

## Stay Awake

I keep thinking. It can't be much longer.

He turned on the gas exactly six minutes ago.

I can see the clock. Must focus. He's staring at me.

I manage a smirk. It's not that difficult, really, this waiting him out. After all, considering how he came in here,

I'm amazed to be alive. I should have looked through the peephole, asked, "Who is it?", all of those things.

Oh well, when I saw his face, my intuition's pretty keen. automatically I knew.

"Look, you want some soda?" I asked. "The truth is I don't have much cash." Oh yea, cool as a cucumber. The first thing I noticed upon coming 'round was the shade of his eyes, how they bore down upon me. Nice of him not to have blown my head off.

I never asked why. He was desperate. Any fool could see.

Loneliness and fear does that. I went and heated some broth.

Later we listened to a few details about him streaming from the transistor.

"They got it all wrong, man. I didn't use gelignite."

I shrugged and switched the station. "You like Bach?"

I thought he'd break my arm, but was just testing.

"God," he laughed. "What is it with you? You ain't got no car. You ain't got no computer. You hear I blew up Mr. Big Wig's caddie, yet don't even seem interested."

"I'm kind of a dunce." I faltered, trying to remember if the newsman said whether anyone died.

"See this." He went on, flashing that gun again. "Wanna know if I used it?" I poured more soda and tried to keep my voice even. "Not particularly."

I held my breath, figuring violence would come then.

Only, "You're no dunce," he whispered, and went to the stove.  
These last three hours he's turned it on and shut it off twice.  
I've noticed this third time he's leaving it be.  
I wish I were Scheherazade and could entertain him with tales.