

## Target Practice

"No, really. How many times were you wounded back in the war?"

"Two, maybe three times, wasn't nothin'." Alan lifted his half-filled glass to his lips with a trembling hand. He continued to stare forward, afraid that this enthusiastic questioner might see too much of his face.

"Wasn't nothin'? Like Hell! Where'd you get it?"

"Oh... places." Alan said patiently. He spoke up. "Uh, what did you say your name was?"

"I didn't. The name is Rick. Well, what

### Liturgy of Oogenesis

You shoved lilies in my face  
mumbled your name  
while wiping your feet  
your champagne  
was as warm and soothing  
as pabulum  
on 440 A strung nerves  
discarding your eyes  
I dove directly  
for the hair of your chest  
you laughed when I politely asked if  
I could grab onto it  
at least I was polite  
when you began shaking with sweat  
and singing the corporeal cantata  
I knew my end was near  
soon to metamorphose into  
(one of those)  
a cold  
sticky  
sheet-stain  
in grey-snoring aftermath  
listening to my heartbeat  
I politely requested of god  
that there be only one...  
to each ra-thum ra-thum  
he responded  
a quiet, Antiphonal hiss in my ear  
what if? what if?

by Lori Stephens

### Tourist trap

He sat by the road with his box  
With a large sign that read "please look!"  
He had many teeth, and a grin like a fox.  
"Too crafty," I thought. He reads me like a book.

Believe me, said he

This is something  
That you gotta see.  
Just between you and me  
It's a sight unseen anywhere  
that you'd care to name.  
This man had me  
I was playing his game.

"How much?" I inquired.

Just for a look? said he.  
I nodded. I felt tired.  
Ten bucks. He was done with his book.

I gave him his money  
I took the box  
I removed the lid  
And flung it into space  
The man was there no more  
Inside the box was a mirror  
And there was my face  
I guess I'd never seen it before.

by John Chandler

kind of places?"

Damn it, Alan thought. I'm going to have to tell that bartender to keep his mouth shut.

"What is it to you?"

"Well, I just wanted to know. You see I wanted to go, but my parents made me stay in college instead. ...What's it like being shot? Did you ever shoot anybody? What's it like to shoot somebody?"

Alan's throat went dry. He took another big gulp from his quickly emptying glass. "What's it to you?"

"I'd really like to know what it's like. Does it hurt? Did you pass out? Did you think you were going to die?"

Alan twisted his barstool away from these probing questions and walked over to the jukebox. He pretended to decide what to play — he hoped the man would give up. A few seconds later, in the glass of the jukebox, Alan saw the man get up and approach him from behind.

"Hey you limp a little bit. That from the war?"

"Nah... hurt myself when I was a kid." He looked down at his foot — he could still remember carefully aiming the rifle and pulling the trigger. He could feel his stomach burning.

"Really? With a limp like that, how'd you get through?" the man said derisively. "I don't think you were ever over there!"

Alan turned to reveal a face grotesquely contorted with anger. "Hey, Man! You want to see what it fucking feels like to get shot? You want to see what it fucking feels like to have all the people around you blown to pieces?" Alan reached inside his jacket and felt for the handle of a gun.

Everyone looked up at Alan with building eyes. The little man froze, then like a frightened deer, dashed out the door overturning empty chairs in the wake.

by Mark Sutton

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