

You think it's dead? **DEL**

How should I know? **GIL**

Nudge it. **DEL**

You nudge it. **GIL**

DEL

If Le was here he'd nudge it.

GIL [*nudging the rope*]

Not moving. Must be dead.

DEL

Pull back the cloth.

GIL

I bet we can eat it. Hear snake tastes a lot like chicken.

DEL

Come on, pull back the cloth.

GIL

What if it's playing possum?

DEL

Why would a snake play possum?

GIL

You never know.

DEL

Only one way to find out.

GIL

You get ready to hit it if it springs up when I pull off the cloth.

DEL

Ready.

GIL [*pulling up the picnic blanket*]

IT'S MOVING! HIT IT! HIT IT!

DEL furiously hits the rope.

Uh, Del, hold on there. Hold on, Del. DEL!

DEL

What?

GIL

It's notta snake.

DEL

Not a snake?

GIL

Nope. Just rope. Harmless old rope.

DEL

Damn almighty. Twists like a snake right down to the center of the earth--but it's just. . . rope.

DEL tugs furiously on the rope. GIL picks up utensils.

GIL

Can't eat rope, that's for sure. Less it was made a licorice. Member rope-licorice? The kind that sat in one sweet coil an ran on an on. Used to buy it by the arm-length from this big pickle jar. A cuppala my buddies. . . Dee and Leigh. . . we'd buy us an arm a piece of rope-licorice and then jump rope all morning long. . . . One morning though I ate arm after arm waiting for Leigh to show . . . Must've had me twenty-five arms a that rope-licorice all knotted up in my aching belly. . . but no matter how many arms I ate, Leigh never did show. Didn't show the next morning or the next. . . first time I ever heard of the gorge . . . Never saw Leigh again. After that, me an Dee, we didn't know what to do with our mornings. Our hankering for rope-licorice had turned gainst us and it takes three people to rightfully jump rope. We just didn't know how to be--

DEL

Give me a hand, Gil.

GIL

I'm picking up.

DEL

Stop and give me a hand.

GIL

Our napkins?

DEL

Let them lay.

GIL

The only things that stand between us and the animals and you want me to let em lay?!

DEL

There's other things that stand between us, but you wouldn't understand.

GIL

Try me.

DEL

Well, there's things that run inside us. . . and things that run beneath us.

GIL

Like?

DEL

Like . . . things that run deep down . . . unexplainable things . . .

GIL

These deep down, unexplainable things separate us from animals?

DEL

Yes.

GIL

I don't get it.

DEL

I knew you wouldn't.

GIL

If it'd been explained a little better to me.

DEL

I explained it fine.

GIL

Unexplainable is a good explanation?

DEL

In this case. Now give me a hand, I have a hunch about this rope.

GIL

An unexplainable hunch?

DEL

Hunches are unexplainable. Are you going to cooperate?

GIL

Co-operate?

DEL

You remember what it means.

GIL

I got spaces in my memory bigger than the gaps between my teeth.

DEL

Think about it. Piece it together.

GIL

Last thing we pieced together was that---uh whaddaya call it?--jigsaw puzzle. Damn jigsaw puzzle you found with a picture of a big bowl of berries--dumbest thing I ever did. Got me hog-wild thinking bout the taste of berries, but did it get me any juicy berries?

DEL

Those pictures used to be called still-lives.

GIL

Not even a single strawberry.

DEL

On winter nights, my mother and I sat around a round table, peacefully piecing together those still- lives. Then she'd carry me upstairs and tuck me under a warm cloud of goose-down. She'd told me to imagine sweet things so I'd have sweet dreams. Things like trees that grew nothing but lollipops, but the gorge...

GIL

I'd piece together a whole patch of jigsaw berries for one ruby red strawberry.

BEAT.
