

## Wilderness House Literary Review 6/3

Susan Gibb

### Knockout

Two days after she held a pillow over her infant granddaughter's face as she was sleeping, Edna Waters tied a cement block to her ankle and drowned in the pond behind her house. I agree it was the smartest thing to do. You don't come back from killing your own grandchild, really. What would you say? *Oh I'm perfectly fine now, it was just a bad time in my life and I forgot to take my medication.*

I think her family felt much the same way. Else someone might have thought to consider that she might be suicidal. She had been left home alone. Her husband Joe ran out to get some groceries. They knew the police would be arresting her any day. While Edna double-knotted ropes around her ankle, he was in the Super-D wondering if he should still buy the big half-gallon milk.

They didn't find her right away. When he came home he took a nap. To be honest, I don't think he really wanted much to see her then; it was a heartache and loyal love itself could not penetrate deep enough to comprehend her mind. Their son said he did forgive her but everyone was still in shock of course.

Joe woke about an hour later and went downstairs, expecting to see her likely starting dinner. Some necessary things are automatic. He didn't even think about the knives. He went from room to room before he called her name, finding it stuck like a dry pretzel in his throat. He went out and checked the garage and all around the house, noticing as he walked that she hadn't weeded the flower beds in quite a while. He called louder and circled around again, went back inside and did the same, this time going down to the cellar where he doubted she would be. Then he called his son.

It was certainly a double tragedy, like getting hit with a one-two punch right in the middle of your stomach. Many thought that really, it was more a one-two-three. They gathered around in comfort and collective grief for a couple weeks. Then Edna's husband suddenly found himself alone. He poured himself a cup of last night's coffee. Heated it in the microwave until it started sparking and cracking light and noise. He almost burned his fingers on the cup until he found out where she'd kept the hotpads.

He wrote down "coffee - less than 5 min" on a little notepad they'd left him by the stove. Then he opened the refrigerator and pulled out the milk, surprised at how light-weight it felt in his hand.

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