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# Winesburg, Indiana: Inspector 4

Michael Martone

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## Winesburg, Indiana: Inspector 4

### **Abstract**

I am in quality control. I am quality control. I control quality here at the Pink Pearl factory. My job is to write out something, anything, on this piece of paper, and, then, test the eraser, a random nub from the lot, and erase, erasing every word. So, I use my test, this simulation, to write to you. I write this to you who worry that there will be evidence, a record, of our secret. "I just don't want anybody hurt," you write to me. "Destroy this," you write at the end of the note where you wrote "I just don't want anybody hurt." I'm an expert, making language disappear.

### **Keywords**

redundant, copy, boring, dull

### **Cover Page Footnote**

**Note:** "This story is exclusively available in the anthology, *Winesburg, Indiana*, published by Breakaway Books, an imprint of Indiana University Press, in the spring of 2015. Available wherever fine books are sold, borrowed, or used as dowry."

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November 30, 2012

## Winesburg, Indiana: Inspector 4

Michael Martone

Inspector 4

I am in quality control. I am quality control. I control quality here at the Pink Pearl factory. My job is to write out something, anything, on this piece of paper, and, then, test the eraser, a random nub from the lot, and erase, erasing every word. So, I use my test, this simulation, to write to you. I write this to you who worry that there will be evidence, a record, of our secret. "I just don't want anybody hurt," you write to me. "Destroy this," you write at the end of the note where you wrote "I just don't want anybody hurt." I'm an expert, making language disappear. No more phone calls. "Your number will show up on the bill," you say when you call. "Strike me," you whisper, "from the call log on your phone." I control quality. I am qualified. I make space. Gaps. I erase erasures. "We must," you say, "not get carried away," "Delete 'Delete'." "You are driving me crazy," you write in the email, my email dangling down below where I have typed that you drive me crazy not from what you write but the way you hold my head, your fingers rubbing through my hair, how I spread open your lips with my tongue, its tip touching that nub, your pink pearl, sanding it flat, the stubble of my beard, iridescent irritant. "Rubbed raw," I write. Abrasion. My hand in your mouth. You gagged silent. No one should know any of this. Ever. We must control ourselves. Not write down anything. No evidence. Forget even this. Nothing left but some

*Booth, Vol. 4 [2012], Iss. 11, Art. 5*  
crumbs rubbed clean, brushed from the empty, empty, empty, empty paper.

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I am in control. I control. I control here  
 the Pink Pearl write out something,  
 anything,  
 on this piece, test the eraser, a random nub  
 erase, erasing every word. my test, this  
 simulation, to write to you. I write this to you who worry  
 there  
 will be evidence, a record, our secret. "I just don't want  
 hurt," you write to me. "Destroy this," you write at the end  
 you wrote "I just don't want hurt." I'm  
 making language disappear. No phone calls. "Your number will  
 show up," you say when. "Strike me," you  
 whisper,  
 "from the call I control  
 I make space. Gaps. I erase erasures. "We must," you say, " get  
 carried away "Delete 'Delete'." " driving me crazy," you  
 write dangling down below where I have typed  
 you you write the way you hold my  
 head, your fingers rubbin through my hair, I spread your lips  
 my tongue, its tip touching that nub, your pink pearl, sand it  
 flat, the stubble, iridescent irritant. "Rub raw," I  
 write. Abrasion. My hand in your mouth. gagged silent. No one  
 know any of this. Ever. We control ourselves. write

down evidence. Forget even this. Nothing left some  
crumbs rubbe clean, brush from the empty, empty, , empty  
paper.

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I m in control. I c nt . c nt here  
 the Pink Pearl write out me , any i ,  
 this piece , test the eraser, random nub  
 erase, eras every wo . my test is  
 simulation, to rite you. I rite you worry there  
 will be our secret. "I just want  
 hurt," me. Destroy this at the end  
 I just want I'm  
 making language disappear. No . "Your will  
 show up you say . Strike me you whisper,  
 call I control  
 I make Gaps. erase erasures. We must get  
 carried away "Delete 'Delete'. " " me crazy, you  
 dangling down below where I typed  
 you you the way you hold my  
 head, fingers rubbi through hair, I spread lips  
 my tongue, tip touch that nub, your pink pearl, sand it  
 flat, the stub scent irritant. Rub raw I  
 it Abrasion. hand in mouth gag silent. No one  
 now any of this. Ever. We rol ourselves. writ  
 do evidence Forget this Nothing some  
 crumbs rubb clean, b ush o the , empty, , empty paper.

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in           c nt . I                   c nt . c nt                   here  
 Pink Pearl                           rite       me , an i ,  
 this pie                           ,                   the eraser,       rand nu  
                   erase, era       eve wo .                   test is  
 simulation,                   you. I                   you worry       there  
 will                           our secret.       just           want  
                   me. Destroy                   the end  
                   I just           want  
 language disappear. No                   .       You       will  
 show up                   you                   . Strike me you  
 whisper,  
                   call                   I control  
 I make                   Gaps.       erase       sure .       We must           get  
                   away                   'Delete'."       "                   me       you  
                   dangling           below           I       typed  
                   you                   you           the       you  
 hold my  
 head,       fingers rub       rough       air,       I re  
 d           lips  
                   tongue,       tip touch       that           ink pearl,  
 sand       it  
                   at,       stub                   scent  
 irritant.       Rub       aw I

it ion. hand in mouth gag silent. No  
 on  
 now this. Ever.  
 We our . it  
 do id Forget Nothing  
 o  
 crumbs rub lean, us o , empty, ,  
 paper.

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in . I . her  
 Pink Pearl it me , an i ,  
 is i , he erase , and  
 erase, eve . test  
 on, you. I you the  
 will  
 our secret. us want  
 me. the end  
 I us want  
 disappear. No . You will  
 show you . me you ,  
 call I  
 make erase . us  
 away ' let '." " me you  
 below I  
 you you you  
 my  
 fingers rub air, I  
 tongue, tip at pearl  
 irritant.  
 I  
 it i . and i out gag i . o o  
 now this. . We o

do . it  
get Nothing o  
rub us o ,  
empty, , paper.

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Pink  
 Pearl me , ,  
 erase , erase ,  
 erase , . test  
 you. you  
 our secret. us  
 disappear.  
 show . me you  
 , I  
 erase us  
 away \ ". " me you  
 you you you  
 rub air, I  
 pearl  
 irritant.  
 out .  
 is. . o .  
 o o o

rub  
empty, , paper.

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## **Winesburg, Indiana: Inspector 4**

Inspector 4

Michael Martone was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and grew up there. As Fort Wayne was the site of, at least, nine forts (three each of French, British, and American fortifications, not to mention fortified villages of the Shawnee and Miami tribes), there was fostered in Martone a keen attraction to walls, fences, barriers of all kinds so much so that he was marked (as he matured) with what can only be thought of as a fetish for such structures which now (years later) expresses itself in his vast collection of examples he displays at his West End house in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. There, the visitor might find field stone walls (dry and mortared, finished and rough), vertical wood-picket fences with various finials and knurls, bamboo stave, horizontal clapboard running fence (reproduced in crosshatching or herring bone patterns), chain-link cyclone mesh, chicken wire, wrought-iron worked, brick, concrete block, red cedar plank snow-fencing, a four yard section of the right field fence bought at auction during the demolition of Yankee Stadium, corrugated galvanized steel, split-rail, adobe, dry-wall, wattle and beam, electrified, a slab from the Berlin wall with graffiti spelling out "wall" in German, and several versions of "invisible" pet fencing. Martone has a real fondness for star fortification (also known as trace italienne) and has in his backyard reconstructed the walled city of Neuhasel in Lower Hungry with its ravelins and redoubts, bonnettes and lunettes and tenailles and tenailions and counterguards and crownworks hornworks and curvettes and fausse brayes and scarps and cordons and banquettes and counterscarps and the long grassed glacis suitable for picnics. He also has the largest collection of barbed wire in west central Alabama, including an example of contemporary razor and concertina wire. Martone has also written the authorized biography of Joseph F. Glidden (of DeKalb, Illinois), widely regarded as the man who perfected Lucien B. Smith's original design of the famous agricultural fencing.

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