

When I got home, Marilyn yelled, where in hell you been, dinner's spoiled? I thought of saying that I was out drinking with the boss, but it just popped out that I stopped to watch a big fire. She was surly all night, but the burnt dinner tasted better than the cooked ones.

Later, when Marilyn was in the bathroom throwing mud on her face or whatever, I got Trudy on the phone. She was crying I didn't love her. I said, listen baby, I've been lying all day, don't you think I want to tell the truth? She got happy. I looked up and winked at myself in the hall mirror.

In bed, Marilyn yawned and asked what time it was. Twenty to two, I mumbled, too lazy to look. She wondered how in hell it had gotten so late.

THE HAND OF THE POTTER

Al got off booze by making rifles. I helped him.

We used to work all night, every weekend in his basement. Al sanded and drew designs and I packed bullets. We never talked. Sometimes, we took a break and looked through gun magazines. We went to bed late. It was nice to stand by the window, looking out at the snow.

One night, Al loaded an 1842 Range Shooter, put the barrel to his head and pulled the trigger. It didn't work. He grabbed a Colt Scout Pistol, put a bullet in the chamber, stuck it in his mouth and shut his eyes. It didn't work either.

We cleaned up the shop, tossed the magazines in a corner and went up to bed. The snow blew against the windows.

Next morning, a little after dawn, he started drinking.

-- John Lowry

Brooklyn NY