

# —MEAT-BOY

by Peter Hynes

Meat-Boy is bored. Meat-Boy is always bored. Stiff-tension waiting for the anytime doorbell to ding, groping his dopey dong and groaning inside.

He stops his losing pocket pull to rise and coast the rubber-sole squeaky-clean floor of the morgue, past the rack of autopsy tools--tools for tardy torturers, he laughs, for victims who'd never feel nothing no more. On beyond the vault faced freezer door, no combination, no time lock--the valuables are gone; we just keep the jewelry boxes here.

Assuming there was ever anything in them.

Meat-Boy gets a call, delivery on the ten minute way. A 200 pounder--hammered one too many shingles and express ride down. No need for the siren. DOA, name in the file, meat in the aisle. Left a wife and three kids, Driver says. Thanks a fucking lot, says Meat-Boy, I needed to know that.

In the toilet closet, tense stance before the sink. One hand stroking this month's glossy center-stapled pubis, the other squeezing Meat-Boy's boy-meat. Sticky game amid the sterile waiting--race the rush, squirt the porcelain before the wagon arrives. Beat the meat. The live in his hand, the dead in the van.

Just in time.

Need a hand? asks Meat-Boy. Driver wiggles motionless pale fingers from beneath the sheet and says, Gots all I needs, thanks--code ID password. Old joke. Jesus boring job, thinks Meat-Boy. Says, If he took a head-first off a roof, why the slice and dice?

Insurance, says Driver. Pays different, dipshit slip-and-fall or heart seizure. Swings gurney handle around, watches Meat-Boy work the dolly up the ramp to the freezer via the cutting room. Okay, says Meat-Boy. See you later.

What a shitty job, Driver says. Some nights, rather be unemployed.

He's unemployed, Meat-Boy says, pointing to the stupid stiff who fell off his own fucking roof, and Driver laughs around a cancer stick and nods like, Yeah, it could be worse. Maybe.

Later. Meat-Boy is truly neck-stiffeningly pound four-inch nails with your skull bored.

Meat-Boy reads the articles.

Full moon tonight, newspaper says, left by bossy fuck-off grad student working three nights a week at the morgue. Pisses Meat-Boy off. Ever watch a stomach burst when you lift it out, Meat-Boy? the candidate likes to say. Phew!

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Imagining grad lad's stomach crawling out his asshole and playing Amazing Grace bagpipe style amuses Meat-Boy. Briefly.

Meat-Boy gets a call. Drops a tab.

Driver's early--good thing, 'cause the pseudo-acid cooked in some daddy has ambitions but no money entrepreneurial med student's one Bunsen burner flat is still idling at the offramp. Driver's a little drunk, wouldn't notice anyway, only, shit, Meat-Boy starts laughing because he can see the booze on Driver and smell his coming hangover.

Fuck 'em all, says Driver.

Line 'em up, says Meat-Boy. Driver laughs like an asshole. Literally.

The tab hits like rush hour. A gurney wheel squeaks and squeals and Meat-Boy can see it clawing at itself, trying to get free, metal nails on his mental chalkboard, so he stops to smoke and wait until it goes back to sleep and he can slip the stiff into the icebox. Freeze the little rotating fucker, shut it up right good.

He pops the freezer door, heavy sumbitch, and is struck stupid by the light--stares the up to now unseen, unknown, brilliant afterlife passage dead in its million cosmic candlepower, spotlight spiral, unblinking, iris-shearing eye.

Holy shit, says Meat-Boy, and slams the freezer shut.

Now, weeks working in a morgue dragging the freshly and often dumbly deceased to freezer, tag room, split room, alone, bored, fluorescents creeping up on you, formaldehyde sinus burning, hospital air, funeral atmosphere will give the spooky shits to near anyone. Meat-Boy *likes* it. Meat-Boy gets hard-ons between deliveries. Meat-Boy proudly considers himself one sick fuck.

So, finding the bright light at the end of the tunnel, corridor, bridge, four lane freeway to the next world (that musta been some shit), that gives Meat-Boy the creaming miseries, the one hundred watt jollies. Meat-Boy thinks that this is so far beyond cool Fonzie couldn't find it.

He opens the door again. Nothing.

Meat-Boy is depressed. The drug could wear off soon and the after-light hasn't returned. He's been waiting beside some wrinkled, sag-titted old stiff in the freezer for half an hour and now shivers atop the hallway heat vent in blue-lipped disappointment. Hoping to see inside, to or beyond the light at the end. To watch the transmutation of the soul, or somesuch, he's heard of it but wow--for real, the big bone voyage. He's been babysitting their old clothes, and they're off getting fitted for feathers and gold threads.

Meat-Boy kicks the wall. All this going on and he's choking his chicken in the lavatory cause he's *bored*.

Call comes--five minutes Meat-Boy, get a hustle on.

No rush, says Meat-Boy. Take your time and come twice.

Nah, says Driver, this one's ugly. Those models just don't die on my shift.

They don't die at all, dipshit, says Meat-Boy. They're done in a computer, like those dinos.

Yeah. Look butcha can't touch, says Driver.

Hurry the fuck up, says Meat-Boy. He's just remembered.

The Polaroid. Documenting six-shooter--flash, you're dead. (Come here often? Grad Student had said to the stiff being portraited, and Meat-Boy imagines cutting