

I have plans for my life. I have a picture in my head of what my life should be and that picture look more and more like fairy tale. I am almost fifty years old. My hair has disappear and my breasts are falling to Earth and *still*, I rent my home from old Jewish woman. I cannot ask any woman to be my wife in a rented home. Almost *fifty*. These boys from Nizhny, they think I am homosexual because I am still bachelor. I'm embarrassed. I come to this country to make a mark, not fade away.

ARTHUR: I'm sorry, but my store is not for sale.

MAX: Believe me: day will come you wish you take my good price.

ARTHUR (*With irony*): Donuts are my life.

MAX: Donuts are not your life. Donuts are not anybody's life. Your life is your life. A home. A home of your own, that is life. A home and children and a wife.

(*The room goes icy.*)

I'm sorry, Arthur.

ARTHUR: Don't worry about it. Here's your donuts.

MAX: No, I feel very foolish. I was not thinking about your wife.

ARTHUR: Max. Please stop.

MAX: What has got inside me? These boys! Seeing these boys see this country for first time has got my insides all worked up. I remember first time for me, in America . . . my eyes blur just to think about it. Just to remember so much . . .

(*Regarding donuts and coffee*) How much for these?

ARTHUR: On the house.

MAX: No, Arthur—

ARTHUR: Tell the boys from Nizhny to enjoy.

MAX: I will tell them it is American hospitality.

ARTHUR: Tell them it's Polish hospitality.

MAX: *That* they will never believe.

(*Max exits.*)

FRANCO: How you know them poets, man?

ARTHUR: I—

FRANCO: You're a damn hustler!

ARTHUR: I'm a reader, that's all.

FRANCO: Are you like one of those idiot savants?

ARTHUR: Yeah, probably.

FRANCO: You're cold-blooded is what you are.

(*Franco hands his book to Arthur.*)

You got to take real good care of this. 'Cause I don't have any other copies. I just now finished it so I haven't had it typed or put on a computer.

(*Beat.*)

No one's read it yet.

ARTHUR: I'm the first.

FRANCO: You're the first.

(*A moment between them.*)

Franco resumes his paint job as Arthur tends to the register.

Franco laughs.)

Way you just rattled them off? Cold-blooded. Like you was **Start**
Rain Man, only entertaining. Hey, tell me you ain't sellin'
this place to that Russian cracker.

ARTHUR: What's it to you?

(*Franco shrugs.*)

FRANCO: What's that about your wife? Are you married?

ARTHUR: No.

FRANCO: I thought Max just said—

ARTHUR: Max talks a lot.

(Silence.)

FRANCO: Divorced.

ARTHUR: Yes.

FRANCO: Recent?

ARTHUR: Let's just. Skip it. Okay?

FRANCO: Okay.

(Beat.)

So you're single these days.

ARTHUR: Yeah.

FRANCO: Yeah, me, too. Kinda. Yeah. How come you don't go out with that lady cop?

ARTHUR: Why would I do that?

FRANCO: She's sure into you. I seen her when she comes by, I think she wants to drink a big tub of your bathwater. And I wish I hadn't said that 'cause I just got a little sick in my mouth.

ARTHUR: You're crazy.

FRANCO: You hadn't noticed.

ARTHUR: She's just friendly.

FRANCO: No, *I'm* friendly. She's good to go.

ARTHUR: It. I. I.

FRANCO: Pick a verb, any verb.

ARTHUR: I haven't dated in a long time.

FRANCO: That's hard to believe, way you dress and everything.

ARTHUR: What do you mean?

FRANCO: Nothing.

ARTHUR: What's wrong with the way I dress?

FRANCO: C'mon now. Look at yourself. I hate to break it to you, but the Grateful Dead ain't gonna hire a new guitar player. That old man died and they just called it quits.

ARTHUR: I like to be comfortable.

FRANCO: You might be comfortable *naked*, but that don't mean it looks good.

ARTHUR: You're not really a fashion plate yourself.

FRANCO: I ain't goin' out with no lady cop.

ARTHUR: Neither am I.

FRANCO: Suit yourself.

ARTHUR: What would you suggest?

FRANCO: First of all, the ponytail has got to go.

ARTHUR: Now stop right there.

FRANCO: Let me tell you who looks good in a ponytail: girls . . .
and ponies.

ARTHUR: I've had this ponytail almost forty years, man.

FRANCO: And you ain't ashamed yet?

ARTHUR: You've got a mean streak, you know it?

FRANCO: I'd lose the T-shirts. Get you some shirts button down the front, hide your belly a bit. And it might be time for some new jeans. Y'know what, let me rephrase that: *might* be time to soak those in jet fuel, light a match, and run for your goddamn life.

ARTHUR: These are my lucky jeans.

(Franco stares at him.)

FRANCO: Get you some good shoes. And not tennis shoes, neither, unless you're gonna play tennis. And shave that nasty-ass beard. And wash your hair. And get a new coat. And get some glasses don't have tape and shit on them. And trim your eyebrows. And stop carrying shit around in plastic shopping bags, you look like a homeless man. Get a leather bag or light backpack. And cut your fingernails. Lose that earring. And throw out all those white tube socks. And here's a tip about patchouli: it smells like cat piss.

ARTHUR: I don't use patchouli.

FRANCO: Then it's time to get rid of that cat.

End