With Forefinger and Thumb

Jan Spielmacher
Grand Valley State University

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I' Valent ine picked up the suitcase and made one
ding everything in order, he turned out the lights,
walked into the cool evening.
igh, Valentine crossed the large courtyard and
his leather case down and, staying in the shadows,
, he thought, as he looked at his pocket watch.
appealing, wasting no time, climbed in.
to me to Humberly," he said, "I've got to catch
bbie, "and where the hell is Humberly?"
said, "I'll show you."
little puzzled, started off. He drove through the
.White church and drive for five miles. After he'd
bbie had picked him up before, if he was
Valentine was hiding in the shadows. 
ites," Valentine said, "but it's much shorter than
aid the cabbie?
up ahead. Here it is, make a left. Now another
you can drop me off," Valentine said.
plete silence, he addressed the cabbie again. "Ever
ant to, either."
I had time to tell you about it. But see that light
the lot at the right."
uctions, the cabbie pulled into the lot and was
ly had been waiting for them to arrive.
you have a nice trip?"
ong trips are tiring, so I think I'll go lie down for
all about it in the morning."
e, took his suitcase, and walked into the building.
y questions you'd like answered," the nurse said.
"Ya, quite a few," said the cabbie.
"Well, you see, you're new on this route and must not have been informed
about Mr. Quintrac. He's been in this home for ten years now. Once a year he
packs all his belongings and takes a vacation."
"What vacation," the cabbie said, "he didn't go anywhere but in a circle."
"That's just it. To you he went in a circle, but to Mr. Quintrac it was a
needed vacation."
The cabbie, not fully understanding and ready to forget the whole incident,
took a last look over the grounds and drove away.
itting quietly in his room, Valentine picked up another tour book and
read about stopping at a sidewalk cafe in Northern France, about munching on
French cheese and sipping French wine.
This is real Europe, he thought. Maybe next year I'll go to the Riviera.

JOHN SCHMIDT

WITH FOREFINGER AND THUMB

I threw you
out of
my life
like a
fly
dead
in my
coffee.

JAN SPIELMACHER