

Todd McCoy is 37, but the only part of him that shows it is his eyes. Under his big shirts and baggy jeans, he is thin. If someone hugged him, they would feel shoulder blades and maybe a rib or two. But not many people hug Todd. Summer or winter, Todd wears two pairs of socks and long-sleeved shirts. The socks keep him warm. The long sleeves hide the tracks on his arms and the bony elbows that seem too big for his pale, wiry arms. He still has good teeth, even after all the drugs. Once in a while, his smile flashes white under his dark mustache, but not too often. His blue-black hair is just starting to thin, but it is still soft and shiny. Dark shadow covers his jawline, even when he shaves every day.

Not many people work harder than Todd does lately. When his muscles ache and sweat runs into his eyes, his demons leave him alone, at least for a while. He likes feeding the chickens on the farm where he stays now. After he gathers the big, brown eggs, he carefully counts them and washes each one before he puts them in the cooler. Todd stays away from the shop out behind the house. He doesn't like to work on the cars out there. The smells of gas and oil, paint and fiberglass, give him a headache. The fumes remind him of the city and all the trouble he had there. He would rather dig in the garden, or cut the damp-smelling grass.

The small farm he stays at now is starting to feel like home. It's been a long time since Todd had a home. The

jails, cheap hotel rooms, and sometimes even the streets he's occupied for the last 12 years don't count. Neither does the room in the basement, with the concrete floors and wall, that his father let him stay in. Todd's last real home had been with his mother in Springfield, a historical home filled with the scent of gingerbread and fresh lemons. But that stopped feeling like home the day she let the truant officers drag him back to school when he was 12. He came home because he felt bad and wanted his mom. The officers chased him down, and the fat, sweaty one tackled him. Then the fat one and the one with the rat face each grabbed one of Todd's arms and let him away like he was a criminal, their hard fingers biting into his flesh. His mother just watched from the porch. The big, mint-green house with the wraparound porch stopped really being his home the day he sold his mother's silver. She had never forgiven him for letting them melt down all the tiny, silver baby spoons she treasured. They'd been passed down for many generations; now they were gone forever. He was 16 when he took them. He never had said "I'm sorry." He wasn't sure if he was or not.

Now, at the farm, everyone tells him he's part of the family, even the children. He eats at their table with them; they watch TV together. Todd even has his own bedroom with blue carpet and flowered curtains. It is on the same floor as all the other bedrooms. Todd has arranged his few possessions proudly. The room came with a bed and dresser. On the dresser are his two favorite boxes. One is small, black-lacquered, with mother-of-pearl

flowers on the top and sides. Inside, he keeps his little address book, filled with the name of everyone he's ever known - mostly dealers, or "boosters," from whom he bought whatever he needed while he was on the streets. Next to the little black box is a larger one, made of aromatic cedar, a decoupage hunt scene on its lid. He keeps his best sunglasses and his lighter in this one. The wonderful scent seems to get stronger as years pass.

Next to his bed are two apple crates he uses for shelves. On one are various cigar boxes of cardboard and wood, bearing names like Partagas and Joya de Nicaragua. Below these are smaller, metal cigarette tins, Chesterfield and Old Gold. The second crate holds his baseball hats and a pretty, brass, antique lamp. At the foot of his bed is his box of tools, a nice set he bought from a "booster" for only 10 dollars. Maybe here at the farm he'll have a use for them.

On the walls of his room, Todd has hung bright bandanas. These have strips of leather embossed with names like Jalisco, Colina, and Nayarit, and flags of Mexico in colors of red, white, and green. The bandanas all have silky green fringe on their lower edges. Todd likes to stroke the fringe, sometimes letting it strike his cheek, to soothe him. He lays on his bed and dreams of Mexico, of sun, laughter, dark-haired women. All his life that warm country has called to him. But lately he's started to feel happy and peaceful. The farm has laughter and sometimes sun, and right now Todd has found he wants a home even more than he wants a dark-haired woman.

Susan Davenport

JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT !!

Ten simple words in a line to start this cause.

Why? There's no reason but to just do it,

And make nothing of value fit a design.

So far, so good, don't you think?

But I can't forget to have

Five in the middle line,

And then make sure

The last line

Ends with

One!

By Van A. Zallee

Life On Sugarmelt Lane

Winter wonder lights
and melan tulip sky

don't hinder crazy truckers
truckin' right on by,

below, they are people,

white yettis and the sort
save energy for safety home

from odd ass winter air

Savor good the nice bright lights

and pass away the care

care to do a thing

move a muscle drive a car

wreak havoc little boy

drug up Uncle Rick,

skeadaddle up the hill

and get good and frozen sick

Deliver ice hits in the face

and pee right in the street

Melt, melt de parous chap

because life is right for me.

White house tops, white rain crystal clear

drops of halo washings, fall down but never care.

Lay sparkly hair, lips frozen, stiffy about the knee

parking lots and flower pots

have stopped the busy breeze

nice ice, in the sky

cramping up the lanes

stop life stop today

give me a break

shave away the chairs

and freeze this town,

white

ice

along this rainy, rippling, raging city,

claim its people as losers for a day

a lazy good-for-nothing day

but you drift on down and lay with me

and watch the sugar melt

Christopher Haberman



Take note.

This is few. Dig all. Stop not.
Push on. Listen well. Spread
good. Do sooner. Skip none.
Use caution. Take care. Enjoy
now. Think.



RHAPSODY

Many thank go out to oodles of folks, too numerous to mention. Thank for being a part of my universe. I would be nowhere without you. Thanks especially if you are reading this. Thank to Shea, the Greek God, SFSCA, various familial figures, and my cats. May the bluebird of happiness aid you in your journey. May the Bird of Paradise fly up your nose. Now, reread the above lines until you memorize them. Please. Thank. By the way, Chad was the principle creative force behind this edition, so I, Cori the Useless, say Danke. Check ya later. Oh yeah, drop E-mail to CCCPrint@clackamas.cc.or.us

~Chad Pattenon & Cori Kargel
Co-Rhapsodors

