

## FUTURE NINJAS

The future ninjas of America wait for their mothers to pick them up after karate class. Unlike other groups of boys clustered in one place for any length of time, they don't fight. They don't even talk very much, having exhausted themselves with all those kicks and chops.

The first mother pulls up in a silver Saab. She moves something from the passenger seat to the back seat so her son can sit down. She knows not to kiss him in front of his friends.

Another mother beeps her horn as she brakes along the curb. She squints at the pack of them, not sure which boy is hers. They're all dressed in identical white karate outfits. She waits for awhile, then toots her horn again. One of the smaller boys walks over and gets in without looking at her.

Now the boys are reading comic books to pass the time. Today's comic books aren't very funny, so their expressions remain the same. They look at the pictures, then they read the words. Cars keep pulling up, one by one, until only a single boy is left, walking back and forth in front of the empty karate studio, not sure whether to kick the air or burst into tears.

## LOW CEILINGS

Tall men shop in tall men's stores. At least that's the theory. Usually, their short, dumpy wives do the shopping for them. They try their best to reach the shelves, but they can't, because the shelves were designed for tall men, who don't shop. A seven foot salesman has to come over and provide assistance. "Just how tall is your husband?" he asks. "About a head taller than you," she replies. It's the sort of remark that makes him feel slightly ill at ease with himself and his choice of occupation.