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'In a dark time the eye begins to see'
~THEODORE ROETHKE

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SCARVES OF MASS DISTRIBUTION

WORDS & TOONS BY DALE FLOWERS



A curious thing happened to me the other day. While rummaging about Ross's clearance rack, I noticed a familiar face; I don't mean *familiar* in the common acquaintance sense, but in a most unusual sense. I had to stare over the clearance rack to confirm my disbelief. I studied his profile until absolutely sure it was *him* — Donald Rumsfeld. Finally no longer able to resist, I approached with a hesitation created by the force of this powerful man. Past the discounted socks, and the St. John's Bay shirts, I approached. "Excuse me," I said, "But aren't you Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld?" It was an awkward introduction, worse than trying to decide if the reduced price of a name brand was a really good price.

"Why yes," he said shifting his gaze from a pair of Dockers. "But call me Donald." This of course immediately set me at ease. By his simple gesture and his benevolent eyes, I was able to feel my approach was not an intrusion.

"You know," I said, "I've really been curious about that whole Iraqi thing. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions about it?"

"Not at all," he said, a benevolent twinkle in his eyes, now accompanied with a slight smile that said *welcome*.

"Well...those weapons of mass destruction that no one seems to be able to find, how do you explain that?"

"Look," he said stretching his arms out, "Ross has a multitude of items, wouldn't you say?"

"Of course," I nodded in agreement.

"And from our vantage point," he said nodding at the rack of Dockers separating us, "We can see the sales rack, the sock display, and the special on BVDs — correct?"

"Uh huh."

"But," he raised his hand in the air and gestured forcefully with his index, "Do you see scarves?"

"Scarves?"

"Yes, scarves. Remembering Ross is a big place, with varied articles of clothing throughout. But do you see any scarves?" I glanced around frantically trying to spot a single scarf but couldn't. "Well..." he said feigning impatience.

"I — I don't see any scarves," I said barely concealing my anxiety.

"But this is Ross's!" Again he flung out his arms. "You mean to tell me there are no scarves in this place?"

"There must be scarves somewhere," I said nervously.

"Exactly, they gotta have them somewhere." He placed his hands on his hips, looked straight into my eyes and asked, "So what does that tell you about Iraq?"

"Iraq has scarves," I said with an awkward shift.

"Not scarves," he emphasized, "WMDs — weapons of mass destruction."

"Oh I see," I said excitedly. "Just because you can't find something, doesn't mean it's not there."

"Exactly."

"Just like when I couldn't find double-ply at Fred Meyers didn't mean they were out."

"Now you're cookin'."

"And just because someone professes their innocence is no reason not to assume they're guilty."

"Now you're thinking like an attorney general," he said cheerfully. I could see why this man worked for the government.

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