

THE HEAT CAN BY JASON  
NOT SGNHT N E S  
Y CRAZY U C Y N  
O E MOS OD E C P  
U S O D E Y T  
S S R T  
OMETIMES A STO U S

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HAZZUCINATED  
PERFUME  
TODAY.

He was lying on his mattress looking at a magazine, a photo of a beautiful woman. It was a blistering June day, must've been 100 degrees in his apartment, easy, but he'd just spent six hours at the library and couldn't stand one more minute. He was looking at the beautiful woman thinking it'd be nice to touch her shoulder

when a strong whiff of perfume suddenly crossed his nose like when you're reading one of those fancy expensive magazines and accidentally flip across a page with an ad with one of those sample seals you open and run across your wrist. Except this wasn't one of those fancy magazines and there weren't any perfume swatches. He thought maybe it was something weird from outside like maybe a big blooming

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things to you sometimes.

tree was right next door and the wind just happened to whistle through it just the right way and waft across his nose. So he went to the window and it wasn't that. He was sweating like a pig today, stewing in his own juices as a nosy downstairs neighbor would say if there really was such a thing as a nosy downstairs neighbor and he hadn't eaten in a little over two days now and just quit smoking on top of that, and it occurred to him that he must be hallucinating. Strange, he thought, that of all hallucinations he could have he would hallucinate about the smell of perfume. He flipped on the television and thought, The heat can sure do some crazy



SHE WISHES  
SHE COULD BE  
IN A BLIMP  
RIGHT NOW.

She'd like to be in a glass-bottom blimp and she would like to be lying on the glass, her stomach on the glass and her looking down on the countryside below. It's a blistering June day, 100 degrees in the shade, easy, and she is lying absolutely still, feeling an ice cube slowly melt on top of her forehead and trickle down her temples. The blimp would be air-conditioned, she thinks, and the glass would be cool and she'd lay her arms and legs prone on the glass bottom and feel the coolness of the glass on her

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some crazy things to you sometimes.

KILLER; POETS ARE NO KILLERS which is from Lolita and is her favorite quote right now 'cause she's reading it right now. Or no, fuck it, maybe she'd just type I JUST FARTED or HA HA I'M HIGHER THAN YOU or something really stupid just because she could. She has four fans going in her room today, all on high, hot enough to fry an egg on the sidewalk a crazy drunk in the park would say if there really was such a thing as a crazy drunk in the park. She'd yell at the blimp driver, Take the blimp higher! and he would but not high enough, she'd keep yelling Higher! Higher! and he'd say Lady, we can't go any higher, the blimp will pop and we'll all die. And she'd say Oh. And then he'd say What do you want to do now but the thrill would be gone and she'd say Oh, just put me down I guess, drop me off at the coffeehouse, I think I'll get an iced coffee or something. The ice cube melts completely off her forehead and she puts a new one up there and one on her stomach, and she thinks, The heat can sure do

skin, until she started warming the glass with her skin and then she'd move her limbs a couple of inches over so they were resting on a new part of the glass. She would watch the slowly-moving landscape below as her cheek rested against the glass and the driver would say, "Hey lady, do you want to type something on the big electronic billboard?" and she'd yell Of course! and she'd type something cool and artistic like that palindrome Anne Sexton was so obsessed with that she could never remember, RATS blank ON NO blank STAR, something like that, something about rats and stars. Or she'd type WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE! or maybe I'M NO



She was under the impression that she was Anne Frank and that this was wartime Europe. He was under no such impression of false identity, but was there merely because he was terrified of the outdoors and had not been able to leave the enclosure of the hospital for the last three years. It was a blistering hot June day and the hospital's air conditioner had broke,

must've been 100 degrees inside, hot as a horse's behind a folksy grandfather might say if there really was such a thing as a folksy grandfather. The sudden change in room temperature had convinced her that the Nazis had finally invaded and she wandered the hallways in a panic. Finally she spied him and said Please, you must hide me, I'm a Jew and they'll kill me, you must hide me. And he said Gladly and took her to his room where they sipped bottles of cold spring water and played a lackluster game of gin rummy. And she said

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These may be my final moments and I want to know what it's like to be a woman before I die so please won't you kiss me please won't you make love to me in our sweaty hideout. And he did and it was wonderful and he felt the entire oppression of the Jewish race in her trembling arms grasping his back. Eventually the air conditioner came back on and the staff went around collecting all the stray deluded teens to get them back to their rooms and when they got to his room and collected her up she said This is it, they've come for me, don't forget me, don't let them forget me, I love you I love you don't forget me. And he said I won't, Anne, I love you and I will never forget you. And she left and he leaned back on a pillow and he thought, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



that his former employers had secretly taken photos of him masturbating and posted them on their corporate website just because they were mean and enjoyed seeing him humiliated. He didn't consider this a good sign that he'd gotten over his phobia of jobs and that he was ready to go get a new one. When he woke up that morning and actually did masturbate he spit on his penis for the first time in his life. It seemed like the thing to do. It was 100 degrees in

his apartment, hotter than the fires of Hell itself an action movie hero would say if there really was such a thing as an action movie hero. He woke lying in a pool of his own bodily fluids, his heart racing a million miles a minute because it'd been 70 hours since he last ate and he thought his body was finally starting to catch up with him. He was masturbating and his body was already covered in a sheen of his own fluids so it just seemed like the thing to do to spit on his penis. When it's as hot as it is right now there's this natural urge to rid yourself of your insides as much as possible, just as a desperate attempt



to cool your body at least one degree. It's a well-known fact that your body temperature rises as you approach climax and by the time he was close to coming his body was so hot he felt he was going to spontaneously combust so he started spitting in a futile attempt to lower his body temperature. He would've peed on himself, he thought, if he had had any urine to get rid of. Hell, he would've committed all kinds of other indiscretions if he'd thought they'd lower his body temperature any. Eventually he came and a wave of pure bliss and coolness overcame him and he actually got goosebumps in a room that was 100 degrees if a day. He got in the shower and washed the spit off his body, glanced at his wet body in the mirror and thought, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



THE BOY WAS  
AT THE PARTY  
AND ALL HE  
COULD THINK WAS

When did my life get so complicated? The party was in June and the place was packed, must've been 100 degrees inside, easy, and since when do people throw parties in this kind of heat? the boy thought. The boy was at the party and five girls the boy had slept with and one boy the boy had slept with were also at the party. When did my life get so complicated? the boy thought, watching a guy who was rumored to be in a band in London pump the keg and pump the keg even though nothing but foam was coming out. None of the girls he wanted to be hitting on him were hitting on him. All of the girls he didn't want hitting on him were hitting on him. The five girls he had

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slept with were all on ecstasy and kept shooting snide looks of contempt at him. One of the girls knew that the boy had slept with all five of them; the other four knew only bits and pieces. The one girl the boy knew for sure he wouldn't be sleeping with kept complaining about being the token dyke. That girl was also on ecstasy and knew she wasn't getting laid that night and was mad about it. It was a sweltering June night, 100 degrees in the shade as a jolly fat weatherman would say if there really was such a thing as a jolly fat weatherman. The boy kept walking from the front porch to the back porch to the front porch to the back porch in the desperate hope that one would be cooler than the other. The guys who were rumored to be in a band in London kept talking about how much better New York was than here and the boy wanted to punch them in the face and yell Wash that dye out of your hair, you all look like a bunch of fuckin' idiots.

you sometimes.

The boy's friend kept singing Gilbert and Sullivan songs at the top of his lungs because the boy's friend was a repressed theatre major whose ugly side came out when he was drinking. The boy who the boy had slept with got pissed off at everyone and left which was just as well because he was a moody repressed homosexual who would've just gotten drunk and hung all over him anyway. The five girls the boy had slept with and who were all on ecstasy kept dancing with each other in the living room. They put on the song Let's Go Crazy and they did, and another of the boy's friends, one who knew he had slept with all five of them, leaned over and said This is the first fifty chapters of your life. Then he paused and winked and smiled and said And your next twenty chapters! At five in the morning two of the girls the boy had slept with started making out with each other on the couch and everyone knew the party was over. Everyone was standing on the sidewalk and the boy's friend asked Do you want to get some breakfast? and the boy said No, I'm tired and drunk and besides the sun's coming out and we should all probably get to sleep before it gets too hot to do so. The boy's friend clapped him on the shoulder and said, The heat can sure do some crazy things to



reading the cover of the yellow book which said Windows 98 for Idiots and she thought Is this what my life has come to? It was a blistering hot June day, must've been 100 degrees in her car, easy, and the sudden overwhelming air-conditioning of the store was making her slightly nauseous. It was one of those computer super-stores and they had devoted an entire aisle to books about Windows 98, an aisle as long as the eye could see. There was Windows 98 for Beginners, Windows 98 for

Dummies, Windows 98 for Klutzes, Windows 98 for the Computer Challenged, and then she'd come across the yellow book and picked it up and thought Is this what my life has come to? Do I now have to call myself an idiot in public just to type a resume? Do I now have to pay someone for the privilege of having them call me an idiot, just to check my email? She missed the heat of the outdoors already; the artificial cool was creeping her out, making her sick. She missed sticking her arm out her window, tapping the roof of the car as she drove along to the beat of her cassette player. She used to be able to type her resume, on a typewriter, she thought. Now she had to spend



a Saturday afternoon getting sick off artificial air and getting called an idiot. It was the hottest June anybody could remember for a long time, cover your exposed skin when you're out as a concerned skin cancer doctor would say if there really was such a thing as a concerned skin cancer doctor. She thought of all the things she'd done in her life that she thought were pretty smart. She had managed to get through college all on her own, not a dime from her mom and dad, and that was pretty smart. She had gotten 600 bucks knocked off her car currently sweating out in the parking lot, the one she missed and wished she could be riding in right now. That was pretty smart. Is this what my life has come to? She flipped through the yellow book. The first page was an explanation of the illustrations in the book. Any text next to a gray exclamation mark, the book explained, means that it is of even greater importance than the usual text. She put the book down and walked over to the counter, where a boy in funny glasses said Can I help you? She said Yes. I'd like to buy a Macintosh. The boy with the funny glasses smiled and winked in a knowing way and whispered, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



**DADDY,  
I'M AFRAID  
OF THE  
VAMPIRES,**

she said that night. It had been a blistering hot June day and the local drive-in theatre, the only one left in the whole state, had decided to have a special triple feature that night of Dracula, Frankenstein and The Mummy. He and his wife had packed up themselves and their daughter and headed out to the drive-in. It was a warm night, 100 degrees in the car, easy, and he had lowered the cloth top of their convertible to let some of the heat out. The daughter was now afraid of the vampires and he was sitting on the edge of her bed, trying to explain patiently that it was only a movie, that there is no such thing as a real vampire. He ran his fingers through her hair, noticed

the tan she was already getting from a month straight at the swimming pool. She was slightly sweating in her bed despite the generous air-conditioning of the house around her, and the father realized that he'd be losing his daughter soon enough, that she'd be growing up and getting drunk off peach wine coolers and sloppily fumbling at a boy's zipper in the back of their Saturn. This was okay, he thought nervously, this was okay. She will need to grow up, you can't hold your children back, and besides he'd rather his daughter lost her virginity in high school like any normal kid instead of having to wait until 22, like he had, feeling like a freak all the way through college. It had been a real scorcher of a day, a punishment from the sun god an African prince might say if there really was such a thing as an African prince. She was trembling despite the air-conditioning and despite the assurances and finally the dad said Come on, and the two of



them went into the kitchen. They gathered cloves of garlic and a wooden ruler that would do as a stake if worse came to worse, he assured her, and they dug out an old rosary from the old days when the husband and wife had been Catholics. The wife eventually woke at two in the morning, suddenly alarmed realizing that her husband was missing from the bed. She went into the daughter's room and saw her bed covered by a wide circle of garlic cloves, and the dad asleep in the too-small bed, his feet hanging off the edge, a wooden ruler on his chest, and the daughter also asleep, her small arms curled around her father's neck, a small crucifix between her breasts like a cheap necklace. And unbeknownst to them the wife started laughing, oh so quietly, and then started crying, looking at them, and unbeknownst to the husband, the wife knew that this was the first time in her life her husband had made her cry simply from pure simple pleasure, that he had made her cry simply because he was her husband. The wife wiped her eyes, pulled a light cotton sheet over the two of them, headed back to bed, shook her head, and thought with a smile on her face, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



he thought. It was an unusually hot June day, must be 100 degrees in his apartment, easy, and he would go to the library but he'd already been at the library for six hours and couldn't stand another minute of it. His usual coffeehouse was closed for some reason or another, one of those reasons coffeehouses close for the day, so he had gone to one by his house he usually doesn't go to because it was a non-smoking coffeehouse and he had quit quitting smoking because it was too expensive to quit smoking right now. They call them baristas here, he noted, not employees, and what exactly is a barista? One of those weird European words that sneak into coffeehouse vernacular, he sup-

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posed, much like Grande and Latte and Torrano. He was sitting in the corner typing on his laptop knowing that everyone else thought he was an evil yuppie for typing on his laptop on a hot June day and he looked up at his barista and thought I've seen her naked, I'm absolutely sure of it. He collects internet amateur pornography because after 15 years of collecting pornography he's bored with it and internet amateur pornography is the only thing that can get him excited anymore. He collects blurry non-color-adjusted photos taken with instamatics and scanned into JPEG format and posted on 30 million websites, and he brings them to his hard drive and categorizes them like his own personalized pornography magazine and he takes out his laptop on lonely Saturday nights and masturbates to his fellow slacker compatriots without them knowing. It was a blistering hot day and the air-conditioner in the coffeehouse was-

it on, must've been a 100 degrees in there, hot enough to make an albino sweat a genius movie director would say if there really was such a thing as a genius movie director. He realized that his barista had posed naked on the internet, not just naked but filthy, absolutely lewd poses on her bed, pile of CDs in the background, row of stuffed animals in the background, mountain bike hung from the ceiling in the background. He realized that he remembered this because she had short hair and small breasts and a pierced belly and exhibited all those other traits that had made him start collecting internet amateur pornography because after 15 years he was bored with pornography. And he realized that she didn't know that he had masturbated many, many times to her on lonely Saturday nights and that he had fairly fallen in love with her and had spent many nights wondering who she was and what her story was and why she had posed so lewdly and why she had posted those photos for public consumption. She came by with a pitcher of coffee and said, Nice laptop. Is that a 1400? And he said Yes and she said I just got a G3 and it's amazing, runs four times as fast as my last computer. He said Do you ever go on the internet? and she snorted and said God, I live on the internet and he looked at her and she looked at him and all of a sudden they both knew. And they just stared at each other for a few seconds and then she refilled his cup and said Do you need room for cream? and he said No thanks. She filled his cup and sighed and shrugged and said, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



It was a hot June day and she was at yet another shitty un-air-conditioned coffeehouse, drinking too much shitty black coffee because refills of coffee are free and refills on cold drinks aren't, playing yet another song at another shitty open mic. She felt the weight of the oversize black Fender on her breasts, a purchase that had seemed cool at the time and had made her feel tough but was now just a pain in the ass. It was 100 degrees in the coffeehouse, easy, and every sip of the black coffee was just making her hotter and hotter. She had just chopped all her hair off and dyed it blonde in a political protest against her ex-

boyfriend who liked to call himself a writer and kept a notebook full of notes and had never written one damn story. That'll show him, she thought, knowing that it showed nothing, and why was she here? She sang her song on the stage and stared at a small drip of paint on the frescoed wall opposite of her and she thought about how she might just die if she had to play at one more shitty open mic. It was the hottest June anyone could remember in a long time, hotter than the President testifying before a grand jury a witty political commentator would say if there really was such a thing as a witty political commentator, and she was glad she'd worn a muscle shirt but mad she'd worn a muscle shirt. She knew she could no longer tell who liked her music and who wanted

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to sleep with her, she knew that line had blurred so much she could no longer differentiate. She pressed her back against the exposed brick wall behind her, she glanced at the pile of demo tapes she had shelled out 600 bucks for, seemed like a good idea at the time and had made her feel tough but was now just a pain in the ass. She strummed her Fender and grit her teeth and spit the lyrics out at the audience, so hot she thought she was going to die, and she watched her friends wiggle their feet in time to her song and she watched strangers sign up to her internet mailing list and she thought, Never again will I fall in love with boys in cardigan sweaters. A coffeehouse employee knocked over a tray of glasses in the middle of her song and another made a double cappuccino at the end of her song and she thought she might just die if she had to play at one more shitty open mic. She finished and a boy walked up and bought her demo tape and started to say something to her but then just stopped, put his hand to his mouth, moved the hand over his chest, smiled, and left. She watched him walk out without saying a word, and she took another drink of her coffee and smiled to herself and thought, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



It was a hot June evening, must've been 100 degrees outside, easy, and the two of them were taking refuge in a neighborhood bar, sipping on domestic beers and talking shit. For example, she said, Sometimes I'll fantasize that there's a scorpion in my bed at night, when I'm lying there trying to go to sleep. And I'll fantasize that I've suddenly lost the ability to move my limbs and I'll lie there and fantasize about that scorpion slowly crawling up my body and when it'll finally strike me and I'll die. The

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two of them had just met. He lived in the neighborhood and couldn't stand the sight of his apartment one more minute so decided to go to the bar and get drunk. She was meeting her boyfriend here in twenty minutes and happened to be sitting next to him and struck up a conversation. It was a sweltering June night, hotter than a bug zapper on the fourth of July a white-trash cousin might say if there really was such a thing as a white-trash cousin. Sometimes, he said, I'll just be starting to fall asleep and I'll dream that I'm running and running and suddenly run right off the edge of a cliff I didn't know was there and my whole body will jerk violently and wake me up. She

said, I do that too, except it's falling out of a chair. She repeated the phrase My boyfriend about a billion times when she was talking to him because she needed to remind herself of the fact. She needed to remind herself not to hit on him, not to repeat her mistakes, that she was dating someone and she liked him and he would be here in twenty minutes. He heard her repeat the phrase My Boyfriend about a billion times and wondered what exactly she was trying to prove and why she had even brought up disaster fantasies in the first place. The boyfriend eventually showed up and she pointed to him and said This is my boyfriend and the boyfriend said How do you do and shook his hand. And then they left and then about ten seconds later she came back in alone and handed him a piece of paper and said This is my phone number, and then left again just as suddenly. He put the paper in his pocket, shook his head in resignation, and the bartender brought over another beer and laughed and said, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



**WHEN YOU GO DOWN  
ON SOMEONE  
ENOUGH TIMES,**

she thought, that means you own a little piece of them forever. It was a blistering June day, must've been 100 degrees outside, easy, and her ex-boyfriend had said Let's go to the Chuck Close exhibit at the museum today when it's free and she had said Sure. She sat on the concrete steps outside the museum and let him talk on and on and thought about how many times his cock had been in her mouth. Let's see, she thought. Probably twice a week average for three years, which adds up to 306, give

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would say if there really was such a thing as a sultry voiceover announcer. She sipped her coffee and let him ramble on and on and on about the genius of Chuck Close and she thought about how she'd like to leave a message behind for all the other women who will someday go down on him. She'd like to take a needle and tattoo on his penis, I'VE SUCKED THIS DICK MORE TIMES THAN YOU COULD POSSIBLY EVER HOPE TO. These are emotions I'm no longer allowed to have, she thought, yet somehow she knew she was allowed to have them, as long as she could still remember the taste of his cock in her mouth, which she imagined she would be able to the rest of her life. He asked her what she thought of the exhibit and she said I can't stand Chuck Close, I can't stand anybody who would do the same one thing, over and over and over, their entire life, what was he thinking, what could Chuck Close possibly be thinking? He stopped and looked at her funny and she closed her eyes against the overbearing heat of the sun and he winced and said, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.

or take a few. She took a sip of the iced coffee that she bought for three bucks at the museum cafe and she thought about the fact that she knew the details of her ex-boyfriend's penis better than her own body parts. If you go down on someone enough times, she thought, that means you own a little piece of them forever. This excursion today would have been bad before but was now okay. They were past the mean hateful part of their breakup and were in the middle of the Let's reform our friendship because it's still so important to us part. She wiped her forehead and came away with actual puddles of sweat on her hand, hot as the hood of a Ford a sultry voiceover announcer

**I WASN'T ALWAYS  
CALLED MR. SMITH,  
A DIM PART OF HIS  
BRAIN SAID TO HIM.**

It was one of those blistering June days, 100 degrees in the shade, easy, and he had been in the library for six hours now and was still slightly sweating. It occurred to him that his name hadn't always been Mr. Smith although he didn't know why he was having this thought. He sat at a large wooden table and leafed through six months worth of Readers Digests and watched the women walk, back and forth, back and forth. It seemed to him that he had a whole other life before the life he was currently

having, and it wasn't a pleasant life either, a dim part in the back of his brain told him. He watched the women walk back and forth, their shiny legs glimmering in the fluorescent lights because it was June and no one had been able to get a tan yet. I wasn't always called Mr. Smith, he thought, and this idea gave him a headache, a blinding stab of pain through his temple that he knew for some reason was also a part of his former life, blinding headaches that would leave him with blackouts, leave him in strange areas of town, leave him with dirt all over his pants. He watched the dirty shiny women walk, back and forth, back and forth, and he knew for some reason

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that this was a part of his former life too, that the shiny dirty whorish women were part of the reason he was now called Mr. Smith. He stirred uncomfortably in his seat, anxious to go outside and stretch his legs but dreading going outside, it was so blistering hot, crack the windows of your car a manager of an animal shelter would say if there really was such a thing as a manager of an animal shelter. I wasn't always called Mr. Smith, a dim part in the back of his brain said to him, and he watched the women walk and walk and wondered which one it would be today. The thought gave him a blinding headache and he knew the blackout would be coming soon, the hours lost, the dirt under his fingernails, the scratches across his face, and he knew his name was Mr. Smith and he knew his name wasn't Mr. Smith and there was a reason why this was but he couldn't care anymore. He watched a Latina high school student walk toward the door and he thought, She's the one, and as he got up and followed her out the door onto the sidewalk outside, his last thought before the blackout was, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



**SHE WAS READING  
LOZITA IN THE  
MIDDLE OF THE  
MOVIE THEATRE.**

It had been a blistering June day, must've been 100 degrees, easy, and it was still hot and humid and sticky that night so she decided to go to one of those movie theatres that has ripped out the seats and replaced them with tables and chairs and you pay three bucks to get in and then you can smoke and drink liquor inside and shout back at the movie screen. It was

the intermission between one bad summer action blockbuster and another bad summer action blockbuster and she was reading a little more of Lolita which she was in the middle of reading right now and which truly surprised her by the amount it could still shock and disturb her 50 years after it was written. It had been the hottest June day anyone could remember in a long time, hot as an umbrella at an outdoor cafe a weary slacker would say if there really was such a thing as a weary slacker, and the woman tried to ignore the circle

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of rowdy yuppies in front of her and the circle of rowdy nerds behind her. A sudden shiver went through her system and she couldn't tell if it was from the unnatural air conditioning in the theatre or the creepy section of Lolita she had just read, and then she realized it didn't really matter. A cartoon was playing on the screen, dancing snack bar items, and when the hot dog jumped off the pedestal into the waiting folds of the hot dog bun the room of 600 drunk strangers exploded into simultaneous cheers and applause and the woman knew she had to leave. She took her pitcher of beer and put it on the nerds' table and said, Do you want this? I gotta get going, and the nerds cheered and applauded and laughed and yelled to her as she walked away, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you some-



It was a blistering June day, must've been 100 degrees, easy, and they were returning from a roadtrip in another state. They were running a few hours late and as they stopped in a nowhere truck stop at a nowhere town on the nowhere highway and refilled the tank the friend said he was going to make a quick call to his girlfriend and tell her they were running a few hours late. The men looked at each other and shook their heads because they knew that he and his girlfriend would get in a fight and stay on the phone for an hour arguing about why he was running a few hours late. Sure enough, they had been sitting on the

hood of the car for 45 minutes, lazily smoking cigarettes, watching their friend shift his weight from his left foot to his right foot and back to his left and so on. They all agreed that their friend was dating an abusive girlfriend, someone completely irrational and bordering on psychotic, and they were glad they were not dating the woman, but they hesitated saying anything to the friend because they were very uncomfortable with the idea of being that male friend who's always saying "You need to dump that girl, dude. Besides, they agreed, they've seen their friend pass up plenty of opportunities to date wonderful well-adjusted women. They knew their friend was a masochist and they knew he was never truly happy unless he was truly miserable. The sun beat down on their heads

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in the middle of the farmlands, hot as six-day-old roadkill a friendly hitchhiker would say if there really was such a thing as a friendly hitchhiker. They knew their friend was a masochist but that still didn't mean he deserved this kind of abuse, and they also knew they shouldn't have to pay for it, sitting on the hood of their car and slowly burning in the unusually hot June sun and now becoming officially three hours late getting home. There, one of the men said, "He's almost done, and the other man said 'How can you tell?' and the first man said 'Because he's lowered his voice so much you can hardly hear him.' The friend hung up the phone and walked over to them and looked at them, then hung his head and said 'What's wrong with me? I suck.' The men put their arms around his shoulders and stuck him in the car and slapped him on the back and said, 'The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.'



**GOD, I WISH I WAS  
A PROFESSIONAL  
MAGICIAN,  
HE THOUGHT.**

It had been a blistering June day, must've been 100 degrees, easy, and the heat had been trapped in her apartment but she was lazy and tired so decided to lay in her apartment that night and sweat and watch The World's Greatest Magicians Part IV on television. When she was a girl she had checked out every magic book her city's library owned, had spent hours practicing sleight-of-hand in front of the mirror until she could fool even herself, had delighted her little brother by plucking quarters out

of his ears. How hard could it be? she thought. The biggest difficulty, it seems, is getting the startup money to build your first tricks. The magicians on these specials weren't particularly skilled or talented, but they could afford lavish amounts of money on spectacular tricks and the lights and the white tigers and all the other crap that went with it. It was a sweltering hot night in her apartment, hot as David Copperfield's wife a horny teenage boy would say if there really was such a thing as a horny teenage boy. Professional magicians are high-maintenance, she had to admit. All those fancy custom-made black leather outfits. All those silk shirts. That perfect hair. But still,

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she could do just about anything she's seen in these specials if she had enough money. Well, except for those doves. She'd never make birds go through that. It was her dirty dark secret, the one she had never told any friend or any lover, that she never missed any of these cheesy television specials. She saw every But Lance special, every Copperfield, every Doug Henning, every Siegfried and Roy, even all of these super-cheesy variety specials where every single magician looked like everyone else. Why is that? she thought. Why does every professional magician right now have dyed black hair and look like that weasely guy in high school who had the wispy mustache and would get beat up after school? The phone rang and she let the machine get it, another friend wanting her to go out that night, and the woman sighed and picked up a cigarette, lit it, shoved it up her nose and pulled it back out her ear, applauded herself, sighed again, and thought, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



It was a blistering hot June day, must've been 100 degrees in the shade, easy, and he would go to the library except he had already been at the library for six hours and was sick of it, so he decided to go downtown and hang out on the benches and watch people. She was about the same age as him, obviously dressed to not look like a tourist except she had a giant pack strapped around her waist which gave it away. She was standing in front of the Picasso sculpture, her hand holding her camera back-

wards as far away as her arm would reach, and she kept looking at the camera then looking back at the sculpture and back at the camera, seeing if she was getting herself and the sculpture in the frame. The man sat and lit another cigarette and watched the woman and wondered about her. One of those hipster guidebooks was sticking out of the corner of her fanny pack, one of those books that tells you where the slacker dives are and how to get a 10 dollar hotel room. She didn't look like a tourist, he thought, and he wondered who she was and where she was from originally and why she was traveling by herself. He was sweating so much today it was actually running down into his

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eyes, hot as a 1985 bright red Fiero an early-eighties loser might say if there really was such a thing as an early-eighties loser. The man fantasized about helping her, about taking a photograph of her and the sculpture, innocently beginning a conversation, offering to show her the city, end up tenderly making love to her in his studio apartment just like every young traveler secretly hopes will happen on their trip otherwise what's the point of traveling when you're young? He got up and went over and said Can I take that picture for you? and she smiled and said in a Scandinavian accent Yes, thank you. And he snapped the picture and she said Do you know where the Contemporary Museum is? I would like to see the Chuck Close exhibit and he said Yes, walk that way three blocks, take a left, and walk about half a mile, and she said Thank you and he said You're welcome and he walked away and she walked away and he smacked himself on the forehead and lit another cigarette and thought to himself, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



It was a blistering hot June day, 100 degrees in the apartment, easy, so they sat on the front porch overlooking all the other front porches and they got stoned over the course of the afternoon and drank lukewarm Zima that somebody had left behind from the party the night before. They got a little drunk and then they got baked and then they got baked again and one of them said What should we do tonight? and the other said I got free tickets to the symphony through work, we could go do that and

they agreed that that sounded like a fine idea so they took off. They sat in the twenty-third row on the left hand side. They knew this because they counted the rows from the front back because they got into an argument about whether the letter W was the 22nd or the 23rd letter in the alphabet. It had been such an overwhelmingly hot day that day, hot as Rachel Barton's cat strings a snotty NPR disc jockey would say if there really was such a thing as a snotty NPR disc jockey, and the two of them greatly appreciated the cool wafting air conditioning in the symphony hall even though they could tell no one else appreciated it as much as them. They listened to one of

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those guys whose name started with M, Mozart or Mahler or Mendelshon, or maybe it was B, Bach or Beethoven or Brahams, oh fuck, I'm a lot more stoned than I thought I was, huh? Shut up, we're talking too loud but anyone it was some dead white guy, they were sure of that, and they toasted dead white guys heartily during intermission when they stuffed themselves into a bathroom stall together and drank some bourbon they had snuck in and smoked some pot, yeah, right there at the symphony, well it beats working, you know? At the end of the symphony they ran into a friend of theirs all dressed up in a cocktail dress and on a blind date with some dork and she said Why are you guys here? and Why are you dressed in t-shirts? and God, you guys reek of pot, what the hell are you doing here? and they said Run off with us and get stoned and play pool with us and ditch your blind date and she looked back at him engrossed in his program and looked at them and grabbed their arms and ran out the door with them, kicking off her shoes and yelling, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.

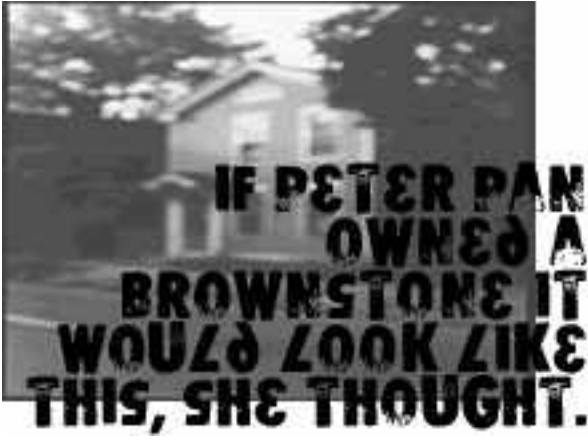


It was a blistering June day, almost the hottest on record, must be 100 degrees in the shade, easy, and he had been at home but was sweating his ass off so went down to this coffeehouse he always hung out at. There was this company in town that charged advertisers to make postcards for them and then they distributed the postcards for free in all the coffeehouses and restaurants and bars and whathaveyou all over town. He had seen these display racks for about a year and he thought it would

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another drink of his iced mocha and sweated just a little bit more, hot as his ex-girlfriend's ass an obsessed fan would say if there really was such a thing as an obsessed fan. He knew his ex-girlfriend would be here in about an hour to play at that ridiculous open mic she always went to but still, it would probably be pretty cool to stick around and hear her new songs except for the fact that his friends told him she recently cut off her hair and bleached it blonde to piss him off and it did piss him off because he had been trying to convince her to do that the entire time they were dating and she was doing it now just to spite him. Still, though. It would be cool to see her. A barista came over and looked at him looking at the postcards and said Have you decided on your project? and he said Yeah, I'm only going to use postcards that homeless guys have stolen and sell back to you for a buck while you're eating lunch at McDonald's and the barista smirked behind the man's back and said to him with a faint tinge of sarcasm, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.

be really cool to make some sort of project out of them, what kind of project he wasn't sure right now but he knew something cool could be done. He had spent the last three months collecting postcards, trying to decide what kind of theme and statement he wanted to make. First he decided to use all postcards that had no writing on them, just an image, and he collected 500 of those, but then a month into it he decided to go a whole different direction and collect nothing but cheap-looking local postcards, like the ones made by the coffeehouse as a reward for having the display rack, so he'd been collecting those and had about 500 saved up again. He took



It was a blistering June day, the hottest anyone could remember, 100 degrees in the shade, easy, and the woman was looking out the bay windows of her new brownstone, her new brownstone, she couldn't believe it. There was an oak tree right in the middle of her six-foot-wide front lawn and it snaked up the side of the building, now maybe 20 or 30 feet taller than the house, and the limbs had grown right up to the windows so that if you were young and adventurous you could open your bedroom window and hop right onto the tree. She still couldn't believe she owned the building, that she wasn't just housesitting for some

rich professor like she used to. She touched the keys of the piano next to the bay windows and she thought This is what thirteen years of hard work will get you and then she thought My God, have I really been working for thirteen years? Yes, I guess so, she thought, I started with the agency when I was 22 and here we are. So, this was it, the point she had been sweating and laboring and working her ass off for the last thirteen years. It was a sizzling hot day today, hot as a last-minute escrow a nervous real estate agent would say if there really was such a thing as a nervous real estate agent, and the new air conditioning system in the brownstone was starting to creep her out, in fact everything was starting to creep her out, the quiet oak-lined street, the tasteful prints in the

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living room, the electric pasta maker in the kitchen, the goose-down comforter on the edge of the bed. Oh my God, she's 35 years old, what is she doing here, someone's going to figure out the truth one of these days, someone's going to figure out she doesn't belong here and she's not allowed to own such a nice thing and that her entire life is a lie, one big fat giant lie. The woman ran up to her bedroom, panicked, and she looked around and looked around and didn't know what to do so instead she turned off the air conditioning and opened her bedroom window and climbed out of it and right into the oak tree planted in her six-foot-wide front yard. Her daughter came home from school and walked under the tree and the woman threw acorns at her and the daughter yelled Hey! What are you doing up there? and she said Come on up! We'll go to Never Never Land and have tea parties in trees! and so they did and it was perfectly delightful and the girl said You're a weird mom but you're okay, I guess, and the woman smiled and tussled her daughter's hair and thought to herself, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



**THE MEN WERE  
MASTURBATING  
TOGETHER IN  
FRONT OF THE  
TELEVISION.**

It had been a blistering June day, 100 degrees at its peak, easy, and one of the men went over to the other man's apartment to get real drunk and try to forget about the heat. The two of them drank some beer and then they drank some more beer and then they ran out of beer and had to go buy more beer and then they drank that beer and before they knew it it was two in the morning and they were trashed and chain smoking and exchanging humorous stories about who was not getting laid more that summer. The man who owned the apartment said I bought some new porn which was normal for him to say because the two of them regularly watched pornography together and

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some crazy things to you sometimes.

was such a thing as a woman with silicone breasts. The two of them sat on the floor and jerked off and the man who didn't own the apartment noticed slyly that the other man's dick was huge, big and fat and white and sticking straight out from his body, and the man started getting fascinated with watching the other man jerk off, so much so that eventually he was watching the other man more than the pornography and, he noticed, the other man was doing the same. The man started reaching his orgasm and suddenly thought how exciting it would be to jerk the other man off at the same time, to bring this other guy to orgasm, how weird and thrilling it would be to hold another man's penis in his hand and make him come. Spurred by this thought the man suddenly had his orgasm and he looked down and his hand and pants were covered in sticky white goo and the videotape was still playing, the fake men and women still endlessly fucking away, sweat glistening all over the silicone and steroids and the man suddenly felt foolish for the thoughts he was having. He put his dick back in his pants and the other man did the same thing and they both sat there saying nothing for about ten minutes then the other man flipped off the tape and said You need another beer? and the man paused and said Yeah, sure, and the other man went into the kitchen and brought out two more beers and handed one to him, sighing, and said, The heat can sure do

also obsessively discussed pornography in their idle moments. The other man said Well, put it in and they sat around and watched lots of random fake-looking women get fucked by lots of random fake-looking men. The man who didn't own the apartment had always thought it foolish that they watched pornography together and didn't jerk off, after all, what the hell was the point of watching porn if you weren't jerking off? Otherwise you're just sitting there getting all horny and uncomfortable, it just didn't seem right, and he was drunk enough to finally say this to the other man and the other man agreed and so nervously they undid their pants and took out their penises and started masturbating in front of each other, watching the television. It had been the hottest June anyone could remember in a long time, hot as a dozen Klieg lights in a cheap motel room, a woman with silicone breasts would say if there really



It had been the hottest June anyone could remember, 100 degrees in the shade, and she had gotten into the habit of hanging out with her friend almost everyday at this coffeehouse halfway between their apartments. She liked her friend and she liked their conversations but he had gotten obsessed this summer with seeing how long he could

go without eating and he was starting to get weird and she thought it might just be time to mention something about it to him. She sat at the outdoor table and ran her sweaty hand over her sweaty forehead, hot as a laminated poster in a travel agent's window an oppressed Latino might say if there really was such a thing as an oppressed Latino. He was explaining how he had now gone 96 hours without eating, a new record for him, and

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things to you sometimes.

he was starting to hallucinate that small woodland creatures were breaking into his apartment at night when she said You know... and he looked up at her and said Yes? and she stared at him for awhile and thought about whether she should really say something, I mean, her life wasn't any better than his, was it? and at least hallucinating was adding a little excitement to his life, I mean, her most exciting times this summer was hanging out here with him and listening to his hallucination stories, and maybe she should stop eating, just to see what happens, and she looked at him some more and then picked up her iced coffee and took a drink and said into the glass, The heat can sure do some crazy



It was a sweltering June day, 100 degrees in the apartment, easy, and she was talking about how she had been dreaming of blimps lately and of course you can't just rent out a blimp but you can rent out a hot-air balloon and she had looked into it and it wasn't nearly as expensive as you would think and Please would he do it? Please please please please Please?

and he thought Whatever and Maybe it'll be fun. So they drove out to a small suburban airport that weekend and met with the man they had talked to on the phone. The man was filling the balloon with hot air in a big grassy field and he had to admit, a rush of adreneline filled him when he saw the balloon and knew he'd be in it soon. He squinted his eyes against the blistering June sun, hotter than the rollercoaster line at an amusement park a crabby seven-year-old would say, if there really was such a thing as a crabby seven-year-old,

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and before he even knew it they were up in the air. It didn't occur to him that the balloon would be traveling at the same speed as the wind and it kind of spooked him to feel no sense of motion, no sense of wind on your face or sound of whizzing air. He looked over at her and she was smiling, beaming really, and she reached over and took his hand and mouthed the words I love you and it occurred to him for the first time that he might just love her back, that he might just have stumbled into the relationship he was meant to be in for the rest of his life. He mouthed the words I love you back to her and watched the birds flying three feet away from him and laughed at himself for being so silly and romantic and thought in his head, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



**THE BOY SAT AND  
WROTE A LETTER  
TO HIS BROTHER  
WHO WAS IN A  
MENTAL  
INSTITUTION.**

It was a blistering June day, the hottest anyone could remember in a long time, and his brother had gone to the institution a few months ago now. The boy didn't quite understand what was going on, something about his brother not being able to handle other people anymore, something about getting really scared in big places, but his mom said that his brother was sick like with a disease and was at a fancy-like hospital where he could get better and it would be a good idea to write to him. The boy

wasn't quite sure what to say so he wrote about school and how home was and how mom hadn't let him go to this big show even though all his friends had gone and they had said it had rocked but no, it was a school night so of course he couldn't go. The boy put his hand up against his bedroom window and felt the heat from outside, hot as a Randy Rhodes guitar lick a geeky metalhead would say if there really was such a thing as a geeky metalhead. He read over the last letter his brother had sent, where he had told him that he had had sex in the institution with this girl who thought she was some famous dead Jew and how the air conditioning had gone out

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and it was weird but alright and he thought he was getting better but he wasn't sure. The boy sat and thought about how he wasn't so sure he believed in God anymore and how some of the songs he listened to made a lot more sense than what his parents and his teachers told him even though they weren't exactly saying Just Say No and some of the songs said Fuck in them which would freak his mom out if she knew which is why he always listened to them in his Walkman. He sat and wondered if all this meant he was mentally ill too and would have to go to the hospital and get better. Eventually he finished the letter the same way he finished every letter, Hope you're feeling better, I'm eating all your desserts while you're gone (ha-ha), and suddenly the boy broke into unexplained crying, and he wiped his eyes and licked the envelope and thought, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.



**IT TAKES ALL  
KINDS, THE MAN  
THOUGHT, FLIPPING  
ANOTHER PAGE OF  
THE MAGAZINE.**

It was a blistering June day, must've been 100 degrees in the shade, easy, and the man was working his usual shift at the adult bookstore, bored out of his mind and flipping through the latest issue of Details. A fat middle-aged man had just come in and darted his eyes around the store before whispering that he needed twenty bucks in tokens. I mean, that's like two,

two and a half hours in the booths, the man thought, just how much can one masturbate in a row, but it wasn't his place to judge, he thought, it takes all kinds, and his job was to take the sweaty dollar bills, right? It was like a vacuum in the store, all the windows covered, strong air conditioning blowing throughout, but everytime another person walked in they were covered in a sheen of sweat, hot as the zipper of John Holmes' jeans his friend Mark would say if there really wassuch a thing as his friend Mark. He flipped another page

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and read about Brad Pitt's latest movie and longed for someone to come in with his girlfriend which was always something fun to watch, the woman so nervous and jittery but slowly more turned on to the point where the couple would buy five bucks in tokens with a wink of the eye and sneak back into the booths together which technically was against the rules but what the hell. The door rang and one of his regulars came in, a guy about his age who was always pleasant and friendly and never seemed embarrassed by the fact that he was in a pornography store and the man said Hey, how's it going and the guy said I just had a dream that my old bosses fucked me over and the man said Who and the guy said I know, I know, Could I get six bucks in tokens? and the man counted them out and handed them over and said, The heat can sure do some crazythings to you sometimes.



**THE WOMAN WAS  
AT THE PARTY  
SWEATING HER  
ASS OFF.**

It had been a blistering June day and the heat had continued to stick around that night, must've been 100 degrees in the apartment, easy, and she was glad she was at the party but she was mad she was at the party. There were all these people she didn't want to see--her ex-boyfriend in the corner, looking all mean at everyone, this pushy dyke who always got drunk and tried to take her home, some band from London who kept hogging the keg and complaining about the apartment. But she was on ecstasy so it was pretty easy to ignore all the people and just concentrate on her latest conquest, this girl who had recently started

hanging out in their circle. She knew the woman because she had slept with her ex-boyfriend and she knew this but the other woman didn't know that she had slept with him. But that was okay, after all it had happened before, right? Sure. What? She had trouble focusing with all the ecstasy going through her head and this overwhelming desire to fuck this girl just coursing through her veins, fuck-FUCK, fuck-FUCK, and maybe she should initiate a threeway but she glanced over at her ex-boyfriend and just got pissed off at the whole idea and shot him a mean look. It was sweltering in the apartment, hot as a Kathy Acker novel a repressed bisexual would say if there really was such a thing as a repressed bisexual, and the woman decided that she just had to get

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something started so she went over to the stereo and put on the song Let's Go Crazy and she did. All the women on ecstasy started dancing a devilish whirl and drove everyone out of the living room and knocked over a vase but that was okay because they were on ecstasy, right? Sure. What? Eventually the conquest in question was on the couch breathing heavily and trying to regain her composure and the woman simply went over and started kissing her and she heard all her friends leaving and she pinned the woman under her and once the last person left and the door was locked the conquest said I don't know if it's the ecstasy or what but I've never slept with a woman before but I really really want to fuck you, I mean I really do and the woman smiled to herself, put another notch in her mental headboard, took the woman by the hand and led her to the bedroom, whispering into her ear, The heat can sure do some crazy things to you sometimes.

END

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Jason Pettus is the author of three novels and, to date, 30 self-published books of short work. His performance credits include National