

Rockabilly Rendezvous

By Kenn Hartmann

I need gas, sez Sneaky. She sez, "Let's get wine." Somewhere past the power-lines off the map is a shadowless night but in silhouette doorsteps of a Chicago alley shadows dance like stolen glances. She sez, "the liquor store's lit like a theater." She buys 3 bottles of wine "before they close." Drink slowly – we'll make it last, sez Sneaky.



They walk back through the dancing neon paradise. She asks, "paranoid my husband will find us?" Not really. I'd worry about my sickle first, sez Sneaky. "It's locked in the motel room," she says. That hardly eased his heart – he's seen doors kicked down for less. The drug dealer's addicted clientele didn't worry Sneaky; it was the damn motel manager couldn't be trusted. Sneaky asks, why bring up your husband anyway?

"He called the cops." On who? You? "He wants to." She & Sneaky sweat the night away on warm sticky sheets. They drink wine in the shower. Sleep without sheets. Sneaky peaks through the shade at sunrise & thinks the city's more alive at night. Going to work is dead. She snores. When he opens the door to roll out his sickle she sez, "you going to meet your friends?" Get gas. "Take me with." If you fill my tank & buy breakfast you can go. They ride along lakefront beaches near the college. Perhaps I should enroll, sez Sneaky, earn credit hours. She sez, "I could be a professor." In what? "Aromatherapy – scented candles & essential oils." I could write a book – Married Women & Insane Rituals. "You insensitive asshole. I'm going back to my husband." I'm going south. "He hates that I give you money." He can afford it, sez Sneaky, I need gas. He fills his tank & drops her at a bus stop on Hollywood. She weeps. He waits. The bus arrives & she leaves. He fires his sickle & heads south. Things will be better south he promises himself.

South to Sneaky meant the Southside – he lacked confidence to leave the city, no faith in his machine. He went to his friends on the Southside, "hey bro wat yu got ta go?" Camaraderie, uh huh, sure. The endless rap, everybody raps, Sneaky laments, I'm wore out, tuckered, no rhyme no reason. "Sneaky, you'd better wake up man, stay up - if you snooze you lose." Sneaky sez, I figure I can make it through the burbs' - I already – I'm on probation. "Animosity nothin' cops suck." In the end it's not ideology

that fuels the police state – just an oppressive craving for revenue.

Sneaky's quandary - even his friends eye his wallet. He could ride his crappy bike through a gauntlet of money grubbing municipal checkpoints. He chances it & a couple hours later pulls into the farm. He sleeps in the barn. Crickets lull him to sleep. But he awakes to laughter, strange voices; quiet at first, closer, closer not voices at all, but sport bikes out on the highway at the cornfield's edge. A pack of racers rips apart the night. One rider buzzes through gears & jams an electric barber's razor into Sneaky's ears. His eyes bug out blood shot burn out. Holy shit! Holy fn shit, he mutters off to sleep. In the morning he heads to a rickety biker bar where he meets a writer from Free Rider's Press & spills his story.

Kenn Hartmann
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