

LET'S GO TO BED

CHARLES HARAD

The key is turned in the lock, the door opens and George stumbles in to be greeted by his not-so loving wife.

"Well . . . it's about time!"

"So what."

"Three o'clock in the morning . . . and look at you . . . a fine looking specimen!"

"Aw shuddup . . . a guy can't even have a couple of beers without catching Holy Moses around this joint."

"Don't tell me to shut up. I'll say what I've got to say and you . . . can't . . . make me . . . shut up!"

"And . . . you . . . can't . . . make . . . me . . . listen. I'm going to bed. Get outta my way."

"I'll get out of your way when you hand over your billfold, I want to see how much of your pay those poker-playing bums took this week."

"It's none of your damned business. It's MY money, not yours. I work for it. If I want to play a little poker that's MY business."

"And it's MY business when there's to money to pay the bills. Do you know how much money we owe?"

"No, and care less. To hell with it. Let's go to bed, I'm tired."

"You're not going to bed until we get a few things settled."

"What's there to settle? I get paid, go out for a few beers, play a little poker and come home a little late. SO . . . what's there to settle?"

"So, you get paid . . . go out and get drunk . . . lose your pay gambling . . . and stumble in at three o'clock in the morning, , , , THAT'S WHAT THERE IS TO SETTLE!"

"Oh for Cripe's sake. Same old stuff. I've been hearing it every payday for the past twenty years. Let's got to bed. I'm tired."

"Yeah, that's right. For twenty years you've done the same thing every payday. You get paid . . you get drunk and you lose your money."

"And come home and catch hell!"

"That's not all you're going to catch. The landlord called and said if we don't catch up on the back rent we have to move."

"So what. The damned place is ready to fall to pieces. Did he say anything about fixing the toilet that don't flush?"

"And the finance company was here to pick up your car. Said you were three payments behind."

"Good thing I had the car with me."

"He'll be back in the morning . . . EARLY."

"To hell with them. The damned car is worn out."

"My mother was right. I should never have married you."

"Your mother's a crock of . . ."

"Don't you dare! My mother's a smart woman. If I'd taken her advice I'd have married someone else."

"I wish you'd taken your mother's advice. Let's got to bed, I'm tired."

"I told you we're NOT going to bed until we get some things settled."

"Like f'rinstance?"

"Like for instance WHERE'S . . . THE . . . MONEY . . . TO . . . PAY . . . THE LANDLORD?"

"To hell with the landlord."

"And like for instance WHERE'S THE MONEY TO PAY THE CAR PAYMENTS?"

"We'll walk. We need the exercise. You're getting broad across the backside."

"You leave my backside alone!"

"I won't lay a hand on it."

"AND . . . the money to pay the bank!"

"Let 'em wait. They've got a vault full of money. They don't need mine."

(Gets her hand in his pocket on his billfold)

"The billfold, George . . . DON'T YOU DARE STRIKE ME!"

"GET YOUR COTTON-PICKING FINGERS OUTTA MY POCKET! HEY . . . GIVE . . . ME . . . MY . . . MONEY!"

(She has the billfold. It's bulging with money. Her eyes are also bulging.) "George, what's all this money doing in your billfold? There must be a THOUSAND DOLLARS in there!"

"Thirteen hundred and fifty, to be exact."

"You mean . . ."

"Yeah, I won the raffle for the thousand bucks and a couple of hundred playing poker. The rest of it's my pay."

“You mean you didn’t lose your pay and all this money is ours . . . really ours!”

“Where do you get that *OURS* business. . . . Oh, hell, take it and pay the bills and get yourself some new rags. . . . do whatever you want with it.”

“Oh, George, KISS ME! You’re such a wonderful husband! I’m tired. LET’S GO TO BED!”

A POEM

MARTHA MOLDT

Up-gullied,
Dust-bitten,
Sun-sticky,
Shade-cooled,
Breeze-grateful,
We hiked
Along the creek,
Whose gentle music
Flowed downstream
Against our hot
And swollen minds;
Cooling us with
Seductive green thoughts
Of its depth-bounded
Secrets.