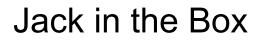


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JACK-IN-THE-BOX -LAURIE LESSEN REICHE

Behold the bloodless puppet rising out a cheap quadrangular man-hole. Fluorescent mandarin hair forming a deceptive heart around alabaster skin, framing his daisy petal eyes, his pink colossal nose, and boomerang mouth.

Lifeless flat arms are convenient for his clever retreat down the hollow enclosure of his one-man-circus where night and day he waits legless for the monotonous metallic tune to set him free.

And he goes on contemptuously smiling at the little ones who sometimes laugh or cry at his startling appearance into our civilized world where he is slave to tickle-me, in bondage to humor and relief.

Only I have seen the devil he becomes when I stare at him at night in a baby's still room, his eyes fierce and fiery inciting diabolical deeds and fearful notions of uncontrollable rage.

Heartless Jack, I would smash you to bits for the threats you so mockingly spit out at me, while you watch me cringe, subservient to your fiendish tricks. But how would I explain to the little girl that mama killed the Jack-in-the-box before the Jack-in-the-box killed her? The Tuxedo Archives, Vol. 2006 [2017], Art. 9