

## arden goes canoein

I asked Arden what he got for Christmas.

“Well the ole lady, she been bothered cause I been sittin roun all the time. I don’t even like it much. Sittin roun. The ole lady bein bothered don’t bother me much, I’ll tell ya that for free. Course I’m ole now — and in front the woodstove where I used to be able to enjoy it — now I just sleep and sweat. My gol darn thighs sweat so that I get up to walk n my nethers are stuck to my thighs n I got ta limp around a couple minutes till everything dries right. I mean when it’s all-dry down there I’m fine really. Awful gettin ole.

“Anaway, bein it’s been so warm, and bein the ole-gal-a-mine’s tired of me doin nothin, she got me a leaf blower for Christmas. I love it.

“Powerful? Whaa! I strapped that bear on me, cranked it over, an BLAM, I was smack on my back before any leaves even had the chance to get blown mister bubbly. I smiled some now let me tell ya.

“Thing is I only got stray leaves on my lawn cause I ain’t got trees near the house which was by design. When we built this shack back in ’77 everybody said I had to plant some trees for shade and privacy. Well, didn’t need the shade cause ’77 was back before Goball warmin — and plus I don’t need privacy, cause I don’t generally do anything anybody ain’t paid good money to see cross the border anaways, so I thought probably not to trees, and cause a that I ain’t run a leave rake for 30 years. Smart? I guess I’m smart. Don’t look it.

“No leaves to blow, so I bound the canoe to the Citation and took off ta Joe’s Pond, right on Christmas day. Loaded the leaf blower in there too.

“Got to Joe’s, got in the canoe, dropped the leaf blower out over the side, cranked it, and blew the crap right outa myself round that pond twirlin like a F-16 in a toilet bowl. Frigfreein funnest Christmas I ever had. Got to shore, took out the boat and I tell ya what, cussed nethers weren’t stuck to my thighs. I guess if that was the effect the ole lady wanted by buying me that leaf blower, she’d done good by herself.

“On the way back I see Charlie Johnson the guidance counselor raking on his lawn terrible. I stop and asked him what he was rakin at.

“Dog turds,’ he said. ‘Wife got three dogs, big ones. Turd, sleep, turd, sleep, and that’s just the wife. Hahamphicaaah, wicked funny ain’t it? No. Yeah, she got three dogs and they go bathroom out here and she don’t pick it up. She’s too drunk. So I rake it once a week.’

“Charlie, put that rake down, I said, as I took out the leaf blower, slash canoe motor, slash turd scatterer, and got it goin’ and started blowin. Well, you know that gol darn leaf blower blew them turds cross two other peoples lawns, cross the Cumberland Farms parking lot, right up one side and down the other of the playground teeter tooter, and stopped right underneath the new band shell in the center of the town green. I hate to be in that band shell playing flute ta Battle Hymn of the Republicans come this July 4th . . . but, ole Charlie got himself a lawn smooth an clean as a billiard table tell ya what.

“So anyways did I tell ya I’m bout to be a rich man? Ya, you might just well be talkin ta the King of England right now. Yuh, I ain’t gonna be buying too many gol darn Megabucks tickets once summer comes n after I start my new business where summers I’ll blow turds, take flatlanders MotorCanoein, and falls I’ll blow leaves.

“N if this winter keeps warm like it tis right now, I’ll start the business right off, and prolly have nough money to buy Maine in three years. If it don’t stay warm, an instead gets cold and snows, I’m gonna set right ta front a the stove . . . and when I get up . . . I will be limpin. I’ll tell ya that for free.”