

THE EIGHT-YEAR OLD 1950'S TV WRITER

He sat in green leather rocker – feet on the hassock – library book lit by the yellow shaded floor lamp standing in the corner behind the left hand side of his chair. Many a night he'd fall asleep like that – Woodhouse's Jeeves – towel over one arm – bowing slightly at the waist – leading him to gentle slumber. Short – combed straight back hair showing the faintest signs of grey – Mom – taking the open book from his stomach and piece of paper or matchbook cover marking page – laying it on the small – well polished – butterfly table by his side – then signaling us to lower the old black and white TV's volume. I think it was nights like these that helped me learn to write – having to fill in my own dialogue every time a train went by – usually at a crucial, dramatic moment – drowning out the most important part of whatever the heck I was watching. I was secretly happy – although I'd complain – quietly – to mom that I was missing all the good parts – because my brothers complained and at that age you follow the older guys lead. But in my mind – regardless of their movements on the screen – the characters said whatever I wanted them to. So that a detective merely pointing his finger and probably saying something like – “I have some questions for you” – became – “I swear – if I find out you're lyin' – and I have to come back here – this gun I'm pointin' at ya is just liable to add about an ounce of lead to your already too fat carcass.”