

“THE .38”

by Ted Joans

I hear the man downstairs slapping the hell out of his stupid wife again

I hear him push and shove her around the overcrowded room

I hear his wife scream and beg for mercy

I hear him tell her there is no mercy

I hear the blows as they land on her beautiful body

I hear glasses and pots and pans falling

I hear her fleeing from the room

I hear them running up the stairs

I hear her outside my door

I hear him coming toward her outside my door

I hear her banging on my door

I hear him bang her head on my door

I hear him trying to drag her away from my door

I hear her hands desperate on my doorknob

I hear the blows of her head against my door

I hear him drag her down the stairs

I hear her head bounce from step to step

I hear them again in their room

I hear a loud smack across her face (I guess)

I hear her groan – then,

I hear the eerie silence

I hear him open the top drawer of his bureau (the .38 lives there)

I hear the fast beat of my heart

I hear the drops of perspiration fall from my brow

I hear him yell, “I warned you!”

I hear him say, “Damn you! I warned you and now it’s too late!”

I hear the loud report of the thirty-eight caliber revolver, then

I hear it again and again – the Smith and Wesson

I hear the bang bang bang of three death dealing bullets

I hear my heart beat faster and louder – then again

I hear the eerie silence

I hear him walk out of their overcrowded room

I hear him walk up the steps

I hear him come toward my door

I hear his hand on the doorknob

I hear the doorknob click

I hear the door slowly open

I hear him step into my room

I hear the click of the thirty-eight before the firing pin hits the bullet

I hear the loud blast of the powder exploding in the chamber of the .38

I hear the heavy lead nose of the bullet swiftly cutting its way through the
Barrel of the .38

I hear it emerge into space from the .38

I hear the bullet of death flying toward my head, the .38

I hear it coming faster than sound, the .38

I hear it coming closer to my sweaty forehead, the .38

I hear its weird whistle, the .38

I hear it give off a steamlike noise when it cuts through my sweat, the .38

I hear it singe my skin as it enters my head, the .38, and

I hear death saying, "Hello, I'm here!"