

*Gina enters, she picks up the paper.
Reads the obituary and discovers that
her ex-girlfirnd has just died.*

GINA

It's cold.
I'm wearing my red scarf. A gift.
My jacket. A gift.
My snow boots. A gift.
My whole life feels like it's been a gift.
I start fresh.
Heading to who knows where.
I stop to pick up the paper.
Skim through the pages and there.
Center of the page.
There she was. Who she was. Who she left.
And I want to cry.
But I can't.
I don't know why I can't.
I'm angry. I'm frustrated. I'm silly. I'm tired. I'm feeling groovy. I'm ecstatic. I'm shocked. I'm still. I'm jaded. I'm hopeful. I'm hopeless. I'm tickled pink. I'm turning the corner. I'm jacked. I'm wired. I'm dancing. I'm light. I'm heavy. I'm moving like the wind. I'm mocking those who walk by. I'm twitching. I'm hunched over. I'm on my knees. I'm yanking off my boots. I'm kicking off the chill. I'm standing in the middle of the street. I'm yelling. I'm hearing my voice echo back. I'm flying high. I'm underground.
I'm alone.
I close the paper and I head to work.
Because that's the only place I know.
The only place that I can rely on right now.

OR

MARY LOU

I can't stand to see her little face. I want nothing to do with her. I never asked to take care of her. Who's gonna take care of me huh? Who's gonna watch out for me? Daddy never gave me that. So why should I? I don't care if she's my daughter. I don't want her. You don't believe me? Two weeks ago, it was hot as hell. So I'm trying to keep the house cool. I close the blinds, put aluminum on the windows but it's still fucking hot. And Jesse, she's sweating. Poor little thing.

Sweating and sweating and I'm trying to keep her cool. I look at her, sitting in her bouncy chair. All of a sudden I'm balling like I'm the six month old. And she's giggling. At mommy cry. I look at her. I couldn't tell if the little fucker was trying to comfort me or make fun of me. And I want her gone. Then it hit me. That's probably how Daddy felt when he looked at me when I was her age. I went into the bathroom. I had to get away from her. I went in there and began to bang my head against the wall. To just get the anger out. But inside, I wanted to bang her little head against the fucking wall. So, I put her in the stroller and head outside. I'm standing at the bus stop. And I hear the bus coming. And I just want to jump. In the street. Let the fucker smash into me and end it all. But I didn't. And not because I couldn't. But because I was daydreaming about jumping in front of it so that I missed the bus. It drove away, leaving me with the stroller in my hands.

OR

JULIE

A couple of years back, the company I worked for laid me off. And I realized I didn't want to be a secretary my whole life but I didn't have the money to pay for school, so I joined the military. They offered a special one-year program: candidates would live as 'civilians' and attend a specialized program that focuses on business training. All I had to do is sign. And I did. Boot camp was rough and I developed some minor back issues from the daily PT. A few months into service, my back problems got worse, and I developed daily headaches and migraines. The base doctor, a youngish Navy captain from Alabama, assigned some physical therapy and then had me follow-up with him. In our meetings, we'd chat. Felt the same about having a 'normal' conversation with someone who had interests outside of the base and the bars that ringed the base. He invited me out to dinner one evening 'as a friend.' Nothing romantic was implied, he assured me. He said that he enjoyed our talks about old movies and old music. I hesitated, but I found him pleasant and believed what he said. We agreed to go to an 'old movie festival' (I actually think it was Bogart films) that was running that evening nearby, and he arranged to pick me up. I dressed casually, which back then (and with my lack of fashion sense) was jeans, a jean vest, and some sort of shiny blue polyester shirt – a bit on the boyish side, as I think back. He was prompt. He drove a black Trans-Am Firebird. Like Smokey and the Bandit. The car actually surprised me because he hadn't struck me as one of 'those kinds' of guys. Nevertheless, I climbed and we left to go to dinner. But then he stopped at his off-base apartment, saying he needed to pick something up, and I could certainly join him for a few minutes. Okay, I thought – naively. As I noticed a package of chicken on the counter, and spices, and potatoes, he casually suggested, "Why

don't we eat here first?" We had a few hours before the movies started, and besides, they ran continuously through the night. I agreed, but with hesitation. He poured me a drink and I consumed it, too quickly, which has always been my style. As he prepared dinner, I had another drink, and then a third. They were strong, and I hadn't eaten anything since lunch 6 hours earlier. The chicken went into the oven, and we sat on the couch to chat. I remember asking why he joined the service. He said he just that he wanted to get out of Alabama. He poured me another drink and I hesitated, feeling buzzed and growing uncomfortable. I asked when dinner would be ready, and could we get to the movie festival in time. That's when he leaned over to kiss me. I recoiled. My mind raced. I didn't know what to do. I said I had to use the bathroom and he pointed to a door in the hallway. I headed in that direction, my face red, feeling really uncomfortable. When I opened the bathroom door, he was standing there with his pants off. He grabbed me in a huge bear hug and pushed me into the adjacent bedroom. I stiffened and said I wasn't interested – that I really felt sick to my stomach, that I didn't know about sex (all true). He twisted my arms behind me and started pawing at my clothes – my boyish, unattractive clothes. He pulled until he created a burn between the denim and my thighs. He pulled at my underpants until they tore. He jumped on top of me as I pulled to turn sideways. His voice was angry now. It was over in a few moments – he was 'quick' to come to completion. I was frozen in a curled position, with my clothes draped over me. He grunted, "Get up, I'll take you back to the base." I pulled my clothes back around me and stood there trembling. He drove me to the base, and I jumped out of the car. I jumped into the shower and probably stood there for over an hour. I didn't cry. I tried, and couldn't. But I scrubbed and grew angry at myself, at him, at my life choices. Monday – three days later – I went to class. At noon, I went to the base chaplain, a Catholic priest, a Navy officer, and told him what happened. It wasn't easy, and I never looked up from my hands in my lap. Was there any chance I was pregnant, the Navy priest then asked. I finally looked up, What? Could I be pregnant? He continued that if there was any chance of pregnancy, I could never consider an abortion. I waited a week, got tested. I was with child. They gave me two options: I had the choice of staying in the service, they would put me on lighter duty as necessary and I would get 7 weeks maternity leave and another 6 months to recover enough to pass a PT test... or I could opt to discharge under Chapter 8. I was raped. There was no way I could go back. So I chose option 2. I came back to my little hometown and learned that even if I wanted to get an abortion I couldn't. It seems that you help pass a law that made my clinic illegal. And it shut down. So I had no choice but to have that child. A nameless child of rape because you seemed fit to tell me what I could do with my life. Now, I'm sure you feel lots of sympathy for me and my situation. But, I don't need your sympathy. I need you

to be you. It's not this baby's fault his father was a rapist. But I didn't choose to be a mother. I wasn't ready for that. So I'm going to tell you what I'm going to do. You see this bag. This is his diaper bag. It has three weeks worth of clothes and diapers. You might want to start him on formula since I won't be able to breast-feed him anymore.

I'm sure you'll figure it out. I think it's time you pay for what you did to the women of this state by supporting and passing a law that creates situations like mine. Congratulations. You are the father of a brand new baby boy.

And she turns to go.