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A Story About Ramirez

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M. Earl Craig

A Story About Ramirez

Ramirez was thirty when it struck him: his legs had been broken at birth. It seems they were caught funny on his way into the world, got twisted-up and lost their blood. He never learned to walk, or even crawl. I guess I should mention the submarine he was born into. Almost immediately he was posted in the glass turret. They gave him a swiveling chair; he had remote controls for everything.

But that was years ago. When Ramirez turned thirty he gave them his two-week notice. He'd had enough, was exhausted. He moved to Kansas. When he arrived the first thing they told him was that he'd have to learn to crawl, crawl first before walking. They dressed him in a terry cloth jumper and had him babble and coo from a deep crib. They spanked him vigorously until he gave in and cried. They truly wanted him to walk. They wanted him to coach high school football or run for public office. They didn't know what they wanted. Ramirez, he wanted to work in a pet store. He wanted to look at the fish in the tanks. This conflict is something they never resolved. Ramirez is almost sixty now. He's moved back into his turret. I think he let the whole community down the way he just up and left. I have him on the phone now, if you care to tell him something. Ramirez, can you hear us? Hold the receiver to your throat and swallow twice if you're happy.

But even that happened years ago. As far as I was

concerned the word "Ramirez" had been wiped from our memories. MEMORY: the mental faculty of retaining and recalling events from the past; a unit of a computer that preserves data; persistent modification of behavior resulting from an organism's experience. EXPERIENCE: the apprehension of an object, thought, or emotion through the senses of the mind; active participation in events or activities leading to the accumulation of knowledge or skill; the knowledge or mastery of a skill so derived. MASTER: a person having control over the action of another or others; the captain of a merchant ship; a man who owns a pack of hounds or is a chief officer of a hunt.