

## Christmas 1987

by Walt Sutton

I knew that it would happen  
life was going to well  
or seemed to be  
but really there were problems everywhere  
and I couldn't see them  
I was the boy genius  
who made up the impossible company  
vice presidents in charge of everything  
all of them played golf too

Flying to important meetings  
with important people  
in pinstriped suits  
that was my life  
there was no time to dig in and  
turn over the rocks  
to see the bugs crawling around  
I was in a dream  
a power dream  
one which made me think I was seeing clearly

Important papers delivered to my desk  
by one of my two secretaries  
little yellow tabs sticking out of the stack  
so that I will know where to sign  
"What is this" I ask  
"oh just a long term lease  
on several floors of a skyscraper  
in Century City"  
"Of course", I say  
in for a penny in for a pound  
or twenty-five million pounds as it turned out  
Standing up from my desk looking down 38 floors  
at all of the little movements  
people I think, but here I am  
feeling powerful

I signed a lot of paper today  
I think I will manage by walking around  
so I walk  
People greet me in the hallways  
from their desks  
even in the bathrooms



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"Hi Mr. Sutton how are you today?"

"I am great

Colline,

Tim,

Marilyn,

Alex,

Vincent,

Tom,

Roger,

Sam,

Eric,

Tamara,

Joan,

Richard,

Karen

"And how are things going here at the office" I ask  
and they all say "great, everything is wonderful"

Of course it is

I have made this business up

I only make up things that are  
wonderful

things that work perfectly.

I deserve it

Sitting in a patio looking out at the waves breaking

at Poi Pu beach I receive the message

"I am sorry to interrupt your vacation, but you must get in touch with the office  
immediately"

I'm absorbing tropical sun, being cooled by the tradewinds

A Hawaiian Lizard, the big Kahuna Lizard

The tops of the waves rolling in

are white with feathers

trailing a veil of spray behind them

like so many brides rushing to the

beach on a windy day

Then there is something large

rising up in the water

something as wide as the beach

inhuman extra human size

My father

dead for ten years

and still stalking me

I look at the telegram again

and know that I've been caught



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Calling to the mainland  
makes voices echo  
So really bad news sounds even worse  
And this was really bad  
We have lost the big contract  
If we don't get another soon we will go under  
I knew that we couldn't replace the contract  
soon enough

I wrote in my journal that night  
scribbling disbelief  
Invisible feelings with visible ink  
I drew a cartoon of a building falling over  
a little stick figure standing on top as it fell  
Again I could feel Father behind me  
I actually turned around,  
I didn't want him to see what I was writing  
I knew he would be critical

The next day I stood in front of my wife and  
Jessika my 17 year old daughter  
Marcel my 16 year old son  
Nick my 15 year old son  
and said..."we have had a huge failure  
I am afraid that in the next year or so I may lose the business  
and all of our money will be gone  
We will all be living a very different life"  
Jessika and my wife both looked wide eyed and shocked  
the boys asked if we had to go home now or could we stay  
until the end of our vacation  
Jessika smiled and said  
"Aw Dad, you will pull it out..."  
"Yes, said my wife, we know you can  
You always have in the past"

Alone again on the beach,  
walking towards the sunset  
the sand changing from white  
to orange  
the waves still rushing in  
Bright green algae clings to the black lava rocks  
which jut through the sand  
Water covers my feet each time a wave comes to shore  
I am alone except for Dad  
And he is laughing  
"I told you so", he is saying.

