

Chapter 12 of *The Debate* by B. Douglas Robbins

douglas@medialawgroup.net
drobbins@owrlaw.com

Copyright © 2000 by B. Douglas Robbins.
All rights reserved.

“There’s a way,” Collin said with the biggest grin of the century, “to fix this problem. I know how to fix it, and it wouldn’t require anything beyond just exposing the truth. You’re not adverse to the truth, are you Rich?”

I carefully placed my right hand on his left shoulder as if I were about to divulge a secret, and brought my heel down as fast as possible. A muffled crack from the toe of his boot. I asked him politely to not call me Rich.

Collin cursed and hopped. A small girl with breasts breaking through a yellow t-shirt reading “California Lacrosse” spun around. I grinned weakly and shrugged my shoulders. At the front of the line a Mexican boy presented me with a free chocolate croissant with the latté: “*Mucho macho.*” I told him to learn some fucking English and he smiled with pride.

Collin and I sat under the bulwark at Strada, shaded from the rising sun by ivy and other creeping, crawling plants. A group of amber completed girls with wavy hair pulled tightly back, congealed on the corner of College and Bancroft where the edge of Strada met the sidewalk. Boalt across the street. A Scotsman up the hill. They took turns reading homemade poetry under a large blue and gold striped umbrella:

“You cannot touch my body, Mr. Freud. I am not yo bitch, Mr. Freud. Take your analysis, your hypothe-sis, your **synth-e**-sis, and fetish-es out of my womb, Mr. Freud. I am a beautiful African Queen.”

Collin drank herbal tea in a thick pint glass, “We can do it at my party. I can fix it.”

“You think he’ll quit debate?” I asked quietly.

“Oh yeah. Cornish is scared shitless of you.”

“Cornish isn’t scared of dick,” I shook my head repeatedly, “Don’t put me together.”

Another poet with loose blue jeans and a nylon jacket that read “Golden Bears,” stepped up to the microphone, “This is called ‘My Sisters of the Nile.’”

“He’s been my partner since we were freshmen,” I ruminated into the glass.

“And riding you the whole way.”

“. . . the cool waters lap at my banks, my **fer**-tile banks. The metal gunship sails up the **ri**-ver, the wet **ri**-ver. Come for my sisters of the Nile, my beau-**ti**-ful sisters. And RAPE THEM, AND RAPE THEM, AND RAPE THEM . . .”

A group of ten year old, white street-girls with pierced bellybuttons, stopped to listen to the poets. One with budding nipples and black Levi’s repeatedly licked her lips in the warm sun. I thought to myself, *not bad*.