

“2nd Notice”

“Some guy named Bill wants me to be their friend,” I told my wife the other day.

“Sounds kind of shady,” she said in that tone of her voice that I can never tell if she means to give a warning or speak sarcastically. “How does he want you to get back ahold of him?”

“I don’t know. He didn’t leave a number.” Her follow up question suggested to me that she took Bill’s request seriously. I’m comfortable with my relationship with her, but I’m also always hesitant to let another man into our lives. I learned the hard way after a friend of mine, years ago, ended up sleeping with my first wife. My wife now always calls me paranoid when I talk to her about this. Jealousy is an irrational beast.

“How do you think I should go about calling him back?” I asked my wife. She just laughed and started singing “Steppin’ Stone”.

“That Rolling Stones song confuses me,” I said.

“It’s actually by The Monkees,” she said.

“See what I mean.”

“Yeah, I know, The Monkees. Good band, questionable musicians.”

“Maybe they wouldn’t have been such questionable musicians had they spelled it M-O-N-K-E-Y,” I emphasized the Y, “S.” My wife just laughed her little laugh that always catches my ear like a ring of bells.

I think of the old friend named William that I had when I went to school states away from where I live now. My last memory of them is standing on my porch singing out “Open up,”

drawing out the “up” with a long sustain—their arms wide with jazz hands. To be fair, I did stick a note on my door that said, “Please bring your music.” I intended it as a nod to the German “Welkommen” sign that my parents hung next to their front door. I left Bill standing with his arms outstretched—I still reeled from the breakdown that resulted from the world of sexual doubt I found myself in after I left my first wife. I left many friends behind when I stopped going to school and returned to my home state.

“In this day and age, what with Facebook, Twitter, and all that shit, you’d think it be easy to get a hold of old friends,” I told my wife.

“You probably would have been better off if this Bill approached you while walking down the street on the sidewalk,” she said. “Then you could have just been friends. But knowing you, you would have wondered what more he wanted from you.” I pictured the sidewalk sectioned off in its many rectangles and cracks, all jutting this way and that from settling and the undergrowth of roots. I started humming “Steppin’ Stone”. Yep, that song confuses me—at least I’ve got my wife.