

# "Smell"

what's  
so  
funny

by  
geoff  
mcmurtry



Are you comfortable?  
Aulph.

OK, good.

All I can hear at the moment is this horrible, otherworldly whine of power tools, and my mind keeps conjuring up an image of a chainsaw grinding against the outside corner of the building. After a brief eternity, the noise dies down, and he switches appliances. This new one has a much lower sound, which is probably caused by a much larger grindstone. There can't be much left of that tooth. Sure glad I can't feel this.

I am strapped down in a comfortable recliner in a clean, pleasant office, and evil-looking electronic devices of unspeakable torture are being inserted in my stretched-open mouth. Also in my gaping oral cavern is planted a rather remarkable device. The latest in dental technology, it's a big flap of latex called

a rubber dam, and it undoubtedly seems brought to us by the people of Phillips Petroleum. Anyway, the big dam rubber thing is held in place by a variety of clamps or thumbtacks or something and apparently prevents broken drill bits or chunks of teeth from getting lost in my throat. Works pretty well, too. Every fashion model should have a picture taken at least once like this.

Between bouts with the drills and lathes, the nice man torturing me scrapes the excess enamel from the underside of the roots of my teeth with a tiny whetstone and chats pleasantly with me and the hygienist.

"How far along are you school?"  
"Nochfaranufth."  
"I'm a sophomore."  
"Mhmm. You haven't been here in a while, have you?"  
"Nls. llsithorry."  
"Well, I had two tests last week."  
"Ah, I see. What are you studying?"  
"lono."  
"I haven't chosen a major yet, but it'll be something in medicine or health care."  
"Well, that's certainly an interesting field, don't you think?"  
"Ohyefth."

About now even the serious enamel is starting to wear through, and it's time for more power tools. Luckily, the terrible image of the chainsaw against the corner of the building is no longer plaguing me. Now my mind is treating me to a memory rerun of "Marathon Man," and I get to be Dustin Hoffman. It's really a pleasure imagining I'm watching a seasoned pro like Laurence Oliver work. Sure glad I can't feel this.

While the nice man with the drills chips away at my teeth, the nice girl across from him has a vacuum stuck in my mouth so the smoke from the drilling doesn't set off the sprinklers. Luckily, the vacuum gets all the collected spit off the rubber dam thing, too. Ah, yes, at times like these a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of... uh oh, more scraping. I guess there

was still some enamel left.

It occurs to me that it might be simpler to let all my teeth rot away and inject my food with some sort of IV system, but before I can struggle out from under the assorted drills, rasps, picks and the dam rubber thing to suggest it, the nice man torturing me says we're done. That's it. It's all over.

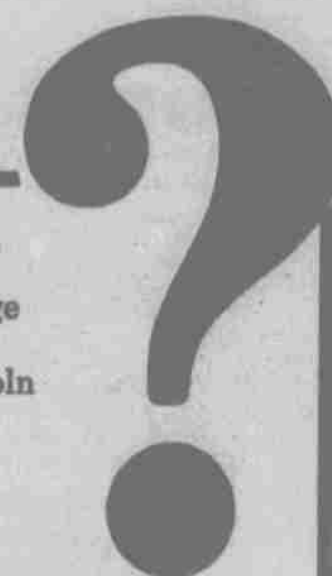


Tom Lauder/Diversions

Actually, it could have been worse. The sound of the drill drowned out that Starship song I couldn't get out of my mind. Thankfully, it's gone now, replaced by the much more pleasing sound of a high-pitched, metallic whine. In fact, now that I remember it, Death Wish III was much more excruciating. Truth be known, this took less time than an episode of "The Facts of Life," and I'm a better man for it.

All in all, that wasn't so bad, now was it?

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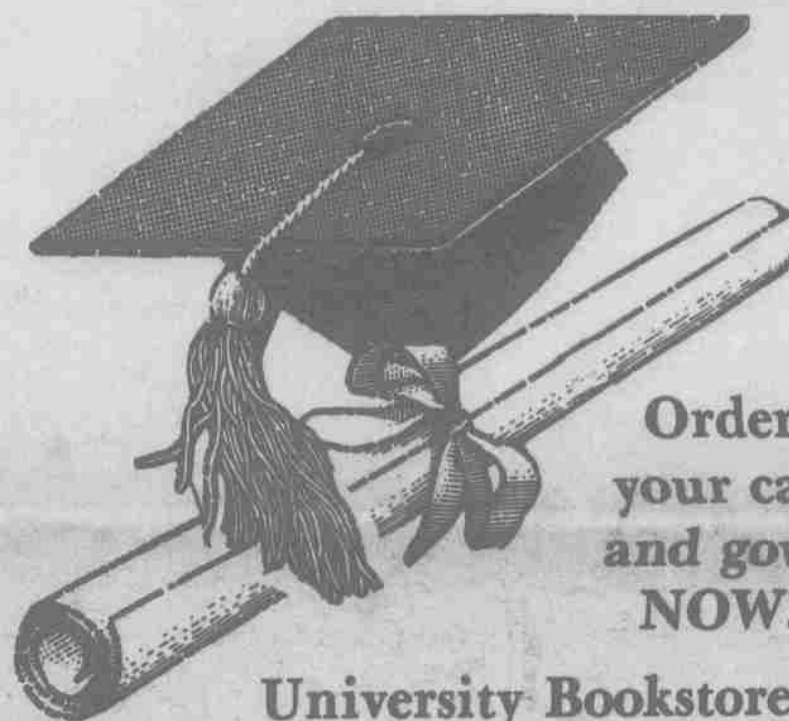
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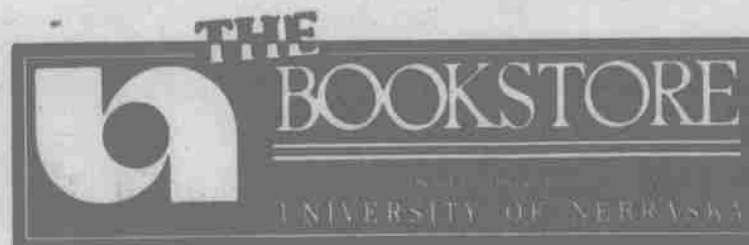
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