

Dayton Ohio by Gary D. Moore – novel@gmasw.com

The night air was stifling. There was not a wisp of a breeze. Ted ambled to the window. He thought about what Sacramento would be like...warm...breezy...less humidity...air-conditioned, and a three hour time difference. Ted was not sleepy...in Ohio time.

Sweat trickled down his arm over his hands to his knuckles and fingers. Droplets fell in a stream to the floor. A salt-water puddle grew in a matter of minutes. Wiping the sweat globules was useless. They reformed almost instantly. The sweat puddles expanded. Living in California was far different.

Hot, humid nights like this were something Ted did not miss about the mid-West. He reached for his water bottle on the windowsill. Ted deftly twisted the cap, and raised the bottle to his lips. "Warm...yuck," he muttered softly. However, Ted knew he needed water to replenish fluid that oozed out of him like juices from cooking meat. In fact, he felt like he was in a crock-pot.

"It's two in the morning," his roommate moaned as he sat up, and then swung he feet to the floor. "Eleven my time. I'd be reading or watching the news," Ted replied. The roommate bound off the stiff hotel bed. He stood up for a mere second, and then he walked hurriedly to the bathroom. He shut the door before he turned on the light.

Ted turned to the window. A lone streetlight shone in the distance. Nothing could be discerned from the glaring light. Ted squinted. He practiced a technique he learned during survival school more than a decade ago in the US military. Ted could distinguish a small tree, and a row of scrubs several yards away. Everything was varying shades of opaque grays to black. He thought about the small stream...in reality, a ditch...behind his California home. The weeds were high and golden brown this time of year. Only vegetation near the water source was green.

The bathroom door opened. His roommate turned out the light, and then sleepily plodded to his bed. He flopped on top the sheets. He was instantly still. A few minutes passed in silence. "You ready for the test tomorrow?" his roommate mumbled drowsily. Ted smiled slyly. "I'm the one giving the test," he replied softly. "Oh yeah," the roommate replied.

Ted set his water bottle on the windowsill. Just as he was about to walk to his bed the roommate asked, "Is the test hard?" Ted winched. "Only for those who didn't do the homework, or didn't pay attention in class," Ted replied. The roommate groaned. Ted knew that the young man did not pay attention, and that the nightlife with the guys was too tempting. The young man would likely have to repeat the pricey class. The roommate moaned again as he rolled over to face the wall.

Hangovers also contribute to poor test scores Ted mused as he walked to his bed. He slowly reclined. The sheets were clammy. Ted looked up at the ceiling and reviewed the test questions. He was quickly asleep.