

"It is," said Ellis.

Ginger sniffed the air.

Everyone settled in, made themselves comfortable. The men talked football, the women talked drapes. The pizza cooled in its hiding place, the little pools of grease trapped in the craters formed by the curled up pepperoni slices congealing into waxy circles, like tiny lakes freezing over in the winter.

Ginger, pacing back and forth, straining at the leash, finally located the source of the tempting aroma. She stuck her nose between the bottom of the couch and the rug, rooting like a small, spindly-legged pig.

"What is this dog after?" said Juanita, pulling at the leash.

"Maybe something crawled under there and died," said Clete.

Ruth caught Ellis' eye. Ellis shrugged his shoulders and blushed. Ginger, relentless, hooked a tooth into the pizza box and started scooting backwards.

#### RADIATOR BLUES: PART ONE

Glenda got in a fist fight at the swap meet with a small, hairy, ape-like man over the price of a cheap, Korean-made blender. Her husband, Bob, embarrassed as all get out, pulled her off the poor bastard before she could beat him to a bloody pulp.

In the truck on the way home she became so foul mouthed and abusive that Bob stopped on a freeway overpass, pulled her out of the cab, hit her a couple of times, then pushed her over the guard rail.

She hit the freeway and bounced before being run over by Raul Rodriguez in his '68 Pontiac Catalina. She ended up in the ivy on the bank on the side of the freeway. Raul kept on driving, a steady hiss of water coming out of his radiator where her knee had smashed the grill into it.

Bob got back into the truck and headed home, wondering what, for Christ's sake, he was going to tell the kids.