I Held Nothing

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WHY . . . why . . . why?” echoed the scream in my
own ears. My skin sparkled with the little beads. No
one came. No one answered. No one cared . . . no one . . .

Where am I? Where 'n' the hell am I? A white stiffness
confined my arm. What's that? Hospital. Who said that?
You're crazy. I was just out there. I was just coming back
from . . . from . . . My mind ran my legs . . . faster . . .
I wanted to scream. What? Where is my left hand? Where?
I fought hard to move my fingers. Come on now, you have to
move. Move! Damn it, move! . . . Where have all my
fingers gone? Where have all my fingers gone? A distant
voice answered, “Send the flowers . . . Flowers? Oh, yes,
flowers. “Where Have All The Flowers Gone?” Was Mary
still singing that?

I clawed hard at the bed with my free hand. My legs
trembled on the crisp sheet. They must run faster . . . they
must! The tucked sheets gave way. I ran faster. Oh, God,
what a relief. My legs ran faster and faster. I jumped on.
Round and round we spun. Who . . . who was that on the
other side? I jumped off and ran the circle faster. Push.
Push. She laughed. I hopped back on. Around we went like an off-centered top. Hey, is that you? She didn’t reply. She smiled, revealing only a glimpse of her white teeth. The blue eyes glittered with mischief. A breath of wind tugged at her short hair. Gee, she was pretty. Her tiny hands firmly held the bar. Sure her hands are tiny. I ought to know. See that ring on her hand . . . it’s a four and a half. You know, when I gave that ring to her, it was a big surprise. She had just finished the dishes when I asked her. She had a dish rag in one hand and a bucket of eggs in the other. What a way to ask a girl if she will marry you! How lucky can a guy be?

Around we whirled. The car went . . . went around . . . Lightning flashed on the horizon from the previous storm and sent a roar of thunder bolting across the darkened sky. Flashed? The lights flashed in my eyes . . . what lights? The car lights . . . A damp breeze stirred through the newly-budded leaves. From the cabin music vibrated across the crystalized grass. I felt a few drops of water on my face. It was red . . . the ashes were red . . . who put out the fire?

As we started back to the cabin, I reached for her hand. I reached for her hand . . . “Oh, no,” I screamed as the pain surged through my body. “Oh, God, please no!” . . . I held nothing . . .

Haiku

by Dave Thomas

Leaves drifting
drifting
around the feet of old men
sleeping in the park.