

The paramedics came and put the jogger in the back of the ambulance, administered oxygen, shocked his chest till his legs kicked up in the air. Bob asked the guy in charge if he'd make it. The guy said, "Hell, no. He's deader'n a doornail right now."

Bob went in and brushed his teeth, he felt dirty. He'd always hoped if he had to do something like that, it'd be a nineteen-year-old girl, not some sweaty, paunchy, forty-five-year-old man who hadn't even shaved that day, for Christ's sake.

Marti (Martha) said, "Did you save the man's life, Daddy? Did you?"

Bob said, "I'm afraid not honey. The man died."

Marti couldn't wait to go to school tomorrow and tell all her friends about it. She laid her school clothes out. Glenda said, "There's no school tomorrow, honey. It's Saturday." Marti put her clothes away, disappointed.

Glenda had explained to Robbie that Daddy was trying to save the man's life, not kiss him, but it didn't seem to take. He hardly said a word all night, went right to his room after dinner.

Stan watched himself getting worked on from up above, the roof or a tree limb, he guessed.

"Hello, son," said his old man, heels hooked in the rain gutter, "You really got 'em jumpin' down there, huh?"

Stan said, "Yeah," smiling. "I'd always hoped if something like this happened to me that it'd be a nineteen-year-old girl doin' the mouth to mouth, you know what I mean?"

The old man chuckled, "I sure do."

"Well Old Timer," said Stan, "What happens next?"

#### BACK YARD TAN

Ruth put on her bikini, got her beer emblem beach towel, and went out to the back yard to soak up some rays. She laid on her back with her straw hat over her eyes, her snow-white, baby-oiled skin reflecting the sunlight, blinding passing birds, knocking them out of the sky.

She rolled over, undoing the strap on her bikini to avoid the white line on her back, putting her head on her arms and settling in, undulating into a position of comfort like a shiny albino sea lion.

Clete, the next-door neighbor, out watering his garden, looked over the fence and quickly looked away, saying, "Oh jeez."

Jeffrey, the paperboy, rang the doorbell, trying to collect from Ruth and Ellis. Nobody answered. But he knew somebody was home, he could hear the television. He walked around to the side gate and opened it, sticking his head through to look into the back yard. Ruth rose up at the sound of the creaking hinges, one huge, doughy breast breaking free from her bikini top and hanging down toward the lawn. Jeffrey pulled back and leaned against the cool stucco wall, gasping for breath as a snowy egret fell from the sky, landing with a thud at his feet.

#### THE LITTLE DIGGERS

Rusty, Chuck and Nadine's floppy-eared, formerly libidinous little dachshund laid moaning in the three-sided cardboard box with the blanket in the bottom: they'd had him fixed.

"No more roaming for you, Romeo," said Nadine as he came out of the anesthesia.

Two doors down, Juanita was doing some moaning too: her Ginger, a bug-eyed, spindly-legged Chihuahua, had just given birth to a litter of mongrel puppies, the length of their bodies leaving little doubt as to their paternity.

"Rusty," she hissed, "You stepped out with Rusty." Ginger wouldn't look her in the eye.

Chuck brought in a bowl of fresh ground round and set it in front of Rusty's bed. "Hey fella, how you feelin'?"

Rusty gave him a pit bull glare and went back to licking his bag, a black, wrinkled, pitted prune with stitches.

They'll probably dig up my yard, thought Juanita, everyone knows what diggers dachshunds are. She picked one up. It squirmed and cheeped, moving its head back and forth on its weak neck, blindly searching for a tit. It whimpered and Juanita stroked the soft fur, ashamed of her impetuous plan to fill the laundry sink in the garage and be done with them. She laid him back down in the bed where he