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FANCY with *erma* FISTE

I don't know how "Days Off" ever originated, but I imagine it all got started something like this:

One fine day the department head looked at Effie Mouthwash, who was a picture of health and contentment, and said, "Effie's been looking a little too happy lately. I think she's too satisfied with her work. How about giving her a day off. That'll put a stop to her outburst of energy. Yes sreee, give her a day off to take a little color out of her cheeks. She'll be all right when she comes back then."

At least, that's the way it seems to me. You see, my day off usually has these results . . . At 6:30 a.m. our neighbor spells out "I love you" in Morse code on his horn to his wife. This, I ignore. At 7:00 a.m. a cannon explodes in our living room. I am assured by my loved ones it is only the milkman making his deliveries. At 7:45 a.m. a robin begins tapping at my window. Opening one eye, I catch a blurred vision of him waiting for me to share his fishworm. Nauseated, I close my eye. The telephone blasts forth. Mother enters the room and says the man from the radio station will give her \$35 and a box of Canine Easily Digested Dog Biscuits if she can tell him who patented the first hand axe and in what year. I begin gnawing at the covers with my teeth. At 8:02 the "Lawnmower Association To Do Away With People Who Sleep After 8:00, Local 701," start their vile campaign. I try to invite death by putting my head through a venetian blind slat and pulling the string, but my efforts net me only a mangled ear.

Not a thing is overlooked . . . the odorous garbage collectors who stop just long enough for the changing wind to carry their presence to my bedroom, the mailman who laughs merrily as he soft shoes his way across the lawn, the 27 kiddies who drop in to play leap frog in my room, the village idiot who playfully puts a time bomb on my window sill.

At 8:30, I rise, dress, and eat a bite. As I head for the bus line, I am stopped. "What's wrong," they say, "Where are you going? I thought this was your day off . . . your day of rest. You aren't going down town where there are lots of silly people milling around, or go to a noisy old movie, are you?" I laugh hysterically.

My return to Rike's is nothing less than an occasion. I suppose I'll never know how "Days Off" ever got started, but if your day of relaxation is anything like mine, you'll live in dread of the day when the department head looks at you and murmurs, "She's been looking a little too happy lately. I think she's too satisfied with her work. How about giving her a day off . . . !"

The perception of the comic is a tie of sympathy with other men.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson