



FOR THE LAST 16 YEARS, STEVE HUGHES HAS BEEN LISTENING TO PEOPLE HE MEETS IN BARS, DINERS, HARDWARE STORES AND JOB SITES TALK ABOUT THEIR LIVES. HE WRITES AND THEN PUBLISHES THE STORIES THEY INSPIRE IN HIS ZINE STUPOR. THEIR STORIES—OF INFIDELITY, DRUNKENNESS, DISAPPOINTMENT, AND, SOMETIMES, DUMB LUCK—ARE TOLD LIKE THEY'RE BEING SPOKEN FROM THE BARSTOOL NEXT TO YOU, AS RAW AS THEY ARE REAL. STUPOR: A TREASURY OF TRUE STORIES IS A COLLECTION OF 14 ISSUES DESIGNED BY TOP ARTISTS IN A UNIQUE COLLABORATION THAT DEPICTS A PLACE AND ITS PEOPLE LIKE NO OTHER PUBLICATION OF ITS ERA.

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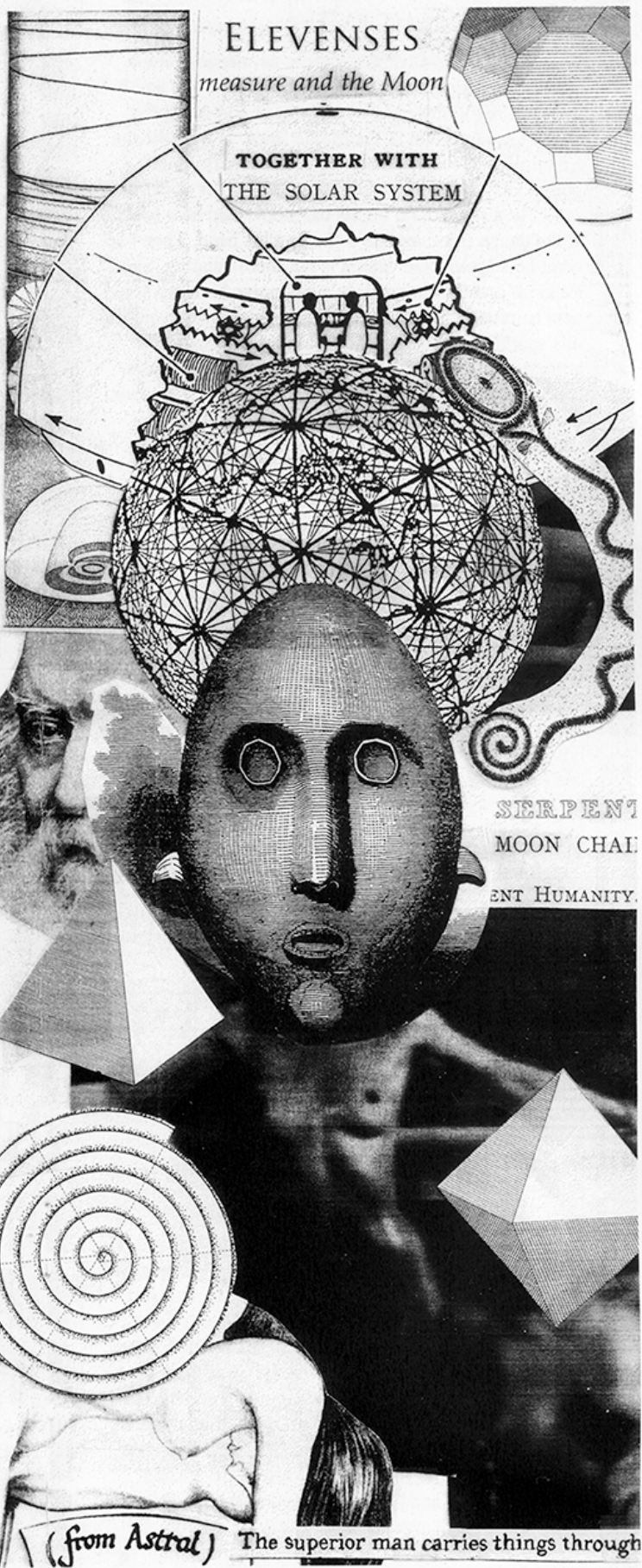
AN ALTERNATE SELECTION OF BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB®
STUPOR CUTS EVERYONE'S GRASS.

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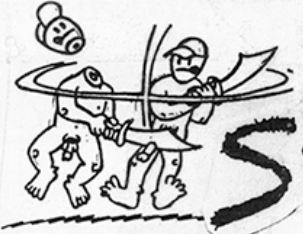


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Stupor is a collection of true stories. Some of these stories, I stole from letters, some I got by informal interview, some by eavesdropping. Most of these stories came to me in a skeletal form. I put skin on them. This issue was assembled by Detroit artist Scott Hocking. I first met Scott back in 2001. He and his friend Clint Snider had just installed a really amazing piece, "Relics," at the Detroit Institute of Art. They stacked the walls with 100-plus boxes they'd built and filled the frames with broken bits of Detroit. It took me off guard. I didn't expect to appreciate it so much. That day, Scott and Clint took my idea of what art could be and they yanked it hard, shook it around and replanted it better. A year or so ago, a photo of one of Scott's projects was snagged and printed in *Time* magazine. It showed a pyramid he had built from busted-up chunks of concrete. It was inside the abandoned Fisher Body factory. It's a cool shrine about the end of commerce and progress. After I saw that shot, I started thinking about the pyramid on the dollar bill. I read somewhere that the shining eye floating there is supposed to be the eye of providence, as if God were overseeing capitalism. Last summer, I was at a gallery in Hamtramck, which had a show about pedestrians in Detroit. Scott had some amazing photos of the I-94 industrial empowerment zone. This neighborhood is wasted. It's gone. The houses, the businesses, the churches have long since been pushed into the dirt. There's a windowless school still standing and some chemical storage tanks, but the streets have flooded and, remarkably, lily pads and little purple and yellow flowers are growing in them. While the city tries to sell off its land to more industrial enterprise, nature is moving in and reclaiming it, making it unsuitable for development. This past December, I was having a beer with Scott, and he talked about a new project he was working on atop the partially collapsed roof of the Packard factory. In one of the massive storage rooms, he had found a bunch of old console TVs. And one freezing, windy-as-fuck day, he leaned a crummy ladder against the old concrete pillars that once held the roof but now only supported sky and air, and he worked the TVs up the supports. They're up there still – and will be till the building collapses or the columns topple. He calls it "Garden of the Gods." Scott's work is fascinating. It makes you think about the past, the future and the amazing things happening very quietly here, right now in Detroit. Check him out at scotthocking.com. Special thanks to Scott for work on this issue. Remember: there's a reason *Stupor* looks good on the back of your toilet. *Stupor* is published by Steve Hughes. All rights reserved © 2010. Back issues are available. Contact me at stevestupor@yahoo.com



DUALITY
opposites



STUPOR

(from Astral) The superior man carries things through

Male, Detroit **TWELVE** *heaven and earth*

I know Joe from way back, before he married Shelia. We were all friends then, his wife and my wife. Me and him. Now we're all older and everything is sort of on the skids. I ran into him at the Magic Stick. It was like the first time in a year, and Joe's got this terrific drunk going. His eyes are blank with it. "I hate her now," he says. He turns around on his bar stool. And he's looking at the dance floor, and he's shaking his head. Then I see what he's looking at. Shelia is out there dancing. She looks so great. I almost didn't recognize her with her new haircut and all the weight she's lost. She's wearing this sparkling dress and she's shining and bouncing around with this new girlfriend of hers. The music is loud and throbbing. Then, suddenly, Joe's tipping from his bar stool. "I gotta talk to her," he says, and he staggers forward across the dance floor. Just for a second he's got hold of her and she spins away. He tumbles forward knocking his face against her back, and he bounces off the ramp of her ass and smashes to the floor with a huge thud. By the time I get there, he's rolled over and blood is coming out the corner of his mouth. "Shit," she says. "Asshole." But he is just lying there, surrounded by legs, by boots and skirts, and all these eyes. Someone is saying, "Oh, Jesus." Then Shelia gives him a jab in the side of the thigh. I'm getting ready to hoist him up, but the two bouncers move in faster. They check him for a heartbeat. They wave the salts under his nose and his eyes flip apart. They hoist him to his feet and escort him down the stairs. So I down my drink and go after them. I get them to walk Joe to my car. I just tell him that if he's going to puke that he's got to do it out the window or open the door. "I'm not going to puke," he says. Then he says, "We should pick up a couple hookers and take them back to Shelia's place and fuck them on her bed." Jesus, I say. Then he says, "Alright, we'll take them to your place." I'm driving up Woodward by White Castle. I'm hungry, so I pull in. I order a sack of ten. You want anything Joe? He snores. The girl at the drive-through hands me my sliders. The bag is warm and heavy. The smell of meat and onions fills my car. She gives me my change. Her fingers around the coins press against my palm and open. I look at her. She is doing a job that I did for one year when I was just out of high school. She can't be twenty. She is a picture of pure boredom. I remember feeling that way too, waiting for my life to unfold. And mine has. It happened already. I fucked it up, one thing at a time. The girl smiles faintly and tells me to have a good night. She closes her window and she is sealed behind glass and rubber gasket. I don't know what to do. I don't know where to go. I can't think. I pull the car over under the bright lights that illuminate the blacktop and I begin to eat. I wonder what my wife is doing now and who she is with. Then Joe, from the back seat, says, "Let's go get some hookers." His eyes are closed and he's stretched out sideways across the seats. His knees are pushed against one door and his neck is bent abruptly against the other. His voice is pinched in his neck. "I've got money," he says.

100 ft. 80 ft. 60 ft. 40 ft. 20 ft. 0 ft.

DREAMLAND

LEI LIU

\$ one dollar

STUPOR

THE FALSE MESSIAH

Wants To Be
Your Dog

CONTAINING THE
PRIMARY FORCE

n = 11, m = 8

*With an Excellent Explanation
by the Noble and Learned Philosopher,
THE MONAD*

one unity

CONCERNING
Sleep.
Sleep.
Sleep.
Sleep.

ALSO
KUNDALINI
OR
SERPENT-FIRE

THE FIRST PART.

Earth

Mountain

Water

Wood

Thunder

Fire

Lake

Heaven

Greater Yin

Lesser Yin

Lesser Yang

Greater Yang

Yin

Yang

2222 QUATERNITY

Male, New Orleans: *two pairs*

We were sitting in a private courtyard in the French Quarter. Green, leafy stalks grew out of the brick walls, and the sun and all its heavy melting heat had passed across the sky and now cut a sharp, glowing line of light on the opposite wall. There was a fish pond with a big, dumb, orange fish, which gazed flatly at us, pumping his mouth as if he were showing us what he'd do if we just gave him a pinch of our pizza crust. Phillip was staying there for a month or something with his wife, who in many ways was very practical, except that she married him. After a lot of drinking, we smoked a joint, and, just to prove that he was still the same crazy bastard, Phillip took his clothes off. "Jesus, Phillip," his wife said, throwing up her hands again. Then she plucked the head off an Easter lily, and fitted the big white trumpet end over the tip of his semi-soft dick. "Go ahead and pollinate," she said. He smiled and sipped his drink. "Phillip wants every party to be an orgy," she said. This wasn't even a party. It was just the four of us, husbands and wives, having drinks and finishing off a pizza. The mosquitoes were just coming out, rising out of the pond, and then skating on its surface, here or there, shitting streams of larvae. The big, orange fish stirred in the water, and his body flicked once or twice toward the insects. I got bit in the neck. My wife was rubbing her arms and Phillip just sat there, in some sort of reverie, his Easter lily dick-helmet tipped to the side, and the mosquitoes landed all over him and fed.

Super
human

HUMAN

ANIMAL

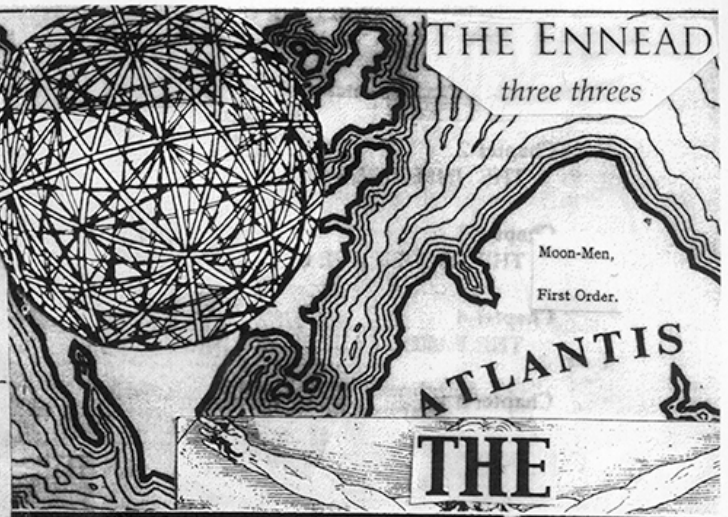
VEGETABLE

MINERAL

ELEMENTAL

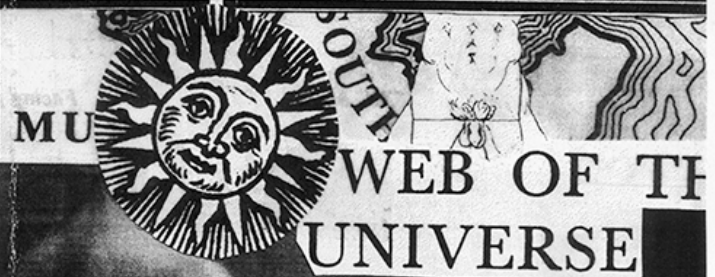
THE ENNEAD

three threes



THE

ARCHETYPE

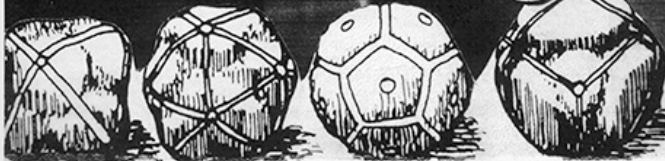


ALL DIRECTION IS CURVED-ALL MOTION IS SPIRAL

Force-Centre
rapidly
rotating



Lords of the Moon.



THINGS SIXY

the hex Six "Spokes"

THE HEPTAD

seven sisters

SEX TRUTHS

De secretis Natura

Heats Up!

CONCERNING ANCIENT MONUMENTS

a Solution of lost Youth, lost love, lost Happiness and Divorce!

PRANA OR VITALITY

INTERNATIONAL HARMONY BASED UPON A MUSIC OF PLANETARY GRID SYSTEMS

GREAT MOUND AT RIVER ROUGE.

CONSCIOUSNESS

BETWEEN THE EYEBROWS CENTRE (96) CLAIRVOYANCE

VITAL FORCE one kind predominant in each centre

CLAIRAUDIENCE THROAT CENTRE (16)

Hermetique Mysterie

UNDERSTANDING HEART CENTRE (12)

BELLE ISLE

TRAVELLING - VITALITY GLOBULES

FEELING NAVAL CENTRE (10)

SEAT OF KUNDALINI

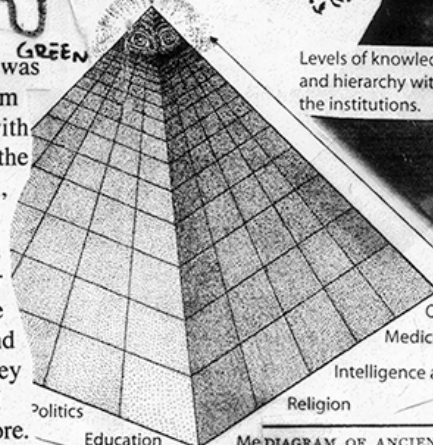
Ancient Language.



The Pyramid of Power

Global elite

Levels of knowledge and hierarchy within the institutions.



MEDIAGRAM OF ANCIENT EARTHWORK, SPRINGWELLS, NEAR DETROIT

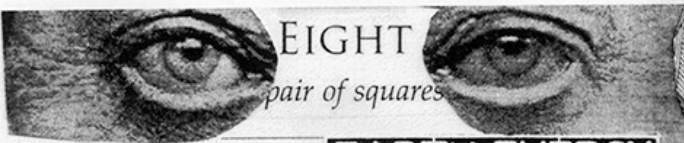


ELLIPITICAL MOUND

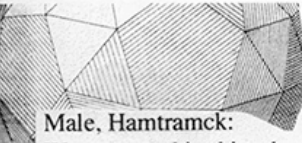
Moon Animal-Men.

Male, Lima, OH

It was Easter. I made a paper cross at church and decorated it with crayons. It was a special day. Mom was going to roast the chickens. We were going to eat them for dinner. Dad held them down, one at a time, and with a quick swing and thwack, their little heads fell onto the ground. "Watch this," he said. And he set them down, and the little bodies jerked around the yard and dark blood ran all over their white feathers. "Look at them go," he laughed. I ran around too, scattering the other birds, the ones with heads still on. After a minute, the wounded flopped over and my dad strung them up and let them drain. The chickens were suddenly dead. They quit moving. I waited for them to come back to life. I wanted to put their heads back on and chase them more.



EIGHT
pair of squares



PHIVE
life itself



Male, Bloomfield Hills: **EARTH ENERGY**

We got this invisible dog fence. It was my wife's idea, and, at the time, I thought it was a good one. These guys came out and set it up. It works like this: You put this special collar on your dog, and if the dumb mutt goes out there near the boundaries of the yard, he gets zapped right in the neck. It works pretty good. My neighbor has one too. Everybody has them now. So I'm out there with my boy, and he wants to try it out. He wants to pretend that he's the dog and to put the collar on and trot over to the edge of the yard to see what it's like to get the shit shocked out of him. I'm shaking my head. No. No way. That's that dumbest idea. But he's whining and whining, and finally he breaks me down. Fine, I say, suit yourself. So he puts the dumb thing on and I help him tighten the strap around his little neck. He barks and pretends to wag his tail. Then he bounces around on his hands and knees over toward the fence line and the collar beeps and then snaps and shoots a little spark into his neck, and he

FOHAT OR
ELECTRICITY
convertible into
heat, light,
sound, motion,
etc.

yelps just like our dog. He comes running back crying because it hurts. Well, of course it hurts. Dumbass kid. What did I tell him? He's such a whiner. He had to figure it out for himself. I take the collar off him and pick him up and carry him into the house. Of course, right away, he tells his mom what happened. "What?!" She snaps at me. "Are you crazy?" she says. "What's wrong with you?" I explain that I thought it would be a good lesson. She sends our son off to get some new pants on. Apparently, he wet himself. Great. Guess who's the bad guy now? Yeah, me, I'm the bad guy. So, whatever. After a while we all forget about it and eat our dinner. Then I put the kids to bed, and me and the wife sink in the couch and watch a movie. The next morning, we all get up and go to church, and all is well and fine. Then Monday, my boy's in school and he gets hit in the face with a basketball, and it knocks him on the ground and he bumps his head. So they send him to the nurse and she asks him if it hurts. He says it did, but not as bad as when his dad put the electric dog collar on him. That really hurt. So all of a sudden these flags shoot up and I'm in big trouble. First, I have to explain to the school social worker, and then the principal, and then even social services from the county. It's bad. It's like they're all trying to assess whether or not I'm fit to be a parent. The truth is that I'm probably not. Nobody ever asked me if I wanted to be a parent. One day I just was. I'm doing my best. I'm sorry if it's not good enough...

MYSTIC SYMBOL

Male, Hamtramck:
We were at this shitty bar, having beers. It used to be a very good gay bar, but now they've got it all wrong. Terrence seemed to be having a hard time looking at me. His eyes were nervous, and they zipped around the room, up to the television, over to the pool table, to the beer signs on the wall to the jukebox, resting on his beer where his fingers worked away, picking the label off the brown damp glass. I had to touch his hand just to bring him back. Hey, I said, Where the hell are you? "I'm thinking," he said, "I'm just thinking about stuff." I'm not thinking, I said, I'm tired of thinking. I've been doing it all day. It's time to relax. "You're right," he said. We sipped our beers. I watched the door for people I knew. I didn't feel like explaining anything to anybody. There was nothing to explain. But anybody who knows him or his wife would wonder. Even if they didn't ask, they'd wonder. They'd look at me and look at Terrence and say, "So... What are you all up to?" The door opened again and again. It was cold out there. You could taste the smoky, idle city air. Terrence emptied his beer again, and we talked about other stuff besides his dull, bitchy wife or my last completely unlovable partner, stuff that wasn't so depressing, and we were finally getting drunk, and we laughed and remembered why it was so important to drink together. There was a straight couple dancing next to our table. She had great hair, and she knew how to wear it. Damn. She was fantastic-looking, even if she was a bitch. She wrapped her arms around her man and stared into his eyes and kissed him, and they were glowing. She caught me watching and said, "Don't worry. We're married." And Terrence busted up laughing. You all look really cute, I said. "So do you guys," she said, "You guys look great." I know she was right. It's true. Terrence shook his head. "That's a good one." Terrence was finally drunk and he smiled at me. It'll be snowing when we leave here. The streets will be white and clean and pure as these streets can be. New and crisp. The snow will cover the potato chip bags and the half-pints of Crown Russe and the pizza boxes left on the sidewalk for crushing and slipping. Terrence was looking at his phone. He was ready to go. He'll want to take me back to my new apartment and hoist me against the wall and push his mouth to mine. He'll want me to wrap my legs around him. He'll want to lower me to the hardwood floor. He'll want and want and want for like twenty minutes, and then he'll stop, and get hammered by that crazy sense of shame, and he'll have to race home to his stupid wife. It makes me so mad. I want to kick him. I want to kill him. But mostly I want fuck him. I couldn't wait for him ditch that bitch. I don't know. I was pining away for this straight. I was stupid too. We raised our beers. The bottles glowed in our hands. We clinked their necks, and they made a high hollow sound. We drank. And the beer seeped in and coated us. It smoothed out a lot of the complicated crap. The bottles shined with possibility.

That which pushes upward does not come back

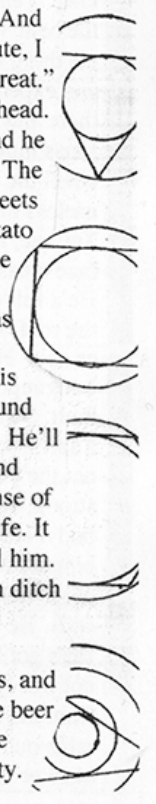


FIG. 22.

TEN

fingers and thumbs



THREE

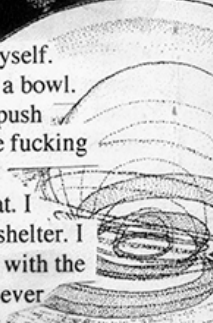
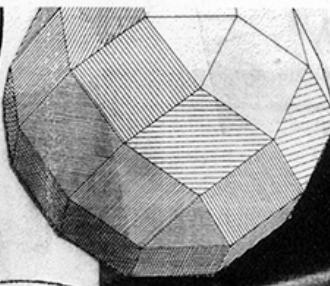
is a crowd

SUN

33

Female, Hamtramck:

I come home with a bucket of chicken, all for myself. I'm going to eat it and watch the TV and smoke a bowl. I climb the stairs and fit the key in the lock and push open the door with my foot, and he's there at the fucking table. Where he's not supposed to be. There's a restraining order on him. Not that I asked for that. I didn't want it. They made me do it at the dumb shelter. I only stayed there two nights. The fat, ugly bitch with the orange hair, she's the one who said to. Like she ever understood anything about anything. You're not supposed to be here, I say, and I start laughing. He came to give me a gift, he says. A gift to say he's sorry about punching me in my stomach and leaving those dark bruises on my ribs. That was a bad, stupid thing, and he didn't mean it. It's fucking hot in my apartment. He is sweating. He opens his hand. He gives me a gold bracelet and necklace. He's put his hand on my ass and he's turning me around and puts the necklace on me, and I feel the warm metal draping my neck and my collarbones. There's a little gold Jesus on a cross. Where the fuck did you get this? I ask. He shrugs. When I ask again, he starts to get mad. He says, "It don't matter." I like it. So I kiss him deep, and I split my legs around his knee. Tell me, I say. He won't say nothing. I undo him at the belt. What I'm doing is going to make him mad since his thing barely works. You can't shoot junk like he does and expect it to keep going. Dumbass. Now it just sits there and makes everything worse, and he gets all angry. I kiss him. I work my hand down to his thing. I can smell the bad, dead smell of his balls and his sticky, useless meat. I work it, trying to bring the blood to it. Tell me, I say. And when I do, he pushes me away. His face creases and goes red like the coils on the oven top. He's full of the kind of fire that could put holes through the roof. I can't get him hard, and that makes him crazy as shit. He's like a pitbull that all his life got fed nothing but gunpowder and rat poison. I know that's not his fault. So I'm like, fine, I already know, and I don't give a shit who you stole it from. If it's gold, real gold and not the plated shit, I'll wear it. "It's gold," he says. He's strong, and his muscles stretch and strain all over his body. He's got muscle bulging out of his head. He sits himself down and takes up a piece of my chicken. He snaps his teeth shut and bites the knobs off the bone ends. He crunches them up. It's like eating with a dog. He's got bad problems. It's true, but he's smart. He's not just lying there and letting the black dirt and soot from the incinerator pile up on him, because it will. It rains out of the sky, and it will bury you, and turn you blacker than black if you lie there long enough. It will.



For Play



Male, Ann Arbor

I used to go to Jeff's after school. My parents worked and so did his. We had all this time to kill. One day, we found his dad's porn collection, not just magazines but videos. We watched them, one at a time, all the way through. It made me sick. I was unable to think of anything else except what those women could do with their amazing bodies. That was when I learned the business of working it myself. It was a revelation. I'd close my eyes and think about Jeff's mom. She was plain and ordinary but very nice. I couldn't imagine her doing any of that stuff from the movies, but then I did. I thought how she might take off her clothes. Of course she was older and knew everything, and I was very young and needed her badly. I needed her like nothing I'd ever needed before. My body throbbed and drizzled with the thought of her. I hit myself to stop it. I punched myself in the stomach and doubled over. I wanted to talk to her and tell her everything. I thought if I could explain it right, she'd understand, and she'd see how she could help me. But I was nervous around her and couldn't speak. Months later I met this girl, and she liked me, so I asked her to be my girlfriend. She was younger than me, which made me worried. Still, I liked her and we made out all the time, but she didn't seem happy about my hands. There was always a lot of unzipping and re-zipping and unzipping again and re-zipping again and pushing me away, saying, "Don't." When I finally broke up with her in the woods behind my house, she hit me and pushed me, and her face got this terrible, hurt look. Then she turned and ran home. I remember thinking that's just what girls do. It's like this on TV too. I saw an *After-School Special* just like this. It foretold my life. Probably I was going to die in a car accident too, just like the guy in the movie, and it was going to be the saddest thing. It was like I was already up there, in the clouds, looking down on all these teenage girls at my funeral, and Jeff's mom would be there too with a nice low-cut top. All of them dressed totally hot and crying their dribbly girl tears.

Kinky Business

SOLAR ENERGY