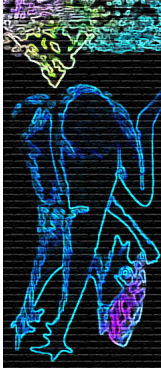


Jaroslav Bednárík



**Dickey works in front garden in the broiling sun. He slaves weeding for a lady, although as far back as one can think and remember, there have never been any taskmasters scourging with thin leather belts cutting into the skin nor have there been any torture chambers. Aunt Puss bought Dickey for a buck in the town, and now we can say that Dickey truly belongs to Puss. And so we will not call him anything but Dickey from now on too. He has already forgotten his real name, and what good would it be for any more? A name labels a person, a few letters will burden him/her for the rest of the life and s/he will go goofy from it.**

**It is a scientifically proven fact that if a person has to change his/her lifestyle, the person needs to have the name changed. Aunt**

**Puss always reminds us of it when we get together for dinner at her place. Of course, Dickey prepares it. He spends mornings working around the house, and he cooks in the afternoons. At one time he used to go hunting, but then aunt Puss took his rifle away because she had a dream that Dickey shot her.**

**Aunt Puss believes in dreams, and she always interprets them to us, or sometimes she adds her own inventions to them and scares us with horrible endings of seemingly pleasant dreams. If, for example, you fly in a dream, at a wink of an eye aunt Puss will explain to you what would happen when you lose balance – in a horror that will make your eyes bulge out, and you will crumble to the ground breaking into tiny pieces that will be covered by a black rain afterwards.**

**But we are not afraid. We are not even afraid of Dickey, although the aunt says he is so bad that when he wants to, he can break a healthy tree at a fifty-yard distance by his thought, and he can carve out a coffin from it by his eyes alone.**

**We do not know whether to believe her or not. Last year we tried it with Johnny, but we did not succeed. Perhaps we are not bad enough.**

**Dickey is quiet type. He does not talk to us at all. He only sings from time to time. And he can read too. Often, when the aunt goes**

shopping in the town, he sits in the shade of an old nut-tree and reads. We can sing too, but read we cannot. When he reads, he loses touch with the reality, and then we can uproot the whole garden. We think that makes him glad, because then he can do his work again. We steal mainly strawberries and currants, although aunt tells us not to do it, and that we would have bad thoughts from stolen things. From stolen things maybe, but what Dickey grows is ours. We also do it so we do not bleed. One day an elderly man told us: “Just keep on taking, stolen things won’t make you bleed.”

We often make fun of Dickey, and we throw rocks into the garden and of course the front garden. The front garden is the one that Puss has in front of the garden. Isn’t that strange? Well, it is a piece of land we can easily reach from the walkway. It was exactly there where aunt told Dickey to plant strawberries, because we like them best.

Sometimes aunt Puss is very nice. “These are for you, but don’t you dare to take them,” she points out to us with a smile. Dickey does everything thoroughly, taking care to take out every stone and pull out all weed. Last autumn we poured him some sand there to make him feel like at a seaside, but he took it all out grain by grain. Obviously he does not care for the sea.

Aunt says that Dickey was sitting in the can for two years. It must have been awful. We have tried sitting all morning until noon, and then we had sore butts. They say he was sitting because he had

**a misunderstanding with his wife. Aunt used to tell us how it happened. Both Dickey and his first wife had a sweet tooth, and they mutually envied each other for every tidbit. They had a fridge full of sweets, and they secretly get up during the night to fill themselves up without having to look at each other at the same time. One early tense morning it happened that the man sneaked up to the fridge and as he opened it he exclaimed:**

**“Ah, ice-cream!”**

**“Why do you scream?” asked the half asleep wife who appeared behind him.**

**“Me, screaming?!” screamed Dickey being caught, and in rage he grabbed the woman by her neck not letting her go. Fortunately, the woman did not die, but she has been trying to catch the second breath ever since. Dickey was sentenced.**

**“That is why attentively listen to what others say so the same thing does not happen to you too,” stressed aunt Puss.**

**Aunt Puss loves to have sex with Dickey. We do not know what is in it, but aunt said that she has a soft skin like the one on the face of a cock between her legs, and that is why Dickey likes her so**

**much.**

**When Dickey heard what aunt told us, he got all wound up like a yoyo. He was jumping up and down, and for the first time he ran off to a tavern without permission. He was sitting like a tiger in the cage and kept on ordering butt kicking shots until he started singing. He stood up on the table, and in a while he enticed his heart by his own song. He sang until the alcohol cut off his tongue. Then some men came up to him, dragged him outside into the yard, punched him out real good and kept laughing at him as much as they could.**

**Next day, when we wanted to mine the front garden so that Dickey would fly off like on a magic carpet, that blue-spotted wretch came to us and said: “I understand you. After all, who should a man fear more than himself?”**

**He outsmarted us. At high noon, wearing a stone face he climbed the church steeple, stretched out his arms and flew away.**

**Aunt Puss now has another Dickey, but the prior one has stuck in our memories. Since the time he flew away days have been dragging by like dog poo in molasses, and in the evening when we are falling asleep worn out like old socks, we are looking forward to becoming adults in order to be able to make his mistakes so**

**that anybody could make fun of us.**