



In the smooth blue mist of the night, a figure is dimly visible in the distance. As the shapes and sensations of barely recognizable events drift past he pursues the figure, or he thinks he does. The pace of the shifting memories quickens, but he will not be daunted, he feels passionately driven to fix the vision of the figure before, before... It seems to be getting closer now, a woman with raven black hair. As the distant figure gathers out of the mist, others appear as well. One of the shapes edges towards him.

At work, and his hands seem glued to the key tops of the computer console. One report after another flows from mind to hand to screen to paper, they come and go so quickly that he can hardly even remember what he's writing. But he doesn't really care, as his focus shifts to the small square of the cursor blinking patiently, it always scoots to the right just in time to avoid being trampled by yet another letter pursuing it's own journey from mind to paper. In the pulsing of the little square he fancies he sees her. *Who?* But she's gone again, just a fleeting tickle in the back of his mind, enough to stir him back to the task at hand.

*Some more coffee just may banish this nagging vision long enough to finish these reports.* As he picks up his mug and heads to the other room for a refill the monitor blinks out, in seeming approval. *Why don't they just let me DO what I do best, instead of always writing these infernal reports about it.*

He walks the path to the coffee machine without the slightest regard for his surroundings, completely preoccupied with his thoughts. *Perhaps it's time for a change of jobs, or ... Yes, a vacation.*

The images cascade freely out as if they were themselves a wave crashing upon the sand that courses between his feet. The sand crabs edge by skittishly as they forage for the tidbits that float in the brine. The coast is a wonderful place to loose it all, always touching some primal place in his soul. A day could be as simple as a swim and a read, or stretch out to include sumptuous dining and lively conversation.

The smell of the coffee snaps him back. The sand crabs return to a darkened recess of his mind where they continue their business undisturbed, until called upon once again to dance across the playing field of his mind. He takes a sip of the warm coffee as he starts back to his office, stepping nimbly aside as the commuter train whisks by toward Oak Park.

*If I catch the 10:18 I'll get to O'Hare by 11.* He still hadn't checked to see whether the secretary had pre-booked the seat or not, but either way he'd have enough time. He places his coat over the back of the seat and once again removes the plastic cover from his coffee, still hoping that by the time he finished the cup it would clear his mind of the remaining wounds from the previous night's drinking.

As he surveys the faces of his fellow passengers he feels a sense of consolation as many of them slowly nurse a cup of joe, or gaze out through dark sunglasses, in spite of the gray overcast that obscures the sky, from the lake well into the west. He settles for a lazy view out the window, as the scenery bounces by.

In the distance, down a broad alley, he sees the Blue Moon, the dance hall where he had often drank as a teenager. This is where he played his first game of pool, learned to polka and slam dance, even bought his first condom, from the machine in the mens room.



Sheila was older than he was, but after much prodding from Tom, the bartender whom he'd known since he was a kid, and some number of vodka-tonics, he finally makes his move. He plunks a couple of quarters into the jukebox and picks out a few songs. First a song a little slower than whatever is playing, anything would prove a welcome respite to the incessant Barry Manilow and Bee-Gees, then a classic show tune, and then the polkas.

Wednesday nights are his favorites, the crowd is a good mix of young and old. The working stiffs are tired, and will leave at the slightest provocation once the clock gets past ten-thirty - his song selection providing that impetus. The older folks, his real friends, were in no hurry, they lived for their polkas, bingo and gin. Those that remained were either other kids like himself, the invisible hangers-on that slipped in and out of society as it suit them, or else people with a need - a shoulder to cry on, a drink to lean on, or a body to press against in the

night, to wash away whatever chains of shame or loneliness or guilt bind them into that closed box of urban night life.

She's in this last group, he's sure. He slowly winds his way over to her, dodging the remaining pool players and dart boards as he approaches her table near the dance floor. Sheila nervously pushes about the butts in her ashtray with her smoldering Salem, hoping that the recent exodus of people from the bar won't mean another night ending at bar time, with her barely sober enough to make the drive home. She's brushing her long black hair from in front of her face as he makes it to the table.

He asks her if she wants to dance. She's a bit apprehensive at first, this lanky kid in the shark skin suit isn't exactly her type, but the very idea of being asked to dance a polka by anyone younger than thirty piques her interest. As soon as they hit the floor he's on automatic pilot. Ole' Frankie had taught him well, he knew that. There's barely a soul on this side of town who can polka like he can, and before long she's caught up in the energy and excitement of the dance. The old timers give him plenty of room on the floor, he's their boy, as they keep dropping quarters into the record machine.

By the time the music stops they're laughing and giggling as they applaud their own performance. For the first time since seeing her from the bar he sizes her up on the way back to her table. Her black hair flies out in a wild spray from her head, with curls so chaotic that they had to be real. The sweat from the dancing outlines her breasts perfectly in the now nearly transparent fabric of the danskin she wears. An ankle length denim skirt, cut to hug from waist to hip, and haratchi sandals complete the outfit that marks her as someone not given to the trend of the moment.

He drops into the empty seat, already envisioning her body riding up and down on him with the same careless energy and rampant lust for excitement that she displayed on the dance floor, when she surprises him with the question. She is still standing, one hand on the back of her chair the other on her out thrust hip, as she asks simply, "Do you want to come over to my place, I've got a dance I'd love to teach you."

The night turns into one long delirious orgasm, neither of them noticing the sun's tentative arrival in the eastern sky. He buries his face between her legs, wanting, for once, to give a woman the greatest pleasure he can, rather than just satisfying some inner feeling that this is what she expects. As he tastes the saltiness of her musk he feels driven from deep inside, eliciting shrieks and moans from her without a single thought for what he is doing. He hardly even feels his own erection bouncing against her leg as he focuses on, even feels, her excitement building. Somewhere in the back of his mind he realists that what he'd been doing up until now was having sex, this is making love.

With a deep guttural moan she pushes him back, and then pulls him up to face her. As he props himself up on his hands, she grasps his erection with one hand, spreading her lips with the other, pulling him into her. He is amazed at his own passiveness in all of this, he is drawn along, his every motion directed by some other mind. With every thrust they stare into each other's eyes, a tantric lust passing between them far surpassing any single sensation he has felt before.

For awhile her ear or shoulder or knee becomes a point of focus for him. He has not a single thought other than to consume her, or feel her. She rubs his chest and nipples with one hand while slowly, gently consuming him. Slowly drawing him into her mouth and then tickling him with her tongue while pulling away. He finds even more arousal in watching her movements, her lips on him, the clarity in her face, her breast sliding up and down along his thigh, than in the sensations coming from his groin.

Then she rises, half silhouetted in the breaking dawn, and mounts him. There's no question but that she is in control, although he senses from the look in her eyes that she too is being lead by some deeper spirit. As she rides him up and down he remembers his impression from earlier in the night, as he imagined the diaphanous fabric of her danskin melting away and

her skirt falling in threads as she humped him wildly.

But now it was not wild. Last night seems so far away – he, in his shark skin suit, out for a piece of ass, and she, another lonely drinker praying that the night would soon end, even though a lifetime of them lay on the horizon. As he felt yet another orgasm building he looks up to her eyes. Her face is cast in the mold of Aphrodite, eyes closed and a mouth without a smile displaying the most sublime pleasure. They move together toward the precipice. “Would you like some more tea?”, his mother asks. He wheels around, profoundly embarrassed at the sound of her voice. Even as he realizes the absurdity of her presence here in Sheila’s apartment the world starts to slip away. “Mom! What are you doing here?” barely makes it’s way out of his mouth than he starts to sense the room around him, and the sound of the morning traffic report blaring through the tinny speaker of the clock radio. With a swing befitting a Golden Gloves boxer fighting for his right to the belt he smacks the snooze button and rolls over.

Closing his eyes he starts to plunge deep into his mind fighting against time to catch the remaining vestiges of the image. Racing against the clock, and the diminishing half life of dreams.