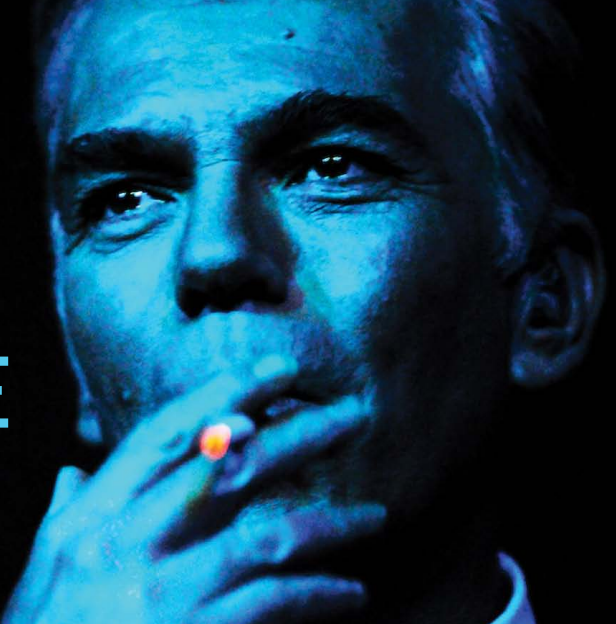


# LOVE TRIANGLE



## *I didn't understand why she left me*

*A story by Chris Offutt*

SHE LEFT ME FOR A WAITER who dealt coke out of a ribs joint. I told her that was better than a guy who sold ribs in a coke place. She didn't understand the joke and I didn't understand why she left me. I watched TV for fifteen hours. During dusk and dawn, it was mostly news, a gray time illuminated by a gray light. My eye didn't operate at capacity, the pupil never quite knowing whether to open or close. The constant hideous flickering light made my head throb. I decided to be on the news. I dressed in dark clothing and walked in drizzling rain to the ribs restaurant. Cold water ran into my collar and down my back. I should have worn a hat. The waiter was working late. I stood in the employee parking lot beside a dumpster that smelled of rotting meat. I breathed through my mouth. The kitchen crew played loud music as they cleaned up, the kind of raucous music I hated. The waiter left. He walked by without seeing me and I stabbed him twice in the ribs. Maybe now she'd get the joke. 🍷

---

*Chris Offutt is an Oxford, Mississippi-based writer of fiction, nonfiction, and screenplays, including several episodes of the television show True Blood.*

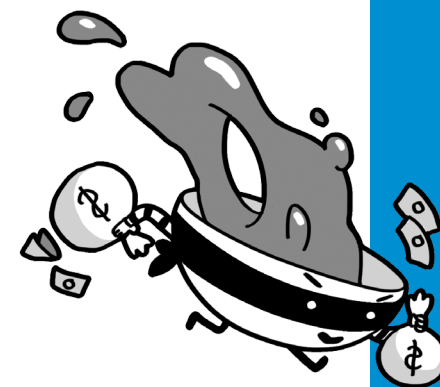
PHOTO, ABOVE by *Denny Culbert*.



**IF YOU'RE READING THIS IN A RESTAURANT OR STORE,**  
it's yours for the taking.

**IF YOU'RE READING THIS IN PRISON,**  
and you're not yet an SFA member, please join at  
[www.southernfoodways.org](http://www.southernfoodways.org).

**IF YOU ARE AN SFA MEMBER,**  
well, thank you.



---

**THE MISSION** of the Southern Foodways Alliance is to document, study, and celebrate the diverse food cultures of the changing American South.

[www.southernfoodways.org](http://www.southernfoodways.org)  
[info@southernfoodways.org](mailto:info@southernfoodways.org)  
662-915-3368