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Helpful, sociable, Barbara tried hard to fit in. When talking, she invaded your personal space with her pelvis. Several of us joked about it, though we liked her well enough. Just a little too insistent, we said. Pushing her pussy into your space, we said. We thought we were funny

Normally, I wouldn't tell you this about her, but Barbara's dead now, died young, aneurysm, burst her brain.

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**Merle Drown** is the author of stories, essays, plays, reviews, and two novels, *Plowing Up A Snake* (The Dial Press) and *The Suburbs Of Heaven* (Soho Press, 2000), trade paperback (Berkley Press, 2001). He edited *Meteor in the Madhouse*, the posthumous novellas of Leon Forrest, published by Northwestern University Press in 2001. Barnes and Noble chose *The Suburbs of Heaven* for its Discover Great New Writers series. He has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the NH Arts Council and teaches in Southern NH U's MFA program. Pieces from his collection-in-progress, *Shrunken Heads*, miniature portraits of the famous among us, or *Balzac in a*

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*Nutshell* have (or will) appeared in *Amoskeag*, *Meetinghouse*, *Night Train*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Rumble*, *Sub-Lit*, *Word Riot*, *Bound Off*, *JMSS*, *Eclectica*, *Toasted Cheese*, and *971 Menu*.