



Author Asks

from Michael Jeffrey Lee,
*author of **Something in My Eye***

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- 1** If you knew that “Warning Sign” was composed only days after a nationally televised tragedy, what would you think of the person who wrote it?
- 2** “Contemporary Country Music” is about one man’s difficulty adjusting to life back in his sleepy southern town. Have you ever felt as though you didn’t fit in anymore, or that the world was falling down all around you? Why don’t you write a song about it?
- 3** The story “Something In My Eye” resonates with audiences around the world, partly due to its use of familiar, everyday situations that everyone can relate to. And yet it leaves you cold. What is wrong with you?
- 4** In “If We Should Ever Meet,” what symbolic role does Vitamin C play? Your answer will probably depend on how healthy you are.
- 5** Recall “Whoring.” In what way is Michael J. Lee “whoring himself out” in this story? In the book as a whole?
- 6** Which one of the “Five Didactic Tales” is your favorite? Which one do you think is a misfire, or a flop?
- 7** The characters in “Repenting” believe they have much to repent for. What do you have to repent for? How much time do you need?
- 8** In “The New Year,” do you find yourself rooting more for the narrator, or for Moany? Why? Also, do you think that the mayor kept his campaign promises?
- 9** In “The Buddy,” in what sense does the author “buddy up” to the reader? How does it make you feel? Do you have what it takes to be a *real* buddy?
- 10** The working title for “Murder Ballad” was “Hopelessly in Love With You,” but was changed by the author at the last minute. Did Michael J. Lee really mess this one up?
- 11** “Last Seen” pushes a lot of boundaries, particularly in its portrayal of gray-haired men. Is no one safe these days?

12 Who here “shall not be moved”? Who? Name them.

Suggested Reading

The Complete Fairy Tales and Stories, Hans Christian Anderson

60 Stories, Donald Barthleme

Cruddy, Lynda Barry

Wittgenstein’s Nephew, Thomas Bernhard

The Complete Butcher’s Tales, Rikki Ducornet

Sanctuary, William Faulkner

Dead Souls, Nikolai Gogol

The Old, Weird America, Greil Marcus

The Moviegoer, Walker Percy

Collected Poems, Stevie Smith

Honored Guest, Joy Williams

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