

truth be known

by Jerry Ratch

It could be there is a little me, somewhere, truth be known. One time in Laguna Beach I slept with a girl I met at this café, the Jolly Roger, I think, when we went back to my apartment and had unprotected sex. She said she was on the pill, but you never know. It was just that one time, and she did seem desperate to have me come inside her. Then she wanted no more contact. Very strange. As though it were the perfect timing for ovulation maybe?

I remember going up to her house at night a couple of days after that encounter, and ringing the doorbell over and over. No one answered, so I went around behind the house and saw the curtains blowing in a wide open sliding glass door, and a television set glowing its blue light. And I knocked and knocked. No one answered. I guess she'd already gotten what she'd been after. I stood there for quite some time. I tried knocking again. No one answered.

I could soften the lazy honey that slides in her lap and give her more, but she would have no more of it.

Then there was Terry, before I left for school in California, that time in the back seat of my car. That was in August of 1968, just before the Democratic Convention, when the troops were driving into Chicago in one long column to quell the demonstrations. And there was yet one more time when I returned from college, which would have been 1970. Before I went to teach downstate at this little college. And Terry crossed herself in her bedroom, I remember, after taking off her clothes, just before coming to me, and I thought, *Holy Jesus, Holy Jesus, what have I gotten myself into?*

