

## Motel musings

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This is my arm. Actually, to be specific, it is the inside of my left arm, at the elbow. I went for an uneventful annual physical Wednesday morning, and they did an uneventful blood test, and now, for some reason, this is my arm, resembling a bad case of gangrenous frostbite.



I am in a Holiday Express Inn in WEstfield, Massachusetts. I came here today to accept the Carol Otis Hurst Book Prize...which is a real pleasure, since Carol was a very dear friend of mine...but I realized that It would turn dark before I got home, and I have difficulty driving in the dark; so I decided to spend the night and head home in the AM. Actually it was not a hard

decision because my home still has a big hole in the bedroom ceiling and another in the master bathroom wall, just above the smashed window. I have been dealing with roofers and contractors and insurance adjusters all week but there are still gaping holes, and still tree parts everywhere; now and then more dead leaves flutter in, as if I am living in a weird animated cartoon.

So I enjoyed driving to western Massachusetts instead of staying and staring morosely at my semi-destroyed house. Of course I still have to stare at my gangrenous arm, since it accompanies me. But it is chilly out now, in November, and so I can cover it with long sleeves.

But too often, in a hotel room, I find myself turning on the TV to an obscure channel and watching true crime: midwestern housewives stabbed to death by their insurance-salesman husbands, who invariably do something stupid two years later so that the detective with the weather-beaten face is able to catch them.

At the event today, I was greeted by an old friend from college, someone I hadn't seen since we were both 18. That happens now and then and is always a surprise and a pleasure, even as it reminds me of my immature self, not always the best of memories.

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