

HOSEY

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Beard of Bees Press
Number 56 · November, 2008

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Moonball

Bushes of bluebirds and pea green berries infest ten-gallon hats on a rack. Try one on and twirl across the salon. Halt, extend arms, palms out, eyes wide, and open mouth. Toss one to your partner by his secret boyfriend. Not quite connecting love triangle in the midst of framed paintings wallpapering to the heavens. One picture for every season since the turn of the century painted from postcards. Moonball rising high over midnight blue tinted snowheavy firs. Tracks in the snow resemble a contour of Hissy, in the kitchen stirring a kettle of garbage soup with a rolling pin. Smells like old newspapers. Dash of rosemary, heads of cabbage, and hunks of anonymous meat fat and all. Bubbles boiling sticks of butter. Hissy's oblivious to our ball. I go check on lunch while covert lovers play Heart and Soul. Tinkling piano keys soak into the walls as they segue into kissy kissy.

Uncle Harland's

He held me one time in his musty white suit while I ran my chubby fingers through his rooster patch.

He owned a chicken empire but only brought one bucket.

Lincoln Apartments

Deb Penn table dances for burned out locals and fellow residents. Her window's wide open. Chun stands in the middle of the junker-filled lot facing the Penn's. He should be witnessing this spectacle, but he's sleepwalking. Chun patters back inside, his chicken legs goose bumped from only wearing whitey tights. He pulls them down around his ankles and pees in Don's closet.

The kids are hardscrabble at the only project in Knightstown. Single moms smoke squares and gossip on the front lawn while their kids terrorize each other. Moms don't mind the young ones playing grenades with wooden blocks.

Many marks are left on foreheads.

Kid's club convenes around the gated-off dumpster. The rowdies send the weak ones diving into the week's worth of refuse. Greg finds a barely used Operation table. Mikey wants and Greg talks tough. A big wheel flies at him chipping teeth. A-Team is on at four. Assembling all action figures and a black plastic van to faithfully reenact the action live. This continues through the Dukes of Hazzard and on some nights MacGyver. Chun pedals his Duke's big wheel in the hope it will take off into the sky like E.T. Toys covered in heaps of sand. Ben Penn and his little sister strap some with Black Cats. At the bottom of the slide they pile up one after another on top of Charlie. "Help me, woman," he creaks. Bumble braiding Hee's hair glances over and continues crossing blonde strands through his fingers.

Bernadine

Her double wide Cadillac, bejeweled with excessive electronic gadgets and displays, picks us up outside of Lincoln Apartments on Saturday. She leers back, places gum in her ears, and tells us, “Be quiet and keep your hands to yourselves, kitties”. Hee and I immediately proceed to fight tooth and nail. Caddy rocking front, back, and side to side all the way to Overman’s Plumbing and Heating. There they disperse our powdered milk and cheese brick. Bernadine takes her cheese and cradles it across the street to L&W’s deli counter for slicing. Somehow she never raises an eyebrow, despite her Harry Caray spectacles with a diamond encrusted B and the auto show Cadillac taking up two spaces.

I just gnaw cheese.

The hunk of cheddar tastes delicious.

Uncle Kenneth's

You could cook eggs off of his cement patio. Little Kenny will help you. He gave Crazy Mary a dish of peanuts that she is still passing out even though there is no one left in the room. If you feel someone standing over you while sleeping it is her. She recently came back from Washington D.C. on a mission to meet the President. They had important matters to discuss since she is the Queen of the universe.

I do not kill my animals

Dumb as a box of rocks Ginger never has a sense of home or direction. She wanders off daily into the corn fields across the road, hanging with the runaways from the Home. Either we find her by driving around hollering, “Ginger, ginger, tweet, tweet”, or the Animal Shelter hauls her away in their Paddy wagon packed full of strays and Sale Barn farm animals nobody bid on.

In the end we believe Eli Lilly’s kidnapped her. Susie lost a few to them too when she was a kid. A suited man in a pea green four-door sedan snatched a whole batch of kittens at the end of Susie’s long and winding driveway. She could do nothing but silently whimper from where she hid underneath the baby foot bridge while the Blue River runoff slicked her toes. The word around town is animals are being lifted by Lilly’s for experimental testing in order to better the human race.

Meemie's Sugar Dumplings

Sliced through Meemie's parlor squeezed by Uncle Robin's ivory hands. He's pink-faced and simmering. We pick his back pocket taking a big red comb while poking him in the rear with one of Meemie's candlestick holders. Stop it, Robin! They're just kids. Wrap us up in blankets. Put on Golden Girls. Prepare frozen pizzas. Kiss me, Miss Piggy. I am Kermit the Frog. Slobber all over my face. I have to keep reminding we're not supposed to like this. My last name is Hutson not Richey or is it Richey-Hutson? I bet they'll never want me back if I cover their walls in baby powder. I poop in a cookie tin and sling it at their house.

Raysville

Cutting through the curly q takes you within your first whiff of the Sale Barn. A pig farm smell that burns the inside of your nose hairs. A mix of fresh manure cakes and filthy animals. Every Saturday you can hear it for a mile. Fifty-five, sixty-five, can I get a ninety-five, ninety-five, OK sixty-five down in front, how about sixty-five and a quarter? Hibbidy, hibbidy, honk, honk, and a dollar. Don't raise your hands little boy. Keep them behind your back or you'll go home with a heifer. Cars by the yard. Congestion in Raysville. All gather around to stand and hear scribble, dibble, flimflam, sixpence, and a buyer. Round the corner and now you're on Old U.S. 40. Used to be the Route 66 until they built 70. Gem motels died by the dozen. This is where the shame sets in. Everyone will see you not in a car. They'll laugh and yell at you. All you have to do is to make it over Blue River. Above where the bears roamed wild. Past the juiced-up football players in the back of a pickup, throwing egg sliders.

Everything in life was free

They used to care about us then. We bought groceries receiving change for food stamps. Lincoln Apartments paid us to live there. That is where I met my green friend D\$. We floated around together in Grandma's nightgowns after riding Blue River's current underneath Three Bridges. Midnight scrawls of RR and D\$ on cement walls using crumbled chunks of that same wall. The fire we built on shore never kept us warm. Not the point anyway in the land of lost stoves, potties, and tangled briar patches gating trails at eighty-five degree angles. Plateau at the abandon railroad tracks Grandma rode past on 67 years ago waving goodbye to a simpler life headed towards Baltimore.

We walk those same tracks now to avoid police or Nic's gang trying to finish what they started. Commotion closes in we cannonball into Blue River swimming recklessly until we are gently deposited into Grandma's house on the hill just in time for dried beef gravy and biscuits.

Hosey

Nic and his gang blow big trees. They ride before school banging Fifth Ward Boys. Schools nothing but throwing down Euchre for the first few periods. Freshen up at lunch. Slide through the rest of the day. Load up the Hosey mobile then endlessly loop the square. Creep through the three stoplights and turn around at Checker. For an extended lap turn around at Pic 'N' Save.

When all the girls go hide in their parent's homes we kick it Goose Roadsipping fatties. T rolls those table legs. Levi does it better except he's sliding his hands down Eby's jeans. I take Hosey mobile off road and bounce backon again, coming to a complete stop out by the Tree. Do anything you want here under the cover of miles of corn fields. You can hear anyone coming, silence accompanied by the hum of distant generators.

HMH

Three cigarette ride rocking baby blue scrubs. T-shirt or bare chested beneath the V-neck, depends on how saucy I feel. Don the hairnet and latex to dish out slop to employees, patients, and visitors. Not doing your sidework anymore, Maria. Rather talk to Liz about Bob Seger.

I kill cars

My right hand man and pharmacist Kevin doses me after cracking out with James. Falls back into the Probe. We decide to take advantage of the slick, icy church parking lot. I get going good. Kevin reaches over and yanks up on the emergency brake whipping that Probe in circles with glee. This also works in reverse. Have to find something to do to top that. The snow mound leading to the church is lush frosting. Try to climb, but the Probe whaps right into it. Guess we'll have to take care of this in the morning.

After lines and a tow truck Kevin and I barely make it to the stop sign. The Probe lost all of his fluids on the road behind us.

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Chicago, IL

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