AN ODE TO LOST LOVES

BY LEAH KAMINSKY

Whatever, he's Venecuelan.
When the club closes, you follow Alfredo into his friend's Mercedes. The friend is Israeli, and when he discovers that you, too, are Jewish, he slaps his lips and throws bitter glances Sauce's way, as if to say, "You've got it all backwards, man. Shikas are for practice."

You sit in the back, realizing fully the provocative nature of your dress as your skin sticks to the leather seats and refuses to peel free. The Mercedes' tires swivel around Fremont, dodging oncoming traffic like it's a video game and the reflective lights on the yellow lines are easy points for the taking.

You grip the door handle and, with the flair of a true romance novel prince, Alfredo whispers, "Do not be afraid. Hold on to me."

You think, "Sorry, Sauce, I'm not that drunk," but you say, "Cool!" and grip his sweaty arm tightly.

The boys stop at a posh apartment complex to bum weed off a friend. They leave you with the Israeli, and he pries you with desperate questions through guttering tears.

AN INTERVIEW, PART II

BY PATRICK MISHINA

You know, it wasn't the actual butcher shop that made me cry, but the overwhelming, condensed fright of everything around me. It all culminated in that bloody mess displayed proudly right in front of you in the display case, and, I mean, which girl wouldn't be frightened at the sight of that? Oh yeah, they had everything, whole ducks, pig's heads, chicken feet, so...it wasn't pleasant. But I knew what was going to be there every week, so it wasn't so much the body parts as it was the stench of everything mixing right before your eyes and clinging to your clothes, the posters of actresses you haven't seen before, and they're not particularly attractive, either, the dirty brick sidewalks - you can actually see a top layer of black grime collected over hundreds of years! - and the fact that everyone around you is speaking in indecipherable letters and strokes, it was all of this bearing down on you as soon as you cross the river and head down North King.

But it was really nice that I had a chance to spend those days with my Grandpa. It was funny, he would wear this dirty undershirt, just real dirty, to the point where you couldn't it was originally white, a real gross yellow, and over it he would wear this horrific aloha shirt, unbuttoned and untucked with the collar unfixed, and he would hold my hand and we would walk all the way down to the post office and then catch The Bus back home. Those were really nice times, yeah, yeah.

And you know, when I think about, I don't remember what he had to buy from the butcher shop every week.

He would pick me up and take me to the candy store, right across the street. No, I don't remember the name of that store, too! But every time I would get something different, sometimes just little huggie stuff, sometimes dirtied ilk...yeah, those are my favorites. I also don't remember the person behind the counter anymore, but he had the loudest laugh I ever heard, booming, like a mushroom cloud instantly filling the whole room, and every time he laughed he would slap the counter and make the large glass jars on the floor tremble. Sometimes I would jump up and drop all my candy, which made him laugh even louder.

He and Grandpa would stand there and talk and I wouldn't care 'cause I was too busy picking out my stash, but it's kind of strange, when you talk about it, yeah? Why would he have had a friend at the candy store?

Sometimes he would go towards the back behind the noren and then would come back out with a small brown package. With that and whatever he bought from the butcher shop under one arm he would pick me up, set me on the counter, pay, and then leave. By this time the sun was already over the buildings.

You know, I feel like there is this guilt, a real small guilt that grows inside every person...when you talk about it, yeah? Why would he have had a friend at the candy store?

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THE QUEEN OF EX-HEROIN ADDICT INDIE GIRLS

BY

DEIRDRE COYLE

The Queen of Ex-Heroin Addict Indie Girls fluffs her scarves like feathers, digis reptilian boots into the dirt, returns to mammalia by unleashing auburn hair. Really she is a bird, swan-necked and sprawling out from behind the door. Really, though she and I have been roommates since college, we have nothing in common. Really, I want more than anything to absorb her uniqueness, take some of it for myself and keep it in a jar, or tucked inside my hair toclip up and expose when necessary.

The Queen of Ex-Heroin Addict Indie Girls is rubbing her boot into the sidewalk outside our apartment, grinding her heels into fresh cigarette ash. “I can’t do this, Norah,” she tells me. “We have to do it.”

“Okay.”

Her smile is desperate and quick. She walks to the gas station to buy coffee. I toss after her boots, my own scarf long and trailing in the wind. Her scarves—are there two, I think—twist around her neck like intertwining snakes. We are at the Circle K. I pick up a pack of around her neck. “Guess the government took I stare at the red and white packet, me. “Or electricity for the stove.”

We are in line. “We don’t have hot water,” she tells thinking of our apartment. “Where’d it go?”

Outside, she drinks the still-steaming black It was a dark and stormy night. It was a dark and stormy night. I should go back to home. We are in line. “We don’t have hot water,” she tells me. “Or electricity for the stove.”

I stare at the red and white packet, thinking of our apartment. “Where’d it go?”

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