

# Long Paddock

**MICHAEL CRANE**

*Navel*

*To the young woman with the Mickey Mouse tattoo on her wrist.*

I have the same dream every night. I am walking through a desert. I have not eaten for many days and I am very tired. Finally I come to a mountain and there is a cave and I enter. It is cool inside and on the floor of the cave is a sack of berries. I eat a handful of the berries and then fall asleep. Every time I wake up from my dream I feel relaxed as though I need this dream to give me strength through each day. Last night I met an attractive girl with light brown hair and large hazel eyes. She told me that no man has ever made love to her and she always felt alone. I had never told anyone before about my recurring dream, but I told Katrina. She reached out for my left hand on the restaurant table and touched me gently. Her hand was soft and I felt an incredible longing. Later we walked to her house. I lay on the bed beside her and it was a hot summer's night and I perspired profusely. I undressed her on the bed and removed her panties only to find that she had no vagina. I saw her looking at me with her sad hazel eyes. I kissed her and told her it was all right and lay down with her and held her close to me. She reached down to her navel and with both hands began to stretch it open. Within a minute there was an enormous opening and she told me to climb inside. I crept inside her navel and it was cool there. I was tired and fell asleep. In my dream I am walking through the desert and she is there with me holding my hand gently. We come to a lake and there is a small boat on the shore. We get inside and she begins to row to the other side and when we get there a cool breeze blows gently over us.

*From the stranger  
who is your  
closest friend.*