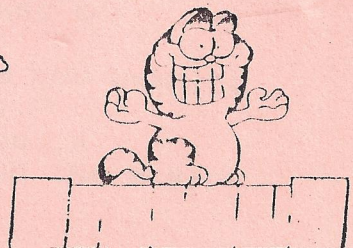
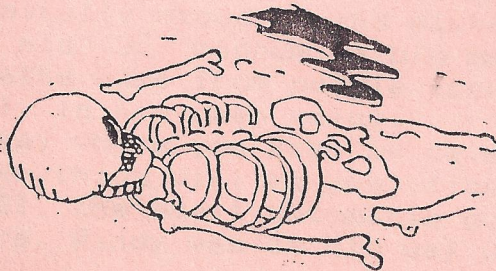
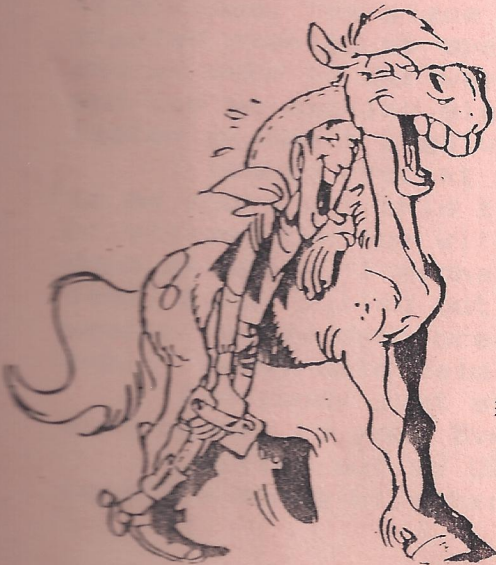
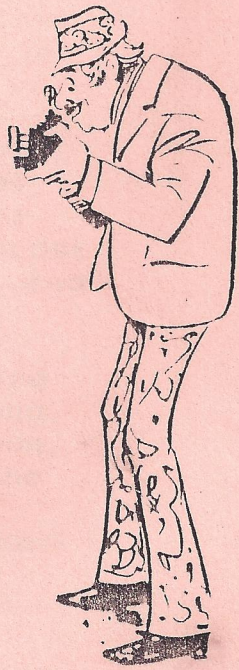
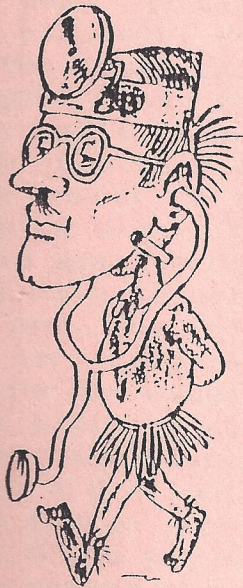
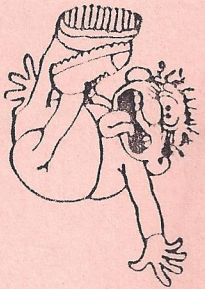
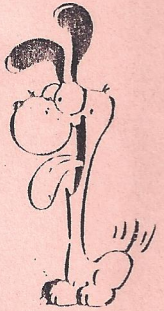
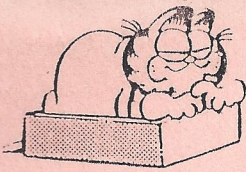


Beth

SURGERY

Short Stories



Hijack

SCOT WILLSON

Flight 272 for Japan now boarding at gate 13. The loudspeaker blared in my ears as I rushed through the crowded airport terminal. Thoughts of worry rushed through my head. If only the security guards hadn't seen something suspicious in Randy's bag. I hope they didn't see the gun. I finally got to boarding gate 13, I showed the lady my pass and went quickly through the walkway and onto the plane. I found my seat in the first class section. It happened to be an aisle seat. I sat for a long time watching for Randy to board the plane, hoping he would get on safely without too many more problems. Everything had gone so smoothly until the security guard saw something suspicious in Randy's bag. It was Randy's idea to do this in the first place. We were both a little short on cash so he decided to do this.

"It'll be easy" he had said. "They always give hijackers what they want nowadays. We just get on, tell them what we want, collect the loot, and jump off. Simple."

"Yeah, right" I had said "but what if they catch us?"

"Naw, they won't catch us."

So now I'm into this and I can't back out.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw Randy board the plane. At least he didn't get caught. I saw Randy nod to me when he took his seat across the aisle from me. I nodded back. Why did I have to get into this? Oh well, I guess I can't back out now. The thing that scared me most was that Randy could be very cold hearted. He wouldn't hesitate to shoot someone who was causing trouble for him.

I felt the familiar nudge as the airplane moved away from the walkway, and started it's taxi out to the runway.

"Welcome aboard flight 272 to Japan's international airport. Please fasten your seatbelts and extinguish all cigarettes. Would you please direct your attention up front while our stewardesses show you some of the safety features aboard this aircraft. Thank you."

After the stewardesses finished their safety techniques, the plane rolled out onto the main runway and started picking up speed. The plane lifted off the ground, and we were on our way. My ears started popping very soon, and the no smoking sign went off. A few minutes later the fasten seatbelt sign went off too.

I looked over at Randy after a few minutes, he nodded to me again but this time he stood up and picked up his briefcase, the one with the gun in it. A cold chill went down my spine, I mechanically stood up and picked up my case. Randy pulled out his .357 magnum, a big mean looking weapon. A few deep breaths came from people around our cabin. Randy said calmly in his deep voice,

"Everybody just stay where you are, be calm and nothing will happen to you. Everything will be just fine."

I pulled out my UZI, the small automatic gun, a favorite among hijackers. Randy was on his way up the stairs

to the cockpit. I just stayed down and tried to keep everybody under control. A man started to stand up but I kicked him back into his seat.

"Don't even think about it or I'll blow you away next time." I patted the gun as I said it.

Randy then came down from the cockpit. He was dragging a pilot down by the neck. He was talking to him quietly in his ear. The pilot was ashen faced and just kept nodding to everything that Randy was saying to him. Randy said aloud to me,

"They are going to land in West Germany and they will give us the money. A man will be waiting at the airport for us so we can get away."

I nodded and smiled quietly to myself. Maybe everything was going to be alright after all. Wow, all that money. I've never even seen that much money in my whole life.

All of a sudden a man started to get up and run at Randy. Randy raised the gun and shot him, twice right in the head. As the man hit the floor, the pale matter that used to be his brains leaked all over the floor. I thought I was going to be sick. I slowly turned around and walked into the other cabin.

People were in a panic when I came into the other cabin. Everybody stared at me wide eyed when I walked in. Maybe they were expecting me to shoot them. They had probably heard the two shots fired from the other cabin.

"What are you staring at?" I yelled at the first person I saw as I walked in.

I walked through the aisles looking at all of those frightened people. I heard more shouting coming from the other cabin. It was Randy, but I couldn't comprehend the words anymore. Three more shots were fired each in rapid succession. There was the muffled thump of another body hitting the floor. I went into the food storage part of the plane and pulled out a Coca-Cola.

From the back part of the plane I heard the crying of a small child. I went and found the child and yelled right in its face.

"Shut up kid!"

The mother said "Please sir, my son has to go to the bathroom."

"Ok, let him go, but hurry up."

"Thank you, sir"

I didn't even look back to acknowledge that I understood her. I just walked mindlessly around the plane. I walked into the First Class compartment. Randy wasn't there. There were two other bodies on the ground. There was the sweet smell of blood as I walked in. I heard Randy coming down the stairs. There was a strange glow in his eyes. He said to me,

"We will be landing in a few minutes. Sit down in a seat."

I said o.k. and sat down and put on my seatbelt. The plane made its slow descent to the airport. My ears popped a couple of times. I swallowed hard to make the clogging in my

ears go away. I could see the green countryside out the window. Then the gray strip came rushing up beneath us. We touched down. It was a pretty rough landing, but I guess the pilot was nervous. The plane finally slowed down and taxied around for a while and came to halt.

We sat on the plane for a long while, the engines still burning. Randy stood up and walked up to the cockpit. I just sat there staring blankly out the window. After a few minutes Randy came back down.

"Let's go," he said.

One of the pilots was opening the big door. When it was open, I looked out into the bright sunshine, there were metal stairs leading out of the plane. Randy stepped out first, I was right behind him. There was the crack of a gun shot from the distance, blood spattered onto my face. Randy fell back into my arms, dead.

I dropped Randy and ran back inside the plane, now what do I do? The dream about all that money was gone, gone with Randy. I didn't want to hurt these people as Randy had. I decided there was only one last thing I could do, run for it. I went over to the door and peeked out, no one there. I took one last long deep breath and ran out the door. As soon as I stepped into the bright sunshine I noticed that I was extremely hot. Sweat was pouring down my face. Then I heard the crack of gunshots, bullets whized by my head. I started running down the stairs, I fired blindly into the field. Bullets nearly missed my head. I was at the bottom of the stairs, I continued running across the airstrip, into the blinding heat. I saw nothing, I just kept running mindlessly, firing my weapon. There was a new sound now, a thud, it happened again, and again. There was a cool trickle down the side of my head. I suddenly felt like I was falling, it was a nice feeling the hot air moving slowly by my face. I finally hit the ground, the nice, cool ground. I was away from everything, the bullets, the guns, and oh, the heat. Yes the heat, I would never be hot again.

Trip to the Desert

Reason.

"Hey, Let's go to the desert!" Charles said. We were looking at a map and we found city a called Tamarraset. That city was in the middle of the sahara desert in Algeria. Since, I met him in Cairo, I have never forgotten him. He was so slim and tall, and he spoke the Queen's English. He was in Cairo, he was teaching English at the British Council. I met him there and at the moment we were at Charles house in London. He really likes the desert and he has a reason to like the desert and he has a reason to like desert, he never gave me an answer and became quiet. So, I didn't ask any more and we started talking about other things, I feel it is tabou to ask why he likes the desert.

Equipment.

We started to talk about our equipment, He said we needed to go to the desert so, I decided to ride my motorcycle a Yamaha RD 400 and Charles got new BSA Gold star, (that is made in THE UNITED KINGDOM) Each motorcycle had side bags, we could put food and spare parts and tools in. Then, on the back of the seat, there was a sleeping bag. On the petrol tank there was another bag for maps and cameras. The water and petrol are the most important things in the desert, so, we put the luggage rack behind the back seat. Then a 25 litre gerry can for petrol and a tank for the water. We got the gear from a garage, so that was no problem for equipment...

London-Marseille.

April 18th about eight O'clock, we started on our way to Marseille. First, we left the suburbs of London and then refilled with petrol, checked the oil level, battery water, level. We left the station really quick. About two hours later, we rode in to Dover. Then we went to a car ferry agency and bought tickets to Calix. Then we took the ferry to Calix. Inside of the ship, We bought a bottle of Glenfiddich whiskey at a tax free shop. It costed 15 UK pounds!

In about three hours, we arrived in France. France has nice buildings, food, and women. Yes, we know that it is really dangerous to ride motorcycles and look at beautiful women at same time. When we reached to the interchange in Calix, we started to ride our motorcycle as if we were racing... The average speed, from Calix to Marseille. We went to a one star hotel, it costed 70 francs a night. It was expensive for us! (70 francs = \$11,6)

The next morning we ate breakfast. but then breakfast was not much compared to a British breakfast, French style

breakfast is much lighter than the British breakfast. We thought the we could eat on the boat, so we left the hotel and went to the boat. The ferry cost for one person £30. Well... that sounded expensive ,but if you calculate, the twenty four hours in the boat and the food, and, bed, it wasn't much.

ALGERIA.

About ten o'clock we saw the port of Algeria, which looks like an old french city. (Algeria was colonised by the French).

It took us a lot of time to get our visa, Yellow card and our banknotes inspected. Every thing inside of the tank and even inside of the tire, was inspected. It sounded like we were bringing some illegal things into the port!

It took us five hours to get out of customs.

That day the Hotel made us mad, because there were showing (CUMPLI) this mean, no room, government pays them so they never work...if you wanted a room you had to talk to the front clerk and pay little tips..It shows that money is stronger than any thing, even in communist country.

Any how, we got a room. The room had a shower, so I tried to take a shower, but there was no water. I called the front desk and they said, "You didn't know, in this country, there is a water pipe line made by the French, and the government never changes or repairs them! So there is only water from twelve o'clock to three o'clock, that it!" He smiled....well.....we were surprised at this.

After that the front desk said "You better not turn on the water for cleaning your motorcycle, if you do that, they take your licence away and your visa!" We said, oveserves "I know, water is really, really, important in Algeria but the city is not a desert...Algeria is Communist and that's the answer to every things.

Algeri-El ghorea.

Next morning, at six, Charles and I checked all the important parts of our motorcycles and both motorcycle's were low on oil, so we put oil in.

Then we went south to El ghorea. The road were paved, so, that it was really comfortable for us, except, sometimes when sand, stone, and camels are block the road.

The Atlas mountans was like china, Austria, the cous, green....

that showing good part of colonised country.

But when we crossed the road, there was about 500km of desert ahead of, no mountains, nothing, on the ground except clear one line of road and pure blue sky and the deadly desert. Riders have to be tough psychologically, because if your mind is not strong enough, you will go to the other world.

We brought walkman to keep us awake.

Each hour and half hour, We changed cassette tapes and checked petroleum inside of the tank. On the way from the Algeria to the El Ghorea, we saw a thousand of car crash. The town was like a small oasis, but the hotel was worse than the capital of Algeria.

El Ghorea-tamanraset

Next morning, I woke up the sound by Charles voice. "HEY HELP HELP!" I looked at him, and on the blanket, there was a scorpion.

I smiled at him and I grabbed the tail of the scorpion and said, "Here is your friend!"

We started to the El Ghorea at nine O'clock. We put the scorpion was in the grass! On the way to tamanraset, it was like some kind of rally.

We had to see the map and decide the way to tamanraset. The Middle of the way Charles toled me . "My old friend died in this area about ten years ago, we were really young and we didn't have any equipment to bring with. Our car was broke, down and no water and no food..WE lost our mind, and went to sleep. It was a long sweet sleep.....When I woke up by the Algerian Army they toled me, "My friend was dead."

I understand the meaning of this trip. I was either going to die or to arrive but to arrive would be the most difficult.

YOSHITARO ONO

Pigeon's Gold.

"I shall remember to feed the pigeons," promised Jeff. He didn't want to make his mother sad. He knew how much she worked each day for food and clothing for the family. When his father did not have any work, she worked from early morning to late at night.

"Thank you for lunch," said Jeff. He stood up and walked over to the kitchen and washed his things. Then he took the bag full of old bread and some pigeon food and ascended up the kitchen stairs to the rooms in the attic.

It was always so dark and lonely up there. It smelled of trapped air all the time. In one of the corners was the room in which Jeff's dad kept pigeons. Jeff's dad did not take care of the pigeons any longer because he had just got a good job as a waiter in a fine restaurant and he did not want to lose it. When he came home late at night, he was too tired to feed the pigeons, so now Jeff took care of it.

Bam! Jeff almost fell over something big and dark. What could it be? A big suitcase. Where could it have come from? And what was in it? Jeff tried to lift it but it was too heavy. Who would put it here? Nobody ever came up here, except Jeff when he had to feed the pigeons.

Wait! Didn't he hear a sound? Yes, there was something! Jeff listened. Somebody was coming up. Oh, it was just one of the neighbors. No, not in the middle of the summer and in this heat. Jeff decided that he would move - just to be on the safe side. He opened up the door to the pigeon's room and went inside. The pigeons were hungry and they tried to take the bread away from him.

"Shhh," said Jeff to them. His heart was beating with excitement.

Through the door he could just see three shapes, three men. They talked now and then, but he couldn't hear what they said. His heart started to beat louder and he thought it would drown the silence around him.

Now he could see them better but still he didn't recognize the faces. They were all dragging around the suitcases and boxes on the floor. Now he could hear them open a door and close it again. Jeff stood still for a moment. When he was sure that the men were gone, he started to breathe again.

Jeff started to feed the pigeons. When he finished, he wanted to go out but he couldn't. Jeff started to pull in the

door but futilely for no use. It was locked! Suddenly Jeff felt a cold fear within himself. What if he couldn't get out? The thought of this made him even more scared and the fear was at its boiling point.

"Help! Help!" He screamed.

"Hello," said a voice.

"Yes," answered Jeff and jumped up. "It's me, Jeff. I'm in in the pigeon's room! Somebody locked me in."

"Hi, Jeff," said Chris who was Jeff's best friend.

"I was going to feed the pigeons and there were these three men who locked me in. Am I glad to see you!" said Jeff. After a while Chris got Jeff out and they both went over to Chris's place.

While sitting in the kitchen, Jeff got an idea.

"The three men locked another lock in the attic. I heard it. They have probably locked stolen goods in one of the rooms," explained Jeff. "I think I know where it is. Let's go! We are are going to solve the mystery."

"One for all and all for one," screamed Chris, while they both ran down the stairs and across the street.

As the two boys went around the corner, they suddenly made a jerky stop. They had almost tripped over three men. One of the men grabbed Jeff and shook him.

"Can't you see where you are going?"

"Ow, let go, man," said Jeff.

Then one of the other men said something and the man holding Jeff dropped him. Then he went over and talked with the two other men. While they talked, they looked after Chris and Jeff as they ran down the street.

As they came further down the street, they heard a newspaperman.

"Read all about the gold robbery! The Police have no evidence whatsoever!"

"I would like one," said Jeff.

"Why did you buy one?" asked Chris.

"I wanted to read about the gold robbery. You know there is a reward."

About teen minutes later they went over to Jeff's building. Jeff motioned Chris to follow him and opened the door.

Chris followed him. Silently, like mice, they went up the stairs, all the way to the attic where Jeff had been trapped.

"I bet that I know where the stolen goods are," whispered Jeff.

"Shhh," said Chris. They went silently on.

The three men were standing in front of a shop. One of them said, "Come on, fellows."

The three men walked over to Jeff's building. "Lets go up

the back way," said one of the men.

Jeff opened the door to the attic and waved to Chris to follow him.

"I heard them lock the door here," whispered Jeff.

"This must be it. Look there is a new lock on the door!"

"That's the suitcase that I almost fell over, and the two smaller suitcases and the boxes are the ones that the men were dragging around."

"Should we give the police a hint?" asked Chris.

"Shhh," said Jeff. "Wasn't that a sound?"

Chris nodded.

The two boys pressed themselves into a dark corner and listened.

"I really didn't hear anything," said Chris.

"Maybe it's just the pigeons," said Jeff.

"We must have a plan," mumbled Chris.

"I have one already," answered Jeff.

"Now listen to this..." Jeff started to explain Chris what his plan was.

"That's great," laughed Chris.

"Come. Let's go. We must hurry."

After a while the three men came slowly and heavily up the stairs. The two boys stood pressed in a corner not moving a muscle.

"They are coming now," whispered Chris in a scared voice.

"Ready! whispered Jeff. "But not a sound!"

They saw the three shapes come flooding over the floor like ghosts on a cold December night.

The man reached for the lock which was placed in the door to the stolen gold.

"What!" He almost screamed it out. "It's open, the lock is gone!"

"The suitcases are still here," said the smallest one.

"Let's check if there is still something in them."

The men jumped into the room and took the heaviest suitcase.

"No, it's still full, but let's check to be sure."

At the same time they heard a loud click behind them.

The three men turned around with the speed of light and saw the heavy door closed behind them. Outside the door stood the two boys, one with a hammer, another one with the spoiled lock.

"That's how you catch pigeons or should I say pigeon's gold in the attic?" said Jeff laughing.

"I am going to kill you!" said one of the men.

"Maybe in another pigeon life," said Chris.

Now they heard footsteps on the stairs and they saw Jeff's dad and the police.

"I hope we are on time. I just did what you told me to do," said Jeff's dad.

"You are right on time. Just let the police handle it from

here," answered Chris and Jeff with big smiles on their faces. They had every reason for smiling, for a reward was waiting at the station to be picked up. They certainly deserved it.

THE CALL

Amina

"....but mother she's getting better now, believe me." said the man with the beautiful aquiline nose.

"Well, you had better be careful. You should have settled down and married a nice and intelligent woman." said the mother.

"Mother, I really think that I can deal with my own affairs, but thank you anyhow for the advice, but this matter happens to concern me and my wife only."

Well then, if that's the way you want it, then that's surely the way you're going to get it! After nine months of carrying you in my stomach, this is what I end up with, an extremely independent and conceted son. Well my dear son you can just go to hell." said the man's mother with an unconstrained amount of sarcasm.

"Mother, I really haveto go. You know how costly telephone calls are, and I really can't afford it. So goodbye my dear and affectionate parent."

"What do you mean by goodbye? If you can afford to buy that psychotic bitch of yours a wwhole new wardrobe of designers lingerie, then you can sure as hell afford to talk with your poor tired and aging mother!"

The man can no longer control his emotions. They have become too strong and overwhelming. As he stares of into space, tears cut paths on his cheeks. His eyes seem to be drained of all life, as though emptiness lurks behind them. But still, the tears continue to make paths.

"Hello, Hello, Hello, Hello" says his mother in a rapid series.

"Yes I hear you." answers her son in a defeated and frustrated tone of voice.

On the other end he hears the voice of a young woman conversing with his mother.

"Hold on one minute, someone has come to get my autograph. Isn't it ravishing. You just don't know what reassurance fans can give you. Hold on dear. I'll be right back with you." the mother says to her son. As he waits he listens to the conversation on the other end of the line.

"Mrs. Steinham, I really think it's time for your medicine." says the woman with the young voice.

"What medicine are you talking about? Now come on dear, do you want my autograph or"

"Mrs. Steinham, it's really time for your medicine and anyhow you'll get achance to talk to your son next week." said the woman.

"What are you talking about? Get away from me! Just go away. Disappear! Do whatever, but just go away. In the name of the lord, what do you want from me? I hate you all!" says the old woman in a hysterical voice. A voice that you cannot forget, no matter how hard you try. It's a voice of dispair and insanity.

The woman with the youthful voice gets hold of the receiver. "Mr. Steinham could you call back another time.

Were very sorry, but it seems that your mother's neurosis isn't reciding. So goodday, Mr. Steinham."

The man puts the receiver on the hook, but still his eyes are as cold as stone, motionless. It's as if he's contemplating the secrets of the universe and trying to read the invisible writing. People come and go, but still no response. He continues to just stare and stare."

Dozica

The Fighting Horse

It was a sad morning in fall. The wind was blowing, carrying yellow and red leaves. They stopped moving when there was a wall or a tree to prevent them from moving, but eventually the wind would blow again and this time it would succeed in moving the leaves. It was not raining even though gray clouds were in the sky. It seemed more like different color of the roof above. There was no sign of birds, but people suspected that they should still be there, for it was not cold but only cool.

Fields were empty and they looked nude without people working in them. Small houses were scattered around, and from quite a few of them the smoke was rising from their chimneys. The only unusual thing about the whole village was an unfamiliar sound combining with the wind which made the whole village peaceful.

The sound was coming from the rather big house and it went on without pausing. It was the sound of a piano produced by a boy trying to calm himself. His mother was getting ready to take him to the doctor, and the boy took that time to forget about his pain which had appeared during last month. He had not spoken about it until yesterday, for he was scared, really scared, of the pain. He had a feeling that the pain was very dangerous and he wanted to get away from it, but it was still there, above the left eye, deep under the skin.

His mother stopped him in a middle of a song by calling him to move from the chair and start going. He could refuse his mother, but the politeness that she had taught him guided him and he arose. The melody was still in his mind as he started for the door without finishing the song.

They went out of the house to the garage and his mother took the red BMW out. She motioned him to sit down next to her. He sat down and closed the open window. His mother told him to switch on the radio, but he ignored her. His thoughts were in Canada where his father was on business. He would be home tomorrow morning. "Just how big, but small distance was there between Colorado and Canada," thought the boy.

Now they were going past the fields. The boy looked through the window and saw a horse running through the fields. The horse was alone. The boy wished that he could be that free, running when he felt like it and sleeping when he felt like it. But he could not get away from the pain. Whatever he did he realized he would never be alone but with the pain always following him.

They arrived at the clinic at about 10 o'clock. The atmosphere was very alive and the boy could not keep up with it. His mother was an old patient of his doctor, so the boy did not have to wait for his turn. Instead he knocked on the door and quietly went in.

The boy's name was Richard. It was the same Richard who started playing piano when he was two years old. It was the same Richard who painted pictures since his fifth year, and the one who was the physician the first time he opened the physics book. He was an only child, but not a spoiled one as you might think. He had many friends and was one who would have helped everybody if he could. You might

think that he was showing off, but he was far from that, as far as the sun is from the earth.

His mother and father were proud of him and they did not let him to do as he pleased, for he would not be what he was today. They made him decide himself what it was he wanted to do.

Richard came out of the doctor's room. He was pale and walked automatically, just like a machine. His mother rushed toward him and asked him what was wrong, but he did not hear her. The only words coming out of his mouth were "no! no! I don't want to die!".

His mother did not know what to do. She wanted to speak to the doctor, but how could she leave Richard alone? She took Richard's hand and pulled him toward the exit. They went running toward the car, and when both of them were sitting in it, the mother tried to return Richard back to reality.

Richard was calmer now, but still pale. He was telling his mother the exact words he heard from the doctor a while ago. He had a cancer. It was not one removable by an operation, the hopeful one, but the killing one which takes all the happiness from a human heart and locks it in an empty box throwing the key in a great abyss.

His mother for once went mute. She wanted to speak but the words would not come out of her mouth. She turned on the car and started driving.

They were passing through the green fields again and Richard saw the same horse again. It was not running any more, but eating the grass near the tree to which it was tied with a rope. It looked in car's direction as they passed by, and its eyes met Richard's. The horse had sad eyes but they were full of life.

This struck Richard. It made him think for the first time since he heard the doctor's words. True, he was going to become blind and probably death would follow then, but should he wait for the blindness and the death feeling pity for himself and allowing others to feel sorry for him? No, he was not going to do that. Wasn't the sickness enough to put up with? Did he really need people feeling sorry for him and making his life miserable? No, he did not want sadness in the last moment of his life, but he wanted happiness, excitement, and love. That was the hardest decision he ever made.

Next morning his father arrived. He was struck by the news and it took him some time to recover. Then he kissed Richard and hugged him. He immediately started speaking, though, asking Richard what he would like to have, where would he like to go, how much money he needed... Richard drew back from his father and told him that he had everything he needed except one thing and that thing could not be bought, had, or gone to. But he politely thanked his father and told him that he did not want people feeling sorry for him.

Next day Richard went to the party he was invited to. He was dancing all the time, telling jokes, and laughing with the rest of the people. He also met a nice girl whom he wanted to take to the picnic on the weekend. He not only took her to the picnic, but to the movies and dinner. He had many friends often at his house and they listened to music, laughed and had fun together.

But most of all he liked sitting and playing the piano or driving through the fields and watching the same horse he first saw on the day he discovered his illness. The horse was tied to the tree whenever

Richard went, but still it had hope in its sad eyes. The horse was becoming weaker and weaker every day, but he was fighting for his life. Richard noticed that.

After a month of the wild life Richard had, he woke up one morning to find out that he could not clearly see the time on the clock on the wall opposite him. He knew what it meant: he was going blind.

But still his life continued with the same effort and he continued playing piano with his fingers trying to get the right note. The horse was still there when Richard passed through the fields with his mother driving the car. He could not see the horse, but he could hear it, its breathing still full of life.

A second month passed and Richard was becoming weaker and weaker. He did not know how long was left until his death, but he knew that it was coming soon.

One morning, as usual, Richard's mother went to the Richard's room to wake him up and take him to the breakfast. She opened the door and started calling him, but he did not answer. The only thing she could hear was the heavy breathing.

She quickly rushed to him and yelled to her husband to call the doctor. But Richard stopped her with a weak "no" and she understood why. Ten minutes later Richard died peacefully with his mother's arms around his neck.

That night the horse slept and it never awakened again.

The Unknown Flight

The airport was very busy at 12 noon. Jerid and Dill stepped out of the taxi, dragging their luggage to the front of the terminal. The noise of the jets taking off and landing made them sick.

They were both very good friends who decided to spend their vacation in Jakarta, Indonesia. They were both in high school together and in college they lived in the same dorm. They were more like brothers than friends.

The airport was very hot. The central cooling system was out. Everyone was draining sweat. Dill and Jerid were originally Americans but they were using their British passport. In Jakarta it was more convenient to use the British passport than the American passport.

The time was around 1:45 when Dill and Jerid boarded the Indonesian Airlines boeing 757. The jet was nice and cool inside with a nice scent. They were led by a stewardess to their seats. Both of them sat down a little nervous.

The jet started to roll down the runway with its engines roaring like an angry beast. The plane was full of people.

When they were in the air for around 15 minutes and the seat belt sign was off, people began to chat and talk with each other. They were unconscious of a man who was in a business suit and was carrying a briefcase.

The man had kept his newspaper in front of his face from the time the jet took off. He was tall with large hands and a thin face. His tie was neatly done and his handkerchief was neatly placed in his pocket.

Dill and Jerid were playing a game of cards when suddenly the man rose from his seat and pulled out an automatic A.M.S gun.

The people began to panic. Some of them fainted. One little boy of about seven began to cry in fear. Two old people suddenly began to shiver as if freezing from coldness.

The man said that all of the passengers would survive if his demand of ten million dollars is granted by the World Bank. He said that he is part of an International terrorist movement code named as the Clu Clux Clan.

Then the man slowly began to approach the cockpit and ordered the pilot to remain calm. The man told the pilot that he wants to go to Beirut.

Meanwhile, Dill and Jerid were very quiet. Both of them were thinking about how to get out of the fiasco. Jerid was not feeling well. He wished he never came on this flight.

The plane was approaching Beirut. The pilot asked permission from the control tower if the jet could land. The tower gave their permission. The jet landed and stood at the end of the runway. The pilot was explaining to the control tower about the situation on the plane.

The pilot gave the tower the information about how much fuel the jet needs and also food and drinking water. Soon after ten minutes a convoy of trucks supplied with the refreshments approached the plane. The hijacker told the stewardess to open the door. Then the supply men delivered the food through the stewardess.

After that the hijacker ordered the pilot to fly the plane to Cuba. The plane slowly approached the runway. The Beirut control tower gave permission to the pilot to take off. The jet was on its way to Cuba.

Back in Arizona both Dill and Jerid's parents were terrified when they listened to the sudden announcement on T.V. about flight 154 of Indonesian Airlines being hijacked. They phoned the airport in Arizona but the airport officials gave no further details.

The jet was flying at only 1175 feet above sea level. The hijacker had earlier ordered the pilot to fly as low as possible to escape the radar scanners and the beacon stations.

Dill and Jerid were very quietly whispering to each other about what to do. Dill estimated from looking out of the window that they were flying at around 1500 to 1700 feet. Dill was telling Jerid that they could jump out of the plane since the air pressure outside the jet would not be too much.

They slowly pulled out their life preservers and without letting anyone seeing them, slowly put them on and crawled from their seats to the nearest door.

With a jerk Dill shoved the door open and down went Jerid and then Dill. Four other people who saw them escape tried to also jump down but they were unfortunate for the hijacker saw them trying to escape and shot all four of them.

Without a parachute or anything to slow down their fast descend into the Atlantic Ocean, Dill and Jerid felt they were going to die. Jerid fell in the water with a mighty splash and then Dill. The water was ice cold and both of them began to shiver. Their life preservers helped them stay up for the waves were bouncing them like a cork bottle in the water.

The jet almost reached Cuba. Suddenly an engine burst into flames. The jet was swaying from side to side like a ship in a storm.

The people began to panic. Little kids began to cry and some people began to move around. The pilot tried to calm the people down but it was no use. Then the hijacker fired his gun in the air.

The people became absolutely dumb. The hijacker said that he could destroy the whole plane if the people don't shut up. The little kids cryings turned into tiny sobs.

The people did not know of their fate for the burning jet collided with a big hill on one of the islands. The jet lightened up like a fireworks display showing all the colors.

Everyone in the jet was killed. The burning remains of the jet slowly disintegrated until no trace of the crash was left.

Dill and Jerid were exhausted from swimming and trying to stay afloat in the water. They have been in the water for over 12 hours. The water in the Atlantic is not safe at all.. There are many sharks that eat human flesh.

Dill had fainted and Jerid was almost dead when out in the distance Jerid spots a boat. He quickly started to yell to it for help and he took off his life preserver and waved it in the air. The captain of the boat saw Jerid waving the life preserver and ordered 4 men to go in the life boat to rescue Jerid and Dill.

When both Dill and Jerid were rescued the captain asked them how they got in the waters of the Atlantic. They told everything about the hijacking and of their escape. The captain was very pleased. He said that he could drop them at New York harbour where they could go on to their destination.

When Dill and Jerid got to to New York they got a lift on a truck which was heading west to Arizona. After a long drive they finally got to Arizona. They then decided to phone their parents to pick them up.

When their parents answered the phone they could not believe what they were hearing. Just an hour ago they heard on the television news that the jet was missing and everyone had perished. Their parents came and picked up their kids and then happily drove home.

No one knows what happened to Flight 154 of Indonesian Airlines, no one that is except for us and the dead.

by Amer Naqui

Creative Writing

Abir Lehet
May 25, 198

A Bad Day for Beginnings

It was a hot, sultry day. The sun was a glaring disc in the sky, a nemesis punishing everyone but the flies who gloried in its heat. They were gathered in swarms, covering everything and everyone with a thick black coating. The dust rose in lazy swirls with each passing car. It was the kind of dust that lodges in hair, eyes, nose and throat and once it is there, it is there to stay no matter how often one coughs it out or wipes it away.

The few people with enough courage to roam the streets had wet handkerchiefs pressed to their foreheads or papers to fan with in their hands. The only sounds were the buzzing of the flies and the slow scuffling of tired feet. No voices could be heard for it was a day of dry throats and little conversation. Occasionally, the cheerful tinkle of bells could be heard as shop doors opened and closed but the sound seemed anomalous to the passers-by. The puddles along the pavement seemed to sizzle softly in the heat until one approached and discovered they were only illusions.

It was a day for raw nerves and ready anger; a day of impatience, irritation and little tolerance. It was not a good day for beginnings. Nevertheless, it was the day providence chose for the beginning of this story.

At about noon on this day the door of the most sombre and ominous building along Main Street was opened. It was a metal door, heavy on its hinges and badly in need of an oiling. Above it hung a sign that had once read "COUNTY JAIL" before it lost several of its letters.

Out of this door came a young man in his early thirties. There was nothing particularly striking about him, except perhaps his eyes and the fact that they had not seen the sun for nine years. It was not the appearance of his eyes that might cause people to take a second look for they were average eyes, small, brown and slightly myopic. Rather, it was the expression in them: a strange mixture of despair and hope warring with one another. The hardened cynic and the romantic dreamer who fervently believes in happy endings were looking out of the same pair of eyes, both hoping that the dreamer would triumph in the end.

He was a tall, lean man with sunken cheeks and an unhealthy pallor to his skin. He stood squinting into the sun until the glare grew too strong for him and he had to turn away. The

Creative Writing

bright light left little colored spots dancing before his eyes and he waited until they cleared away before taking stock of the street around him.

The heat had taken its toll and there were fewer people coming and going. His trial had taken place on a miserable day like this. He could still see the jury fanning their faces and wiping the rivulets of sweat from their temples. "The jury has reached a verdict of guilty." The words still rang in his mind. Nine years....

He shook himself. No use thinking of the past. There was a future before him - a beginning, although this was not a good day for beginnings.

Walking along the street his mind drifted off to another beginning all those years ago.... "I now pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss the bride." Ah, yes and what a bride she had been! Only an hour before he had had a long talk with his father.

"Don't be a fool, my boy," his father had said. "So she's pretty. I'll admit that much but it's not enough. There's got to be more. You've heard all those stories about her. She's bad deep down. I can feel it. There's still time to back out. Come on, let's call it off."

It was not the first time his father had said those words but he hadn't listened. In those days the cynic had not yet been born within him. The dreamer expected the world to be rosy with so much faith that he never tried to make it so. He had been firm in his belief that everything would work out by itself and at that moment his happiness had known no bounds.

It lasted three whole weeks, the best in his life, then the fights began. At first they were little arguments over nothing. Then it began to get serious. She was never in the house when he came home; she was seeing other men and she was not ashamed to admit it. The tension continued to build between them until one night as he was walking home from the bank where he worked he saw her strolling arm-in-arm with a well-dressed man, both of them somewhat drunk. He never knew how he managed to get himself home that night or how he stopped himself from confronting her right then and there.

It did not take him long to arrive home but she did not come until one o'clock. By then his anger had had enough time to come to a boil. Her cheeks were flushed and she was in high spirits, unconcerned that he had seen her. She listened calmly to all he said but did not respond. This only served to make him more agitated. The smugness of her expression angered him to the point where he found himself involuntarily raising his arm to slap her. He stopped himself in midair, shocked at himself, and without another word turned on his heel and strode out of the house. He walked aimlessly up and down the streets trying to

Creative Writing

quiet the tumult within himself. The cynic was taking his first breath.

He walked until a bright sign above a bar attracted his attention. He stepped in with every intention of drinking himself into a stupor. He was halfway there when the bar door swung open and two men came in. He recognized one of them as the well-dressed gentleman who had been walking arm-in-arm with his wife. He felt his hackles rise and grabbed the edge of the table.

They sat down and ordered beers. He could hear only snatches of the conversation. The first one was saying, "But what about her husband?" The other chuckled, a deep, throaty sound.

"He deserves it for having the stupidity to marry a slut like that. She says he's out of town, the poor fool," he said.

There was the sound of breaking glass. The "poor fool" stood there holding half a liquor bottle by the neck, its jagged edges gleaming.

"He's not out of town anymore, you-"

"Hey, watch where you're going!"

"I beg your pardon, ma'am. Here, I'll pick those up for you," he said, bending over to retrieve the groceries he had just knocked out of the lady's hands.

He had told himself not to think of that night a thousand times but his mind constantly drifted back to it. 'That part of your life is over,' said the dreamer. 'It's time to turn a new page and start afresh.'

He would find a job and a house to live in. He would forget the past. He decided to go back to the bank and try his luck but when the manager recognized him he scowled and said, "This bank does not employ murderers."

'It doesn't matter,' said the dreamer. 'You can't always win the first time.' The cynic merely shrugged and said, 'It won't be any different the second time.' In the end the dreamer won. Maybe he should try for a physical job where the employers would not be so picky but the only answer he got was "This is no place for jailbirds, mister. Find yourself someplace else."

Yes, it was a bad day for beginnings. In the heat and dirt everyone was already impatient. There was no room in their hearts for reformed criminals. On another day, perhaps, but not on this one.

He continued to search until the sun set over the horizon. His feet were sore and bloody, his shoes torn in several places. The grime was caked on his face in layers except where the trickling sweat had left a white trail behind. The darkness set in and with it a light rain that turned the dust into mud.

Exhausted, he sat down on a bench to rest his tired feet. He had not been there long before a police officer came by. He

Creative Writing

took one look at the sweaty patches on the man's clothes and his tattered shoes and ordered him off the bench. "These seats were meant for decent people not vagabonds and the likes of you. Go on, I want no trouble in this area."

'Where will you go now?' said the cynic. 'You've no money so renting lodgings is out of the question.' The dreamer raised an involuntary protest but was silent. It was then that the idea struck him. He still had a house in this town. He would go home. So he made his way through the winding streets until he arrived at his house. He fished in his pocket for the key. It was the only thing he had kept during all these long years. He tried fitting it into the lock but it would not go in so he rang the bell. An elderly woman opened the door and peered out at him.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," he said. "It's just that I used to live here. I thought the house was empty."

The kind expression on her face hardened to one of contempt. "If you lived here you would know the...lady who sold me this house. She left town with a man many years ago."

"Thank you," he said softly when he could think of nothing else to say. The door closed, shutting him out of the home that was no longer home.

There were no jobs for him in this town, no house, no one to go to. He sat down on the first step and lowered his head into his hands. The cynic had won.

It was around Christmas when I got off school for the holiday. My parents, or at least that's what they call themselves, and I were going off to Maine. They had bought a little hut thirty miles east of King Pine, a skiing resort. So we could spend Christmas there.

We took off from Philadelphia. That's where I live in a three room flat, in a twelve story building, just like most other Philadelphian kids. My mother and my father were at me again.

"Come on Scot, cheer up! It's going to be a splendid Christmas," my mother tried.

"Shut up Liz and sit down," my father bit at her. "He is in his 'meditation mood' again, just because we bought him and...."

"Sshhh!" My mother stopped him. "It's not called bought it's called adopted."

My mother smiled, just as a little kid does when he or she is right, and then she lifted her nose. This was because she usually was wrong in all the things she said. She actually was very stupid. I have wondered why and where my father picked someone like her up.

"Aah, bought..adopted...picked up, all the same. He just didn't have a price tag."

That's how they discussed me. Just like they would do shopping in a super-market. They didn't think I could think. All they have ever wanted of me was to join the army so I could get shot and killed. This was because they figured out after one year that having a kid after all wasn't for them. But they were going to be disappointed, because I had found my grandfather. I had even already called him and he knew me and my problems through the phone. We had also decided that when I'm eighteen we are going to see each other, and he was going to help me find a place on this earth where I would fit. Yah, I was going to make it. I looked out of the window; my parents were still discussing, but now over another aspect of me.

Later we arrived at the little hut. I hadn't seen anybody for the last twenty-five miles, so it was pretty deserted around. My father parked the car in front of it. It was small but very beautiful. Snow covered the roof, barely leaving the chimney exposed. I wondered if wood was all that we would have for heating, for then it was going to be a busy holiday. Chopping wood in snow isn't fun. I waited in the car as my parents stood out to look at the hut. They were both in a good mood now and my mother was laughing as she was clinging to my father.

"Bring the suitcases," my father commanded me as he opened a Budweiser. My mother pulled out an old key, opened the door, and entered.

I got out of the car, and went to the back. I could hear my mother and father laugh in the house. The six suitcases were heavy and I had to go three times. By the time I put the last suitcases into the house my parents were already in their skiing suits.

"We are going now," my mother said, "you can just come when you have changed and unpacked." My father frowned at that but still he kept quiet.

"O.K.," I responded, almost adding; "hope you'll get run over by a snow slide."

They went out hand in hand laughing, leaving the door open for all the snow to blow inside. When I had unpacked and cleaned a little, I went out to look for them. Finally I saw them. They were skiing down a steep slope with lots of trees. I stood there for a long time on the opposite slope looking down at the two small dots making lots of noise. Suddenly a low rumbling sounded. Then everything went quiet. The birds were silent; the wind stopped; and my parents stopped. Then I heard my mother scream. It was a loud scream. I could hear it clearly all the way from the other side of the little canyon. I turned around in shock and then it came. The loudest rumbling and thunder I have ever heard. Silently I stood there waiting until the wind was there again and the birds started to sing. Slowly I turned around, and froze. The tree-filled slope was white, just white. No more trees were to be seen in the whole canyon on that opposite side. I ran back to the hut there locking myself in as if waiting for someone.

The next day I found myself packing my suitcase. I was going to visit my grandfather. I might as well go visit him now, for never in my life would I live in a foster home.

I started the car and tried to drive down the road. I had driven less than a mile and the car glided right into a tree. I couldn't get the car out so I picked up my suitcase and started to walk. It must have been at least negative 10 degrees celsius, I thought. I soon had to sit down. Covered with water and freezing like hell I stuck my numb thumb out trying to stop a car. No cars stopped. I was getting tired when suddenly an old Ford stopped and two strong arms pulled me in.

"Hey, stop it!" I screamed, "My suitcase, you forgot a suitcase."

"Shut up you little snot bomb," a woman in a leather jacket and lipstick all over her face yelled at me as she pulled a knife. I got the message and sealed my lips immediately.

There were two women and one man in the car. They were all laughing and joking. The car smelled of cigarettes and something sweet. "It must be either hash or candy," I thought. "But since these guys didn't look much like candy eaters I just made an easy guess. They were talking about me almost like my parents, except they were on a different subject.

"This is the last kid we're going to collect," the guy at the steering wheel said laughing, greasing the inside of the window with his spit.

"Yah, and this one is a cute little one too," the woman by my side, holding the knife said. "I think this one will get picked for a movie."

They all laughed. "What movie?" I thought. But then suddenly it hit me. "Oh, no! I must definitely get out of this very soon." I kept calm and started to look for opportunities to escape.

After a while one of the girls had to take a leak. It was at a little gas station. Since the man in the station was looking at me I got out of the car. I knew that the woman with the knife was not going to cut me in front of him, but only follow, so out I went. She got out of the car on the other side and followed me, I could see the knife ready in her pocket.

Still I went in and looked around. In there I bought a magazine and some cheap ping-pong balls from my last pocket-money. Then I had to go back to the car. The woman was still following and as I got in she stuck the knife through my clothes almost cutting me and said.

"If you try anything again I'll personally see to it that you get your you-know-what cut off."

I tried to look scared and got in the car happy that she didn't take the ping-pong balls.

Soon we were on our way again. Close to Boston the guy, still driving, turned off the road down an enclosed little forest road. There he stopped.

"What are we stopping for?" The woman with me asked.

"I just want some fun," the guy said half asleep sniffing something.

"No, not now!" The other woman complained.

"Listen," the guy said trying to sound threatening. "Either 'Donna Baby' here does it or I'll take the kid. You choose, I mean, I'm a nice guy."

It ended up with him taking 'Donna' since the guy that was going to buy me, as they said, wanted all the kids to be fresh.

As they were all naked in the front seat I jumped out of the car, since I had noticed that the woman with the knife was mentally as much into it as the other two. Then I ran to the back of the car, opened the little door to the fuel tank and threw down a ping-pong ball. Then I just ran. Everything had gone off well. I could here one of the woman scream to the guy.

"God, get back in the car you fool, you are naked!"

Then I heard.

"Hurry start the car, then after him, that aahrr."

But...as I said, my ping-pong plan worked. Everytime the guy started to move the car it spluttered out. The last thing I saw of them was the two naked people in the car and then the third sitting in the car screaming swear words after me.

Boston was weird to walk around in since I had nowhere to go. It didn't take long before I figured that I was not going to make it here alone.

I started to walk towards New York, but I hadn't gotten further than to an outer suburb of Boston by ten. There I found and somewhat clean and enclosed parking lot where I sat down to sleep a little.

I was awakened by someone falling over me.

"Auu!" I moaned.

"Sshhh," a young guy only a few years older than me commanded.

The guy had jeans and a muscle shirt on. He looked pretty normal to me so half asleep I gave him the biggest smile I could.

"Who are you?" He asked.

"Scot," I said. "Who are you and where do you live?"

"I'm Michael and I live....ehh...I live...around!" It burst from him as he grinned.

"Ah," I said, now waking up. "So you're a thief."

"No, no, I just don't have a permanent house, that's all."

"That means you never steal and you're not a thief."

"Nooo, I just borrow things once in a while."

"Oh, so you are a thief!"

"Well, sort of," he said.

He looked around and started to walk away.

"Bye," he said.

"Hey, wait! Where are you going?"

"To New York," he responded.

"To New York!?" I questioned again.

"Yes, I think there's going to be more business for me there. Why do you ask?"

Suddenly I just told him everything about me and where and why I was going. He then decided that since he didn't have any parents himself, I would be an O.K. companion on his little trip.

"O.K.," he said, and started to walk away again.

"Hey, where're we going now, you're going the wrong way."

"Well, you don't want to walk do you? We are going to get us a car of course!"

He started to take out car stealing tools.

"What kind of car do you like?"

"Holy cow, I don't know. I don't even know if I want to do this. Can't we take the train or something? Stealing is not nice."

"I'm not stealing," he said. "I'm just borrowing a car. Anyways no one ever watches the cars here. It will not be missed before tomorrow at around twelve."

I swallowed hard and said nothing more. Everything went fine and we were both soon on the road heading towards New York.

"Now just tell me where your grandfather lives and I'll put you off around in the area," Michael said, as he drove down the highway, in his 'new' Ford Escord, playing his 'new' car stereo on full blast. I gave him the address which I had memorized and then I leaned back.

"For the first time in my life no one was going to stop me from doing what I wanted to do," I thought as we, my driver and I, passed a sign saying 'New York State' on it. I wondered what my grandfather was going to look like. I had better to call first saying that I came. Michael was a good driver. He didn't want me to drive so I was soon asleep.

by Morten Petersen

