

## LEADER OF MEN

My dad was a tall, good-looking man, though his features bore the slight tremor of the frenzied, similar to that strained purposefulness of a dog that has come to the end of its chain, but does not agree. He was waving a butcher knife out in front of himself while he spoke, and with each thrust, the knife, a bit of a yes-man itself, nodded up and down in obvious collusion with dad, who held it, giving an added force to his words that alone they didn't carry. My mom watched dad and the knife equally, but said nothing, though her face, exquisite in its own right, said everything. They stood in front of a wounded tomato that mom had been brutally mutilating before dad had been able to assess the seriousness of the situation and rush in to salvage it from its complete demise. There the tomato sat in front of them, bleeding to death from its right side, a savage testimony to the woman's complete and utter incompetence.

"Wrong," my dad said. "Wrong, wrong, wrong!" He snatched up the knife quickly, calling a halt to this obscene bloodbath. Was it necessary for him to be everywhere at once? Was there nothing that his wife wouldn't destroy if left to her own devices? Mom understood nothing -absolutely useless. Dad held the knife forcefully, and with authority, letting it know immediately that he was in charge now, and it was to do exactly as he said.