

## La Dispute

### "Edward Benz, 27 Times"

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I heard the old man's voice break, stutter once then  
stop it. I  
Heard "A sentence started confidently halted by  
the sudden absence of  
A word. Stumbled and he sputtered trying to find it  
back, something once so  
Simple gone now. "When he finally gave up told  
me, "Aw, it's like  
Hell getting old."  
When you came into the store, did you know you'd  
show me your scars?  
I had a heavy heart, he carried a door, it's shattered  
pane all wrapped in  
Plastic and "He asked if I could fix it, come by a  
little later help  
Him put it back on hinges. "See, I'm far too old  
to lift it and it's  
Not for my house, it's my son's."  
When you opened up the door, what is it you thought  
you'd find?  
Nobody flinch.  
Later I came by and backed into the driveway. Got out  
to find him waiting  
There to lead me "Through the side yard to back  
behind the house where  
The door frame stood empty and helped "Me  
keep it steady while I  
Hammered all the pins in then later on the porch we  
somehow got  
To "Talking, he told me of the house and how is  
son is schizophrenic  
So they purchased it for him, "The medication  
working and they figured  
It would help him fit in, help him lead a normal life.  
But the pills made him sleep too much. And he couldn't  
keep a job as a  
Result so one day he just "Gave up on taking  
them. And that day she  
Had called you, he'd locked her outside of the house.  
How quickly did you get there? And what were you  
thinking while walking up?

What fears flashed in front of you, taunted you,  
walking to unlock  
The door?  
I remember it, Ed. That story you told me came back  
clear tonight here  
While writing. And you should know the feeling  
never left me—the  
Weight of my heart—when you showed me the  
scars—On your arms, when I  
Looked in your eyes and I heard what you said how you  
probably  
Would've died were it not for to care for your  
daughter and wife. How  
He drove in the knife, still your son,  
How you seemed to look through me to some old  
projector screen playing back  
The scene as you described it on a movie reel,  
as real as the minute  
When it happened, that memory moving behind  
me. That moment that  
Changed you for good.  
And he drove to the house and pulled into the  
driveway. Got out to find his  
Wife waiting, frantic. She'd come by to check,  
found that pillbox  
Was empty, went out to the pharmacy to fill up  
his prescription and  
Came back to a locked door and could not get back  
in. She'd knocked  
And she'd knocked but he wasn't responding.  
You put the key into the lock and turned it. Felt the bolt  
slide away.  
Slowly open. Went into the hall, his son held a  
knife, standing off  
In the shadows, lunged forward and tackled Him.  
Stabbing him over  
And over and breaking that window. He fled up the  
staircase. The  
Ambulance came; stitched and filled him with blood  
while the cops took his  
Son with his wires so tangled his father was a  
stranger.  
And I sit in my apartment. I'm getting no  
answers. I'm  
Finding no peace, no release from the anger. I  
leave it at arms  
Length. I'm keeping my distance. From  
hotels and Jesus and  
Blood on the carpet. I'm stomaching nothing.  
I'm reaching for  
No one. I'm leaving this city and I'm headed out

to nowhere.

“I carry your image. Your grandfather's coffin. And Ed,

If you hear me, I think of you often. That's all I can offer.

That's all that I know how to give.

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