

Something Wrong

by Tim G. Young

"When was the last time you had your hands on a typewriter? Why are you sitting there with that blank look on your face? Are you completely out of touch? Did you not have your coffee this morning? Did you crawl out on the wrong side of the bed? When was the last time you had a decent night's sleep? Do you think a diet of only hamburgers is going to keep you safe this stormy season from all the millions of opportunities available to the millions of microbes biting the bit to make you sick? Do you understand the seriousness of this situation?"

I looked at her. The face I was posing shouted loud and clear: are there any more fucking questions? She went to open her mouth but then sighed loudly in the direction of my face, turned around and poured milk into her coffee. I stared at her cup like a sailor at sea long removed from even the faintest hint of fresh water but she was finished looking at me. I was not tied to my chair but I felt the weight of heavy chains around my wrists and ankles. If she had wanted to toss me over the side, had we been on a boat, I would have sunk like Houdini locked in an iron trunk except not possessing his other worldly skills of escape I would have had lunch with Davy Jones for eternity.

Making an exaggerated swallowing sound from her last sip of coffee she turned and moved directly to the only door in the room. The half opened door with a small square window just about eye level and just above the small square window was scotch taped a green construction paper Christmas tree, looked to be cut out by a five year old, decorated with little shiny silver stars. Each one glaring reflected light from the chilly fluorescent fixtures scattered

everywhere above our heads. But I knew it was far from December.

Her questions apparently had their desired effect. I continued to sit there, uncomfortable as hell, in my fresh white shirt and blue necktie, without one single intelligent thought left in my head. At the top I thought she was attempting to rally me to action, to get my goddamn hands on a typewriter and I may have done so but then I was drowned. It was impossible to breathe and now impossible to think. Actually this very second I have come to the realization that I am quite hungry and that I had made a major mistake in coming here thinking she might recognize all the talents I know I have in abundance. Now I'm not so sure of anything.

I heard the click click of her shoes as she left the room. There was no one else around. I looked over at the table where she had left her coffee cup. There was a pot there sitting on a warmer half filled. Forever the optimist, I threw off the chains of oppression, stood up and moved to the table. Just then she stormed back into the room carrying a huge IBM electric typewriter which she instantly threw onto the table, the weight of it and the force of her toss delivered a blow to the legs of the table. The legs buckled, the table began its crashing fall to the floor along with coffee pot, cups, milk, cream and box of donuts. My heart also fell to the floor. I saw my reflection in the shards of broken coffee pot glass on the floor. I think I also saw a tear. As I put my finger to my eye her voice once again shattered my being. "Are you happy now," she roared at me. I could do nothing but completely agree. I walked directly up to her red, vibrating face, held her excruciating gaze for half a second and said, "yes," with more conviction than I had mustered in a decade.

When she didn't react I turned around and picked up a glazed donut from the floor next to the broken coffee pot. I took a bite then threw the remaining portion at her face and walked out the door making sure to grab one silver star from the green paper tree.

