

## PISSING INTO THE WIND

We never really change. Like Leary, I began diddling the young beauties in my stable, while a proportionate torrent of tragedy poured upon me...as expected. Tessa got into Jesus just about the time a great fire destroyed my company.

But it didn't stop there. A team of Agricultural Inspectors condemned my field because of some new disease run rampant on our island. I looked at the mottled, mosaic patterns on the leaves, and listened to the technician explain the process of burning the biomass. Then, with tears in my eyes and a sneer to the heavens, I drove the Army truck down row after row, ramming trees, breaking out the windows, and ending in a heap of smashed fruit and empty curses. I threw my hands up in mock surrender. What was this anyway, an exercise in futility?

It may not have been these particular events that cut the frail umbilical cord holding me at the edge of society, but a macabre anger raging beneath the surface began to emerge. I got drunk, and took my machine gun into the broken stumps...firing into the night sky, calling God out, and cursing him roundly for being a coward. I threatened to abort the mission and sell the farm.

This rebuke to life's goodgivings gave Tessa the complete horrors, and she took to praying for me with her pious few, even bringing home a large Bible, which she left on my pillow. I threw it into the closet and punched the mirror...withdrawing by the minute like the Captain on the river to a place where nothing could reach me.

Just about the time news of Hendrix dying reached us, Ralph called to say Danson had drowned. I don't know if this was a mid-life crisis or simply everymans' dilemma come to the fore, but the combination of the fire, the disease, and a run of friends dying was bigger than anything recently and wouldn't pass. A singular disenchantment with existence seemed to catch our whole generation then. The drugs stopped working...and our brief love affair with euphoria lay in shambles.

I struggled, fought it, and rejected everything...in flight from love I withdrew into lust, and hid from any hope of its touching me. I divorced Tessa and forged on, battling like a salmon upstream, challenging the currents of life as if these were personal affronts, creating material success at the expense of spiritual sanity.

My existence filled with an equal dole of chaos to the accumulation of material success I sucked from those around me. I used everyone and everything towards my driven goal--some inscrutable self-destruction. I sensed the

madness back then, only to watch more closely as I reeled it in like some immense fish. Everyone agreed the farm was a beautiful project...but it felt like I was pissing into the wind.