

Hilary Slump

By

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Breathless, Hilary sagged to the dilapidated gas station's concrete floor, leaning back against the same glass-topped counter he pressed his forehead against twelve years earlier when he and his friends would drop their bikes outside and storm the owner to acquire their daily fix of sugar. Dank oily air draped around him heavily, as was this dilemma he'd created for himself.

When he'd told the pawn shop owner to hand over his cash box, Hilary hadn't expected the fool to pull a gun from under the counter. Luckily, the old man was a little slow. Hilary shot him six times, but not before he'd set off an alarm. Startled by the clamor of the moment, Hil bolted out the front door he'd come in through and scrambled down the block, ducking into the alley between the Five and Dime and the bank. "Shit," he mumbled when he realized he'd forgotten to grab the cash box, critical for his escape from this miserable life, this miserable town.

Sirens drove him from the alley to this long-abandoned Sunoco station, the one where his asshole of a father had worked in the back room fixing flats and changing oil. Rolling the stud pierced through his lower lip, with his fingertips, he willed himself to think. Then he laughed out loud at the notion of what thinking had done for him so far. He laughed even louder as he pondered his notions that the life a crime, romanticized by the movies, would be so easy, exciting, perhaps, even fun. In less than ten minutes what had seemed so reasonable to a seventeen-year-old had been slapped out of him.

Hilary flipped open the cylinder and dumped the spent 38 cartridges onto the oil stained floor between his outstretched legs. He dug the remaining few shells from his jacket pocket and reloaded. He stared into the black hole of the sixth chamber, thinking this is what his life has come to. He listened to the click, click, click as he slowly turned the cylinder as he pondered his next move, knowing there were no good ones.

Bright lights washed through the dirty windows of the station. Hilary stiffened at the sharp crack of the bullhorn, "It's over, Hilary."

Hilary stared down into his lap. Tears welled and he blinked, catching one in the palm of his hand. He realized he could not remember the last time he'd cried. His lips curled back into a snarling grin as he spun the cylinder, cocked the hammer back and with a choking rasp, muttered, "Yes it is."