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Visit the Sins

By Cory Doctorow

31 March 2003

Sean had a way of getting his way -- a way of delivering argument that implied that everyone in earshot was savvy and bold, and that the diatribe-du-jour was directed at the Enemies of Art ranged without. His thesis advisor bought it every time. Sean turned in his due-diligence, a bunch of theses written in the last century: collected memoirs of the survivors of electroshock, lobotomies, thalidomide. His advisor signed off and within twenty-four hours, he was debarking in Orlando and renting a car to take him to the Home.

He didn't tell his father. He'd have to, eventually, before he could finish the thesis. But for now, it was just him and Grampa, head-to-head.

Grampa was switched off when Sean found him on the ward, which throbbed with a coleslaw of laser-light and video games and fuck-pix and explosions and car wrecks and fractals and atrocities.

Sean remembered visits before the old man was committed, he and his dutiful father visiting the impeccable apartment in the slate house in Kingston, Ontario. Grampa made tea and conversation, both perfectly executed and without soul. It drove Sean's father bugfuck, and he'd inevitably have a displaced tantrum at Sean in the car on the way home. The first time Grampa had switched on in Sean's presence -- it was when Sean was trying out a prototype of Enemies of Art against his father's own As All Right-Thinking People Know -- it had scared Sean stupid.

Grampa had been in maintenance mode, running through a series of isometric stretching exercises in one corner while Sean and his father had it out. Then, suddenly, Grampa was between them, arguing both sides with machinegun passion and lucidity, running an intellect so furious it appeared to be steam-driven. Sean's tongue died in his mouth. He was made wordless by this vibrant, violent intellect that hid inside Grampa. Grampa and his father had traded extemporaneous barbs until Grampa abruptly switched back off during one of Sean's father's rebuttals, conceding the point in an unconvincing, mechanical tone. Sean's father stalked out of the house and roared out of the driveway then, moving with such speed that if Sean hadn't been right on his heels, he wouldn't have been able to get in the car before his father took off.

And now, here was Grampa in maintenance mode. He

[Before Paphos](#)

by Loretta Casteen

8 January 2007

It starts again. The baby begins to cough and choke.

[Locked Doors](#)

by Stephanie Burgis

1 January 2007

You can never let anyone suspect, his mother told him. That was the first rule she taught him, and the last, before she left him here alone with It.

[Heroic Measures](#)

by Matthew Johnson

18 December 2006

Pale as he was, it was hard to believe he would never rise from this bed. Even in the darkest times, she had never really feared for him; he had always been strong, so strong.

[Love Among the Talus](#)

by Elizabeth

