

*This is an excerpt from my short story*

### Whatever Happened to Ipana?

Roy, the skinny guy down the street from me, owns a drive-thru funeral business. It's a good thing, 'cause my father died this morning. I know I should call an undertaker with a proper funeral parlor; Dad deserves the respect, but then I'd be expected to go in and meet the guy. I'd have to talk to him in person, pick out a casket and make arrangements for a service. I can't do that because a week ago I stopped brushing my teeth.

You probably want to know why. Well, my shrink told me to lower the stress in my life. So, I stopped brushing. You can't understand why that part of my daily ablutions should cause me stress? I'll tell you. It took me so long to get out of the house in the morning and I'm a busy guy – places to go, people to see and sometimes even a little “Hey, Hey” – if you know what I mean.

Tooth brushing was a chore. Brush, brush, brush, and be careful of the gums. Don't be too hard; make those circular motions like the hygienist showed me. That took a few minutes and I hated the foam in my mouth. It dripped whenever I reached over the sink to change the radio station, plus the spit wasn't too appetizing to look at either. I hadn't even had breakfast yet. When I finally got downstairs to the kitchen and ate, food got stuck in between my two front teeth so I had to go upstairs and start the process all over again.

To be continued...