

Support

By Ken Sieben

1/24/08: ready to start new story about Judy Driscoll sobering up. Title refers to her need to support herself financially, but moreso emotionally, + willingness of Darlene Kaye to offer friendly support in form of tough love to help her. She goes to A.A. meetings for group support but discovers (as I did) that one has to do it oneself.

7/92: JD goes to work as “retail manager” for Paul Parnell in his hardware store. Makes pass at him, gets dead drunk, and winds up fucking his brother-in-law 2-3 nights in a row without realizing it.

DK finds her passed out in own vomit on ground next to her front porch Sunday morning after PP returned to own home, the night JP returned to WW.

PP injured in car accident in NYC later that afternoon, and JD must assume responsibility for running store. (Wes helps Saturdays, and she becomes very friendly with him, learning from experience of his family.)

DK persuades JD to take stock of her life, establish own rules, build new life for herself based on sobriety and self-direction.

JD attends A.A. meeting with DK (guest – open mtg). Hears shocking stories but realizes she’s too ashamed to share her own level of debauchery.

JD makes decision to start life anew, to start A.A.S. in interior design at LCC (starting with remedial algebra course).

Chronology:	b.	1951
	m.	1972
	IW	c. 1984-85
	Split	1/87
	DD bankrupt	c. 1988-89

HW	c. 1992-96
SOBERED UP	1992-93
A.S.	1995
B.A.	1998
Teacher	1998
Made up	1999
Re-m	2000
Traveling	2006

SAT 7/12: 2 days past full moon overhead 3:30 a.m.; low tide (+1.1') 5 a.m.; dawn 4:23; sunrise 5:36; moonset 8 a.m.

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Judy Driscoll comes suddenly awake knowing something terrible has happened. She is cold and shivering, despite the July night's heat. Suddenly, her stomach wrenches as her nostrils inhale the stench of vomit. She is lying on the sidewalk next to her front steps, nose and forehead scratched and bloody, hair in the azaleas, mouth and chin pressed into what must be her own foul vomit. The terrible thing that has happened to her, what's left of her conscience preaches, should never have happened to her or to any other woman—or man, or, for that matter, to any girl or boy out of diapers. She has soiled herself. She opens her eyes slowly and is startled by the brightness. An almost full moon shines overhead. She pulls her left wrist toward her face, but cannot distinguish the digital read-out on her tiny watch. She presses buttons. By the time the dial lights up, she sees only 0:00. Her first thought is that time, for her, has stopped. She must be dead or—at the very least—out of time. But if she's dead, why does she feel so sick, so cold, so tired? How can she smell so vile? Is her body decaying? Is she in Hell—a state in which one always and forever smells only the rottenness of the flesh?

The next time Judy wakes up, she is instantly aware that she is no longer shivering, that her body has been covered with a blanket, that someone has obviously noticed her shame. She opens her eyes and discovers that the light has changed. She has never paid attention to moon, sun, stars, or to rise and fall of tide. But the moon is now near the top of Hudson Hill behind the Island Watch condos. It has apparently changed position in the sky. Will it soon disappear behind the hill? That must be what happens. In the

opposite direction, above where she knows the ocean is, she can see faint rays of light. She is lying in her own body's wastes by the dawn's early light. She flashes her watch dial again but sees that the numbers are still 0:00.

Yet time has moved on. The moon is about to set, and the sun to rise above the horizon. She cannot be dead! She is still a living creature on Earth, a living creature so ashamed that she cannot allow herself to fall asleep again. An early-rising neighbor might open a window and smell her vileness. Some fisherman might see her in her shame or, worse, bend over to offer help. She must make herself stand up or, failing that, crawl within the safety of her home, behind a solid door and curtained windows, where she can get on with dying—all by herself.

Judy is thin and light. At forty-two, she weighs the same hundred and seven pounds she'd weighed in high school. Her hips are a bit wider though still boyish, her breasts no larger than when she was ten. She'd looked like a natural track star but lacked the strength and will to compete. She'd always hated gym because she was such a poor athlete. She'd especially hated showering with girls whose bodies seemed to re-shape themselves daily. Her ex-husband Dave used to tell her she had a pretty face and a great pair of legs but nothing in between to interest a man.

This morning, she needs all her meager strength to pull herself upright using the porch post and rail. She slowly manages to climb up the six steps, open her front door, and step inside. She kicks off her moccasins and pads into the kitchen. She unbuttons her shorts and blouse and drops them into the garbage pail, realizing that she is not wearing any underwear. Then she remembers why. She had removed her clothes to shower last night, then opened a bottle of scotch and sat naked on the sofa sipping it slowly, waiting for Paul to come in and find her sober enough to fuck. When he didn't show by midnight, she panicked and decided to drive to his house, stopping only to put on the outer clothes she had selected for the morning. When she tripped on the bottom porch step, she decided she was too drunk to drive and must have passed out.

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Judy showers again and puts on long pajamas, a fleece bathrobe, and leather slippers. Then she drops two Alka-Seltzer tablets into a glass, watches them fizzle, swallows and belches twice. She checks the microwave clock in the kitchen and sees that the time is five-fifteen. She also smells her own feces. She seals the garbage bag, places it inside another bag, ties that as tight as she can, and carries it out to the dumpster, which should be carted away within the hour. She returns to the bathroom to wash her

hands, then pulls down the covers and climbs into her

Paul Parnell was her new boss. When she learned the previous Wednesday that he had generously allowed a tenant to use his own house while he removed and replaced a rain-soaked carpet in her apartment, she invited him to spend the night in her spare room. His brother-in-law Roger arrived that afternoon hoping to sleep at Paul's, so she invited him, too. The three of them got roaring drunk, and one, probably Roger, put her to bed and fucked her at least twice.

CHECK DAY AND HAVE HER REMEMBER PP. WILL SHE BE ABLE TO CLEAN HERSELF UP AND GET TO WORK?
YES, THAT'S ALL SHE HAS LEFT.

ALSO, JD FUCKED ROGER ON WED, THINKING IT WAS PP. ZONKED OUT ON TH WHILE R FUCKED DK. R
FUCKED JD AGAIN ON FRI NT, THEN LEFT FOR VT ON SAT. MID-A.M. JP CALLS AND SAYS SHE'LL BE HOME
SUN, BUT ARRIVED FEW MINUTES AFTER MIDNIGHT TO FIND PP DEAD DRUNK.

THIS WILL BE NIGHT JD HAD FELT SO DESPERATE SHE STARTED TO DRIVE TO PP'S HOUSE LATE AT NIGHT,
BUT REALIZED SHE WAS TOO DRUNK, THEN SLIPPED AND FELL.

LATE SUNDAY SHE GETS WORD FROM JP THAT PP HAD BEEN HIT BY CAR AND WOULD SHE TAKE OVER
STORE ASAP?

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