

The butt of the revolver hung over the edge of the table. Hume was shooting pool. He placed his cheek against the cue, he fired, and the motion caught on the forefinger of his left hand. The cue struck the nine square but the nine ricocheted imperceptibly to the left. It looked odd, unfamiliar.

Fred looked in his glass. It was empty.

“Huh”

Fred left his wife today. He'd been thinking of doing it for a time, now. He wasn't far from home, he could go back, he knew he could. But his glass was empty.

He left his son too. Scotty. Scotty was three and talking and walking and crying. Fred was shooting up the day before, as he had the day before that and that and that. Stacy didn't mind, fuck her though, thinks she tells me what its for, like I'm not smart, like I don't see, like she's worth shit, we're all worth shit, least of all Scotty, the bastard, like I don't know that.

Next to Fred was Linda. Linda is a whore. She's still a whore too. Hume knows. Her eyes had flaccid yellow bags and her purse was cyan. Her purse had condoms, cash, an empty flask, and a copy of reader's digest.

Hume walked to the bar and I handed Linda a cigarette.

The windows of the bar were yellowed, the street was brown, and the sky was grey. Fred walked out, Hume looked at Linda with a bleak face, spit in the corner of his mouth, turned and followed.

Fred had nowhere to walk to and no one to be and \$12.50 to his name, or \$3.00 even now. The Somerville line ends at Pointplace and Fred felt an itch. The fare would be a dollar twentyfive he knew a Pointplace.

Hume had been planning for a while, maybe. He thought he had, he thought a lot these days. His thoughts had been melting, mixing atop each other, and solidifying to brown ice. He

didn't know what he thought, or he did, they were brown, a shade of brown he'd never seen, but always knew he could think or thought.

Fred's back was right there. And no one was around, just him and Fred. He raised the revolver, placed his cheek behind the barrel, and squeezed the trigger.

There was no fire.

He was green, and, bewildered, looked down the barrel of the gun.

It fired.

Fred looked at Hume's head on the sidewalk

It was empty.

"Huh"

"Everyone dies in the summer" I told myself, and Linda took my cash.