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n o m i . h i l l

k e l l y . s c h a c h t

**cagla
aribal**

rabbit plague zugzwang

September 13, 1990, Berlin

Shortly after 2 a.m, when the September air was thinly strewn with drizzle and the grass was richly green and smelled like night, when the stillness was akin to peace in the slanted autumn night, left from a dense summer, the young Frank entered the Tiergarten from the Lichtensteinallee, leaping over the locked gate; listening to his own footsteps rustling through the fallen crispy leaves and the tiny whispers of trees that move of their own accord after the frenzied chorus of the wind. For an hour he had strode and stumbled, not by the most direct route, since he was unused to making the journey on foot, northwards from Schöneberg, then found his way to the shore of the big lake to his left; and there, in the total darkness, shot himself in the heart.

The news of Frank's death spread faster than parasites could conquer his corpse.

On the large rocking bamboo couch in which Frau Dulent and Frank were once in the long habit of meeting, Frau Dulent was laying across the big bed in her satin chemise. She was neither happy to be rid of Frank, this time surely forever, nor unhappy to have lost

**john m.
floyd**

palm canyon

The world ended three weeks before I was born.

Well, that's not quite true. The physical world — the earth, the sky, the stars — remained intact. What ended was civilization.

My name is Michael Barrington, and I was born and raised in a place called Palm Canyon. Not a city, or even a town — just a place, in the low desert of Southern California. In earlier years, before my time, it was a tourist attraction, the largest and greenest of five canyons owned by the Cahuilla Indians. Nestled in the base of the barren mountains near Palm Springs, it was noted for having more palm trees than any other location in the world. (Its neighbor, Andreas Canyon, was second.) I know these facts only because they're printed in a faded color brochure I still keep in a shoebox under my bed — a brochure my mother was carrying in her purse the day she and my father visited Palm Canyon while on vacation from their home in Arizona. She once told me, years later, that she hadn't been pleased with the idea of descending the steep footpath that led from the parking lot to the canyon floor that day (understandable, since she was pregnant with Yours Truly at the time), but my father talked her into it. That was what saved them both from the

christine c.
heuner

empty of me

Eileen has the balls to die in my house, just days before my wife, Pammy, and I unload her on Annie. Pammy and her sisters, Annie and Renee, all housed Eileen on one-month rotations. Pammy and I planned our vacations around her, juggled schedules — pick-ups, drop-offs — negotiated half-months with Annie and Renee, thickened our resentments when they wouldn't budge. For years, Pammy and I wanted to put Eileen in a home. It might be good for her, we said. There will be people her own age. But no. Annie, horrified by a recent news report on elderly abuse, spoke of bed sores and starvation. Renee said we can best take care of her. She's not that much trouble. She reads most of the day anyway, the same book on repeat.

Of the three sons-in-law, Eileen hated me most. She clogged my toilets, filched my almond cookies, and crapped my Egyptian cotton sheets. Pammy says that she did the same in Annie's and Renee's houses — an equal-opportunity crapper — but I know she saved the worst for me. Ever since Pammy and I started dating in high school, Eileen hated me. Something about my big temper. Bullshit.

Pammy and I thought retirement would be easy, but it has turned into child-rearing in reverse; we, the

**nomi
hill**

honey badger

“If you wanna make an omelet, you gotta break some kneecaps.”

An evil yet exuberant laugh followed Jack’s words as he lit a cigarette in the darkness of the earwax gold Cadillac. He was parked out back in the alley behind Dirty Shelley’s gentlemen’s club with his on and off partner in crime, Shea. Both were scruffy white men in their mid to late forties and looked ridden hard and put up wet. They had been in place for nearly three hours and had already smoked their way through three packs of Camels while they bullshitted about past jobs and past women.

The pair waited patiently for their current targets to appear out the back of the sleazy club where they had followed them hours earlier. Jack had paid off a couple of his favorite dancers to persuade these two men out to the alley for a little extra slap and tickle which seemed to be a regular occurrence for them. Jack and Shea had been watching the duo for a little over a week and found that when it was just the two that arrived, they always paid for the backdoor extras.

“You would say something like that. You’re one sick son of a bitch, Jackie. So, what’d you do then?” Shea asked with a chuckle and flicked yet another butt out

kelly schacht



i for intro

/rhyme/

/clear/

\between your thumb and index\

/locate/

\finger to the ear, ear to the ground\

/zero/

\it just takes one beat to get you going\

/count/

\that's your cue\

/deeper/

\feel your mother tongue\

/intuition/

\time to fill up the space\

/cipher/

\unfold the labyrinth, a 360° turnover\

/vocalize/

SORRY, BEEN
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IDEAS FOR THE
BACK COVER AFTER
EIGHT ISSUES. C.

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