

**SLOW DANCE ON THE KILLING GROUND**

by William Hanley

*ROSE*

If you knew me better, you'd see that this is exactly the kind of thing that's likely to happen to me. Getting knocked up, I mean. The point is it was my first time, I was a virgin before that. Wouldn't you know it, I'd get caught? Aside from everything else, I'm not lucky, either. You see, if I was lucky, Harold and I could've succumbed to our silly little passion and that would've been that, the end of it. And New Rochelle, of all places. At least if it'd been in some nice apartment in the Village, say, with the sound coming through the window of traffic and people, the breeze blowing the curtain over the bed, like in the movies. But no. I lost my virginity in the attic of an old house in New Rochelle. Harold's grandmother's house. On a rainy day in spring on the floor of the attic in his grandmother's house, listening to the rain on the roof, breathing the dust of old things...And what comes next but his grandmother who was supposed to be in the city for the day. But instead, she's suddenly standing there, screaming: "Stop that! Stop that this instant!" Needless to say, it was out of the question. Stopping. At that particular moment. I mean, sex is like a flight over the sea, one reaches the point of no return...I guess it sounds funny now, but you know, at the time...it was pretty rotten. Sordid, I mean...it wasn't at all the way it's supposed to be. And Harold, of all people. A girl finds herself in this predicament, this condition, she'd at least like to think the cause of it was some clever, handsome guy with charm and experience, just returned from spending a year in Rome, say, on a Guggenheim fellowship. But Harold. Harold is six foot two, about a hundred and twenty five pounds, tops, and an Economics major at CCNY...That's about the best I'll ever be able to do, I know it. Ever since I found out I was pregnant I've been walking around with a face down to here and my mother kept saying, "What's the matter with you, anyway? I just don't know what's gotten into you lately." So, finally, I told her: a kid named Harold, as a matter of fact. Oh, well, I just keep telling myself: "Remember, Rose, like in the song...Someday my prince will come."