

# Secrets

by F. Keith Wahle

You don't have to worry.  
Your secrets are safe with me.  
Your secret of how you construct a beautiful necklace  
from rainwater.  
Your secret of how the Spanish swords are buried in your back  
yard.  
Your secret of where you go each night, with three changes  
of clothes and a toy piano.  
of what you do with those hundreds of wristwatches  
that arrive at your house each day,  
and where you hide your broken arm.  
I won't tell anyone about your plastic surgery,  
or your magical fountain pen,  
or the three dying leopards in your garage.  
I will not tell them about your life in South America before  
the war,  
when you met a woman who could turn men into sunglasses,  
how you tortured her until she told you the names  
of several high ranking government officials  
known to be addicted to laudanum and perspiration.  
Nor will I reveal your secret cure for spider bites,  
or for the kind of headaches  
You get from looking too long at beautiful things.  
No one will find out from me what is in the large black suitcase  
you keep handcuffed to your left ankle.  
I will keep your laryngitis a secret,  
as well as your whale, your pirate mask, or your knife  
collection.  
I will not tell anyone about your tour of the Orient,  
or what you found under the baggage scale at the railroad  
station at Kuala Lumpur.  
I will keep all of your other secrets as well.  
Your secret of how you can sleep  
with the sports cars racing past your bedroom window day and  
night.  
Your secret of how you smuggled sixteen thousand heavily  
sedated virgins  
across the Mexican border into Texas.  
Your secret of where you hire pack elephants in Cleveland,  
Ohio,  
and of what their mysterious cargo will be.  
The secret of your continuous pajamas,  
your frostbite secret, your exploding handkerchief secret.  
No one will find out from me what is behind  
the enormous painting of Charles Dickens on your dinning room  
wall.  
Nor will I tell the secret of how much you paid for the  
mink-lined false teeth you carry everywhere,  
or the secret of the bright pink locomotive in your garden.  
You can count on me;  
I won't breathe a word to anyone,  
my lips are sealed,  
I won't tell a living soul,  
it's just between the two of us,  
wild horses couldn't drag it out of me,  
and furthermore I'll keep it under my hat,  
I won't let on I know a thing.  
I will always keep your hair growing secret, your secret of crop  
distribution,  
and your secret of how you compose music that will make all  
those who have heard it  
wake up in the middle of the night  
and wander through the empty rooms of their houses,  
looking for the long forgotten emblems of family weakness.  
Even if they fill my mouth with live bumblebees,  
and put burning chopsticks on my bare feet,  
Even if they fill my mouth with live bumblebees,  
and put burning chopsticks on my bare feet, I will remain  
silent.  
or make me brush my teeth with a red hot toothbrush,  
I will not give in. I am steadfast.  
I know that you have discovered a new way to  
manufacture aviation equipment, but I will not reveal it.

They won't find out anything from me.  
The letter openers under my fingernails will get them nowhere.  
I will not tell them about your plane crash souvenirs,  
or your secret formula for turning ammonia gas into diamonds.  
Even if they cover my body with spiders,  
or make me brush my teeth with a red hot toothbrush,  
I will not give in. I am steadfast.  
I know that you have discovered a new way to manufacture  
aviation equipment, but I will not reveal it.  
I will not tell them about your wall safe, or your disappearing  
ink.  
I will not even tell them about your life with the bootlegger's  
beautiful albino daughter.  
I will not tell the man in the wheelchair aiming his shotgun at  
my testicles,  
or the girl with the beautiful dress made of broken glass.  
I will not tell the asthmatic heart surgeon,  
or the police woman with the shaved head.  
I will not even tell the aging herpetologist with the scar above his  
right eye.  
Other people I will not tell your secrets to:  
dog-nappers, arsonists, men with jewelry, or women with  
artificial limbs.  
If you must trust someone with your secrets,  
then I am the ideal person. I am unshakeable.  
And another thing, I am loyal and trustworthy.  
I will not even tell anyone where you've hidden your supply of  
Chinese cigars,  
or what you will do with the crate of gas masks  
that was left on your porch this afternoon by a man in a gorilla  
suit.  
We all have secrets-some that we hear and some that we are  
born with.  
But the secret of a secrets is to keep them secret.  
And I know all about secrets, some of the most famous secrets  
in the world.  
I even know the secret of keeping secrets.  
Please trust me, please love me, please keep me to yourself.  
I am a man with no mouth,  
a man with no sense of smell,  
no memory, all conscience, and nerve to burn.  
Love me as you would like to love yourself,  
love me as you would love your secrets.

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