DREAMS OF WOOD

Kim Jones
I enjoy hanging out on the boardwalk in Venice. Right now I'm sitting on a wood bench facing a small outdoor café called The Figtree. There is a thin man with red hair pacing back and forth near the tables. He reminds me of Woody Woodpecker. Woody is singing loudly, while swinging a guitar up and down with one hand. The songs are mostly about how rotten the world is.

I'm getting tired. I fall asleep near a dead log. In the morning I wake up. I walk over to the pine tree. Wood has wrapped his body around the base of the pine trunk. His mouth is open. Wet saliva is still flowing from it. He is dead. I gather up some firewood. Sticks are stuck under Wood's body. Heavier logs are piled on top. I start the fire. The flames jump and jerk out of Wood's body. The fire doesn't hurt the pine tree. It only touches the bark as it leaps and disappears around the massive trunk. I watch the body as it sizzles and boils under the heat. Sparks pop and fly in an arc toward me. The fire dies.

I walk toward the Pacific Ocean alone. I have to pee. I piss into the wet sand. A steady stream of yellow water makes a small dark hole then trails down a slope into the ocean. There are no waves. Only the edge of the Pacific moving up and back, like it's breathing. My stomach begins to hurt. The pain comes in a kind of rhythm, it begins slow, builds up intensity, then subsides. This is repeated, like breathing, I get used to it. It helps relieve the hurt when I sit down. I watch the sunset. It's dark now. I fall into a fitful sleep under a lifeguard station. The pain continues. In the morning I'm exhausted. I walk to a store and buy a coke. When I get back to my lifeguard station, I throw up. I lay on the sand thinking of Wood. He died for treestanlity. Will he rise again? My stomach hurts. I stop thinking about Wood. I only think about the pain. It fills the day with its steady rhythm. That night I sleep in spurts. The pain is always there. In the morning I notice a bump, about the size of a fist, on my right side. This scares me. I take a bus to the V.A. Hospital. I walk into the Emergency Room and tell someone that I have a bump on my side and I'm going to throw up. They lay me down. Doctors come and examine me. They put me on a metal tray and wheel me around the hospital performing various tests and taking x-rays. I'm finally assigned to a hospital bed. They have to operate. A smiling black lady nurse walks up to me with a razor blade. She shaves my belly. I feel pregnant. My stomach is so smooth and soft. I glide my fingers over its flat surface to the small hill on the right half of my belly.

A little old man walks into my room. This is my doctor. He tells me my large intestine is blocked. He won't know what's causing this until he gets inside me. He gives me three possibilities. It could be cancer and I'll probably die. They might have to give me a colostomy. That's where you shit out of a hole in your side. Or the intestine could simply be twisted and all they have to do is untwist it. The doctor smiles and leaves. I stare out a window. I'm on the third floor. There is a park with grass, bushes and trees below me. Just beyond this there is a highway. It's almost sunset. I watch the cars moving along this road. There is no congestion.

They come and roll me into the operating room. A smiling black lady nurse slips something into my intravenous. I black out. I'm back in the woods lying on my
back. I feel weak. I can't move. A tube is in my dick sucking out pee. Another tube goes through my nose and down my throat sucking up shit. For nourishment I still have the intravenous feeding me fluids. I can't be dead. There's a light coming from between two trees. Some people are quarreling. I think I hear someone scream "cannibal." A woodpecker flies through the light in the trees and lands on my chest. His beak almost touches my nose. He turns around and begins tearing away the bandage on my belly. When he reaches the skin, I scream. The bird is pecking faster now, tearing out a large hole in my middle. A black poodle walks up and pisses all around me, then jumps into my newly formed cavity. I'm a boat. The woodpecker is a red spot floating above, watching us. We flow down a river, twisting and turning toward the Pacific.