

1332 North Illinois

by Tori Kensington

My gait grates against the norm. Now mobile, my now noble gift from the Veteran's Administration's ability to formulate forms, makes me able to carry my clothes to the laundromat alone, unaided and unwheeled. Rehabilitated at last, my mobility shows my agility: to make leather sinews and chromium bones articulate the bandage flesh toned polyurethane hide to caper and dance as a rusty wind-up toy soldier: not like a Fred Astaire, but like those we avoid seeing as they walk, wishing rather, that they would return to the chair and be wheeled, not wheeling with swaying pelvises defying gravity and the terrazzo.

Now the toe of my right shoe points straight ahead, and seems afraid to reach the floor before my heel, as if the ghost of the would-be occupant remembers the shock of separation, and was afraid of the lonely flight across the sky of Penom Phen, so gallantly streaming, purple-hearted by a carnivorous claymore.

Brilliant it is at night, as it stands alone: a fray of sinuous straps at the hip showing more grace by itself than when it is attached to me who pilots it. It pilots me, rather. It walks me away from dances with pretty women, swimming pools, escalators and the society my doctor assured me I could rejoin.

The standardized flesh color mocks the other, and I like Gloucester must stumble with the truth. There is no Edgar or daemon to help me with my self-pitying fall. And if I see the laundromat linoleum come dashing towards me, like the truth of my strapped on sickroom as it fails in the illusion of locomotion, I'll meet it again with palms outstretched, without an ass or salvation.