

The Malcontent

Fall 1992

ISSN 1062-9173

When the Aliens Stole My Car

So many things have happened,
I don't know where to start.
I think it all began
when the Aliens stole my car.

My car wasn't much to look at,
and it didn't go too fast,
but it got me where I had to go,
and didn't use much gas.

The car was black and silver,
the hood bent and askew,
there was a dent in the left front fender,
a fond reminder of you.

The speedometer was broken,
the windshield chipped and scratched,
the radio popped and hissed and hummed,
but all the speakers matched.

The car was leaking fluids,
it left oil stains on the ground,
the grill fell off on the highway,
and could never again be found.

I wonder where they're going,
in that beat up car of mine?
Are they just joyriding?
Are they having a good time?

Why the Aliens stole my car,
I really just can't say.
I asked the policeman several times,
but he just looked away.

The Aliens stole my car
and I'm filled with hurt and rejection.
The spaceship that they left in its place
won't pass motor vehicle inspection.

Ed Hoyer, Jr.
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In fond memory,
1984 Ford Escort, 2 door, color black and grey, 188,866 miles
1987-1992

Grief

I. Shock

A name leaps from the obituary page, a name I never wanted to see, a name I always knew I would find someday, long before my own.

Your name.

A newspaper article I didn't read the day before. I thought it was about the weather. Ignorance is bliss?

A long day of waiting for the unknown. A brightly lit room. A line of strangers. A flag draped casket. A photograph I knew existed, but never saw, a forgotten promise from a letter faded with age. Voices on a telephone long ago now standing in front of me.

Words. Handshakes. Helplessness.

A long sleepless night. A grey morning. Familiar faces. A small white church. Sitting next to a flag draped casket, touching the side, remembering a night so long ago, two cars parked close, drivers' doors almost touching, windows rolled down, my arm stretched through tears from the sky, holding your hand until your eyes stopped raining. Now the rain is mine.

Words. Hymns. Hopelessness.

Carrying a flag draped casket those last few steps to a grave.

Your grave.

I stood by your casket and wondered if I had stood by you enough in life.

A house. A familiar kitchen. Standing in rooms I'd never seen before. Another photograph. Strangers. Food. I have no appetite.

Stopping by the cemetery on the way home, the flowers and earth still fresh. I tell myself it's because you might be lonely. No. It's because I am lonely. The rain inside my heart begins.

II. Denial

A quiet road. A driving rain. An overburdened raincoat. Broken pieces of glass and plastic at my feet. It's not real.

A dimly lit garage. Huge tow trucks. A small white car. I reach out and touch the shattered glass, the bent and twisted steel. It's still not real.

It wasn't you. It was somebody else. The accident was faked. You're on a secret mission. You're in witness protection. You're hiding in a city up north. I'll drive up there one day, and turn a corner on a busy street, and you'll be there. You'll shake your head, "No, don't talk! Pretend you don't know me! I'll call you later with the details!" It's all a scam. It's not you in that grave. It wasn't you in that car. It didn't happen. You'll be back. I'll wait.

This can't be real.

III. Anger

A beautiful spring day. A bright sun in a clear blue sky. Flowers are blooming. Birds singing. The air is warm and fresh. I sit in a crowded little office, heavy with the smell of cigarettes, a loose-leaf notebook in my lap. I'm not sure I have the courage to open the cover and face the truth. It's the police report on your accident.

I stare at the cover. If you were sitting in my place, would you have hesitated? No. You weren't afraid of anything, or anyone, and if you were, your pride wouldn't let you show it. I open the cover.

Words. Drawings. Best guesses.

A blue and white envelope. Thirty-six color photographs. The road. The vehicles. You.

I close the book. I'm a good actor.

The sun is shining. Birds are singing. A warm breeze caresses me, as I sit by your grave. I am blind with rain. A thunderstorm is forming in my heart. I can feel it growing. The police don't know what happened. I do. I feel the storms' fury. It's coming.

A snowy night a few years back. A busy city street. You were driving, I was co-pilot. You were talking, smoking, laughing, full of life. I was sitting next to you, enjoying being with you, and suddenly realizing that we were over the center line. You hadn't noticed. I spoke, and you turned the wheel, the car sliding back to its proper lane. That was once.

Later that night, as we drove too quickly behind the church, you didn't see the ice on the driveway. The corner came, you turned the wheel, and the car

ignored you. The swing-set in the children's playground got closer and closer. The curb stopped us. We looked at each other, amazed at our good fortune. Then we laughed nervously, and discussed what lurid headline the town newspaper would have read had we hit the swing-set. That was twice.

The same night. Two in the morning, and a dozen miles away. A quiet little town between nowhere and not anywhere. You made a wrong turn by the town green. You stopped, backed up, turned around, pulled forward, slammed on the brakes, and swore that stone wall wasn't there before. I hadn't seen it either. We sat there wondering how it leapt out at us like that. That was thrice. I should have been counting.

Your driving almost killed us three times that night. Your driving got you speeding tickets on other nights. I know. I paid for some of them.

The fury is here. It overwhelms me. I hear a voice yelling at you, as though you can hear in eternity.

"You killed yourself with your lousy driving!"

It's my voice.

IV. Depression

Eleven o'clock at night. A police cruiser parked in the driveway of a quiet cemetery. A full moon. Kneeling on hard, snowless ground. A small American flag snapping smartly in a bitter wind. I'm trying to ignore the cold. I'm failing.

Reaching out and placing a white carnation on the footstone. The flower is already frozen. My fingers ache from the cold. My heart aches from life. It's been a year. I've been here often. The days are a blur. I'm drifting through my life. Directionless. Is it still really mine?

Why do I come here? I'm lonely. And you are here. I imagine you sitting by your grave watching me. Someday, you will reveal yourself to my eyes, a reward for my loyalty. But not tonight.

I thought about joining you those first few months, smashing my police cruiser into a tree, shooting myself with my service revolver. But I didn't. I couldn't. I made excuses. "You'll come for me when it's time," "You need someone to remember you, and honor your resting place."

In the end, I knew they were lies. I didn't want to die. That's all there was to it. I didn't want to die.

I shook off Despair's grip on my life. Misery is still wrapped around me. I don't have the will to break free. Not yet, not yet. Someday.

I feel empty without you, a hollow shell. I know I should fill myself from within. I don't have the energy.

The wind howls. I'm so cold.

V. Understanding

A peaceful day in the Fall. Sitting under a maple tree, watching the leaves drift through the air. Reds, golds, and browns land on me and around me. My thoughts are as clear and fresh as the air.

Did you have to die? Was it fated, the work of the stars, predestined and unchangeable? Would it be comforting to know that it was beyond everyone's hands, unpreventable?

It was an accident. There was no fate, no predestination, just a series of random factors that when added equalled disaster.

It was snowing. The road was slippery. Visibility was bad. You were driving too fast. You always drove too fast. I know. I rode with you many a night.

Your car was rear wheel drive, high powered and featherlight. You had a coffee mug in your right hand. I know. The handle was still in your fingers when they found you.

You were on your way to work. You might have been thinking about the new job you applied for, or the condo you wanted to buy, or your boyfriend and how you were going to introduce to your family. Or perhaps, you were thinking about the ski weekend you missed. It doesn't matter. You weren't paying attention. I know. I rode with you many a night when your mind was elsewhere. I know the feeling. I've done it myself.

You rounded the curve. You drifted to the wrong side of the road. The van appeared in the swirling snow. You jerked the steering wheel to the right with your left hand. On a dry road, that would have worked. You would have escaped. But the road was far from dry, and all you escaped from was your life.

The rear wheels slid to the left, and took the car with them. Your drivers' door hit the van's bumper, and your car folded around that spot.

The first rescuer was there in five minutes, but five minutes is meaningless when you're dead.

I understand what happened. I understand all the factors that added up and equalled disaster. It was an accident. I understand. But that doesn't mean I have to like it.

VI. Acceptance.

A quiet cemetery. A cold, wintery afternoon. A light snow falls. The wind dances the flakes around me. Standing next to your grave watching the snowflakes cover your footstone. Two years I have been coming here. My heart has healed.

Accept that you're gone? Only begrudgingly. Once I would have shouted "Never!" and swore on my loyalty to you never to accept your death. But life has a way of draining the never out of you.

I know I cannot will you back. I tried. I failed. That is as it should be. I must let you go now, put you to rest.

You will always be in my mind, and in my heart, a comforting memory. I am glad I knew you. My life would have been much emptier without your smile. Forgive me for missing you too much. But that is the nature of grief and loss.

I've dampened the fire I built for you inside me. There are other fires that I've neglected. I must tend to them again.

Till we meet again, my friend. Till we meet again.

Ed Hoyer, Jr.
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You Filthy Monkeys

You cannot destroy the earth,
you in your petty ignorance,
you in your blind negligence.

The entire idea is absurd.

Something so vast,
something so old,
something so immense
with the capacity for life--
and you would hope to threaten it?

You puny fools.

The earth will destroy you
with your own weapons:
it will feed your poisons to your children,
it will blow your factory smoke into your
faces,
it will smother you in your own constructions,
it will burn you with your own radiation,
it will force you to eat your own waste.

You will beg for mercy and have none.

Did you ever deserve it?

Did you ever show it?

The earth will teach you respect.
The earth will show you the error
in your ways.

When it has destroyed you, killed you,
when it has murdered you in your sleep
and shook you off like the dust you are,
will you still think yourselves so
powerful, self-important then?

When you are dead
the earth will be glad to be rid
of those filthy monkeys
that clung to its back and
deficated their toxins
whenever and wherever
they wanted to.

And so will I.

Ben Ide.
©1992, Ben Ide.

Howl

The morning of the day I forgot your phone number, It howled outside. Usually, when I forgot something, It was quiet and peaceful. Today, It howled.

I couldn't believe what I heard. The howl penetrated every nook, every cranny. The howl even penetrated the spaces between my fingers, no matter how tightly I clamped them over my ears. The whole day the howl went on. Howl, howl, howl, that's all I could hear.

As the sun set, the howl ceased and turned to a low hum. It hummed all night long, a pleasing, soothing hum, perhaps to make up for the howl of the day.

I fell asleep at ten o'clock, and awoke the next morning relaxed, refreshed, and gritting my teeth. It was howling again.

I really felt like doing something about it. Howl, howl, howl. What a horrible noise. But I knew I wouldn't make it ten feet out the door before the howl would turn into a growl. And It's growl was much worse than It's howl.

I stayed in the house and searched for my winter earmuffs. I found them at noon, along with some shells for my shotgun. If It howled tomorrow, I would do something drastic.

Suddenly, the house shook violently. Tomorrow would be too late! I must do something drastic today! I loaded the shotgun and went to the door.

"Howl no more!" I cried, as I flung open the door and fired the shotgun into the daylight. The howl became a roar. The house collapsed about me, and I faded from the day.

The sky was dark when I awoke. It was humming again.

I live in the basement now, underneath some boards I manhandled into a crude shelter. I burn wood from the house to keep warm. It still howls all day long, but I don't mind anymore. You see, I remembered your phone number.

Ed Hoyer, Jr.
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I'm So Bored

I'm so bored,
I'm so bored,
I'm bored, I'm bored, I'm bored.

I ain't got nuthin' to do,
I ain't got nuthin' to do,
Ain't got nuthin' to do.

I'm so bored,
I'm so bored,
I'm bored, I'm bored, I'm bored.

Read all my comics,
Played all my tapes,
Just ain't got no escape.

I'm so bored,
I'm so bored,
I'm bored, I'm bored, I'm bored.

Watched all my videos,
MTV, too,
Ain't got nuthin' to do.

I'm so bored,
I'm so bored,
I'm bored, I'm bored, I'm bored.

Ed Hoyer, Jr.
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Chemistry

Liquify
your body
and slide near me.
Let us form a mixture,
then adding
heat,
a compound,
with age and wisdom,
an element, to withstand
the forces that
oppose.

Ed Hoyer, Jr.
©1975, Ed Hoyer, Jr.

Oh Tofu

Oh Tofu, my Tofu,
Sitting in the bowl,
Oh Tofu, my Tofu,
Doorway to my soul.

Oh Tofu, my Tofu,
Your taste is oh so grand!
Oh Tofu, my Tofu,
We spread you across the land.

Oh Tofu, my Tofu,
Your wonders never cease,
Oh Tofu, my Tofu,
We love you more than yeast.

Oh Tofu, my Tofu,
Be all that you can be!
Oh Tofu, my Tofu,
Pretend you're a steak for me.

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Volume 2 Number 2 Fall 1992
ISSN 1062-9173

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It's Not My Fault

I swear I never
stole your lands
raped your women
destroyed your culture
under the guise of progress

And I never
took you from your village
beat you in the fields
chained you and made you
call me "Master"

And it wasn't me who
locked you in the kitchen
took away your voice
forced children on you
or labeled you inferior

You must have
confused me with another
A man with round,
blue eyes like mine
who stood erect
while you stooped
to search for
your lost dignity

Or perhaps you
thought you saw me
under a straw hat
or a white hood
standing before the
blazing light of
racial purity

Or maybe your
swollen eye
saw another
when an accusing finger
identified me as
the man who
forced you to do
those unspeakable things
just because he bought you dinner

But I swear to God
that I never did those
things to you
maybe it was a
distant relative
with the same color
eyes and the
same color skin
but he had a different
fear in his soul
as different as
pride and humility
east and west
black and white
man and woman
guilt and shame

But I swear I never
did those things to you

Ben Ide
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Occurrences

There are so many things to be said
So many things to be
defined
But writer's block is what I dread
It keeps poetic stanzas tucked away
deeply within my
mind.

Sometimes, I'm just in that mood where I want to
elude
and run away
dodging reality on a quest for hard core fiction
But I can't.

I hold on tightly to my pen, while trying to produce
greatness.
But nothing happens!

Because meaningful words come from
within.

Shaunda Holloway
©1992, Shaunda Holloway

No Genius

No flash of light
No brilliance
No genius

No work
that isn't spawned in base
disappointment
or some sense of injustice,
need, loneliness, or even the
heat of lust

But never genius

Does this reduce to mere
words on a page?
A sad shadow of Shakespeare,
or Byron, or Frost?
A dull growth of creation that forms
in an old refrigerator, unplugged and
left alone for days?
Or fermented from blistered raisins
like stifled ambitions
wilting in the sun?
(And is it still poetry if it only pays the rent?)

Come and see
The great Mediocrity
Doomed to a fate
Of "good," but never "great"
(At least his meter and rhyme
Works most of the time)

Ben Ide
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In Narnia

Winter walks through the garden,
Touching gently Spring's creations.
Softly radiant, the brilliant hues
Tremble in her dark shadow.

With a graceful sweep of her arms,
She reaches out, embracing
The ancient oak and the transient rose,
Her skin translucent as glacial ice.

Kissing the climbing ivy,
Her breath traces the tiny viens
With ice like lace,
And the earth shivers beneath her feet.

M.E.

©1992, M.E.

The Sun Queen

To the sun queen,
The day is forever;
Shining the gold white
Of sand at the edge of
The ocean,
Reflecting in the water,
The beauty of the day.

She looks no further,
At the height of her
Power and majesty,
Than a blue sky,
Children playing,
A garden,
And a companion to
Walk with.

M.E.

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MVSE

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