

*Fur Pockets*

Once, after the mouse exploded the cat's eyeballs and fricasseed its tail on a spit in hell, cartoons moralized senselessly. *Orco was wrong because he lied* says He-Man. *Look both ways before you cross* says the marine toting an unmounted M-60 machine gun. They wanted us clean.

So different from those hippies in the painted van who never went to school, changed clothes, or said boo about a parent, who chased that gigantic wraith throughout the castle thinking their dog could talk and Velma ordinary. She discovers the wraith inside. Little Mr. *McGillicuddy* on stilts would have gotten away with it if it weren't for you stoned kids and that dog in drag.

So different from the prehistoric illogic of engines. The foot-propelled cars and the cave men who drive them. There's clearly a rumbly, motory noise—what's it for? Air conditioning? A cop pulls them over. What do you think this is, the Indierock Five Thousand? The cop rides a motorcycle. Footlessly automated. Why don't they all drive this way?

But that confusion doesn't candle up to Daphne or Betty, how they stand there, knock-kneed elegant, toes spearing space, hand on hips, angular forms squeezed to ferocious points. And those wonder twins just won't deactivate for me. He's always water. She's a Gila monster that breathes fire and flies. She's a little bit country, and he's eyes in a bucket held by a monkey. Drips spill in the sway of Jayna's ponderous wings. Falling puddles of Zan. Each drop a liquid circumcision.

Captain Caveman's fur pocket cuts the fourth wall and the fifth. It wormholes the cartoonist's inkwell, where history drops a pail to quench its thirst. A living pterodactyl lives there with Shazam's Winne-pedo-bago and Mr. Roarke's waterfall, smiles everyone smiles, and a case of Reggie Jackson bars, which Mikey

would eat on a dare with dollops of coca cola syrup and pop rocking sugars popping his heart as sputnik orbits a dog-boned space station in 1999 with that alien whose sideburn bumps give me and Beretta's parrot the business as we shoot arrows out the window of the General Lee. Impotent of doors. Crazy Cooter has no ears on. Ruth Buzzy has hit them gone with her still tagged purse from the backseat where the mouse has left a quiver of TNT.

We return to these caves and the shadows that play there as stalagmites of pixilated memory, ossified with unmilked flakes once stuck to Saturday morning. A cavernous rotunda of them stretches our fur pockets to the brink of their aspect ratio. And I am filthy still.

Michael Chaney's fiction appears in or is forthcoming from *apt*, *Hobart*, *Madbatters' Review*, and *Adroit Journal*. His essays may be found in *Callaloo*, *American Literature*, *Modern Fiction Studies* and many other academic journals. He teaches for the English department of Dartmouth College and lives in Vermont.