

## BACK AT THE PANDA

balmy autumn night, and g and i go for a big feast at the panda in celebration of my getting fired from my job.

actually it was such an unfair firing, fueled by dirty backroom politics, that we are really just out to forget

about what can happen to a person when surrounded by the wrong people. so, we order our favorite dishes, starting

with steamed dumplings and wine, and we sit there and map out the next six to twelve months like a couple of happy

generals who have managed to escape the horrors of war for one sweet carefree joyous night. the waiter knows us

from so many former nights, and he brings to the table two bowls of hot red-pepper sesame oil, and i keep making

believe during the course of our feast in my happy tipsy state that it's not my fault that my shrimp repeatedly

fall from my sticks into these bowls. and g does her best too to soak up as much of this oil as possible, so before

long we're both in tears and both sweaty and the rest of the world is a faraway place not to be missed. ah,

and so the meal unravels effortlessly right up to when the fortune cookies are brought to the table on a

little white plate. and strangely enough both cookies are carriers of the same exact message: you will take

a trip to the desert. and this, this is just fine with us, yes, because it's right in sync with what we

discussed way back during the early wine-and-dumpling segment of the meal.

## AROUND THE EDGES

next to my half-empty green beer bottle are the flowers g gave me before going away.

she's back now, and the flowers are starting to get very old looking, and some of the leaves are hanging

limp. she was only gone for five days. the flowers seemed to lose their beauty very quickly, so i thought.



even g noticed this tonight as we were sitting here indulging in a big late dinner. twirling

her noodles she happened to look over at the flowers and asked me if i had put any water in since we

first did. after dinner we watched a movie for a while and then we went off to bed, but i couldn't

sleep because i knew i had to write, and so i came out here to the kitchen and started drinking beer.

initially there had been a rose in with these flowers, but it went limp early on, and i remember when i

threw it out it landed in the garbage on top of some bread that had gone green around the edges. i thought

it was kind of a pleasant sight, this limp red soft rose on bread with green edges. i was going to

take a picture of it, but then realized that she had taken the camera with her.

#### FROZEN PIZZA

i think we've come to like frozen pizza better, especially late at night. it's more delicate than the pie from the pizza place up in town. it's so delicate that there is no stuffy feeling tummywise at all. it doesn't keep us from sleeping. sometimes we get the french bread pizza. we stick the two pieces of bread in the broiler and they're ready in no time. and really, there's hardly anything to them. they are light and disappear without any discomfort. the french bread pizza is definitely g's favorite. she got me into eating them. i don't know exactly what they're made of, because late at night i don't care to be reading boxes; i don't care what i'm consuming. yes, they're light though. they go down easy, and they let us fall asleep. in fact,