

THE BRACELET CHARM

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Septptych/Ocpttych

A flipbook/chapbook by Arnold Skemer

Two stories, summed up in one word: deception.

Septptych is an affront to the entire human populous, a real, in-your-face look at contaminants in our daily lives that begin from within our very bowels. Inherently, we convince ourselves that they are distant from us when out of our sight. (This "out

of sight" idea links the two stories within the one book.) Skemer is candidly expressive about our septic lives, and this account may make you laugh out loud or cringe in disgust. Be prepared to visualize daily activities and surroundings in a way you may never have before.

Octptych is a view of what most of us believe to be our sight, the necessity of the thing. Skemer directs us that we must question all that comes into our line of vision and how it is perceived. Mirrors, photographs, and in-person encounters (even with optometrists) are not to be trusted. From a part-time blind beggar to "seeing the light," do we filter what we allow ourselves to see, what we deem important, even if that is fantasy? Whether you chuckle or frown, you will consider and reconsider that illusion, pollution, and disease of the eye are factors in our lives, as well as the reality of our lying eyes.

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Submit often. We read manuscripts all year.

HOWEVER, your patience is required !!!

✓
Donor
By Thomas Kropp – Campbellsport, WI

I saw my friend Todd shot to death by a cop.

Todd was 33, bald, hazel eyed with a lot of muscle. He worked construction. He drank a lot and was occasionally arrested for OWI, battery, and disorderly conduct from fistfights. One night we exited the bar and confronted several cops with a warrant for him for disorderly conduct. When he tried talking a cop pasted his face with a punch. Todd dropped the cop with a fist to the face. Another cop grabbed him from the back and Todd nailed his neck with a rear elbow. The hit broke his grip. Then Todd was enveloped in a whirlwind of battling bodies, lashing limbs and loud whacks of blow impacts. Mace sprayed his face. Batons belted his body, limbs and head. Flurries of fists and feet hammered him. But he plowed through the crowd, crossing a dozen feet of concrete bulldozing back into the bar. Then a cop's Glock popped like a string of firecrackers in a hail of lead that hit Todd's head. A scarlet spray painted the white, Hall wall. Todd and a cop fell fatally shot. Cop and convict died side-by-side.

The dead cop was hailed a hero with a big funeral. The cop that accidentally shot him was reprimanded.

Todd's ashes flew in the wind and no one prayed for him. But he was an organ donor and the transplants done with his organs saved several lives.

Ironically one of the lives saved was a judge that received his liver. That same judge had put Todd in jail before.

A voice in my head said, "No good deed goes unpunished."

I laughed. It's what Todd would have said.

A couple months later I was mugged outside a dope house.

A big guy in a ski mask holding a hammer confronted me and demanded my dope and money. I snap kicked his shin and scrambled by. But a second thug attacked my back. His knife sliced deep to lance my left lung. I felt the burn and tried to turn, he jabbed another stab into me. I dropped dying while they robbed me. I passer-by called an ambulance. EMTs saved me.

A couple months later at another dope house I found myself facing the cop named Scott that shot Todd. He was in plainclothes making a buy for narcotics. His eyes widened seeing me.

"He's a cop," I blurted before thinking.

The cop, dope dealer and his buddy all pulled pistols. Gunshots popped in deafening staccato sounds. The cop's barrage of bullets battered the dealer's body. The lead blows punched holes in his chest, killing him almost instantly. In the ensuing fusillade of fire exchanged the cop's leg was pegged by a bullet. He fell. But his return shot tagged the torso of the second shooter. He dropped wounded, but lived. As did the cop.

More cops stormed in shouting. I tried to catch my breath on the floor. A stray shot drilled me in the chest. But the bullet failed to entirely pierce a metal drinking flask Todd had given me days before he died. Besides saving several people with his organs, he'd reached from the grave to save me with his flask donation. I vowed not to waste my second chance at life.

I've been clean three years now and have a good job and a great wife that just gave us a son.

We named him Todd.