

She didn't speak again for hundreds of miles. It was dark. She continued to drive. Finally she stopped. "Be ready at seven in the morning if you want to go on with me."

But I overslept.

The story of my life.

## Four New Stories & a Last Word / James Mechem

*All my early stories used to be written out of the sexist bag. That was my whole bag of tricks . . . I've still got a lot of sexist stories that I have to peddle . . . I guess I'm going to have to let them go even though my attitude has changed . . . written long ago . . . but how can I explain that to people . . . they don't know my attitude has changed . . . too bad . . . I can't be concerned . . .* (from a letter to the editor)

## Not Surprisingly I Awoke in the Night

Not surprisingly, I awoke in the night so chilly that I had to drag up the blankets I had pushed earlier to the foot of the bed.

The woman in the kimono was still asleep on the floor but the fire was out. I didn't want to but I got up and put one of my blankets over her.

I had told her, You can sleep in the bed with me. I won't hassle you. But she said she preferred the floor.

I think I'd have to be awfully tired to sleep on the floor. Maybe she was awfully tired. She didn't wake up when I put the blanket over her.

I couldn't get back to sleep thinking about her. Instead, I got up and began to paw through her luggage.

She startled me out of a year's growth. I turned around and she had taken possession of the bed.

I threw myself down on the floor and fell asleep. The next thing I knew she was bending over me. Was she going to stab me? No. She was telling me to get out.

She had checked with the desk and it was her room not mine.

"But how did you get out? What about the blizzard?"

"They've had bulldozers clearing away the drifts all morning."

"Snowplows?"