

A photograph of a group of people gathered around a fire at night. The scene is illuminated by the warm, orange glow of the fire, which is reflected in the water. The background shows silhouettes of trees against a dark sky. The overall atmosphere is cozy and communal.

REGATHERINGS

Scribings

Vol 6, 2017

edited by Jamie Alan Belanger

Scribings, Vol 6: Regatherings

Jamie Alan Belanger, editor

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"Hearth to Hearth" (c) 2017 D.L. Harvey

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This PDF is a sample of Scribings, Vol 6: Regatherings

that includes a short excerpt from every story.

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I can explain everything. Even the maid's uniform.

Introduction: Regatherings

For as long as our species has existed, humans have always been social creatures. We gather around campfires and tables, sharing meals and stories. We build, we instruct, we entertain, and we share... all that we are, all we could be, and sometimes we even share things that could never be. The constant in the strands of our lives is that we do all these things together. Even those who choose to walk their own paths through life--seemingly alone--are still contributing to the greater story of our joint lives.

Somewhere inside this greater narrative lies a long string of tales that come full circle. People meet, and part, and then at some point they meet again. It seems inevitable, as if this conjunction of lives was always meant to be. Perhaps the person you met yesterday will return to your life in a strange way in a future you will share. He or she could become a mentor, a student, a spouse, the technician who fixes your car, or the waiter who serves your food. Part of the allure of these reconnections is the mystery of what could have been, should both have noticed their link the first time around. Or, the reconnection is just a natural progression of a familial bond that grew apart; an estranged child returns home to parents, or siblings long parted gather once more, or friends who haven't seen each other in years gather together to share memories.

No matter the context, the rekindling of old bonds is a healing act that soothes aches from the past and helps pave the way to our collective future. In this, our sixth installment of original short fiction, the Greater Portland Scribists explore these bonds. Whether trying to save a childhood retreat from corporate interests, reuniting with old friends, returning home for a final goodbye, or trying to cope with a dear one who *won't* depart, these tales are about the twisting journeys of our relationships. Location, context, and pasts are irrelevant--it's the *people* with whom we connect who help shape our experience on this world.

Regathering once more with those people illustrates how much we each have grown and changed in the interim; or, in the case of some, how much we have *not* changed...



Topia

by Timothy Lynch

Have you ever felt like you've had help from beyond? Not just a lucky roll, like double sixes when you wanted them, but a true helping hand, keeping you from walking down the wrong path, making you choose one door and not the other? Adam had such an experience. Later, he would sit in his cracked leather chair, shake his head, and realize what almost wasn't.

* * *

"Must be logging trucks," said Thomas Cass, closing agent for Border Real Estate.

"It feels more like an earthquake," said Denise Mantor, attorney for the West Sodus Land Trust.

Adam waited for the trucks to go by, so he could continue signing the closing documents. The desk shook to such an extent he couldn't write.

"What do you expect? This is Maine. The logs won't move themselves," Thomas said. He returned his attention to Adam. "Only one more batch to sign."

Denise looked on, chatting with the Town Attorney, William Blake.

He signed the last page with a flourish. "Is it over?" Adam asked.

"All we need now is the conservation easement," Denise said from across the table. "Get ready, Adam. You, Mr. Blake, and I will be working on it, starting on the first of the month."

* * *

It was six months ago that Adam went to the Town of West Sodus, with a proposal of joint ownership involving some special piece of land. It had been his great grandfather's and was thirty miles

from the New Hampshire border in West Sodus, Maine. Dad-up-home, his great-grandfather, had purchased the unusual crater-shaped hundred acres thinking he might start a park or something. His great-grandmother, Mom-up-home, had, according to family lore, suggested "Utopia" as a name for the property. She saw it as a precious place--like no other--where people could be immersed in nature. But Dad-up-home, firmly entrenched in reality, believed *utopias*--that is: places that were 'no place'--did not exist, therefore his property could not be one. "Topia," he would say, "a place that actually *is*."

Thomas Cass zipped his down jacket. "I don't think I've ever seen a face as happy as yours at a closing. Congratulations!"

"Thank you, sir. Thanks so much!" In his heart, Adam hoped his great-grandfather would have been pleased with the deal. Again the building shook.

After the closing, he couldn't wait to get to the property. He drove to his apartment complex to pick up his wife, Janelle, and his daughter, Olivia. He breezed through complaints from Olivia about putting on boots and a hat, and Janelle's insistence that the sink be cleared and cleaned before they left. He was simply too happy to let anything take away his feeling of--what was it? Relaxation? Peace? They piled into their used Prius. It had a fifty-pound bag of sand in the trunk to help with traction; it was Maine, in winter, after all.

Topia had been a wonderland for Adam growing up. Dad-up-home would sit on a bench with his drink, while Dad and Grandad walked the property. Decaying logs hid wriggling salamanders and wood frogs. A golden field where diving swallows swooped and twittered covered the north side of the property. It was a place where Adam might look closely at a leafy bush and find a prickly praying mantis or a delicate Luna moth, waiting for nightfall. In the late spring, Adam often saw the black-orange flash or heard the teeter teeter ter ter of an oriole.

The Prius rolled to a stop on a road overlooking the property, and Adam turned off the car. Memories flooded his head. He stared down at a stream running through the property, from the car window. He remembered younger days, pulling up cattails on the stream-bank, making them aerodynamic with small clumps of earth weighting the ends. Dad-up-home would sit and watch with his binoculars. To Adam, it had looked like they were resting on his formidable reddish-white mustache. Meanwhile, he vanquished imagined monsters and lorded over all he saw.

Exiting the car, he searched for the topography of his youth. Next to the stream rose the big hill they called "Roundtop." But with everything covered in snow, other features were impossible to identify. Still, he knew it was all there, under the cold fluffy blanket.

"So, what's the plan, Mister McHenry?" Janelle said, bringing him back to present, her voice encouraging and a bit nervous. He glanced at her steadfast hands holding Olivia's shoulders.



Birthright

by Jamie Alan Belanger

The day that stretched before him seemed full of light and possibilities; the alley, on the other hand, was full of disappointment. He harrumphed as loudly as he could and kicked the boot of the nearest gnome. "Wake up!" he screeched.

The gnome stirred and glanced up at him. A moment passed, then the pitiful creature scrambled to his feet. "S-s-sorry, Dappil," he said. "Er, boss."

Dappil wagged his finger at the gnome. "You can't sleep on the job, Freg," he said. "The people of this district aren't going to rob themselves. We have serious work to do here!"

A few feet down the alley, another gnome was rubbing sleep from his eyes. Dappil gave him a hearty harrumph as well. Word passed quickly and quietly down the alley. More bodies stirred and the alley took on the air of intent concentration. Dappil walked toward the street, glancing left and right, surveying the members of his very own thieves' guild. He knew them all by name and paused here and there to comment on their positions. Trepnil had a good hiding spot. Ylta would never be seen in the alcove she'd selected. The twins--Rennet and Bennet--looked very intimidating indeed in their matching vests. When Dappil said so, they bounced with glee.

Near the alley's end, Dappil paused. He counted his members on his fingers. Then his toes. Then returned to his fingers. Something was amiss. He glanced back at his crew, who watched him from their partially-exposed hiding places. Dappil frowned. "Hey, where's Bobby?"

Rennet kicked at a loose cobblestone. "He's across town," she said.

Bennet nodded. "In another alley," she added. "With a few others."

"What for?" Dappil asked.

Rennet glanced at her sister before responding. "Something about 'spreading out.' Lokt and Krilia went with him."

"Spreading out?" Dappil said. "That's dangerous!"

"That's what I said!" Bennet said. She waved her arms like she was trying to fly away. "We're safer together, like you said!"

Dappil looked up and down the alley. His guild--which comprised the only organized thieves in this city district--numbered nearly fifty gnomes. Many were here, in this alley, where they could watch over one another and ensure their safety. The three who had wandered off on their own... Dappil sighed. How was he supposed to ensure their safety? How would it look if they were robbed, or worse?

"Boss!" someone yelled from near the street. "Someone's coming!"

Dappil waved his arms. His guild members watched with fascination. Suddenly he stopped, exasperated and more than a little tired. "Hiding places!" he screeched at them. This was the most promising prospect they'd had in days, and he was glad he would be here to witness his men and women in action.

Dappil ducked behind a crate, cramming his body near Trepnil and squishing the poor gnome against the wall. They all watched with anticipation, waiting for the right moment to strike. A lone figure appeared at the alley's end. It was too tall for a resident of this section of town; this being the stout section reserved largely for gnomes and dwarves. This person appeared to be a human, clad in a green tunic and carrying a small tube.

"A messenger!" the lookout screamed.

Dappil started walking down the alley, then determined it was taking too long and started to skip. When he reached the end of the alley he stopped and straightened his tunic.

"Dappil?" the messenger asked. He cleared his throat. "I'm looking for someone named Dappil."

"Hi!" Dappil said. "That's me!"

The messenger handed over the missive. Dappil undid the ribbon that held the scroll closed and unrolled it. He stared at the words, then ran his fingers over the letters. The ink had dried long ago. He felt the shapes of the letters, marveling at the way the ink flowed on the page from one letter to the next, lines and flourishes that intertwined on a backdrop of cream-colored paper. It was a fascinating arrangement of scratches and symbols.

"Will that be all, sir?" the messenger asked.

"Oh," Dappil said with a shrug. "Not quite. I can't read. Well, I can't read *this*..."



Tree Song

by Robin Orm Hansen

"She's a sweet child. And smart as a whip, but--" Mama's voice.

"--ugly as a mullein plant," finished another voice.

"Yes, well... that," Mama said.

Jütta had been feeding chickens and had slipped into the kitchen for a drink of water when she heard that.

Mama's voice was guarded in the other room, where she must be drinking coffee with Mrs. Wimple, their Anglo neighbor.

In the kitchen, Jütta shuddered.

"Where did she come from? Who were her people?" the neighbor went on.

Jütta stopped, alert, tin cup poised under the faucet, wondering if her mother would say something that might answer her own questions.

There was the briefest hesitation as Jütta's mother figured out that Mrs. Wimple was fishing--for gossip. Then she popped out the answer that Jütta had heard all her life: "She was born in Milwaukee--over there. She came from an orphanage there. We know almost nothing about her parents. She was a foundling."

"Left on the steps of the orphanage...?" sympathized Mrs. Wimple, still fishing.

"Something like that," Mama said briskly. " 'Nother cup of coffee?"

"Ugly as mullein," Mrs. Wimple mused, playing the line a little, while Jütta trembled in the

kitchen and struggled against tears.

"Ugly is as ugly does, Bettina. We were in love with her right off. She's smart as a whip and loving as none of the other children. She has a way with the animals and is always there for lambing and farrowing. If there's a ewe in trouble, she always knows what to do. She's never been ugly."

But I look ugly, Jütta thought. That's what Mrs. Wimple is saying.

"Still--"

But Jütta smiled then at what Mama had done. She had called Mrs. Wimple ugly. "Ugly is as ugly does, Bettina..." Mama was using "ugly" as bad behavior, and Mrs. Wimple was talking about looks.

* * *

Jütta remembered nothing before the day she was swooped up in the air by Papa, whose face was knotted with concern. She remembered a ride on the wagon, tucked into his red plaid hunting jacket, and then, the place she now called home--the suffocating warmth of the farm kitchen, the brightness of electric lights, and the strange, unnatural faces of the other children, narrow, pale faces flanked with pale hair, leaning over her, asking questions and poking her with their fingers.

Finally, Mama had driven them away. "Hush. Away with you. You're frightening her."

Later, their pale look became natural to her. Everyone in town, everyone at school, looked somewhat like them, all narrow people, some dark with crinkled hair, some pale with flaccid light hair. No one looked like her, square and short with crinkly, wild, red hair.

Mama delighted in Jütta. She said, Jütta thought, too many times, that here was a daughter given by God when her husband had provided three, then four, healthy, blond sons. Her efforts to decorate Jütta as a girl were not entirely successful.

There was the problem of her feet: 5-E width was too narrow. The shoe salesman in town suggested a bootmaker in Detroit who could make shoes to order, and Mama invested in this, because Jütta had to have shoes. Mama held that providing shoes for your children was a vital part of being a good parent. The price of the hand-cobbled shoes was beyond their means, but Papa allowed it, though he had to cut into savings. "This once," he told Mama, then: "Can't she wait a few years?"

But the shoes never fit, and pinched her feet and bound her ankles. Maybe the bootmaker hadn't believed the measurements he wrote down on a small yellow pad of paper. In the end, Mama sewed her a pair of Chippewa moccasins, soft little leather bags for her feet, gathered at the top and decorated with a little beadwork flower on each toe flap. She never had another pair of shoes or boots, just one pair of moccasins after another, some high for snow, some short. And always an extra pair, because they soaked through in rain and snow.

So, she was adopted.



Hearth to Hearth

by D.L. Harvey

Jud's Kitchenette

Jud heard the displacement of gravel in the driveway from Shane's uncharacteristic hard and fast stop with his motorcycle, a 2016 Indian Scout. He closed the refrigerator, marveling at how the twenty-year-old managed to afford and handle the 1200 cc motorcycle. He turned his baseball cap around so the bill could cast a shadow over his features; no need for Shane to see he was being laughed at when he burst through the trailer door. Remembering he had some bad news to deliver to the kid, Jud ducked back into the fridge to retrieve the marinating fish.

The rattle of the screen door hadn't settled before Shane slammed the interior door shut. The towering youth growled as he stomped across the floor and plopped into a metal and plastic chair that would've been the height of decor in the 1970s.

"I have a problem," Shane declared as he yanked the elastic from his hair, letting the long locks of his Mohawk hairstyle trail down his back. He laced his fingers behind his head after compulsively smoothing the newly shaved sides.

Caught up in Shane's drama, Jud smirked. "You don't say," Jud flattened his tone to hide his opinion of Shane's distress, amazed that less than a decade of years separating them made such a huge difference in their maturity. He held out his hands for the vegetables which Shane had gone to the store to collect.

Shane pulled the mango, pear, and fresh herbs from his pockets while he spoke. "Cora says she's

still going camping with Delia. She says her Noni won't let her go camping with me instead." Shane was whining. Once seated, he dropped his hands on top of a pile of newspapers in a huff.

"Why don't you join the group?" Jud asked reaching up to adjust his cap again. Worry wrinkled his brow and lowered his voice. For his cousin, Delia was more of a personal problem than the subject of a mystical investigation.

"Delia." Shane grunted, assuming Jud remembered all of Shane's complaints: Delia's interruptions, changing the subject away from whatever he and Cora were discussing, texting in on their dates with some emergency, backhanded compliments, and instigating the ostracization of anyone questioning her authority. "Cora actually laughs at Delia's insults and thinks the compliments are legit."

Jud opened the glass dish and dumped Maine-farmed salmon into a sizzling pan. "Maybe they are legitimate and maybe you are over-reacting."

"You and your Grove-counsel buddies convinced me to go to the bonfires to watch her little posse for a reason. Your seer--" His voice drifted off, distracted by the table before him; it was covered with dirty cups, empty juice bottles, an incense burner, newspapers and magazines, and the African violet sitting on a mat in the center.

"She's the real deal but she can be wrong," Jud suppressed his instinct to defend his sister's abilities. He kept his back to Shane as he diced fruits and vegetables to add to the fish.

"Is she?"

Jud mumbled something where "including you" and "case" could be heard while the rest was drowned out under the mango dicing. He added the fruit to the fish, ignoring Shane.

"Though," Jud said, drawing out the word to gain Shane's wandering attention before he tried to explain The Grove's request for Shane's assistance. "The police have nothing that proves Delia had anything to do with the deaths in her group of friends."

Shane held his breath and fidgeted in his seat. His feet tapped on the floor in a quick, non-syncopated rhythm.

Jud continued, "There's no material, mainstream evidence that she had anything to do with those people's accidents and suicides. We agree that she's a nasty piece of work. But you, Delia, and Cora's rela--"

"It's the grandmother," Shane blurted, interrupting Jud, "How do I get Noni on my side? She'd get Cora to see reason." He moved the mat in the center of the cluttered table, watching the African Violets shake from being shifted. He could swear the man and daughter carving on the cauldron-shaped planter frowned at him.



Familiar Haunts

by Noah Burch

Ed's blue and white pajama bottoms slid up his shins as his feet reached for the floor. He trod carefully on the carpet, sweeping away tiny, disarticulated bones with the edge of his foot before each step. Making his way into the kitchen, he punched the button on the coffee maker, only to find the machine already brewing. He plodded to the front door, opened it and made his way down the three brick steps leaning heavily on the handrail. His aging joints creaked as he stooped to retrieve the morning paper. He slid the plastic bag off the newspaper and plopped himself down at the table while the coffee percolated.

The paper unfolded. The ads, comics and a human hand tumbled into his lap. He yawned and pitched the severed appendage aside, skimming the headlines. Hit-and-run on a back country road, another senatorial scandal. "So much violence," he muttered as he grabbed a skull glass for his coffee. He took his time with the coffee and ignored most of the emotional trauma known as news. He went to take another sip, only to find the coffee had become thick, metallic tasting, and horror movie red.

"God dammit, Liz!"

He threw the mug with surprising force and jerked upright from his chair. His eyes surveyed the room, his gaze burning into the dark corners with boundless fury. He stomped his way past the kitchen and through the living room.

"I'll find you, Liz! A man deserves to at least enjoy his coffee!"

Rounding his way back through the kitchen and into the bedroom, he kicked the layer of bones

aside and ripped open the bathroom door. A dead woman lay in the overfilled tub. Thick red locks billowed out beneath her head in a tangled, chaotic mass. Pink water dripped over the side as the dead eyes looked blankly up at him. He grabbed her by the hair and submerged her with a tidal wave, before dragging her back up and slapping her cheeks.

"Come on, lay off it."

The inert body simply bobbed in response. He turned on a heel and left the bathroom. With a metallic *chunk* his foot disappeared into a bear trap's serrated teeth. He hobbled on one foot dragging the chained trap along with him. Uttering a stream of curses as his free foot stomped down on finger bones and vertebrae, he navigated his way to the closet, limping on ravaged feet. Before he could touch the handle, the door burst off its hinges. The weak plastic panel bounced off of his frail frame. He thrust the door to the side in time to see an aged crone bubble up from the floor in a mist of unearthly miasma, cackling maniacally. He reached out a liver-spotted hand and seized her by the throat as she made her way up to the ceiling, his fingers slithering and slipping through the semi-ethereal skin.

"Dammit, Liz! I said cut it out!"

"Fine!" the crone huffed, folding her arms and levitating her way back to earth, "but you have to admit I got you that time."

"Sure. Would you mind?" He jerked a thumb at the bear trap.

She waved a hand dismissively and the trap disappeared. Her long, hooked nose shrank back into a small button. Stringy black bangs folded themselves into brown curls with sun-bleached highlights. A wart popped back into her chin.

"I want my room back in order and my coffee back!"

She shrugged and the carpet of bones vanished. He hobbled his way back to the kitchen and poured another mug of mercifully black coffee.

"Come off it, what are you gimping for? It wasn't real," she protested.

"Yeah, it still hurts when my foot gets hacked off, even if it is only in my head. And you owe me a mug." He pointed to the remains of what was now a shattered pile of mundane ceramic.

"Whatever." Liz rolled her eyes.

He sat down again in his recliner, whose meager cushion had long since succumbed to years of use. With feet up, he resumed his skimming of the paper. He flipped to the comics. A laugh would do him good. A pearl white dove with an olive branch pinched in its beak fluttered down and perched on his shoulder. It dropped the twig on a car advertisement.

"Are you mad? I didn't mean to make you mad," the bird tweeted in Liz's voice.



Adrift

by Richard Veysey

Lounge, 6:50 PM, Sunday, May 27, 1989

"What do you think?" Mark moved out of the way, giving Elizabeth a clear view of the yacht's expansive cabin.

"Oh my god!" She inhaled slowly as her eyes took in the details of the room. They settled upon a class photo hung on the wall. She studied it for a moment, taking in the faces, knowing that her own was not among them. "Were we really that young once?"

"Believe it or not, we really were." He walked closer to the picture, Elizabeth following behind. "I still have that cap and gown somewhere. I never could bring myself to get rid of it."

Elizabeth pointed at the ceiling. "Was there really a disco ball in here? Those were even tacky when we--you graduated."

"I didn't want to put one up, but I figured it had to be there if I was going to make this yacht look just like it did back then." Mark laughed. "It's hard to believe it's been ten years since we graduated from high school. It seems like just yesterday, doesn't it?"

"It seems like a long time for me. Probably because I didn't graduate with you. I guess I don't really belong at a class reunion when I didn't even finish high school."

"You were part of our class; of course you belong here." He looked at his watch and swore. "It's almost time for us to get out on the water. I'm going up to the bridge; make yourself comfortable."

Elizabeth nodded and walked toward the bar at the back of the lounge. She sat on one of the

stools.

A tall man with dark brown hair emerged from the small galley behind the bar. "Elizabeth? Is that you? Oh my God, I haven't seen you in over ten years! You look stunning! How's your little girl; what was her name? Zelda?"

"Zoe." Elizabeth grinned. "She's doing great. Smarter than I ever was when I was growing up. She's turning eleven in a few months. How are you doing, Peter? Still a total lady killer? You're even more handsome than you were ten years ago, and now you're a big-shot CEO. Wasn't your company on the Fortune 500 last year?"

Peter shook his head. "No. We didn't quite make it into the Fortune 500, but we're getting close. If everything goes well with my big meeting tomorrow, though--" He paused. "Well, I don't want to brag. I just do what I do and couldn't see myself anywhere else. The past ten years have been a lot of work, but it's all been worth it."

"Hey, I hear Janice came up from California. Do you and her still talk or--"

Peter shook his head. "When she moved away, she didn't give anyone an address or phone number. She was just gone. I haven't talked with her in almost a decade. Haven't really thought about her much, either, to be honest."

"Really? You two used to be a big thing back in the day; cutest couple in the yearbook, prom king and queen. I'm surprised that ended so suddenly."

Peter shrugged. "It was a high school romance. How often do those ever last?"

Elizabeth sighed. "I guess you're right."

Lounge, 8 PM

"Of all the class reunions in all the world, you had to walk into mine."

Elizabeth turned to look at the man who had sat on the stool next to her. "Eric! I didn't expect to see you here! I heard you moved down to Florida after graduation."

Eric nodded. "I thought it was about time I came back to see if anything had changed around here."

"And has it?"

Eric shook his head. "No. It's just as boring as ever. But I guess I can't complain too much. Pam's Diner hasn't changed either, and I wouldn't have that any other way. They cook better food than any five-star restaurant I've ever visited and for a fraction of the price."

Peter and Elizabeth both laughed.

"You've been eating at five-star restaurants? Sounds like you're living the high life." Peter said.



Deadly Tangents

by Julia Labanowski

Before I tell you the story, I want you to know--that guy, the stiff behind me--he wasn't supposed to be *there* and he definitely wasn't supposed to do *that*. I know that doesn't make a lot sense to you right now, but it will. I promise.

* * *

Everything started on a Sunday, when I went to check the mail. I know what you're thinking; there's no mail on Sunday; why did you go check the mail? My sister called and told me it was Monday. I believed her. And no, it didn't cross my mind that I would have had work. I didn't think about it too much.

Anyway, the mailbox.

No. Her call isn't important. Besides, I don't remember what it was about. I wasn't paying attention. I never do.

The mailbox. Inside was one small, black envelope. I almost missed it, but luckily the faint gold lettering caught the sun just right. Actually, maybe it wasn't luck. Never mind. You wouldn't understand yet.

So, I pulled the envelope out of the mailbox. The lettering on the envelope was so faint, I had to catch the glint of sun to read it and even then, I'm not sure I read it right. Instead of my name and address, it read Necromancer. Or at least I think it did.

I, naturally, tore open the envelope immediately. Really, who wouldn't? If a mysterious envelope

just appeared in your mailbox and read Necromancer (maybe), would you really not even be a little tempted to open it? Of course, opening it turned out to be the first in a very long line of mistakes. At least, my sister would call them mistakes.

The letter was downright ordinary compared to the envelope. Thinking on it now, it was kind of disappointing. What's the point of spending all that effort on making the envelope cool, if the letter is just going to be a plain, old, boring business offer? (I assume that's what it was anyway.) He wrote that he "required help on his research in the field of Thaumaturgy pertaining specifically to areas including, but not limited to, reconstitution, abolition and/or maleficium," or something like that. I don't really remember, but he wrote the word "research." I dropped out of college because I hated research, so I tossed the letter into the recycling bin. (Yes, I recycle. It's the responsible thing to do.) That was my second mistake. Of course, that mistake wouldn't come back to bite me for a little while. So, I'll just skip ahead a couple days.

I was sitting in the living room--believe it or not--reading. Now, you don't know this about me, but you can probably guess that I'm not much for reading. But I was reading the most awesome book on the practical uses of necromancy--how to raise the dead, how to kill things, and how to blow things up. If that had been a major in college, I totally would have graduated. Unfortunately, it wasn't.

Where was I? Oh right, reading. So I was reading in the living room, when a huge blast of wind knocked the door off its hinges. You know, if you want someone to work with you, destroying their door is probably not the way to convince them. I mean, I had to pay for it. Actually, maybe, if you're offering to pay them for their services, it might work. I mean, they need money now that you demolished their door. Now that I think about it, that's actually why I took the job.

After the blast of wind obliterated my door--wait, have I told you about my sister's dog yet? No?

So my sister has a 150 pound Great Dane--a big, beautiful boy with a gorgeous, white speckled coat. He's a very nice dog. Sometimes too nice. Classy--that's the dog's name. My sister's daughter named her. I'm just glad it wasn't Spot.

Classy was supposed to be guarding my lawn because my sister was on vacation with her daughter and husband. She left on Monday and she couldn't take Classy with her, so she left Classy with me, without (by the way) telling me, that's what she was doing.

Maybe that was why she called me. Maybe, she called to say she was leaving on Monday and not that it was Monday. Maybe she did tell me she was going to drop Classy off at my house. I should really listen when people talk to me.

You've just read the most comprehensive sample of **Scribings, Vol 6: Regatherings** there is. Seven stories from the members of the Greater Portland Scribists. See how all the stories end by purchasing your copy today!

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