

Nine Elephants and an Ass

by Joey Delgado

Nine sated elephants and an ass sit around a decimated Thanksgiving table discussing the state of the union over the hacked to bits carcass of a twenty-three pound turkey. Two years in to The Great Communicator's *Lame Duck* term and the nine elephants, whose combined incomes would barely nudge them into middle class, sing the praises of the shining city on a hill, while Journey's 'Don't Stop Believin'' pumps in from an off brand tape deck purchased at a RadioShack Labor Day sale. The lone ass, a Kennedy Dem, sits quietly, chain smoking herself sick as her brood of renowned unrealized potential erupt in chants of national pride and military superiority, visions of Me Generation twenty-somethings standing over a slain bear, hot musket cradled in their left arms, right hands furiously waving the stars and stripes. The ass taps Marlboros over her plate, ashes falling like a wintery nuclear snow on a pile of uneaten giblets and Mrs. Cubbison's, as she patiently awaits the annual Thanksgiving pinochle game. Once the cards are dealt the drum pounding and fife blowing will cease, for that she is thankful. A little one makes an entrance, and what an entrance. The ass watches as the first born son of her second born elephant sashays across the linoleum in Grover pajamas singing, "Open your heart to me, baby/I'll be the lock and you be the key," over and over again, a loaded smile pricks up the corners of her cracked lips. So many young men falling ill, thinks the ass. She prays for a cure to a God she stopped believing in a long time ago. She can't bear to think about an early end to her little Grover's song. The ass holds out her hand to the little one as the elephants discuss foreign policy ("We'll kick their fucking *ass*!"), and when the boy takes it in his own, she dances along to his catchy refrain, effectively silencing the brays of elephants who forgot everything she taught them.

