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People I Haven't Seen in Years That I Will Attempt to Eat Lunch with Next Week

[Sunday]

I will meet Laura somewhere with a balcony. The music will be louder than the waiter. If we eat anything, we won't know it. It will be Mexican food, but we won't know this either. The food will be cooked by someone named Art. We will drink Corona Lights with lime because that is obvious. We will not touch the chips or salsa. We will not touch each other. While Laura is fingering the dessert menu, I will be lowering myself over the balcony. When she says she'd rather suck the water from a dishrag than order the flan, I'll be a block away. I'll be humming an anthem, but I won't know it.

[Monday]

I will meet Beth somewhere vegan. It will be her kitchen. I will see homemade miniature billboards directing me to her smells. A German dog will grope me on the porch, but I won't wash my hands before eating because that could offend her. I will refuse her numerous offers to add spices to the food for the same reason. We will eat until we can't stand. We will lie next to each other without touching each other. I will wait for her to fall asleep. I will leave without noticing the words she carved into the kitchen table with my unused fork.

[Tuesday]

I will meet Marie somewhere very dry. Lizards may attend our picnic. She will provide the shoulder of pork, and I will provide the bottle of Bacchus. There will be a wall made of sand and riddled with holes. I will stand on one side of the wall. She will stand on the other. I will peer through the hole directly next to her hole, so that we look past each other and remain hungry. If I break anything, it will be my tailbone. If Marie breaks anything, it will be the bottle of wine over my head. I will stab a lizard with a shard from the bottle. Sand will blow into my eyes until all I see is dust.

[Wednesday]

I will meet Heather somewhere that requires us to wear scarves. There will be no food. We won't be able to decide where to eat, or what to eat if we decide where to eat it. We will sit in the cold in silence. There will be a broken radio in one of our laps. We will wonder if we're actually where we're at. One of us will ask where we're at. There will be no answer. We'll be close. We may be touching but probably not. We won't be hungry. I will drink something. Heather will nibble at the edges of something else. We'll part, but only one of us will be wearing a scarf.

[Thursday]

I will meet Veronica at a strip club because I will assume she works there. She will take me to an outhouse because I belong there. My face will be bright red from the sun. She won't understand this because she's never seen the sun. We'll eat whatever food we have in our pockets. We won't share, but at least once, one of us will attempt to make a trade. The trade will be rejected. We'll sit in the snow if there's snow, or on chairs if there are chairs. Veronica will claim that's not her name. I will lick my lips because they will be chapped from the sun and dirty from the food. When I look at her, I'll only see the sun.

[Friday]

I will meet Samantha at a park where a band will be playing in the fresh mown grass. Every word she speaks to me will be lyrics from songs. Her shirt will fit her perfectly. She'll have a new tattoo still pulsing and bleeding. She'll keep pressing napkins against it. We'll drink orange Crush and eat southwest cuisine from carts on wheels. The cuisine will be Cajun hotdogs in sesame seed buns. She'll keep talking about the tattoo. I'll keep staring at her shirt. Samantha will ask where I've been. I'll tell her I haven't. She'll go to get more napkins while I recycle the Crush cans. We'll both get lost.

[Saturday]

I will meet Charlotte in a café in the building where she works. She will tell me that the café has new management. She will lie to me that she hasn't tasted the new management's food yet. I will tell her I prefer the old management. She will laugh because she always laughs. We won't speak to each other as we eat. She'll occasionally smile. We will eat too much. After dessert, we'll speak different languages to each other. Charlotte will laugh because that is the other language she'll be speaking. I will fake laughter once. I'll walk her to a foreign door, and then I'll walk away. I'll know an anthem, but I won't be humming it.