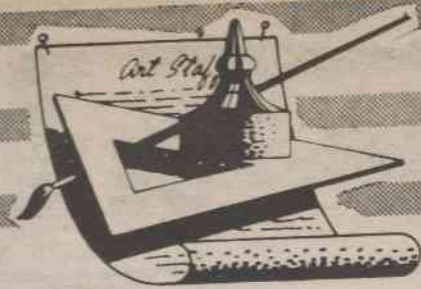


As i 'twere



George Moore

by z.m. bunch

It would always be at or around midnight, always hot (I'd be broiling in cotten baby-dolls);

I would feel more than hear it because that motor was so heavy that it would rattle my mirror.

Daddy and Mommy would be in bed and say (Always simultaneously), "It's George."

I would be the first to the kitchen window to yell, "Uncle George!"

before he blew that distinct cusion horn on his hot-mustard Coupe de Ville. Daddy would go outside in swim trunks (that's what he slept in),

wrestle the wheelchair out of the back seat

("Dammit George, why don't you just leave one here?"),

and that happy pot-roast of a man would hoist himself into it.

"Just thinkin' 'bout y'all an' thought I'd cruise on down."

Mom would bring the Seagram's V.O. from the bedroom closet,

that nobody drank in the summertime--except him.

I made up the bed with the orange and yellow flowered sheets (he had an almost-fetish for yellow).

And after he was in bed I would sit in his wheelchair and we would talk-- always about the same things-- last year's school, ballet recitals, water-skiing injuries, my current boy-friends....

Once when I was little, I told him I wanted a chair like his

and wasn't it nice to sit all the time, he thought it was so funny; and said no, it wasn't.

He let me take a sip of his V.O.-and-orange juice when I was six and I swore I got drunk.

He patted Grandma's behind on the Fourth of July; she dumped potato salad on his lap (by mistake), and slapped his face (on purpose) and everybody howled. Most of all, him.

He taught me to play solitaire when I was twelve.

He wired six pink roses when I danced in "Punch and Judy."

He died last year.

He ran off the street in Richmond and hit a tree.

I didn't cry.

But all this summer I waited to feel that heavy motor and hear my mirror rattle.

Fritz

by z. m. bunch

I would have named him "Morris" but he was the wrong color

The ornery sonofabitch. I rescued him from being used as a surrogate soccer ball.

Soft-headed me, I took him to my dorm room and that was that.

He could've shown some gratitude!

I fed him potato chips and chicken noodle soup until I bought cat food.

He looked about grown to me, so I skipped kitten chow

The glut ate TWO small cans a day and FOUR POUNDS of cat chow a week.

Promptly at seven a.m. every day-he knew

no weekend - I was slapped into the awareness of a feline famished.

If he had to slap twice, the claws came out.

Thus Fritz trained me. I was constantly in his way--

....excuse me Fritz excuse me Fritz excuse me Fritz....

And he thought he was King of Siam.

Neither the King nor I was immune to fleas.

At the vet's Fritz didn't acknowledge the doctor's

presence - save a scalding glare in

answer to the doctor's peering

at his teeth.

"What in hell do you feed this thing?"

"Cat food! - and chicken noodle soup."

"Are you aware that this cat weighs seven pounds?"

I beamed. "Yes sir."

"At four months?"

I died.

I considered everything from escaped tiger cub to genetic mutation.

But he really was just a baby - slightly oversized.

Oh boy.

Fritz is three years old now - A yard long from nose to tail-tip and weighs

twenty-five pounds. And still thinks he's King of Siam, the ornery sonofabitch.

Take a Moment

by jeannie rutledge

Take a moment to stop and see

if your being what you want yourself to be-

Have you given more and expected less-smiled through a frown-made yourself feel up when you're down?

Have you made a goal and kept it-Relied on "me" instead of "YOU"-.

Lived each day through, and then some more-Take a moment to stop and see-Then say, I believe in me!

Secret thoughts to a Secret Friend

by mjk

Into my life you come
Bringing peace to my heart
Fire to my body
Love to my soul.

In your eyes I see myself
Feeling, reaching, looking
For perfect harmony.

August 1968

by z. m. bunch

I still go sometimes to a pine-needle-carpeted ridge To look on that sandy, shaded spot where the "big boys'" canoes lay racked upon wooden saw-horses ten years ago.

smaller than the rest, but hard and lean, a seventeen-year-old man.

My oldest brother was one of those boys;

onto the river and paddle-race to the wharf-

That gang would screech and whoop into their small crafts,

where bulge-eyed bikinied girls would pretend to swoon over the oiled arms,

Each monkey-man would pluck a wharf-wench into his canoe, paddle around, and return her to her giggling bevy.

But when my eldest brother Butch would only tie up and sit-- whenever the water was calm and so was he--

Word would spread like the waves that weren't there and picknicking families would drift to shore's edge to wait,

Today was a show-Sunday and that crazy-assed guy and stupid kid were at it again.

They'd hear the hum, honk, and roaring splash as I ripped out of the channel;

A ten year-old on knees in the driver's seat of a speedboat, ponytail cracking like a bullwhip in the headwind,

I'd up-throttle and toss him his ski and rope and he'd wink.

Down-throttle-- he'd rise like Clyde

and skirt my wake as a flying fish;

Wave when turns whipped his broadside, And no matter how many times we did it,

Take my stomach with one-eighty degrees hand changes.

For these crystal moments, he was all mine and beldame Perquimans'.

Back to shore, to the beach blanket beauties.

He winked again, I retrieved the rope and ski, and down-throttled to the channel; leaving the beldame blazing behind to monitor Butch and his pier-pets.

I docked the boat at home and walked to the canoe-horses and cried because his boat was still at the wharf.

I skipped a mussel shell on the river ripples thrice and wished quickly before the husk sank.

When the sand scrunched behind me I turned.

With the special smile, Butch chucked my chin and piggy-backed me home to watch the baseball game.

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