

his mouth. He continued to shake. His eyes were wide open. Wide open.

I don't know why, but I got down and touched him; I felt around his ribs. I couldn't reach his hands; they were up near his face, and the toilet was in the way. He was as stiff as a board. I didn't want to upset him. It seemed like it was getting better. The shaking was subsiding, and the paramedics would be there soon.

But as the minutes ticked by, I wanted some reassurance that he was okay, so I worked around him and felt his neck for a pulse. His neck was rock hard, and there was a pulse all right. The freakiest, fastest, scariest fucking pulse I'd ever taken.

I don't know how much time actually elapsed until the paramedics got there, but it was quite a while. I guess there's actually an inquiry into the matter now, because they took so long. I don't see how it matters. When they got there, they were totally useless. Their confusion was completely evident to me, as they crouched there in front of him, trying to con-

firm just what it was they were dealing with.

"How many caffeine pills would you say he took?" they asked. I honestly couldn't remember. I still can't. It looked like a lot.

For a while afterward, I actually toyed with the idea of becoming a crusader for the dangers of caffeine, but decided that would be pretty stupid. Besides, I don't want to inject meaning into this. It's better to leave the whole thing meaningless. It has an effect on me that way, when I think back upon it, that is kind of, I don't know. I like it though. It was a totally meaningless event.

I did give up coffee myself, though. I used to drink a cup every morning, but I pretty much stopped that. Gave me a headache for a whole week. whole goddamn week of a consistent, dull throbbing in my head.

I certainly won't end this story with some kind of statement about ambition. Besides, I don't think it was about that. Or even attention-getting. Like I said, it's just some meaningless shit that happened one day after my last exam.