BURNING THE OLD MAN
BY KELLY MCALLISTER

CHARACTERS

Bobby (late 20s), bit of a smartass; Marty (early 30s), Bobby's high-strung older brother

SCENE

The lobby of Jo's run-down motel in the middle of the Nevada desert

TIME

The night before the Burning Man Festival, summer

The brothers are traveling to the Burning Man Festival, an annual desert gathering based on radical self-expression, to bury their father's ashes, as he wished. On the way, Bobby smoked a joint in the backseat and set their mother's car on fire. Marty has called their mother to tell her.

Bobby: (Takes the box of ashes from the table, sits with it on the couch.) I can't believe you called Mom. What are you, 12?

Marty: You set the car on fire.

Bobby: It was an accident. Jesus. I said I'm sorry.

Marty: Not even noon, and you're smoking Mary Jane.

Bobby: Wake and bake. Don't knock it 'til you try it. And did you just say Mary Jane? Geck.

Marty: So says the loser. The completely irresponsible loser who runs to Mommy whenever things get rough.

Bobby: Fuck you, geck. You're the one who called Mom. Just turn around and go home. You don't belong out here.

Marty: (Jo goes to the window and looks out, pretending not to listen.)

Marty: You don't belong anywhere! Jesus, what is your problem? It's bad enough we have to do this. Why do you insist on making it worse?

Bobby: Why do you insist on being a drag? He was very specific. We're supposed to take his ashes to the Burning Man and let him go.

Marty: I'm familiar with his instructions. I was there when he wrote them. Unlike you.

[Jo: Excuse me?]

Marty: Where were you then? Oh, that's right. You were at the movies.

[Jo: Excuse me?]

Marty: The movies. Dad's dying, and you go to the movies.

Bobby: It was a Godfather marathon, and Dad told me to go.

Marty: Of course he did. He knew you wouldn't let him have his privacy, so he pretended to feel better and sent you away. Because you couldn't accept the reality of the situation.

[Jo: Do you still want me to call a cab?]

Bobby: Why is it that everything you say sounds like it crept out of your ass, covered in cellophane?

Marty: Why don't you take that cab to the nearest bus station, and go home? I'll take the old man.

Bobby: Why don't you go fuck yourself! (Grabs the box.) I swear to fucking God, I will dump him out right here if you don't shut up and leave me alone.

Marty: Put him down!

Bobby: At least I didn't leave him alone in a room with a gun in it!

Marty: You shut up about that! God, I hate you!

Bobby: I hate you back! You should have known better!

([There is a very loud explosion outside. Jo jumps back from the window. Bobby and Marty continue to argue, oblivious.])

Marty: How was I supposed to know he'd pull a Hemingway? He asked me to get him a Bible, and I went to get it! Excuse me for trying to help him make amends with his lost God.

Bobby: Oh, please. How could you fall for that? Did you really think our father would ever, ever seek God again?

Marty: Put him down before you spill him.

Bobby: I'll put him down when I get to Burning Man!
[JO: I think your car just blew up.]

MARTY: I am sick of fighting with you! What happened, happened, and there's nothing more to say about that. You need to let it go. I know we don't get along, okay? I know we're not buddies anymore. I've known that for a long time. But unfortunately, the Old Man wanted us to do this together. And that's exactly what we're going to do. We're going to get through this as quickly and cleanly as possible, and then we can go back to pretending we don't know each other for the rest of our lives. Now, please, put him down, and be reasonable.

CHARACTERS
C, the man, around 40; A, the other man, around 40

SCENE
C's home, somewhere remote

TIME
Today

A and C work together in the warehouse. A wants what C has, including his wife. W, C's wife, has just cleared the table and left the room, leaving C and A alone.

C: She gets upset. She can't handle it by herself.
A: What kind of accent is that?
C: She doesn't have an accent....
A: I like her voice....This your place?
C: You bet.
A: All yours?
C: Yeah.
A: You don't pay rent?
C: No, I do not.
A: Well, well....
C: What's on your mind, Angelo?
A: Anthony.
C: Yeah.
A: Yeah. Okay. Let's get to business.
C: What's going on down on the floor?
A: Yeah.