

Jesse Gutierrez -- "Silence, At Last"

Part III

All night while lying awake in bed, Eugene contemplates his daily torture. It's a ritual. Everyday at every meal it's the same thing. The sounds stay with him.

"I've got to have silence," he thinks to himself. The night passes and he realizes that his absence from the breakfast table won't be excused by his wife. He walks slowly down the stairs and into the dining room.

Silence, at last! Eugene sits and eats his breakfast with a smile. As he takes a big bite out of his toast he waves his hands like a maestro and hums a tune of Beethoven. He's so happy. Burnt toast and Captain Crunch has never tasted so good. Eugene stands up, backs away from the table and dances as a ballerina would. With all of the family sitting

around the table, Eugene looks to his wife and asks with a jovial smile, "So, how did you sleep last night honey?" She gives no answer. "Oh, that's nice dear!"

He then turns to his children, "You kids got big plans for the weekend?" There is no reply. "Sounds fun!"

"That was a great breakfast, hon." He picks up the newspaper and searches for the latest stock market quotes.

Brenda sits lifeless, eyes closed, head back, arms dangling at her side. Ten little fingers and ten little toes float in the cereal bowl, the milk is warm and red. A fly lands on the metal fingernail file that protrudes from her throat.

Eugene continues to read his paper. Sara is face down on the table, her tongue sits separate from her mouth. Her teeth are scattered

across the table and floor, one is still in the knuckle of Eugene's right hand. She gasps for her last breath as she chokes on her blood. With the chewing gum wrapped around her thumb she drifts off.

Eugene puts the paper down. Mittens lays limp on the table, its nose and half of its head are submerged in Sara's cereal bowl. With the lungs filled with milk, Mittens tail sticks straight up, stiff as a board. Eugene excuses himself from the table, "Thanks for the great breakfast, hon."

Chad sits upright, eyes bulging open. His broken jaw hangs wide open, dislocated from his skull. A handful of silverware sticks out his mouth, accompanied by a broken orange juice glass in his right fist. Chad's throat is so packed with food it looks as if it could split wide open.

Eugene grabs his keys, his wallet, his shades and jumps in to his 1982 Volvo. With his clubs in his trunk, Eugene rolls down the window and tunes the radio. He then slowly pulls out of the driveway and makes his way towards the course for his scheduled 10:30 tee time.

END


This issue's crossword answers

L	A	B		B	A	S	I	N		R	A	P	
I	L	L		E	L	A	T	E		E	R	A	
S	E	E		D	A	T	E	D		F	A	N	
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R	E	E	F		T	A	L	E			E	M	
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P	L	A	T		E	G	G			N	O	S	E
E	A	T		A	G	O	R	A		P	A	D	
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TOYOTA

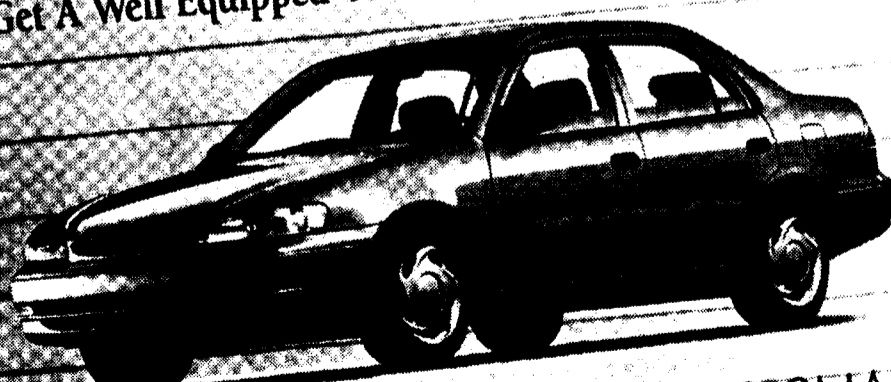
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