

“Memory Lane”

He stumbled through the land fill without any apparent direction. His hazel eyes were wide and staring below his brown hair. His glasses sagged to the bridge of his nose and his steps were uncertain. Smells of mold and refuse were thick in the air. He smiled to himself as he looked down. Among the ripped black bags, egg cartons, dirty diapers, and a huge array of other discarded trash he reached into an old box and grasped a plastic figurine. It was made in the image of a cowboy. The yellow plastic was dirt caked and missing an arm. The gun he held in his other hand was bent. Slowly he began to talk to himself. “I remember.”

He smiled as he thought of the times he had with his dad when he was seven. They would sit together on the soft green carpet of the living room and line up their troops. His father made Indian noises while his son made the sounds of gun fire. They both laughed, his father’s crystal blue eyes sparkled in the light as he lovingly looked at his son, chuckling softly. The lines that were on his face were those of smiles and wisdom. Finally all the Indians were defeated... he always let his son win.

The boy sighed as he unwillingly returned to the present. He trudged on through the wasteland. He heard glass crunch underfoot and he continued his trek. Rats and birds made haste to leave his meandering path as he walked like a drunkard. It was then that he came upon an old mattress. The tarnished blue cloth clung skeletally to the springs that were within it. The boy fell to his knees and rested his head on the filthy thing. Again he said, “I remember.”

His mind was filled with visions of a joyous past. He was in his room and next to him was a girl. She had long brown hair that was held back in a ponytail. She looked nervous and he happy. Her dark brown eyes gazed into his as he began to grin at her. They both looked the same age about sixteen. Slowly he leaned towards the girl and pressed his lips against hers. She pulled away and looked shocked, but slowly she smiled looking upon him with love and then drew him close in a kiss... their first one. The man who lay face down on that mattress began to weep.

Tears rolled down his face and soaked into the old cloth that his head was resting on. He slowly pushed himself back to his feet. Gazing around he cried, “I want to be seven again and play cowboys with my dad, I want to go back and kiss my girlfriend again for the first time, I don’t want to grow up, I don’t want to be an adult! I don’t want my dad to get old and sick, I don’t want my girlfriend to go to college and never be with me again!” Sobbing he reached into the waist of his denim jeans and pulled out a silver handgun. The sun glinted off its surface as he placed the barrel under his chin. His old dirty T-shirt sagged on his shoulders spotted with tears. In the distance a gulls cry could be heard.

Softly he began to squeeze the trigger. In an instant he was back on the ground. A smile was on his face and he thought he heard the sounds of Indians as everything went black.