

## Three New Stories by Willie Smith

Contributed by Willie Smith

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**DRINK PAINT**

I wanna drink paint. Gallons of die-for lead base. Put color in the old GI. Experience room temperature good ice cream consistency. Taste a spike sledged through the throat, pin ya to the wall. I plan to drink till paint pupils orange pith white; skin gangrene early blackberry green. I wanna die from ochre, from scarlet, from vermilion; head in a toilet from Jersey; zapped on LSD under sputtery bug lights, while the elevated thunders. I wanna chug a pint of plum. Finish off the belly with a yellow lacquer. Paint the town red as a stop to the blues. And no more shall the blues reign. For this paint hath put me down. Thick bitter tinct made me extinct. Put me down here "to jitter with you dead. To jig a cocoon no puzzle ever saw. Put inspire to bed. Then inside that rattle "clutched in a piglet trotter "puke pigiron pigment. Not what meant mentally to blow into my horn. But what see now meant stuck fast. I wanna drink paint. (First appeared on at thundersandwich.com)

**NYLON FEVER**

When I was nine I fell head over heels in love with nylons. My old sister wore nylons. Mom wore nylons. The whole female world over the age of twelve wore nylons. Best were the dark parts. Dark heel, dark toe. Best of all: dark top. When a female "on television, inside a magazine, on the bus, in a park "dangled a shoe, dark heel hooked my eye; dark heel plus dark toe electrified; the merest glimpse of dark top wrought telephone pole crotch. Nylons showed a sheen. Gleamed in the sun like crushed diamond adulterated with brown sugar. Nylons made a sound "a zing that, when a woman crossed legs tight, broached my urethra. Besides "taut," tight also means intoxicated. My idea of a hell of an evening in heaven was hearing an intoxicated woman tightly cross nyloned legs. That I could take to bed for 1,001 orgasms. Recreating night after night a zillion echoes of zing-scratch-ZING! Nylons smelled. Like teapot steam, plastic flowers, wax grapes "hardly at all. Clean as bottled water, sheer as cliff air, keen as a razor just from its package slit. I sneaked sniffs from Mom and Sis' drying on a rack deployed down in the basement between the stationary tub and the washer-dryer combo. Never as good as the whiffs I half-imagined off the legs of Teacher on a scorcher in June near the end of the school year. I always sat in the front row, alert to peeks of dark heel, dark toe, dark top, while Teach perched on her desk, frowning over our text, reading aloud for the umpteenth time about the eight parts of speech. This all pretty normal. I'd been masturbating to visions of panties since the age of three "almost as far back as memory could grope. I was very precocious. A sort of jackoff Mozart. But the night after that fatal PETER GUNN episode, I veered off the beaten path over the edge into the abyss. Peter Gunn was a handsome, sneaky guy who dressed stylishly. A detective "meaning he got paid to snoop into the affairs of others. Sometimes people got angry and shot at him, or tried to stab his heart or run his ass over. Often they punched Peter in the back of the head and the show was forced to go to a commercial. Otherwise he had an OK job, doing the things that to me came naturally "spying, peeping, tailing, going through other people's belongings. PETER GUNN was forbidden. An adult show. Came on anyway at my bedtime. But, when I came out to bid the folks goodnight, I could often squeeze in as much as half an episode, slouching in my PJ's behind the sofa, the adults hypnotized with tube jazz. Till somebody realized I had failed to leave, and at once shooed me off to bed. The night in question I only managed to cop about five minutes. Gunn barged into a modest apartment. Shouldered in the locked bedroom door. Discovered something inside that made him sour. The camera "through closeupping on our hero's chiseled features "panned across the disordered chamber: Dresses tossed about, drawers yanked open, bedclothing torn off, makeup table a chaos of overturned lipsticks, atomizers, coldcream jars, hairspray dispensers, other appurtenances of feminine mystique. At long last, above an overturned chair, the camera halted at the payoff: Twin nyloned legs suspended mid-air, visible from just below dark top; reinforced heel and toe showcased. No music, no talk. Bottomless quiet. Backlit, shapely legs dangled two feet off the floor. Sank in a lovely young lady had just hung herself. Or, crossed both Peter's and our dirty minds, had been by another freshly hung. Gave myself away, humping sofa back. Never before had I in public so lost control... "Woody! You shouldn't be watching this "get to bed!" Failed to register if it Mom or Dad barking. Mattered not. No response required. Disappeared into the lights-out masturbatorium also known as My Room. Under the covers, I launched a spanking-new nuclear rocket far beyond the moon into belts of psychedelic asteroids. Three nights later, the fury finally abated, I attempted to analyze this eyeball nitroglycerin. There seemed no escape "someday, someday soon, I must persuade a female to hang herself. Perhaps the way I talked girls out on the playground into hanging upsidedown from the swingset; so, when their dresses drooped around their ears, I could study the panties. But this wouldn't be seven, eight and nine year olds. This would be the McCoy: a Woman. Maybe Sis? She was nineteen, two years out of high school, working her first secretarial job. Most of her paycheck went for nylons, high heels, lipstick, mascara, eyeliner, foundation... Make her take her shoes off. Climb up on a bench borrowed from the basement. Slip her head through the noose, careful not to muss her fifty dollar hair. Kick away the bench. Stand underneath stropping myself into a lather. She too busy choking to notice what I was doing. Cut to a commercial. Cut her down. Hand over two aspirin. Repeat the next night. Or at the very least once a week. Problem being: I barely knew Sis. She ten years older. We hardly spoke. Traveled in different circles. She anyway too busy. All day at the office. Church on Sunday. Choir practice Wednesday night. Juggled two to five boyfriends. Not to mention all those hours making herself up, scheduling hair appointments, shopping for dresses, purses, handbags, perfume, lipstick, nylons... What about Teach? I could hang Teach. No need even cut her down. Leave the body as an example to others who would tie up my time, confine me to a classroom when I could be out in a meadow playing with myself or home in bed daydreaming about Teach swaying "nylons on display, Earth turning beneath as if she a height-weight-proportional pendulum. Teach, once you got beyond the frown and the nasty disposition, was not all that bad looking... Stranger, on the other hand, might be best. Young professional met on the sidewalk. Talk her back up into her apartment. Hang her like tinsel on a sexy Xmas tree... One afternoon I encounter just such a miracle. We get talking, walking along. I explain I'm a little boy lost. She takes me up to her one-bedroom in a downtown complex called

Camelot. Offers a Mars bar. Says I can stay as long as it takes to figure out how to get back home. The building has steam heat. Turned way up. She has no control over the radiator. Soon, to keep comfortable, we strip to our undies. Since we have time on our hands, and she has revealed she teaches middle school science, I ask about the physics of hanging. Seems to me if you put the weight gradually on the neck, the person ought to be able to survive "dangle in the air breathing just fine." "What a novel idea!" she smiles. We fetch a kitchen stool. Fashion a noose from the belt she earlier tossed off. She mounts the stool. Secures the belt to the chandelier. Me salivating at nose-level dark toe taut over manicured nails; dark heel below nylon-sheathed ankle. "OK," she slips head through, cinches noose tight. "Now slowly, very slowly, take away the stool." I perform, for Science, the operation. The good soldier in my crotch ten-huts! Remove stool tremblingly from under stockinged feet. Duckwalk thing over to a corner. About-face. Amble back head-down, so as to delay delectation of the goodie, heart beating to beat Uncle Dick's hat band. Step, to better handle the situation, out of my jockey's. Raise my eyes, even more slowly than I removed the pedestal, to behold dangling toes. Up the nylon slope vision skis. To just above the dark top "creamy flesh topping chocolate welt..." A buzz. An unlocatable zip. An angel? Come to bless this whoopee? Slalom back down... On the dark masking her fuchsia-painted pinky toe, two inches from my chin, lands a fly. Cocks green head. Gimps a few six-legged steps over to the big toe. A fairy, a robot, a vampire, a transmigrating soul, whatever "I slap my warrior erect to honor our tiny intense visitor. A ship from Venus disguised as a bluebottle? Will a titanium-suited flea-sized alien hop out to tickle toes extra-terrestrially? Does Venus harbor undreamed-of ecstasy? My private, unsure of the outcome, shoulders arms. I spit for luck on the muzzle. Aim M16 sweetly at hexagonal eye camouflaging a turret hatch... I awoke "fist clenching rope, elbow clamping neck, torso twisting" exploding under the covers snarls. The first shell, the second bomb, the third hell in the Nylon War. The war to end all whores. The war to make the world safe for self-abuse. PEP RALLY I got my first piece of ass standing up in a broom closet during Friday afternoon pep rally. I was a Junior, she a Senior. Colleen edited THE ERUDITE, our school literary magazine. We had separately slipped into the walk-in closet, which served as THE ERUDITE's office. We left the light off, breathing carefully till the halls emptied of shouts and hurried footsteps. The entire student body attended the rally three floors below in the gym. If we won this one, we went to State. One could not imagine, if we won this one, the extent of the euphoria, I thought in the dark; thinking underneath of the asymptote; reaching for Colleen's ass. Only last week, studying hyperbolas, had I discovered the asymptote. One can forever approach an asymptote, get as close as one desires; but one never reaches the asymptote. We had the last ten blurred days been exchanging steamy notes and torrid glances. I had never before swapped such tokens. A seasoned masturbator, yes. But the sum total of my acquaintance with love, up to that point, had been stories of the gods and goddesses. She liked my style. Or perhaps my lack thereof. Two weeks ago we had first met, when she approached me between classes, as I traded, in my locker, a French primer for my functions text. Asked wasn't I the school's best math student, she a special friend of the honors teacher Mr. Diamond, and Jack had assured her as to my whiz kid status? I grumbled my scores tied for tops with three others. Was about to end the conversation and shove off, when she handed me a folded slip of paper, her magnetic pupils tugging the iron in my blood; smiled she would see me later. Neither Colleen nor I gave a flying frig at a rolling bagel about football. Frigg the Norse goddess after whom Friday is named. Which day, Vendredi in French, the Romans named after Venus; their tag for Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of lust. Soft flesh globed into my palm. Colleen possessed an immense derriere. I had never viewed the marvel in the flesh, much less felt of it; still, of course, not yet seen... A roar accompanied by a rhythmic pounding flared thirty feet below. A smothered brouhaha we could easily have talked over. But were not talking, not saying a word, breathing almost hard enough to drown the sound, although the pounding continued to penetrate up through the arches of our feet. Clothing had dropped away. Time running bumpily. I seemed still in my shirt, shoes, socks; donut of fallen jeans and briefs scrunched around my ankles. My fingers traveled Colleen's doughy torso "confirming at every palp she was "yep, bra also ditched" nude. TH assumed from the tilt of her pelvis she had not stepped out of her inch-high gray suede intellectual heels. I pawed involuntarily her generous knockers. I had known they were big. Could tell from the eye-melting humps under her cashmere sweaters. But... "Sweet Jesus!" she breathed, as I squeezed... kneaded... smelling perfume... smelling musk(?) Knock at the door. "Who is it!" Colleen yelled in my face, the effort jiggling her bosom, another distant roar tickling our toes. "Barb, if that's you "beat it; we'll talk later!" Barb "the assistant editor" also seventeen and owned a "better" body. Much slimmer. Pert breasts needing no bra. Taut buttocks that, instead of being plentitudinous enough to sit and read a book on, were acceptably soccerball-sized. But Barb lacked Colleen's owl-eyes "lousy little pair of squinty blues. Voice nothing like the rich smoke of Colleen's "vibrant at once with authority, melancholy, pride of diction, dark mystery. Barb was a squeaker, a twitterer; knew nothing about poetry. She the childhood friend and confidante. Thus had assumed assistant-editorship. A dud, a joke, something of a fool. Moreover, Barb to date had never even made a pass at, much less raped, me. "This isn't Barb. This is Betty English. Who's in there?" In or I whipped the tip of my erection from outer vaginal lips "having penetrated no further, before the voice on the other side of the door barked its identity. Stooped. Groped pants up around hips. Zipped. Snapped. Buckled. Blinking in the light Colleen had flipped on, I caught her wiggle into her mauve woven dress, glimpsing for the first and last time those monumental alabaster buttocks wobble. As she cracked the door, I spotted, scooped up and tossed into a bag of uncollated pages pink satin panties plus lilac bra. The function  $y$  equals one over  $x$  also determines an asymptote. Miss English taught chemistry. Her ass flat, tight, almost nonexistent. In her late twenties, petite, rather cute herself "but stern, stiff, inflexible: exuding enough asexuality to cure the overpopulation crisis in one generation, were her kind to dominate planetwide all women of bearing age. As  $x$  tends to zero,  $y$  to infinity. Why not, I thought, to infinity, to zero, to anywhere now but here? Cold sweat got for the sprint down my spine the gold. I swallowed a shiver. Stared "freezing" forbidding myself to budge "down at some typewritten manuscript somehow flown into my hands. A about no room in the heart for the doom of standing in the gloom of the womb of a room on the late winter afternoon "I"

got dumped. The letters overinked and fuzzed. The centers of the o's knocked out, letting through light. The poem had been typed with evident passion, or perhaps by a weightlifter during a vigorous session at the gym. "Why aren't you students at the rally?" Colleen opened wide the door. Cleared her throat. Drew herself up in front of Miss English. "The magazine is due out Monday. We're behind schedule. Not a moment to spare. Stuck in this office all weekend." I felt the teacher's steely eyes probe the statue of myself frowning down at the sonnet. "You're Colleen French, aren't you?" she spoke over Colleen's shoulder approximately at my left ear. "Yes. I'm editor of THE ERUDITE. This is one of my contributors. We were going over eleventh-hour emendations when you knocked." Literally, as it derives from the Greek, asymptote means "not together falling." The hyperbola infinitely approaches, but never with the asymptote ever together falls. Without looking up, into her rhythm I fell: "I still fail to see why 'delicious superficial fish' doesn't work in the concluding couplet. This isn't, uh, Petrarchan." She sighed. Raised her eyes in exasperation at the dusty ceiling of the manuscript-magazine-and-book-packed windowless cubicle: "Someday, when we've more time, Bill, I'll expand on the pathetic fallacy. Your trope is a paragon of how Eliot instructs us NOT to write." English knitted brows. Curled one side of her lip "her left, my right. My gaze returned to the sonnet by one Bob Snappe, who below his signature had printed: Class of 68. My year. Another poet I didn't know from Adam. How many to me anonymous poets lurked out there, even when one limited "out there" to the 700-odd individuals in my graduating class? "I don't believe you." English crossed arms before her black blazer and gray buttoned-all-the-way-up blouse. "Something was going on... why so long answering the door, Colleen?" Holding English steady in her stare, Colleen, not missing a beat, stated: "We had a dispute. Bill gets emotional about poetry. He possesses a modest talent that frankly doesn't fully warrant such passion. Whatever, we... well... I had just, disgusted with his obstinacy, thrown a pile of manuscripts onto the floor. I mean, if he doesn't alter the conceit in that pitiful couplet "I simply can't print the piece. He doesn't get into the magazine. We took time to shuffle the pages back into the bag; our filing system here; we don't have a desk; not enough space; no budget allocation. I'm sorry for the inconvenience, Miss English, but we didn't want you to see the office a wreck. We're both of us perhaps too passionate about literature." She sniffed... "Fish?" "I ate," I looked up from the doom gloom, "sardines for lunch. To get better in touch with the metaphor in my couplet. Poetry need not be an, uh, unexperimental science." "I'm reporting this to Mr. Adams. The principal needs to be aware of your behavior. Also to your sponsor, Mr. Johnson." Colleen left a space. Then said: "Actually, Judith Rosenwasser has sponsored THE ERUDITE these past fifteen years. She is also head of the Department." "Yes. Of course." In her own inch-high intellectual heels, English took a step back. "OK "I'll report this incident directly to Mrs. Rosenwasser." "I wish you would." Colleen allowed to cross her large face the satisfaction of an executive agreeing with a peer. "That way I'll have backup if Bill here becomes irate when I inevitably reject his sonnet, should he persist in refusing to accept the emendation." English nodded curtly. "Leave this unlocked. And OPEN." Sneered. Spun. Disappeared stage left (right, from my perspective). When we could no longer hear her heels clicking down the empty hall, I rummaged in the bag. Tossed Colleen the underwear. She stepped into the panties. Wadded the bra into a pocket. "I hate authority," she murmured. "Especially when it thwarts the needs of the magazine. And I despise," her oversized eyes drifted over my shoulder onto the wallboard half-a-foot behind my back, "football." "Me, too." I squeezed in front of her out across the threshold, calling back over a shoulder, "I'm going down to the rally. Goodbye." "Good idea. Oh, and, Bill..." I stopped. Without turning around. Stared down the endless gray-metal locker-lined waxed hallway. Remembering pie radians is another way of saying 180 degrees...perfect temperature, Celsius, for cooking pie. "...You need to submit something. Make it a sonnet. Predate it. And not Petrarchan." That night I sat down to my first creative writing adventure. The words flowed easy as urinating after a lot of green tea followed by, holding it, a long hike. From that moment I date my abandonment of math as a career interest. Sadly (or maybe not), Colleen and I never again tussled with Herby. Rosenwasser delivered a mild dressing down. Mentioned offhandedly, unable to suppress a smirk, the importance of school spirit. Reiterated with absolute seriousness English's advice Colleen always leave the door unlocked and at least ajar. Satisfied herself with a perfunctory inquiry as to the editor's knowledge of birth control. Like I say, it was my first PIECE of ass. The sonnet didn't really go all the way either. But at least we had hard copy on file. I have no memory whether that "or any other year" we went to State.