Last Year at Betty and Bob's: An Adventure

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Leaning across the table in rapt attention, Bob jostled the utensils in his peripersonal space. On his right arm he wore seven layers of brightly colored bakelite bracelets, his recurring fashion statement at Betty happenings. Though a poised and gesturally articulate man, managing this dangly obtrusive presence while dining was a feat he’d yet to master. Absorbed in a Red Betty anecdote about her younger brother’s target practice on wild bunnies, he toppled his wine glass. A smooth Pinot Noir with a cranberry aftertaste trickled from the table to the floor.

“Shit. Sorry about that. I, I didn’t notice the ... damn, well anyway ...” Bob sopped up the spilled wine with a napkin. “Please go on, you were talking about the gauge of the gun ...” “It’s ok Betty Bob, the wine, there’s more, ha, Bettys, BBs, hadn’t thought of that ... yeah, the gauge of those pellets, I remember this factoid and I have no idea why. 4.4 mm.” Red Betty demonstrated the size of the pellet by mapping a tiny space between her thumb and index finger. “On the big side for BBs,” she said. “On the tiny side for rabbit shit,” Yellow Betty added. “My little bro never killed an animal but he sure did serve out some pain to more than a few. There was this one gray bunny, we called him Harvey coz he would just appear and disappear. Poof! Like that. My brother would draw a bead on
him from behind some bush or other and then Poof! he was gone. I saw this with my own eyes more than once. I told my brother, “Bobby,” I said, “this is a sign.” I told him the rabbits were sentient beings and he should shoot at beer bottles or coke cans, something with a logo on it but not bunnies and toads. He was never very good at listening to advice when he was ten. A real brat he was then. Anyway…” On a roll, rb took a dramatically timed sip from her wine glass and continued. “…one fine spring day, Harvey hopped into the yard and up on to the porch where Bobby was playing checkers with himself. He was unarmed coz his pet Daisy Red Ryder BB Repeater rifle was propped in a corner of the toolshed out back. Harvey hopped right on to his boots and sat there all Buddha-like. It was crazy. My brother didn’t move a muscle. Couldn’t. The wind stopped … dead silence … and then, after maybe two minutes, ten minutes, Poof! as usual, Harvey vanished. Presto! Just like in a magician’s trick … but for real you know what I mean …?”

Bob was attentive as he traced a dribble of red wine on the white tablecloth with his pinky. “Wow. Impressive. You sure?” He cynically added, “Was there a puff of smoke?”

Red Betty hesitated a moment, ignoring his incredulity. “We’ve talked about this many times since, me and Bobby, and we both remember it almost the same. He talks about the weight of the rabbit on his feet. Heavy. I couldn’t feel that, the cement-like plop of this rabbit presence, but I looked into Harvey’s eyes, riveted. Yeah, riveted to my seat. I swear I had one of those epiphnic moments. You know, like seeing god or all of a sudden understanding something that’s not supposed to be understandable. Like love or death or intuition.” “Or prehension.” White Betty sullenly piped in.
Bob’s skepticism was percolating like his grandmother’s coffeepot. “Yeah, OK ... and what exactly did it feel like, this, uh, spiritual moment? This revelation?”

Red Betty let out a long breath as her lips flubbered.

“It felt like Nothing escaping.”