

to call it a worldly pursuit when we'd go chasing after the women, but, just look out there and see, the *real* worldly pursuits are out here, are they not? We're out pursuing the world here, are we not?" He rattled this off so quickly that it sounded entirely scripted. Then he dusted his hands together slowly and looked around meaningfully. "You can chase the world as long as you like. You can chase it your whole life and you'll *never* catch up!" He exclaimed this very gently, with breath. "It's like the gingerbread man, isn't it?" He toked his pipe, holding his gaze against the sky. He let a string of smoke fly out the side and said, thoughtfully, "It's like the bloody gingerbread man out here, isn't it?"

Don't get me wrong, I thoroughly enjoyed this guy. He had a performance of some kind that he was walking through and I took it as my duty to stick to observing.

"So," he said to me, withdrawing his pipe and using it to point down, "what's in the suitcase?"

I didn't look at it. "Nothing."

"Sure," he said. "Well, what kind of, what kind of explorer are you then?"

"I'm not an explorer," I said, "Not anything at all right now."

"Not anything?" he said. "That can't be right. You don't have a trade at all or a craft or some kind? I'll bet you that suitcase is full of all your crafts."

I held to a branch of the blackberry bush and shook it from side to side. "I'm a former freelance professor, but not anymore." That came out sadder than I'd have liked.