



Issue 11
December, 2020

Dead
On A
Doorstep

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Contributors

Icarus

Alexis Behrmann

Porcelain Rose Depino

Josh Davis

Camo Salve

SofiBee

Josef Desade

Edward Crossman

Sarah Kerendian

E.W. Farnsworth

A Note On The Issue

December is one of two issues that are open to the entire United States, and not just New England. We welcome, and thank all the people who contributed from around the country for this issue.

Happy Holidays everyone!

-J Desade

Avaritia

Icarus

And just like Icarus,
He plummeted from the heavens to his sure
demise.

What had once been thought as a burden he'd
never endure,

Was now looming upon the horizon,
Wreathed in the flames of the rising sun.

Yet, his fixation to feel that warmth has brought
him to a premature end,

The hunger driving him forwards will never
bring him satisfaction.

The illusion that shackles him to his prison of
avarice,

An indentured servant.

Your possessive nature has turned that warmth
bitterly cold,

And now you have been ostracized from her
touch,

Cursed to never again be comforted by such
warmth.

And so you fall into the shadows,
A fiend committing atrocious crimes, and
uttering damnation,
Wreaking your path of destruction, and despair,
While she dances gently in the meadow of
sunflowers,
Regaling beneath the teal sky, and amber rays
of the setting sun,
A beauty gazed upon only by Apollo himself.
For this is what has become of your reality,
A desecrated world, lacking warmth, comfort,
or care.

Untitled
Alexis Behrmann

You're the most selfish
The most horrid
The most manipulative
The most self-absorbed
The most controlling
The most fake
The coldest hearted
The rudest
The most hateful
The greediest
Human being I have ever met
Here is your reminder
That you reap what you sow.

Greedy Little Fingers

Porcelain Rose Depino

Greedy little fingers

Hands rummaging through my pockets.

“Gimme, gimme!”

That’s all I ever hear from you.

You just take, and never give.

My heart hurts for you.

Greedy little fingers

Another quiet ride, because you didn’t get your
way.

Will you ever understand?

I work so hard to give you what you have.

Am I ever going to be enough for you?

My eyes are so sleepy.

Greedy little fingers

You always bite off more than you can chew.

And I take the repercussions.

But you know I am always going to catch you.

Not this time.

Not ever again.

*It's that time of year again...disgusting.
I cannot find what I am looking for in this
fucking place.*

*All these greedy little fingers surrounding me.
The tantrums, and the crying.
Loneliness seems peaceful.*

Untitled
Josh Davis

What started as a blank canvas,
Now inked with memories,
I, the artist, created many such a work,
But no one knows my name,
No fame, just an empty flame,
Measure your dollars against my pennies,
Makes no difference, memories made me.
What made you?

Greed, And Its Many Soldiers

Camo Salve

The first god ever born to the psyche of man was dominion. Us early men worshiped it, for its ability to supply sustainability. Yet it seems, the line between prosper, and greed is a thin one. And, as most false religions have faith as their primary driving force, the priests, and Popes that preached this faith knew in their hearts what was actually being done. Their jobs weren't to preach the good word, as much as it was to shepherd us sheep to the slaughterhouse.

This god Dominion doesn't want your life, rather he'll settle with your dedication throughout it. He wants your mind, he needs your dedication. He's structured this world to hold up a soft veil of piety, all the while raping the pockets of the weak. This world we live in has one god. The god we helped create.

True piety may come once in a blue moon. We try as people to hold desperately to these words left by these many teachers. Throughout the millennia we wait.

Like a team without a captain. We praise with conviction, anyone we think will restore this balance.

We fall victim time, and again, as unholy men parade around, and do behind closed doors the acts of atrocities they preach against in view of public eye. Men throwing those under them to the wolves of time. All the while using the greed in us all, to do the worst of their bidding.

Greed is a formidable metaphysical weapon. That can, and will crumble entire societies unto the utter destruction of this plane. The Gnostic's called this god the Demiurge. Through his guidance, we humans have constructed an almost impenetrable wall to the thresholds of the mind, and soul. We call it culture, we call it society, we call it economics.

We humans seemingly never had a chance. It's sad, yet there is hope. We confuse criticism with introspection. For when we bash others for their inabilities, we oftentimes are really ashamed that we too have these same inabilities.

As technology grows, we must make sure it's cohesive to the evolution of our hearts. The industries paving this technocratic future have the opposite in mind. For they too understand the game at hand. And

have pledged their greed, like faith, to this god
Dominion. Greed is the currency of this system. The
greedier it is, the higher the numbers. We've associated
these high numbers with happiness, and quality of life.
This whole system is driven by its captors. The players
of this game know that it is through the greed in us all,
that they rule.

Dominion may have been our first god, as humans.
But the greed in us all is what fuels his existence.
Stifling that greed, identifying where it abounds, and
restructuring ourselves, is where we'll be successful in
our efforts to forge a new era.

Hungering

SofiBee

In the days of the loud whispers,
They promised more, and more,
Grasping for every love – if it meant every loss.

I trembled with the possibility.
I held tight hope.

She sat by the fire at the end of the forest,
Tentatively waved for me,
And the river flowed full, and the sky was the
ceiling.

Yet there was more.
Circle upon circle,
To be slipped on my fingers,

And colorful gold glowed on the walls of the
temples.

But there was more.

And some more.

I belonged. More and more.

So much belonging made me full,
Of despair; clandestine hope.

Gratefully, the diamonds faded,
In the night, when no one listens,
I sit outside my door.

One of those days it might open.

Untitled

Josef Desade

In this world loyalty is a dead brand. Gone are the days where family was a word we could rely on. In the current culture we've been fed blood thinners until the bond is almost extinct. In times past, friendship had a code. Loyalty, respect, honor...these were unspoken rules of the concrete jungle which we shared with our companions, as we fumbled through life, looking for some sense of meaning in this strange world in which we live. But gone are the days when those words had meaning. These days we trade handshakes with snakes, and stand vigilant, as we await the knife to be plunged into our backs from those closest to us; for our world has become hypocritical as old world practices, and beliefs have died. The sacred codes have all been left to decay into dust, as generation after generation is

brainwashed to seek the pursuit of pleasure;
greed and vanity over all. Lusting after the
lives of others, we put on our masks and create
fabricated lives, which we project to the world
in a grand act of chicanery, as we burn our
bridges and keep on moving; for if we ever
stop for even an instant, all our past deceptions
will catch up with us, and we will be forced to
face the karmic consequences of our
narcissistic deceptions. So we run, and run until
our legs can't take anymore. Collapsing to the
ground, we find ourselves
alone...unsatisfied...broken. We look to see
what went wrong, however we refuse to peer
into our own shadow. So we create scapegoats
and pass the blame so we can nourish ourselves
off the misguided sympathies of those around
us, and find the strength to pull ourselves to our
feet, and sell our souls for temporary solace as
we start the cycle again.

Social Suicide Revisited

Edward Crossman

You're our walking corporate projection. Reflecting our
image.

You young, infected, mindless fools, who follow this
perfect marketing tool.

Just be silent, and buy, and share the lie.

Spreading the disease, funding our future, try not to
think, just hurry up, and die.

Without us your life is a bore, so join us, and conform.

Give us your money so we may glamorize, and
monopolize all the things of no value.

Even your soul can be sold, if we allow it to.

We own the means of production, and command the
hand of justice.

This is not a brand, it is a way of life, your only choice.

This is not an ad, we are your inner voice.

Your deepest wants are so easy to calculate.

So we manipulate the ebb, and flow of the corporate
state.

You may try to retaliate. To fight back, to re-
compensate, but we are your fate.

Go ahead and rebel for your cause, but it will all soon
be forgotten.

Your morals will be forsaken for profits.

Your causes will wither, and go rotten.

Apathy will be the hammer that pounds the final nail in
your coffin.

We are the natural construction of dysfunction and
corruption.

We are your means of destruction.

But, ironically, without you we cannot function.

Your end doesn't come with a bang, but a whimper;

When you hollow men whisper together.

Your meaningless lives are broken, like voices lost in
the ether..

We rule this dead land with a soft touch, controlled by a
heavy hand.

We teach, and preach, with the speech of the empty
man.

We keep you shuffling around a controlled reality, a
fallacy of shadow, and non-existence.

We capitalize on your resistance;

Your persistent need for recognition of your
individuality, and self-existence.

You're unique, just like everybody else, so join the
crowd, and get lost in the self.

For clout, and esteem you deny you need help.

While we stack all our profits away, up high on a shelf.
Above all you wrecks, you terrible filth. The huddled
masses, yearning to breath free.

Freedom has a high price, but safety is on sale. All it
cost is a bend of the knee.

So put your head in the sand, it's out of your hands,
leave it to your betters to demand, and command.

Get lost in your things; don't want you to think.

Have a drink, and just sink into the numb of the
damned.

We are your gods, we are your masters.

We sell you garbage, the only things that matter.

We sell you the water you drink, and the air you breath.

We are the Amerikan dream.

Seed Of Greed

Sarah Kerendian

She traveled the dark, found the knight, but all
didn't go mighty right,
Through her veins, she went insane,
The devil
Tap...tap...tap...
Deep down inside her gut...
Inside her brain...
The full moon...
The pouring rain...
The black crow came, and caw...caw...caw...its
way.
Sinful night,
The touch of darkness was a touch of death...
No turning back.
Miss Jewish American princess.
She has seen the blood,
Seen the cross,
In the dreams she has, she twists, and turns,
The lurking...

The smirking of the Devil, with his greedy
python of reptile,
Swithers her in...
Eve bit the apple...
As so did she...
As she fades far, far away from this hell of a
reality.

Ratchet's Honey Cart Enterprises LLC

E.W. Farnsworth

Eddie Ratchet, the closet billionaire entrepreneur, was driving his new squeeze, Irma Hoyt, also a billionaire but an heiress, to visit the site of his new business with the intention of garnering half her fortune to back his planned business expansion.

“This had better be good, Eddie. We have been driving for two hours, and you have not said a word about where we are going or what we are supposed to see once we get there.”

“Irma, you have to be patient. Do you know how long I have to brood on an idea before my *Eureka!* Moment becomes a business plan? Have I ever failed you yet?”

“Well, no. But there’s always a first time.”

“Why don’t we just forget it this time. We will turn around and go back to the city. At least we had a sunny day for a drive.”

“What kind of return were you expecting from this latest venture again?”

Ratchet drummed his fingers on the steering wheel and grimaced. “The whole principle of everything I do is the two-for-one return. If you put up a billion for the first tranche, you will get two billion back in six months. If

you don't want your two billion back right away, you can roll it forward for the second tranche and get four billion back after another six months. So in one year, you could clear three billion for your initial investment.”

Irma re-crossed her legs and folded her arms over her ample breasts. Eddie thought she was pushing her tongue into her cheek—which was a good sign.

“Do you want me to turn this Bentley around? Just say the word. We can go back to the penthouse and I can shag you for the rest of the day if you like.”

“Actually, I like that idea in any case. Keep that thought. And keep driving. I don't want to have wasted the first half of our day on a pleasant drive for nothing.”

Ratchet shook his head. “It was on a day just like this one I had my latest brain fart. And I was driving this

blue bomb along this same highway when a rowdy bunch of drunks passed me going ninety or more. As the vehicle flashed past, I caught a bumper sticker. It was vulgar and explicit—I had seen the substance on a number of prior occasions, but that day, it etched itself into my cerebrum: “Don’t like my driving? Dial 1-800-EAT-SHIT!” He glanced at Irma, who was looking out her window trying to appear not to be the least interested in his story. Her foot was rising and falling to some unheard melody revolving in her airy head.

“I don’t see how that old chestnut could have been the lightning rod for a billion-dollar idea.” She was now examining her orange fingernail polish, which matched the polish on her expensively pedicured toes.

“That’s why you are likely to spend down your fortune to zero while my backers and I become trillionaires. Anyway, it hit me: why not eat shit? Do you realize humans digest only fifty to sixty percent of the nutrients that pass through their bodies? That gross inefficiency spells opportunity.”

“Eddie, I hate to tell you, but you will never sell that bumper sticker as a slogan for a business of any size.”

“Shakespeare wrote, ‘What’s in a name?’”

“Yes, but in that play, names were everything.”

“So I will tell you about my family history so you will understand the name for my business. In the late middle ages in the pale of a small city in Poland, my many times great grandfather Aaron Levy pulled a honey cart. People laughed at him for doing what no one else wanted to do—collect urine, which was, of course, the honey-colored liquid in the cart.”

“I am getting bored with this story. What’s the point of it?”

“When Aaron Levy died, he was not only the richest man in his city, but one of the world’s richest men. Emperors and Popes came groveling to his door begging for money. By the time he died, he had provided money to build and support synagogues, churches, convents. In fact, these became significant collection points for his trade. His most illustrious products were distillations of nuns’ piss as many of the nuns were virgins. Stop laughing! Today estrogen products are made the same way.”

“Really?”

“Yes. The estrogen goo women wear to calm the beast within their irascible husbands is made from the same recipe my ancestor used seven hundred years ago.”

“You have my complete attention now. Are you taking me to a nunnery?”

“Do I look like Hamlet?”

“You are joking. Eddie, sometimes I don’t know whether to laugh or cry at the crazy things you say.”

Ratchet shook his head. “Miss Hoyt, I have never been more serious in my life when I talk about my new business, whose name is Ratchet’s Honey Cart Enterprises, LLC. There, I have let the cat out of the bag! Later today I will have you sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement, my standard NDA, to keep your loose lips from sinking my ship.”

“You don’t have to worry about me, Eddie. I am not technical. I do think the name of your enterprise works better than the one starting 1-800-.” She smiled faintly as they passed a field of red poppies against a fringe of bright green woods. Eddie was smiling too, and he slowed as they overtook a herd of oxen. Ratchet waved to the herdsman as he slowed to match the pace of the

animals, which were walking and shitting pie-shaped splotches on the road side.

“One day I may be able to factor ox shite into my plan.” He sped up and left the inspiring sight of the herd in his rear view mirror.

“Do you really mean that?”

“I do. Scout’s honor.” He raised three fingers as a token of his sincerity.

“The sight of those droppings did nothing for me.”

“When you see my factory, you will change your mind. It is ahead on the right. The turn is not far from the sign.”

A full sized billboard announced Ratchet’s Honey Cart Enterprises. Three scientists in white lab coats were examining the golden liquid contents of test tubes while two shipping boys in uniform stood by a door leading to refrigerator trucks about to load goods for sale.

Irma brightened up. “Now that’s what I am talking about!” she said as he pulled the Bentley to the right and coursed down the road to the paint-ready factory building where a refrigerator truck like the one on the

billboard was backed up to the loading ramp. Two shipping boys were carrying goods for the truck. When they saw Ratchet, they smiled and stopped to wave.

“Don’t stop for us. Keep moving. Time is money. We have to get those goods to market!”

The boys got back to work. Once the Bentley was parked in the customer area, Ratchet opened Irma’s door and, like the gallant he was, Eddie extended his hand to her.

The interior of the warehouse was immense. The receiving and processing labs lay to the left while the dry freezing and cold storage areas lay to the right.

“What is that I smell, Irma?”

“I don’t smell anything special.”

“That’s precisely the point. My process removes everything but the undigested nutrients, and those have no noxious odor or color. By the time the residue enters this sanitized plant, it is purer than when it was originally consumed. Further, it does not contain the bacteria and viruses as they have also been culled. Even effluent with antibodies has been siphoned off, and those products are separate lines for the LLC. We will

drive by the other processing plants in the sequence. They line the river. As we go, you will discover the aroma changes. Most people have trouble with the smell of the first plant in line.”

“I saw the line of trucks standing by the side of the road further on.”

“Yes. Those are the raw products being delivered for first stage processing. Seeing them brings tears to my eyes. They bring memories of Aaron Levy’s humble honey cart to my mind. Have you seen enough in this warehouse?”

“I feel better about what you are doing. Everything is sanitized. You would not guess what went into the sequence. It gives me confidence the idea might just work.”

Eddie took Irma through four of the other six factory buildings, but he would not take her into the first two. She did see the trucks carrying the primary loads empty their contents into external pools that emptied inside the stage one facilities.

As they turned around and drove back to the main road, Eddie summarized what was happening in each

building. They stopped by the billboard for a moment so she could look back on the idyllic scene. When they pulled back onto the highway, she was shaking her head.

“I am ready now to hear the secret of the entire picture.”

“To do that, we will have to stop to eat the picnic lunch I packed. On the right side of the road a little way ahead is a picnic area. Eddie pulled the Bentley off the road and unlocked the trunk where a picnic basket lay. With the basket in one hand and Irma on his arm, they walked through flowers to a freshly-painted picnic table where he set out a tablecloth, two bottles of pinot grigio with wineglasses, cloth napkins and silver plates on which he placed the viands. They enjoyed their feast before they got down to business.

“Did you like the luncheon?”

“I did. And the choice of the white wine was perfect.”

“I am glad. Now I have the papers for you to sign. Are you ready?”

“I think so. I will clear a place so I can read and sign them.”

Eddie poured her more wine. While she was reading the NDA and the investment contract, he fetched a butterfly net and ran after specimens in the meadow. When he came back to the table, Irma had signed the papers and placed a check for one billion dollars on top. The check was made out to Edward J. Ratchet. The sight of all the zeroes brought tears to his eyes.

“I think we should celebrate right here in this meadow.” She began taking off her clothes. “Well, what *are* you waiting for? Your lady is waiting.”

Ratchet put away his butterfly net and fetched a blanket. When he returned, she was naked, and she lay on the blanket while he locked the papers and his check in his glove compartment. Then he disrobed and lay by her side, the two of them looking into a blue sky with a line of silver clouds.

Eddie knew what Irma liked, so he went slowly through the foreplay. She always got a dreamy look when she was ready, and when she climaxed she was screaming and shrieking as she dug her heels into his ass and scratched his back with her orange-painted fingernails. Afterwards, they lay still while the insects made their

noises. A fly landed on Eddie's arm, but he did not swat it. He watched it deposit a flyspeck.

“See, Irma. Even the flies have their contribution to make to our cause.”

She pursed her lips. “Now that you have had me—and I must confess I enjoyed it—will you tell me the secret?”

“You always have been good for me, Irma. If I were not a fanatical celibate, I would ask you to marry me.”

“Nonsense. We will have another go when you have told me your deep secret. So don't spoil our outing.”

Ratchet looked over the woman's alluring body and sighed. “In a word, the secret is franchising.”

Irma's head snapped around. “What?”

“You heard me. I have figured a way to carve the business up into pieces that can be separately franchised. Since the six factory steps you saw can be parsed and sold anywhere, our enterprise has no geographical boundaries. Then, of course, there is the franchise for the roll-out. What if the picnic basket we enjoyed for lunch were available through a franchise?”

Irma got a distressed look on her face. “Do you mean our lunch comprised products from your processes?”

“Exactly so! And now you understand why separate franchises are a good thing.”

“Hm. If people cannot make the connection, that’s fine. And maybe they won’t—ever.”

“Our concern is to sell the six franchises first. Then we shall worry about details of the roll-out franchises. Anyway, in six months, you will have the opportunity to bail out with your two *billion* dollars. How does that sound.”

“Mr. Ratchet, I am enchanted. Now, please take me again to the moon!”

Irma was not satisfied till he caused her to climax three more times that afternoon. She might have continued except she thought she might be getting too much sun. In fact, Eddie’s back was getting all the sun, but he did not mind.

As they drove back to the city, they thought about the plan and the prospect of their returns. They talked about their billionaire friends who might want a piece of the action. So when they got back to Eddie’s penthouse,

they were ready to make their calls. By nightfall they had six investors ready to take their tour of the six factories, and within three weeks, Eddie had six checks for one billion dollars each to place in his offshore account.

As Eddie and Irma ushered each new investor through the six plants before regaling him or her with the picnic basket lunch in the meadow, Eddie gradually revealed his other secrets, such as the sources for the sewage that kick-started his processes, the Japanese patent he had licensed for reducing human waste to edible substances and the recipes George Washington Carver used to sell products made from processed peanuts. As ratchet had anticipated, the buzz he established by the time he had banked eight billion dollars caused dozens of other billionaires to clamor for some piece of the action.

Eddie was ready for the groundswell. He drew up licenses for nations such as China, Japan and South Korea to jump on the band wagon. So by the sixth month since inception, Eddie was ready to present to his initial investors personal checks for two billion dollars, after which a new set of investors was corralled while, independently, the franchise action continued apace. In

this way, a steady stream of income fed the franchises while Wall Street was rendered irrelevant through the greed of private investors.

On the highways of America, trucks with the Honey Cart name and image on their broad sides began to proliferate. Public interest rose in the end products so major distributors flocked to include the Honey Cart products among their offerings. Image advertising proliferated including story lines about the LLC's infinite supply of inputs, its transfinite number of end-product offerings, the gross recycling opportunities, and the virtual transformation of the solid and liquid waste industries as well as the pharmacological industry.

Naturally, big finance wanted to find ways of playing the new company. Jealous of an upstart venture trampling on their sacred ground, Wall Street sent its best and bravest to discover a way to profit, and Eddie Ratchet was willing to oblige—for a price.

Eddie Ratchet and Irma Hoyt would provide a feast of Honey Cart products and fine wines while Eddie told stories about Aaron Levy's financial acumen, Not a neophyte at creating spin, he suggested the biggest

houses on the Street could offer private lines of derivatives for their super-rich customers with no potential for government interference. Always dangling the tantalizing possibility of taking his LLC public, Ratchet kept the investment bankers on a tight leash while he pushed out the boundaries of his enterprise.

When the second six-month run had come, as before Eddie was ready to give his investors checks for double their inputs. Seeing how profitable the enterprise had become, they refused to take back their money, and some doubled their stake even though no return of capital was guaranteed at any time in the future.

Meanwhile, business was booming in China, Japan and South Korea, and Europe was looking for ways to enter the fray. Irma was confounded that none of the newbie investors wanted to know anything about the products or the inputs. They were only concerned about the torrential streams of earnings that seemed never to have an end.

Ratchet sensed a new wrinkle when imitators tried to crowd into the space he had created. Of course, he was ready to roll out his cadre of unscrupulous lawyers to sue all infringers of his patents or violators of terms of

his franchise agreements--with triple damages. So for a while he was making more money from lawsuits than from any of his business lines. The money fed into a new secret project called Flyspeck. In fact, Eddie siphoned the money to buy herds of oxen all over America.

At first, Eddie made a single product at Flyspeck—gourmet oxtail soup, but the thought of recycling ox shit was nagging him. He consulted his scientists and soon had a test production line to produce a second enterprise on the model of his first. Bovine Enterprises LLC was conceived in tandem with Irma's five hundredth orgasm. As she had been his first investor, he gave her half interest in Bovine from the start. Eddie was glad this secondary enterprise had no links to Honey Cart whatsoever. He counseled Irma to take her money out of the latter at the same time he was pulling up stakes. As they had made eight billion dollars each over the course of one year from the end-date of the second tranche, both parties felt justice was served.

In the same meadow where they had made love after her initial tour of his prototype factories, he spread the same blanket. They took off all their clothes and made love to

commemorate the date. As it was now summer, the butterflies were prolific. Irma was no less enthusiastic about achieving her climaxes, and Eddie found only one element altered in an otherwise perfect afternoon. The sounds of trucks queuing in a slow conga line on the highway were punctuated by their horns honking and catcalls from the drivers who watched two rich people naked shagging in a meadow as they passed in parade. “You have to be kidding me. Please tell me you are joking!”

Eddie feigned contrition. “I cannot tell a lie: the truckers saw us fornicating in that meadow. I think they heard you shrieking and screaming in ecstasy.”

She sank low in the seat trying to work out the implications. “I don’t know what I should do.”

“We should not let the opinion of the masses to affect our fun.”

“I am mortified! The word should not be permitted to get out. What if some reporter comes calling to interview us?”

“Why should a reporter want to do that?”

“Eddie, I have a past. I don’t want my history to come between us going forward.”

“I will sell the Bentley. That way they will have no way to track us.”

“That might just work.”

“I don’t suppose you are going to tell me what is in your past that causes you such anxiety.”

“Definitely not!”

“Good. Then I won’t tell you what is in my past.”

“Fair enough. But, oh by the way, what is in your past you would not like revealed?”

Eddie gave her a look that meant, “Don’t press your luck!”

From that time, Eddie and Irma drifted apart. She moved out of his penthouse. He felt relieved when her cell phone number was discontinued.

Eddie Ratchet knew it was time to fold his tent and move on to other projects when his investors began filing suit against him for return of their capital. As the suits went from a handful to thousands, Ratchet declared bankruptcy, upending all the would-be

plaintiffs as no more money was deemed available. Lawyers who had come forward on spec now receded. The franchisees were now on their own to sink or swim on their own devices.

Meanwhile, Bovine Enterprises LLC continued quietly, and the startup generator Flyspeck was in no way associated with any LLC except Bovine. All the money for both entities was deposited in numbered foreign accounts controlled by Eddie though, it was true half of Bovine was still owned by Irma, who could not be reached. She may as well have disappeared off the face of the earth.

The financial buzzards decided to flush Eddie from hiding. So they pooled money as a war chest to infringe as many of Ratchet's patents and franchises as possible. Eddie did not roll out his usual battery of lawyers. He did not go to the international press. Too smart for his opposition by far, he waited till they were thoroughly frustrated. Then he published a version of his autobiography: *The Man Behind Ratchet's Honey Cart Enterprises, LLC*. This tome of four hundred pages included the full story of Aaron Levy, Ratchet's illustrious ancestor. Naturally, it also included the

history of Levy's rise as the honey cart man. And it included what that meant.

The sensation went public with fanfare. Ratchet's autobiography sold two million copies before it was translated into the Asian languages. They it sold hundreds of millions of translations. Honey Cart overnight became a name and image of opprobrium. The initial headlines told the tale: "Empire of S**t!" and "1-800-EAT-S**T or Bust." Suddenly no one was able to sell any Honey Cart products, no matter how good they tasted. The entire web work of relationships built by the now-bankrupt LLC fell apart. Asian repercussions were profound.

One day in early winter, Ratchet heard a soft knocking on his door. When the door opened, Irma Hoyt was there draped in a mink stole.

"Hi Eddie, I just dropped by to see how you are doing. I have heard the most terrible stories about your having committed suicide."

"I am as you see me."

“Buster Melton, my new boyfriend, thought I should ask about Bovine Enterprises LLC, of which I own half interest.”

“How much do you want for your interest. I am afraid I can’t pay you much, but I acknowledge the debt. I hope you won’t sue me, as I am not sure I could afford my defense, and it would drive Bovine into bankruptcy.”

“Do you think you could give me five hundred million?”

“I know I could give you two-hundred million today. In fact, I will write the check if you will write an agreement to consider that amount our final accounting for your ownership interest.”

While Ratchet wrote her check, she composed a lachrymose letter that she was accepting two hundred million dollars as the sum total for her interest in Bovine LLC. Tears were streaking down her face when Buster showed up at the door.

Melton looked at Irma and then at Eddie. “Did you write the check?”

“Yes. I wrote the check. She has been paid in full for her interest. Do you want anything else?”

Irma said, “Goodbye, Eddie. You were always so good to me.” She grabbed Buster by the sleeve and dragged him to the door with one hand as she held Ratchet’s check with the other. When the door slammed shut, Ratchet thought a chapter of his life had ended. He also thought he was lucky to have settled on Bovine for one hundredth of the company’s current book value.

Eddie Ratchet went to the refrigerator and pulled out a bottle of his finest champagne. When he had popped the cork and poured the bubbly into a fluted glass, he toasted his ancient relative for showing the way. Honey Cart enterprises LLC had made him close to fifty billion dollars in its two-year run. If he counted the book value of Bovine Enterprises LLC and Flyspeck, he had cleared two hundred billion dollars for a startup amount of around a billion.

As he consumed his champagne, he thought the least he could do was to trade in his Bentley for a classic Rolls Royce, a forest green model with mahogany features and brown leather upholstery. He knew just the car he yearned for. It was owned by a now-bankrupt earl, who had bet his entire fortune on Honey Cart Enterprises LLC. The man would be happy to have cash for the

transaction so he could support his heroin habit. Ratchet made the arrangements immediately. The next night he was flying across the pond in economy class between two passengers who smelled as if they had left behind their own honey carts.

Having come full circle, Eddie fell asleep and did not awaken till the stewardess told him they would be landing at Heathrow in forty-five minutes. Something in her eyes suggested she might be game, so he suggested English breakfast. She said she would be delighted, in fact, she would treat them both as she had just received a bonus. That saved Eddie from showing her his frayed sleeves and how he had to trim his cuffs on account of his abject poverty.

Thank you!

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Thank you to everyone who took the time to download Dead On A Doorstep!

I encourage you all to share it with your friends, or hang it with some mistletoe, or read it with a New Year's drink!

Dead On A Doorstep is a monthly indie press, featuring New England native poetry/prose. If you are interested in contributing to a future issue, please send submissions to DOADNE@gmail.com.

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Our next open issue will be February, with a theme of Rebirth/Crippling Depression. Submissions close January 25, 2021.