

Unscroll

II  
GOLD WAKE PRESS

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Molly Gaudry

Burned

I wanted to write about getting burned but can't because it's still too close to home. I thought I'd go the metaphorical route and write about a lit candle, hot wax dripping on my thighs, some kinky act gone horribly, disfiguringly wrong. I tried the beaten, sentimental path, the long wrong road to the land of infatuation: don't judge, you've been there, I saw you. So then I thought: a screw and wood; asphyxiation by rope; a plank, a plunge; raspberried knees, carpet-jobs; road head, crash hot metal licking flames rubber stinking busted cement, dismemberment. Stupid girl; idiot tendencies; pathetic, invisible scars too fresh to touch.

Eric Burke

Quick and Dirty

It will only be approximate -- a quick and dirty whiteboard diagram -- nothing more -- people will comment on it -- will mark it up -- will change it in in&significant ways&some of these people will be important people -- so we will be committed to their changes. But since you have already done so, I will try to make explicit what lies between us.

Ben Spivey

“Gossamer”

I was unable to give her a child.

My seed; after years of thrusting-ritual, begging, her persistent nagging, clawing, overwhelming need for it, her egg aching for accompaniment, aching for a meaning, a reason to bleed, to become fertile.

For many years, or at least it seemed, my liquid and physical self tried; failing again and again to penetrate the shell of her egg.

The shell of her birthing- that inner most sacred of places- perhaps more delicate than the heart, the lungs or sex; organs and the activity of rape, conception, wet, joy and pain.

Nothing latched, nothing attached, no lineage would follow in my name, or her teachings, her care, her body, her love, or speech.

Suck milk from her breasts.

As she was concerned, my name was no good. And as such I became alone.

In the country- placid- 3:00 a.m. looked darker than you might imagine, conjure. Provoke without seeing. It was especially dark for me, even using my eyes, narrowing them. Squint. Until then, recently: at the time; I'd never been to the countryside during the night; only driven through it a few times, on the way here or too there.

(But I never noticed until that drive), leaving the city-lights behind me, how the sky

shifted into a blanket of absolute blackness, docile, blank without awareness: without other headlights, street lamps, even the reflecting of light from and out of windows, or off of trash cans: the type of darkness that wasn't just the absence of light, but the complete void of it.

So, she left without a child and turned into a sparrow.

Which, at times, pecked at me, on me, in me, and I found a mannequin in the likeness of many things.

Precisely a mannequin was found, appeared or had always been. It resembled a myriad of beings at any given time, until it settled on her.

The mannequin:

A totality of shift when provoked by nothing I'd determined, other than mental state, or inner inexplicable condition, consideration, change; fluxed in a gloss of shine with an infinite number of faces and fingertip lengths. Colour of skin and hair could arise in its molded shoulders, face, legs, feet, torso. A sort of peach froth into a seaweed mesh and reemerge a silky-coffee-shade with black instead of brown hairs, and C-cup cheat instead of A; then too become a male entirely.

That was the sort of thing I feared, change, but I knew of the different dimensions that entirely withstood in and outside of time, place: exact-time, without time. And I was cast into one of those places, like shadows corrected at an angle or in a new light; too swim to surface one day, maybe, maybe not.

For years we called an apartment home.

Across the hall lived a family who had a young boy with milky hair. I'd find his scribbles on the floors and walls in the building, mostly in the hallway and the elevator. Circles of colour, symbolically a beginning and an end, and back again to the beginning and the end.

I don't think he knew how the circles etched into me.

I would never tell him, speak to him, or look at him. And the young boy with milky hair would notice classical music coming from the apartment during the nights my wife was gone.

I could see him through the peephole.

The boy would feel sad because the music, although unfamiliar to him, was full of sorrow.

J.A. Tyler

[ **when the hotel and Jimmy, they first met** ]

Jimmy, he remembers back to a time if there ever was a time when his mother and his father, Jimmy's parents, they checked all three of them into a hotel and they stayed there, this family, in the bed until the sun went down and came up again. The cotton wash of sheets and the quiet run of the room, thunder overhead or the sound of their collective hearts. Jimmy remembers this like it happened and sometimes, when Jimmy he is in bed and thinking his own kind of thoughts, he thinks that this did maybe at some point exist. He was wrapped in the arms of a mother and a father and they were all sleeping together, Jimmy stealing awake most of the night, soaking the warmth. He remembers how a bellhop carried their luggage, and this family, Jimmy's family, they walked behind him at a fair pace, moving past a hallway of white doors, doors and doors, and none of them open. Jimmy can't remember the number on their door. He feels inside like his organs sometimes burn, when he is thinking back like this. And somewhere in the memory the walls they rain or the family is crying, Jimmy can't remember because sometimes Jimmy's memory only works for those things that have not happened, and the ceiling was at least wet, that much he is sure of. But Jimmy has just this haze, like a skin of moments, and he is looking through rain in garbled tones, the bellhop standing there and without a face watching him, white doors down both sides and none of them open. And Jimmy instead wishing he was under a tree, sitting in the rain, remembering how it was that his mother did or didn't drown, how she drank until the world came apart, and Jimmy was left wet, like he was just born, just then, and looking through a gauze of maybe and perhaps. Jimmy remembers some things and some things he doesn't. Jimmy is as far apart as he can go without actually ripping.

CL Bledsoe

Postmodernism

I've had it with post-modernism and its sad adhe(rent)s  
shirts mean exposed breasts unless they're wearing br(as)

sume everyone agrees with you; it's only logical that they w(ou)ld  
tside it's cold; how could anyone choose th(at)?

the heart of matters is blood, repetition, plaque build(up)  
side the head is where I'm gonna hit you if you don't mind (me)

et me in heaven with all my dead pets but no dirty \_\_\_\_\_'(s)  
how me one ounce of proof that naked babies with harps don't rule  
our (fate)s

decides who will be hit by the falling angel, who will du(c)k  
ausality equals something even harder to sp(el)l

ephants are as self-aware as magpies. Where is your god now?

Eric Beeny

*Just a Normal Greeting*

Just a normal greeting:

“Hi, how are you?”

“Fine, thanks.”

Then more. Then more of more. Much more. Enough is too much.

Then touching. In public. Just hands. That’s enough. He’s grateful. This isn’t what he wanted.

He’s very happy. They talk about it. They have a lot in common, just enough to work through. Just like him, he hates himself. Just like her, he loves her. They laugh about that. Too much. They laugh a lot about laughing too much.

They run away from themselves. They run toward each other. When they run away from themselves they’re never where they end up.

They don’t know how to say goodbye. It’s not enough to just leave.

\* \* \*

Simple enough, she smiles:

He thinks she has a tick. She isn’t the only one nervous. He looks at a school bus outside. Kids’ faces in the windows, someone waiting to pick them up.

He touches her cheek. She moves his face.

Just like that, she appears. Drags herself into his periphery. She’s waiting for him there. That’s where he gets off. Only he’s nowhere near home.

Where is he, relative to that? Who’s here, waiting for her?

\* \* \*

He sleeps all wrong:

He has a fight with her earlier. He goes to bed upset. There are dreams he wants to have, to keep. None of them happen, he wakes up.

His neck is sore. He rubs it. He makes a face with his face. He gets up, goes to the bathroom. He sits down to pee.

He goes to his room, turns on the stereo. Background. Soundtrack. Anything can be a soundtrack if he doesn't pay attention to himself listening to it.

He makes some coffee. He sits by the window.

The telephone rings.

"It's her," he thinks. He picks it up.

"Hello?" he says.

"Hey," she says.

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