

Blue Wagon.

I was walking home from the movies with my girlfriend. I was walking on the street side of the sidewalk because I had heard somewhere that this was where the dude was supposed to walk, and I guess it made me feel somewhat like I was being a proper man or something. Who the fuck knows?

Anyway, we was walking, not driving, because we both live in this small town that has a family owned movie theater--one screen, ratty chairs--that doesn't play arty movies like you think it would, that nobody in this town would watch anyway, but plays the same crap they show in the multiplexes. Good for me, maybe not so much for anybody with a brain. But anyway.

We was on Basic Street, off the Main Street where there aren't any streetlights, under a bunch of trees when we both seen it. Well, we heard it first, a hum hum noise, and then we seen it.

It had blue lights, going round and round, neon-like, about the size and height of a little red wagon, but without wheels, hovering-like off the ground. I jumped back and yelled something, I can't remember exactly what, I guess something like: Fuck!

Then it got quiet, like it seen *us*. The blue lights stopped flashing, and it, like, froze. So did we. Then it zipped off so fast it left a blue streak, straight down the street and up into the sky, like a falling star only backwards.

Fuck me, I said.

Anyway. Later that night I told the kid brother what Barletta and I had saw, walking home from the movies. He asked me what movie we saw. I said what the fuck difference does that make? Some dumb ass movie about, fuck, I can't even remember what it was about. You just saw the movie tonight and you can't remember what it was about? It was about, and for the life of me, as the saying goes, I couldn't remember. I'm sure I could have remembered if I had thought about it some, but at that moment I felt he wasn't getting the important part of the story.

Was it funny? he asked. Was it bloody?

Listen, I said. We was on the dark part of Basic street and there was this hum. Remember I told you about the hum? Then this blue kind of rectangle. You remember I told you about the rectangle?

Was the devil in it? We're they spies? And he started laughing like a maniac, like he does, and he couldn't stop, except to ask, Were there Turtles? He's like hysterical, nearly pissing himself, until I said, a little mad: Jesus Cocksucking Christ!

Which is my favorite way to swear, you know, for the shock value. Some times I'll say something like Jesus Ass-Fucking Christ, or Jesus Shit-Eating Christ--you get the idea. Sometimes I call the people who are all into Jesus, Jesus Fuckers. Then I'll pretend I'm, you know, sodomizing Jesus, holding his hips and making fucking motions and I'll say, like moaning, oh Jeesus, oh Jeesus, but sometimes I say, oh Jebus, like Homer Simpson. But not around older people. I know most people are into Jesus, somewhat, and honestly I got nothing against them. I just think it's funny. Anyway.

After I yelled Jesus Cocksucking Christ he kind of got hold of himself, somewhat, for the most part, except when I could see he was reminding himself about the Turtles and would start again, and I seen this was useless and I went to my room and was going to face-time Barletta until I remembered she didn't have her smart phone any more because her parents took it away and gave her a dumb one instead, a flip phone for Christ's sake, for emergencies, which is pointless because she is too embarrassed to carry it around anyway. They took her smart phone away because they saw on the news or something about girls sending out pictures of their beavers. I never knew or heard of any girl sending anyone a picture of their beaver, but just the idea of it sacred those Jesus Fuckers enough to take it away. Then I thought, fuck me! I had my phone and didn't think to recorded the blue wagon and then put it on the YouTube or something.

Anyway, I figured Barletta would be kind of useless too. After we saw the thing, I was all excited but she was just kind of confused. What was that? I

said. I da know, she said. You think it was aliens? I said. I da know, she said. What else you think it *could* be? I said. I da *know*, she said. I think she is so used to not understanding things that she just thinks everything is the way it's supposed to be. She doesn't get curious, even about a thing like that. I'm not Einstein or anything, but the girl, I hate to say it, is just plain dumb. I was pretty positive she would just stick to I da know on the whole topic.

So I went back to the kid brother. He was laying in his bed with his iPad. Jesus, what ten year old kid needs an iPad? When I was ten I barely had, you know, a radio, a light bulb, for Christ's sake.

Was there a guy with a big mustache? Did they make a bomb? We're there *Dolls*? He was making himself all amused again. I could tell he had been thinking of more of them, probably making a list on his iPad. Just shut up, I said.

I asked him that, if there was something strange that happened in the sky, like tonight, like unidentified, would it be on the internet? No, he said. They don't allow anything strange on the Internet. God you're a sarcastic little fucker, I said. Just google it for me. Google blue--and I knew if i said blue aliens he would piss himself again for a half hour, so I said, blue light, and then said, just let me do it. I took his ipad, opened the browser, but didn't know what to type. Fuck it, I said. We gotta go back and investigate.

The word investigate got him interested. He's kinda nerdy about stuff like that. So I told him to get some plastic bags for collecting stuff, and get something for digging, a spoon or something. And we went out, as the saying goes, into the night.

What are we looking for? he asked. We both had our phone lights on and we walked slow, just past where the last bit of street light shined on the road, which is where I was pretty sure I had seen it. Just look for any kind of . . . residue. He had the spoon and asked, What am I supposed to dig up with this? He had a point. I could have got a shovel or something, but I was expecting something small. And it wasn't so much the digging up as it was the touching of anything. I figured we could get a soil sample or something if we could see burnt grass or tracks or something. Anyway that was my

thinking. But I had to admit, he had a point. The spoon was kind of stupid. Just look for anything weird, I said.

And sure enough he seen something.

It was a metal circle, with a piece sticking out. We got on our knees around it. There wasn't anything wrong with the grass but that didn't surprise me, since, as I said, the thing didn't have any wheels. Give me the spoon, I said. And I poked it, and then spooned it into the plastic bag.

What is it? he said. I think it's a key! I said. I, like, startled them, when I shouted at them. Shouted at who? Well not them. I guess. Shouted at it. The blue wagon. And it took off and I guess it dropped its key. The wagon might be like a shuttle craft or something, and they dropped their key. I thought for a moment and realized this sounded kind of stupid and so said: Or something. How the fuck should I know?

Anyway. We went back home. He was tired and some of the hilarity had worn off, so I told him the story again, start to finish, with every detail I could remember, in case I forgot something I could check back with him. The fucker is, I have to admit, pretty smart. I have to admit, it's something I might be kind of proud of, for some reason.

Ok, he said, telling it back, serious now. You're walking with the dummy and you're on the street side because you think if some car splashes mud it will hit you and not the dummy, and maybe she'll be so impressed she might give you a hand job or something. Jesus, that little fucker.

And you turn off on Basic street and once you get under the big tree you hear the hum, and he hummed, and you see the blue wagon. I didn't say it was a wagon, it was the size of one, and the lights were blue. I couldn't see what color it was.

And you screamed at it. I shouted, but, yea, I was startled, I admit. And it stopped humming and the lights stopped winking, and it looked at you. Well I'm not sure looked is the right word, but yea, I got that impression. And then it took off, down the street and up into the sky, super fast. And we go back, and we find the artifact. I liked that, the artifact. It was better than the

key. Exactly! I said. Did it shoot straight up? What was the angle? Not straight up, about like this, I raised my arm from my elbow to about the right height. So 35 degrees, he said. I you say so, I said. What difference does it make? Well if it was going back into space it probably would shoot straight up. And if it was sticking around, then . . .

Ok, I said. Let's get some sleep and think about what to do tomorrow. I was holding the little bag at arms length, as the saying goes. Honestly, I didn't want to be that close to it. I'm gonna hide this in the garage, in case it's radio active or something, and put it something, a metal box or something, and tomorrow you can help me figure out what to do with it.

Now the kid could have laughed at me again, then and there, but he didn't. And I thought, the kid is all right, and I promised myself to be a better brother in the future, help him with girls and stuff when he gets older.

So that was our plan when there was a tap on the window. It was tiny, but we both jumped, like, out of our skins, as the saying goes. He kind of jumped into me, and we kind of grabbed each other. Fuck me, I said. Whispered, actually.

Fuck, he whispered back, which is kind of unusual, since, for some reason, the kid doesn't swear much. I collected myself. You heard that? He nodded fast. I'm gonna go look. He didn't think that was a great idea, and since he was actually scared, I felt more brave. I could take care of it. I was the big brother. Come on, I whispered, and with my arm still around him we stepped kind of slow to the window, which, except for a screen, was open, since it wasn't hot enough yet to have the air conditioning on.

Then something scraped across the screen. It sounded like a little zipper. We jumped back and froze--quiet, listening. Then this little sound: zip zip zip. It's just a bug, I said, still being brave, And, real slow, got close to the window again.

And then . . . bam! And here's where the story gets unbelievable. It popped right into the room, through a flap in the screen it must have cut. It was the wagon, only smaller now. I don't know why I didn't scream. Maybe it hypnotized us or something. Then a bunch of round things, fifteen or so,

like marbles, jumped out of it, all lit up blue. They hovered a little above the floor, zipping around, quick, back and forth, like they were looking for something. And I thought I knew what.

But I didn't have it. I must have tossed it or dropped it when they came it. And I thought, fucking Christ, what if they don't find it?

But there it was, on the bed, and the marbles jumped on it and tore open the bag, they must have had little hands or something, I couldn't see exactly, and they carried it, real quick, through a little door in the wagon.

But one marble stayed behind. It was a little bigger and was more red than it was blue, and it stopped, about a foot in front of my nose, spinning and, I thought, just looking at me.

Hey dude, I said. Sorry I took your . . . artifact. But I don't think it it was mad. I don't know why I got that impression but I just did.

Anyway, it took it's time, slow-like, getting back into the wagon, and then they went back out the window. Then the zipping noise, but faster this time. And then, like, quiet.

This time I thought to grab my phone and opened the camera and ran back to the window. But it was too late. Nothing. And the screen was back the way it started.

Fuck, I said. Fuck.

Then I quick spun around to check on the kid, to make sure he hadn't been, you know, abducted or something. But there he was, sitting on the bed, kind of dumbstruck, till I started to worry that they had did something to his brain or something. Maybe even took it out, and he would just sit there, breathing and all, but without a brain, for the rest of his life. And how was I going to deal with that?

But then, finally, his eyes moved, and he looked at me and said:

Hey dude. And he rolled on the bed, laughing and saying it again and again. Hey dude, Hey dude.

That little fucker.

And that's the story. I wish more had happened, they had talked to us or, I don't know, poked the kid with a needle or something. But they didn't. But Christ, I mean. Isn't that enough? The next few days we poured over the internet trying to find someone else that had seen it. But those internet fuckers are crazy. They see aliens all the time, everywhere, except in our god dammed town.

Anyway, I talked to Barletta and told her what happened. Remember the blue wagon we seen? I said. Yea she remembered. It must have been a toy or one of those drones or something. It wasn't no drone, I said. How can a drone fly off at five hundred miles an hour. I da know, she said, but it was something. Yea, it was something, I said, And what about the red marble? You think that was a toy?

I'd tell you what she said, but I guess you can figure it out by now. Whatever curiosity she had was satisfied, and now she acted like she though I was making fun of her.

Anyway. The kid and I have been pretty close about it, which was his idea. Let's just keep it our secret, until we find somebody else who knows about it, he said. We don't want to be like those crazy internet fuckers. Don't cuss, I said, which coming from me is a little comical. But I didn't like it much when he talked like me, strange as it seems.

Here's the point. We can't be the only ones. So me and the kid keep looking and looking, thinking we eventually will find the only non-crazy internet fucker out there, and eventually find, you know, someone smart who will let us in on it. Or something.

So if anything like that happens, or if they come back, I'll write chapter two.

Chapter Two