

Alan Jernigan

Kind of Saved Again

I saw my friend Rodney lying in a hammock with zero thoughts in his mind. “Are you still a cop?” I said. “I don’t think I am anymore,” he said. “I committed a crime I was designed to prevent.” “Still, though, you’re a kind boy,” I said. Rodney said: “You’re kind of girly, and I like that.” As he spoke, he kept fidgeting with a pair of handcuffs that were halfway in his pocket. “Those are going to end up on my wrists, aren’t they?” I said. “No,” he said. “Don’t worry. Don’t be scared.” “I’m not,” I giggled, blushing from head to toe. “Do you think I could just see your wrists for a moment?” he said in a gentle, experienced voice. “Just give ‘em here, don’t worry. I see you’re blushing, don’t worry.” I inched forward, and Rodney put the cuffs around my wrists, causing me to almost faint with hot neediness. “I’m not a cop now, but I can still take you in,” he whispered. “You have a graceful neck,” he added. On the way to the station, we stopped at a Denny’s. Rodney ordered for himself, then suggested that I try the Ham & Cheese Omelette. “Are those new?” I asked. “Ham & Cheese Omelettes?” he said. “No, I think they’ve had them for a while.”

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Sadness Morphs Into Luck

There's nothing more annoying than the sound of someone struggling to become a mailman. My naked body is already pathetically needy without having to hear that shit. I lay in bed, my skin trembling at the thought of a large human body on top of mine. And just when I'm about to scream out from the softness of my blankets, I hear a voice upstairs yell "Tryin' to be a mailman! Tryin' to be a mailman up here!" Infuriated and quivering and actually quite scared and angry, I walk upstairs and knock on the neighbor's door. It swings off the hinges and out of existence, and I stand there nakedly watching a large man in a homemade mailman uniform trying to force a fake letter into a bare wall. "That's not a mailbox!" I pipe, suddenly feeling massively supportive in my own little way. "Oh!" says the guy, with a single tear of gratitude. "That explains it! Maybe we can help each other in lots of ways!" And he puts his arm around my waist and leads me to a blanket-strewn bed where he climbs on top of me. As my tears of gratitude slither down my face, I worry that my crying will be a turn-off for him. But it's not, not at all. And as the moon sets behind the sun, the mailman smiles and comforts me and uses every inch of his body to wipe away my tears.

Alan Jernigan lives in Tucson, AZ, where he enjoys writing, reading, and playing tennis. He received an MFA in Creative Writing at Northern Arizona University. His poems have appeared in *The Coe Review* and *Driftwood Press*.