

Glorious Compilation

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The Beach

by Billy Risby

My grandparents own a cabin on the ocean. It's on a secluded sandy beach, and when the tide's just right, the water rolls back for a kilometer, revealing a perfect sandy beach. My definition of perfect, and your definition of perfect might differ slightly, but anyone would agree that this beach was great. Pure, grey sand with tide pools and rock clusters. It was teeming with life.

Every summer, my family would go up there for a week, and my cousin and I would spend all day searching the tide pools, looking for the next great biological discovery. Hermit crabs, oysters, clams, shrimp, little fish, weird things that hung from the bottom of the big rocks. We thought we'd seen all this beach had to offer, but every year we seemed to find something new.

The last year I saw my cousin, we had both decided, for the millionth time that there was nothing new to be found on the beach. Then, striding down the lowest lowtide shoreline we'd seen in years, he stepped on a gooey duck. I laughed at the shocked look on his face as it sprayed him in the legs. Our eyes locked. The gooey ducks!

We had been stepping on them since we were babies, but we'd never actually caught one. Sure, we'd tried, but to be honest, I was never convinced it was actually possible to catch one. They were like unicorns. You could grab the tongue, hold as hard as you can, but it always gets away. This time, however, we would be more careful.

We dug carefully around where the tongue broke the surface of the sand, until we had a deep trench surrounding it. Whap! I grabbed the tongue with one hand, and started digging with the other. My cousin joined in, and soon, we'd dug deeper than ever before. It was a long, hard fight, but eventually, we got it.

I pulled up the gooey duck from the damp depths beneath the sand and threw it upon the beach. It was a giant clam. Giant, but still just a clam.

'Wow' I said as I looked over at my cousin. 'now we've seen everything there is to see on this beach.'

'There has to be more, beyond the beach I mean,' he said, as he stared out towards the watery horizon.

He just looked at me and nodded. We both knew it was true this time. I watched as he waded out into the calm ocean, then, looking back at me, dove into the water and swam away.

She Gives Me The Fear

by Hertzan Chimera

Tuesday 14: She has poisoned me again.

Of course I have never written a single story in my life, but tonight, I thought, just to be on the safe side, I would start to chronicle what might be my last days on planet Ergot. That's what killed the first settlers to this fine isle, you know, in Pocahontas time, the ergot, the poison of bread, the breaker of the staff of life.

That's what I would call the bitch if I didn't love her so much.

But how she gives me the fear. Any time of the day or night, if I let down the guard, I get it right in the middle of my mind like a sleazy betacam plugged right into the nerve centres of panic and dread. Her horror show of beauty. Makes me sweat just to think of her potential to allure, if there is such a verb.

We met thirteen years ago before I was a broken necked invalid in some hospital. Car crash of sickness with her starring as some garish whore wanking me furiously. She was killed outright and I survived, physioed back to health and never forgot the dead look on her face. The cloudy fluid leaking out of her torn right eyeball. The badly broken jawbone sticking out of her soft downy cheek. That face, that beautiful face, her beautiful face, almost disengaged from the reality of its wounds, is behind every torn back curtain or jerked open door. Every snatch of reflection in the mirror is filtered by her broken visage such that I cannot breathe.

I didn't even get her name. Just wanted a soft silk palming in the furious fast lane of every new millennium; the new designer drug of every cheap thrill seeker.

She comes at me with a loaded gun and chases me through the choking streets of claustrophobia, I cannot scream, the release won't come. Won't come.

Friday 17: Love the taste of my knee.

This is the only thing that quiets the fear to sit in my boxer shorts late into the night with the WalkMan on full belt, licking my knee in a foetus of comfort in the centre of the draughty hallway. People stepping over me, sucking their teeth in disgust. Listen to the wind as it trails pamphlets for the Night on the Right Side of Hell. A club she would have been a regular at. I can't get therapy, for Chrissake, I am alone in this caper.

Maybe tonight, she will forget my name, my mobile number, her ram wiped by some accident in a car, her face smashed into the windscreen a broken neck of airbag explosion at the height of my ecstasy. The damp undergarments of eternity.

An axe swings in from down the chill corridor, remember that chrome ball of doom that drills your brains out so you fall in a shrivelled mass of nought on the cold marble floor? There she stands, her cape of lambs leather lifting in the Hollywood breeze. Her steel heals. Her eyes without a face.

She has me in a neck lock before I can scramble to my feet. What have I done to deserve this? I ask her without making a sound. The words never come. Never Come.

Saturday 18: Chained to her lust.

Raped time after time would be a stupid statement; once you are raped, you are always raped. The vomit never ends. And as she leans in for just one more round, deep gashes all over my body plunged into like a sicko would split an American Pie. The most brutal of foes, nostalgia.

Where am I now? Grand Central Station in some stinking pit of filth near the mens toilets just dropped in for tea, the vicar pipe organed. When is she gonna let me die, just let me fall away from her grasp and be sucked down onto concrete by the drag of grav? Wind in my hair as I look down into the well. Thirty seven stories of remorse zipping up at the speed of vertigo.

No one picks me up off the sidewalk as my brains trickle out of my flattened skull. The loneliness, the sheer isolation of death sends a spiral helix of fear through my

nervous system. Reanimated like the zombie I have become, I chase through streets tearing out throats with my teeth, my eyes roll like milk in yolk buckets. Watch me stagger stupidly towards you, a clash of teeth with virgin skin and I am sated for a few more nights.

Saturday 25: A night on the wrong side of hell.

My forehead is the shape of an axe. I have been headbutting the wall all night in memory of her soft beauty, her silk of smiles, her lacquer hands like chinese dolls of purest handiwork. Her surface will never crack. Will never run dry. She slits my throat at the bar and my words spill out onto the bar, splattering the barman who asks security to get me the hell outta there. Wrong idea, pal. I am the fearless, the unhauntable. The uncrackable. I take out my cheap dirty gun and drill some holes in him. Behind me, Julia, for that is the name I have given my sorrow, cradles me, her calfskin glove wrapped around mine. Her finger curling mine around the rusty trigger.

We are one finally, this Julia who gives me the fear.

Nutboy and Crazygirl oiling together in a slaking mass of murder and degradation. Just think back to all the times we had eaten each others faeces, drank each others dread, broken fingers of stupid innocent victims of our playtime in the playground. The memory is unbearable sometimes.

But Julia understands.

THE END

Shirt

by Fiberglass

Luke was wearing a different shirt that day. I realized this immediately because for as long as I had known him, day after day for seven years, he had always worn the same shirt. I decided to let him know that I had noticed the change.

'You're wearing a different shirt today, Luke.'

'Yes.'

'It's nice.'

'Thank you.'

'Where'd you get it?'

He brushed his hair out of his face and scratched his left eyebrow before answering.
'From some guy I found floating in the river.'

'Some guy floating in the river?'

'Yep. I was sitting in my apartment, leafing through Principia Mathematica, and I noticed an unusual smell coming from the air conditioner. I looked in the pan underneath it and found traces of blood mixed in with the water. I opened the back panel and found about seven feet of human intestine and a piece of paper with a note on it.'

'What did the note say?'

'You know that stone bridge in the woods next to the outboard motor warehouse?'

'Yeah.'

'Well, it told me to go there and look into the river. After looking around for a bit, I saw something trapped in a mass of branches next to the shore. It was a man who had apparently been stabbed or something.'

'And you took his shirt?'

'He didnt seem to need it anymore. Since there was no will present, I conducted my own hearing and determined that he had bequeathed it to me.'

'Anything else?'

'Well, there was a soggy twenty in his wallet, which I dried out and used to purchase cigarettes, potted meat, saltines, and an air freshener. I would have taken his shoes, too, but they werent my size.'

'What about the pants?'

'Oh, they were a horrible plaid, completely unsalvageable.'

'Thats a shame. I hope that if I ever get murdered and tossed into a river, the perpetrator has the decency to make sure Im wearing stylish pants.'

'Indeed.'