

**b**

Friday afternoon late spring. I'd been shafted, but had two more weeks of teaching and been given this rotten 11 am Friday class. The students would sit while I spoke and I'd find myself wondering what meds they'd been prescribed.

That one - she looked like a wax doll left in the sun - her eyeballs seemed to run down to her chin. Haldol? Her body was all meat rolls and creases, breasty oily and squishy, exposed now in the season's heat. A teenage grandmother at 22. But she read - she read all the texts, and actually spoke well on them. I'd yet to see anything she'd written. When she engaged actively in the class, responding to a question or answer, she came alive. And when she was done, like the *human* switch on her back was turned off or went into sleep mode, she looked like she belonged in a home for the permanently brain injured. The transition never lost its uncanniness. It was something that couldn't happen, and did, again and again.

That one - he needed to stand up periodically and perform some kind of anti-tic maintenance, something like a Nazi salute combined with a reaper's scythe sweep. His tattoos were impressive, and I felt deep affection for him because of them: no images, only language, deep black-blue script and block print all over his body, arms and legs and hands and up his neck to the base of his chin and skull - nothing on his face. Slabs of language in dense paragraphs or long rhythmic limb-running lines. And from what I could tell they were nonsense. In the best sense. Like a cutup of religious texts combined with ingredient lists from junk food. On one arm I always found myself coming back to: LACOESTERS OF FATTY BLOOD DASH THOU. Ridlin, some antidepressants ... and a self-procured street cocktail. He could barely write his name.

Those were the two extremes. Most of the others were either just stoned or up all night or both. We'd gather - be gathered, really - into the pale yellow-brick building that still looked like the one-story factory it used to be; from the outside a few high windows with enormous airconditioners in wire cages, the name of the school on a cheap new board attached with knotty rusting wire to some rust-dripping nails banged in the mortar over the orange metal door. We'd sweat our collective balls off, since the AC's didn't work and we had one standing industrial fan, like an old radio microphone sized for a giant.

I kept my phone on my 'desk' since there was no clock in the room.

*CAN YOU STOP BY AFTER YOUR CLASS? I FEEL LIKE I'M IN HEAT. I'M SOAKED.  
WANT YOU INSIDE ME. I HAVE A LITTLE TIME BEFORE I LEAVE.*

"Oooooo, mister got a text."

"This is important, give me a second. Sorry."

*YES.*

It was high eighties, humid. I walked without hurry, unsure if I wanted to actually make the liaison. I felt like I needed to shit, but didn't want be bothered. She'd be ready - she'd probably have come a few times herself, squirting all over her bedcover - and would slip me inside her as soon as my pants were off, or just down. And I'd be instantly locked in the shackles of her gaze, as I moved in and out of her. Like having a bit in my mouth, a bridle on my face, her gaze turning and controlling me the way she leaned. Friday her double shift, she'd already have her evening wear on, come down to open the door in dress pants and heels - she'd keep the blouse on, and I'd fuck her with her shirt and shoes on, me completely naked. I'd rear and her gaze would snap me back down, my face to hers. I'd kiss her cries, take them in my mouth, chew them like plums, swallow them. I'd hear her cries echo off the building outside her window, I'd hear her cries plummet down the hallway steps into the rooms of the others in the building, splat into the cream of their telanovellas, screw into their phonecalls, pots of earth in their silences at their kitchen tables - her cries grow and soak through their doors, their ears perk up and their hearts quiver against their own wishes - or quiet in enjoyment of the sound of us, the sound of her, the sound of *living* tumbling down their stairs. *I don't want to come on your shirt* I'd say. *Can I suck you off* she'd say. *Ok* I'd allow. She'd look at her phone - untying the gaze - while I stroked in and out of her. *Shit I really have to go* she'd say. *Well then I really have to come* I'd say, and pull out and straddle her head and move in and out of her mouth, occasionally looking out the window til she drank all of me down under the skyclimbing spirals of my own bellowing.

I lay on her bed, alone, in the aftermath. Like smelling salts snapped, up surged remembrance - a world's scent - and woke me. One room apartment, heat and high sun, ceiling fan turning, aftersex sweat euphoria - and being-left-alone, right after, left even as the breath in me was still heaving. *this is the space. of my work. this is its air its scene its*

*setting. this. where I work. this where I need be.* The upsurge of readiness, of *mind*, to work, write, work, swelled. From the very first years it was here, in the single room of fucking-just-ended that my desire, my mind of work, would overtake me. A billowing peace, a softness, an air of unexpected homecoming and reprieve. *I can work here, in the place she leaves behind.* That is the place. The comfort of being not at home, of being away, of being in the wake of her leaving. From the very first years I'd known *being away* the requisite for being in contact with my mind. *Being away* was my opening. Yet for years and years I'd been striving to find 'my own place', find 'my home', find 'where I could work'. I'd even tried marriage. But what I still needed was this: the entrails of being-left in a place that was not-mine. She going to work in the night. I arriving upon her departure, with our crossing being a fuck, a loving, wholehearted, fuck. And then gone.

They could have pressed charges, brought the law. I was a child, then. No one did. Perhaps that is why later I sought the law, sought the state-approved, community vouchsafed ring-on-finger legitimacy of marrying, of institution-backed, militarily defended *love*. For certainly that would be a union in no danger of trespassing mores, no danger of housing rooms of forbidden cont[r]acts, no threat to anyone. A glove without a hand in it. Certainly that would sanctify our privacy, make it not *secret*. Would shine the light of community sun on it, a privacy that would be seen, be safe.

You wrap a woman's cunt around a child's cock - around a child's mind - and something like a sci-fi wormhole opens in him, or swallows him, and his future as a man is - now. Pleasing her seems second nature and first priority, and the time-travel has its consequence: upon return to his 'present' time all his peers seem younger, naïve, and from a distinctly separate world, a universe he remembers having been a part of long long ago. He feels his change as theirs.

My child memory of her stretch-marked breasts, stretch-marked hips, sun-wrinkled deeply tanned skin - her stark white bikini flesh surrounding her tightly shaved sex - the sweat-sheen on her freckled chest and the sunblond fur above her ass - my child memory of her vagina, and how it tasted and how it came - my child memory of seeing my hairless penis inside her, and in her mouth, and on her stomach, in her ass and between her breasts - my child memory of her one room off the road, 23 months the place no one knew I was, the launch site where I leapt my child time and arrived at the time that HOLDS; the

ceremonial ring on my finger was the base of a sno-globe where I could shake and reshape the weather of those hours, watch them fall and unfold inside a state-approved bubble of transprivate silence.

My child memory of *the place no one knew I was* - my child memory of that quality of being hidden, being away, and of being something like butcher confetti - a joyous flinging of my own shredding, a celebration of my own wild destruction, like being shot from a circus canon in pulped ecstatic gory globs and strands - that is my memory of *becoming a writer*. That is my studio's address. That the island of my retreat. I was made alive there, against the law, in secrecy and desire and in the formal structure of kidnapping, which was - simply following my want.

Nothing has healed me - except discovering I need not be healed. Perhaps the law's seal of approval upon the marriage's end retrieved me. In the bright hot day I bite and chew and swallow her cries like plums, and they are balm, internal aid, soothing the long-suffering trail of my intestines that writ[h]e and ache and dump bowls of blood. In the bright hot day I am bridled in her gaze below me. In the one room no one knows, with the one who now is half my age. Perhaps I now am that ring, come full circle to wed my want.

I sit in her one room, in the heat, in the wake of being-left, in the space of not-mine. Tasting and smelling her on me still. Between us five presidents. Sharing the advent of war without end, advent of the rich 'voting' to close schools for lack of funds, the advent of environmental catastrophe as accepted daily life, the nascent advent of a race of pharm-humans with only flippers - thumbs and paws. Outside on the elevated tracks a passing freight train moves slowly across the sky, blocking the sun - in the break between cars the room flashes, brightens, darkens again. The sun become a silent turning siren mounted atop the world. Birds complain in the trees.

*A curative. This is a curative. She a curative. This.*

[2014]