to the oak stump in the side yard where I usually clean my fish. As I worked, I looked up and noticed the yellow Tom sitting just inside the woods watching me. He looked hungry, his eyes yellow and piercing! I tossed the heads and entrails over his way and took everything to the spigot on the side of the house, washed it all (yes ladies, my hands too!)and headed in. After supper I went out on the deck to smoke and have a cup of coffee. I thought about the cat, but didn't see him anywhere; I guessed he found his way home. I laid myself down and started back reading my new vampire novel. I was a huge fan and read everything by her I could get my hands on! (I couldn't get enough!)Hell, I even went out and bought a French Press and beans and started drinking my coffee like the heroine in my book. Towards the end of the book my eyes started blurring on me and I put down the old I Pad and drifted off to sleep. I tossed and turned nightmaring about demons with yellow eyes. (No more creepy tv series before bedtime) The next morning I woke and stumbled around, making my coffee and almost breaking my prized French Press in the process. I started out the door to load the old paint van (Ford Econoline, the only way to go for a painter!) and there sitting on my deck rail was the yellow Tom. I went back in and searched but the only thing I had that a cat might be interested in eating was a pack of bologna so I split it with him, Hell a man's gotta eat too! I left to go paint and I guess the Tom found himself something to do while I was gone. The day went by fairly quick and the builder brought my check so I knocked off a little early and ran by the bank, cashed my check and went to the retail store to pick up a few things I needed. On the way to Sporting Goods I passed Pets and as an afterthought I turned back, humming a tune from the play "Cats", and picked up a case of cheap cat food and threw it in my buggy. Beggars can't be choosy, right! If I had known then what I know now, I'd have added some rat poison! But hindsight is twenty/twenty my old man used to always say. But I'm digressing, back to the gist. I rang out, headed back to the house and slapped myself on the back for being a "conscientious" man! HellPETA would be proud! Roaring out of the retail store, I cranked up the volume on some vintage Stones and let the good times roll! I was in a good mood, the bills paid, money in my

pocket, and work coming up a plenty! Life didn't get much better than this! Little did I know! I felt so good I swung into the local liquor store walked in and told Odie ,the half-crazy clerk(and a good friend)behind the counter, to give me a fifth of Jack. Hell, I could splurge once in a while! Besides, it would probably last me six months! I ran in a grocery store and picked up some Italian espresso roast beans and I was good to go! I lurched into the drive, parked the old Econoline, hauled my stuff in and put it up then went out on the porch drink in hand and fired up the grill. No cat in sight as I flame broiled my supper and sat down at the stone table on the deck to eat. What the hell I thought as I went back in for condiments and another shot. I popped open a can of cat food and set it by the back door on the deck. Can't stand to see anything go hungry! I finished up supper, cleared the dishes, and poured another shot and went back out on the deck to smoke. There he was, sitting on the deck rail pretty as you please, ol' yellow eyes himself licking his lips and giving me an odd look. I settled in one of the high back swivel chairs and nursed my drink, lighting up a Winston. We just sat there for a while, me looking at him and him looking at me. I took a long pull off my smoke and stubbed it out in the little " Welcome to Gatlinburg "ashtray I had picked up somewhere or another. I knocked out the rest of my Jack, and leaned back studying ol' yeller eyes. He looked like a verse in a Cash song," He looked at me and my blood ran cold, he was big and mean and grey and old", which pretty much summed up the situation. I had heard somewhere that whiskey gives you balls!Totally untrue, there was no way in Hell I was gonna reach over and pet that cat!! Not if I drank the whole bottle!! He looked at me like he knew what I was thinking and I swear I thought I saw him smile! My bladder and common sense finally got the best of me so I headed in and lost myself in what my heroine was up to. I don't know when I fell asleep, but once again my dreams were ravaged by a yellow eyed demon, not the cat but the real deal! Morning found me bleary eyed, hung over, and swearing off reading at night as I fixed my coffee and got ready for work. Heading outside I looked over at the empty can of cat food and replaced it with a fresh one! What can I say, I'm tender hearted. I rolled into work and managed to do a decent job for the day in spite of being tired and having a headache I blamed on the Jack. Quitting time I hurried home and showered up thinking to go fishing, but I made the mistake of sitting down in my recliner to change shoes. I must have been tired. The yellow eyed demon taunted me and laughed at me, he told me what he was going to do to me when he dragged me kicking and screaming to Hell. I couldn't run, fight, or move! I woke up still in the recliner, sweating like a whore in church, asking "Why me, why me?" Needless to say my day was rotten and I left and went home the earliest I had in ten years. I was shot out! I walked down to the lake and fished a while but nothing was hitting so I walked back disgusted." To Hell with this shit!"I thought. I took a quick shower and collapsed on the bed. Once again the demon taunted me! Going into great detail the tortures he had in store for me in Hell, he grinned and snarled! I had had enough; I was pissed, good and pissed! I pulled myself up by the bootstraps and faced him! "What the Hell do you want?!",I screamed at him! He smiled, "Let me show you something." he calmly replied, eyes blazing yellow. My mind played a scene from a movie as he killed everyone and the demon strolled away as a cat. In my mind, it was a yellow cat! And old tune by the Stones was playing in the background and I awoke to it playing from the alarm on my I Pad. I was furious; I didn't even think about it I was so mad! I just went into the bedroom and grabbed my old double barrel twelve gauge off my gun rack, loaded two buckshot in it and walked out to the deck. The old yellow Tom was sitting on the rail and as "God as my witness" he grinned. I cut loose with both barrels.As the fur and smoke settled, a funny looking yellow mist steamed up from the carcass lying in the yard. Slowly it took shape and my worst nightmare walked up to me and said "Thank you!" He was grinning from ear to ear! "Oh shit....."

Jesus Loves Bananna Nuts

As they walk me down the corridor to my last farewell,my mind goes back in time,maybe I could have done something differently, I don't know and it doesn't matter now. By the time you read this I'll be long gone but maybe it will help someone somewhere.I found out the hard way why you never look a Demon in the eye.

Two weeks before my discharge from the military I was in a club drinking with my friends celebrating the upcoming event and I got a little overboard as I had not been to chow and my stomach was empty.We drank and drank! I staggered into the bathroom to relive myself. At the urinal beside was some guy drawing weird figures on the wall with a crayon and chanting under his

breath. In the shape I was in, I didn't care what he was doing. I accidentally fell against him on the way out and he pushed me away pointing and chanting, then left. When I staggered out, he was gone, disappearing into the crowd. I joined my buddies and we drank some more. A Senior officer tried to restrain me from dancing on top of the bar and removing my uniform at which I took a grievous offense and declared an unofficial state of war on him. Needless to say, I woke up in the brig hung over and sick, and after sobering up somewhat was transferred to the Psych Ward for observation. They were kind enough to remove my restraints, seeing I was sobered up and no menace, and I flopped down in a chair next to a young officer in a straight-jacket muttering to himself in a rapid tone, to wait and see the shrink. The orderlies

were changing shifts and the one getting off duty gave the other guy the rundown," Just these two to see the Doc so far, him (nodding to me) an evaluation for drunk and disorderly, and him (the officer beside me), poor guy, was studying to be a Chaplain; he tried to read the Bible all the way through in one sitting and flipped out!" They walked away and I looked over to the young guy beside me, probably twenty one at best. His lips were moving furiously and his intelligent eyes were fixed on a spot on the adjacent wall. I strained to hear what he was saying. I made out, "Jesus loves banana nuts." He kept saying it over and over! I shifted my gaze to the Doc's plate glass observation window and tried to ignore the guy. An hour passed and the guy just kept saying it over and over in the same passionate tone. I swear his eyes positively glowed! Two hours had passed now and I was starting to worry about this guy so I turned to him and said "What's your name, sir?" All of a sudden he stopped chanting, his eyes moved first, locking mine in that awful gaze then his head swiveled toward me. I don't know what happened, but I felt like time had slipped or something and I was catching back up. I realized that he was inches from my face screaming those words at me. I instinctively jumped back, turning my chair over and falling on my back and ass. Prepared to fight for my life, I jumped to my feet! The young officer was just sitting there staring at the wall and chanting those words so fast you had to really listen to tell what he was saying. A hand dropped on my shoulder and I spun around ready to cold cock somebody, but it was only the orderly. "The Doc said for you to come in," he said with a big grin knowing he had scared the shit out of me! The Doc asked a few questions then droned on about the military's stance on hitting Superior Officers, yada, yada, yada..... then finally got to the part where the Officer wasn't pressing charges due to my good record and all and I was free to go.

He didn't have to tell me twice. I headed for the barracks, showered and raced to chow. The next few weeks went by smoothly, I got my honorable discharge and that was the end of my military service. I got an apartment in my hometown, got a job, and settled into a gravy life. Over the next year everything went great and I moved up to Assistant Manager over the Front End. I bought a new truck and got engaged to my sweetheart who was an Asst. Mgr. at another store. Life was great!

We had had a real good week, the store was doing great, I came home watched a little T.V., then trundled off to bed after calling my sweetie. Around midnight I woke up sweating and words going round and round in my head, Jesus Loves Banana Nuts! They wouldn't stop! I went downstairs and flipped on the Tube but couldn't concentrate for the racket going on in my brain. I tried everything, I cut the stereo up loud on rock, nope, tried earbuds, nope, cut the stereo up all the way and the T.V. with it, Nope! I stuffed cotton in my ears and took aspirin, nope! Finally I gave up and just listened, the volume of the words eventually decreased to a bearable level and I finally drifted off to sleep for a few hours. I awoke that morning and laid there thinking about that poor young officer I had met in the ward. It was my three days off so I didn't have to be anywhere. It was tough thinking with those words revolving around in the background of my mind continuously but I managed it. The more I thought about it the more I realized the poor guy was trying to tell me something, so I dissected the event over and over and over! Everything before the fight a blank. This went on all day and I fell asleep that night mentally exhausted from worrying about it. The next day was no better and I repeated the routine. My last off day came and still I was no closer to the answer. I exhaustedly went to bed that night. Around midnight I woke again with a startling realization, I wasn't supposed to figure it out, I was supposed to pass it on! And with that the words blasted out in my head like a dam had broken! They were so loud and so fast I could barely hear. I don't know how I managed to get

ready and go to work, but somehow I did it. After futilely trying to take care of my area, I gave up and went to the Managers office in the back and laid my head on the desk. The racket was deafening and I felt my sanity slipping! Mike, the Co.Mgr. on duty came in and asked if I felt okay. I raised my head to tell him "No, not at all," but when I opened my mouth, "Jesus Loves Bananna Nuts" was all that would come out! I screamed it over and over! He didn't say anything else, just stared at me for a few minutes. "We're going to get you some help," he said finally, picking up the phone and calling HR. (Human Resources) "I have a problem here with one of my managers," he said never taking his eyes off me. I couldn't take it any more, I was screaming at the top of my lungs, Jesus Loves Bananna Nuts, and bashed in his skull with my chair. Some associate had the good sense to lock me in the office by locking a chain on the handle and securing it to a steel post, I ranted and raved! I was still screaming an hour later when SWAT took me out in zip ties. At the hospital, they shot me full of something and I fell into a drugged sleep. When I came to in my cell later, those words screaming in my brain, a small thought wormed its way past the cacaphony, it stuck for a moment long enough for my mind to grab it.... maybe I misunderstood what the young officer was trying to say..... the words stopped.....!

Bobby W. Lee

08/23/2012

THE PATH

Frank walked down to the path leading through the woods to the small dock on the lake in front of his house. The doctor had told him to walk regularly to help his failing heart. At 73 he had a few years left in him if he could lick this heart thing. He had quit smoking a few years back and only drank occasionally. With a little luck he'd have a few more years with Betty, his second wife of ten years.

She was a sweet-natured woman, quick with a laugh and a wonderful cook and Frank knew he was lucky to have her. They had met in Gatlinburg, Tennessee while both on a getaway vacation. Fate saw that they had adjoining rooms and they found each other in the lobby of the motel over the continental breakfast.

Betty had struck up a conversation with him about the native Americans and they became inseparable. Six months later they became man and wife. Frank had taken out extra insurance to make sure she was taken care of if worse came to worse. He passed the dock with its narrow walkway leading to a small platform for fishing and started around the cove making sure to skirt the mud and stay close to the edge of the woods. From somewhere came the plaintive howl of a dog or coyote and the hair on the back of Frank's neck stood up. A short distance later he ran out of dry ground and turned back. Hands in his pockets and head down against the now chilly breeze Frank trudged on. As he got close to the walkway he instinctively looked toward the platform. At first he thought it was a child, but as he came closer he realized it was a young woman squatting on the dock soaking wet, water running from her hair and dress. She looked cold and was pale as alabaster. "Are you okay ma'am?" Frank asked as he hurried out to the platform pulling off his tan Members

Only jacket to cover her with. "Something's not right here!" Frank thought.

Betty was putting cornbread in the oven as Frank went out to walk, "Don't be gone long, supper will be ready in about thirty minutes," she called to his backside. "I won't, love you!" came the answer. "Love you more!" Betty hollered back. She bustled about the kitchen, seasoning her cabbage and checking on the meatloaf. The cat came in from wherever cats hide when they don't want to be found and rubbed against her legs meowing loudly till she finally looked in the pantry and got him a can of cat chow. She opened it and as she bent to sit it down she noticed the front door ajar. "That man, he'd forget his butt if I wasn't here to remind him!" she chuckled. Walking back to the kitchen to check on things, she noticed the cat was gone but left most of his food. "Not so hungry after all, huh!" she thought. Then she heard Frank's voice croaking from the bedroom, "Betty, Betty!" "Oh my God he's having a heart attack," she thought and she flew to the bedroom. Somewhere in the distance a dog or coyote howled.

The Path part 2

She was hungry, starving, the need for sustenance burning like a hot flame. It had been two nights since she last fed and she had wandered far from her usual territory. She covered ground in an easy lope, zigging and zagging through the underbrush, her eyes made for the night time. A pale moon hung over the treetops lighting her way. Nostrils flaring, she kept the wind in her face as she hunted. A faint thread of scent tickled her nostrils and she veered instinctively for it. Game, she could smell it now and unerringly picked up the trail. There, straight ahead. It was across the lake so she swam across to the small wooden platform and squatted to catch the low breeze blowing across the lake promising game. There it was, headed straight for her so she froze till it was close enough then leaped up and caught it by the throat. The blood was warm and nourishing but not nearly enough to sustain her so she circled till her keen nose picked up the quarry's back track and followed it. Game rarely ran far by itself. Coming at last to the house, she let herself in, stole to the bedroom where there was the least chance of the game getting a weapon and mimicking Frank's voice perfectly croaked "Betty, Betty!" Somewhere in the distance a dog or coyote howled.

Bobby W Lee. 08/22/2012

The Path part 3

I'm going to take you on a journey, if you want to go, but let me warn you; the path is twisted and dark. Stay close for evil things are waiting if you stray. Your mind must be open if you want to travel this road, few come back with their sanity intact. Don't be afraid, heh heh, I'll be just ahead. Say your prayers or whatever comforts you when faced with things you can't explain and follow me. What, you're not sure about this? The choice is yours and yours alone, it's your mind after all! Make the choice, I'm leaving.

Oh good, you decided to follow. Well, well, I underestimated your bravery, my deepest apologies! Come on then, the first stop is just ahead....

"Mommy, can I go play in the yard?" Elizabeth was eight years old and energetic, forever playing with her dolls and staging elaborate tea parties and camping trips for Barbie and Ken to

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