

FRANCO: Oh, now that's a good one. I'm impressed. You just answered the four black poets who might be in your crossword puzzle. But it gets tougher now.

*(Arthur stares into space, thinking. Franco cracks up.)*

Brother, you are finished.

ARTHUR: Don't goad me. Give me a second.

*(Arthur stands, thinking.)*

FRANCO: Don't hurt yourself now.

ARTHUR: Give me a second.

*(Arthur thinks.)*

FRANCO: Dang, Arthur, your head's about to split open.

ARTHUR: C'mon . . .

FRANCO: Your brain's gonna fall out on the floor.

ARTHUR: Oh, wait, what is his name?

FRANCO: Here comes Nipsey.

ARTHUR: Shh.

*(A long silence.)*

FRANCO: It's like watching George Bush on *Jeopardy*.

ARTHUR: The names will come to me.

FRANCO *(Holding up the two tens)*: You don't want to bump up the bet, do you? By a couple of million dollars?

ARTHUR: If I pass the test, you let me read your book.

FRANCO: If you can't, you let me try out my coffeehouse idea.

ARTHUR: Deal. Where were we?

FRANCO: Just four—

ARTHUR *(Rapid fire)*: Alice Walker, Ntozake Shange, Amiri Baraka, Lucille Clifton, Nikki Giovanni and Yusef Komunyakaa.

*(Arthur snaps the money from Franco's hand, heads behind the counter. Franco stands, frozen. Arthur turns to Franco . . . and smiles, winks.)*

*Max enters.)*

MAX: Arthur.

ARTHUR: Hey, Max.

MAX: Coffee, please. This is your new man?

ARTHUR: Franco. Franco Wicks.

MAX: Franco. Like the Generalissimo?

FRANCO: No, like Franco Harris.

MAX: Franco Harris?

FRANCO: Pittsburgh Steelers? C'mon, man, Franco Harris? The Immaculate Reception?

MAX: The immaculate *reception*? There was an immaculate *reception*? We have different Bible, I guess, you and me. Mine only has immaculate *conception*.

FRANCO: They ain't the same thing.

MAX: No. I would not think so.

FRANCO: No, see, 'cause the Immaculate Reception is something that actually *happened*.

MAX: So. Arthur. You employ demon worshippers to sell your donuts. Speaking of, give me a dozen donuts, please, for the boys from Nizhny.

ARTHUR: The work's going okay?

MAX: They are good boys, good at their work, but I think their new country distract them. They are not used to so many black people, no offense. And the girls, too, they cannot keep their eyes from pretty girls.

ARTHUR: They must see pretty girls in Russia, too.

FRANCO: Yeah, but no "bleck people." . Start

MAX *(Ignoring Franco)*: Oh yes, very pretty. But American girls, they do that thing, they have that sassy thing they do, they have confident way, they have equal way that women in Russia will never have. This boy, my oldest sister's oldest

boy, Kiril he is called, he fall in love with lady bartender. She is very tough and she wears boots and a black watch on wrist and she calls Kiril "baby" and "honey." And now he is there every night, drinking one beer for four hours, and staring with big eyes at this bartender. So he comes in to work in mornings and he has no strength, he cannot lift particle board. I say, "Kiril, have you told this bartender you love her?" He says, "No, because she will laugh at me and then I cannot go back and look at her no more." I say, "Would that be a bad thing? Would you want to look at this woman if she laugh at you?" He says, "If I cannot look at her, I will pray for God to kill me."

*(Max laughs. Arthur and Franco do not.)*

It's more funny how you say it in Russian. So, no, work is slow because boys cannot stop thinking about it. As they must. And by the way, Arthur, I can still see your "pussy."

End

*(Referring to the spray-painted wall)*

ARTHUR: You can still read it, can't you?

MAX: It looks like today's special.

ARTHUR: Franco, can you put another coat on that?

*(Franco exits to the back room.)*

MAX: Arthur, sell me this store. I am desperate!

ARTHUR: Sorry, Max.

MAX: I give you good price! I give you same price I offer before Wall Street douchebags fuck everyone in the ass.

ARTHUR: It's not for sale.

MAX: But is so important for me. I expanse my business for electronics next, plasma, HD, Blu-ray, all digital everything. Nola says she will sell me nail salon, but it does me no good if you take up space in between. With that footage?

Mine *and you and* Nola? A corner lot? I would be biggest electronics shop in Uptown.

ARTHUR: Until they open a Best Buy on the other side of Broadway.

MAX: Let them try. Best Buy cannot do business against me. I offer something Best Buy will never have.

ARTHUR: Which is?

MAX: The personal touch. And Croatian pornography.

ARTHUR: Maybe Uptown would miss my personal touch.

MAX: Arthur, no one come! You sell donut and no one wants donut anymore! People now, they eat yogurt and banana, not donut. And people who want donut can go to Duckin' Donut and eat the shit cake! If they want coffee, they go to Starbuck and pay four dollars for caramel fuck-a-cheeto. You are only donut shop on North Side, you have said this. All the others close. Why? Because they are selling product no one want! Donut is like videotape, it is over! Time change everything and donut has been left behind.

ARTHUR: Time hasn't changed me.

*(Franco reenters from the back room, carrying paint and brush. During the following, he opens the can, mixes paint, starts to apply a second coat to the spray-painted wall.)*

MAX: Maybe not. But people still *can*, can always change later.

Donut cannot change. Donut will always be donut.

FRANCO: "Donut will always be donut."

MAX: Come on, how much you think shop should sell? I mean real estate only. One hundred sixty thousand? One sixty-five?

ARTHUR: It doesn't really matter—

MAX *(A real explosion)*: Goddamn it, I need this store!

*(Arthur and Franco are taken aback.)*