

Night

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The black gulfs of night make me dizzy as stars whirl overhead, spiraling and spinning and teasing me from the sky. I can feel them twirling when night takes the earth like a hungry animal, engulfing it, swallowing it into its hot wet stomach. We are swallowed at night and, inside the animal, become the animal.

I can't bear the stars so I hide inside, unless there are clouds to mask them; clouds to make me safe from their laughter and their cruel jibes. They say you can't see the stars spinning, because they are so far away. I know that I can, though, because they are fast, faster than the carousel at the park, faster than the merry-go-round that makes you puke even as you are laughing.

In spite of that, night is better than day; when we are puked out onto the hot dry sand, the burning of it fills our nostrils and lungs with the cooked effluvia of hot concrete and the poisons from technology. The day is when we mainline these, shoot the toxins into our blood, get high from the computers and the combustion engines and the latex paints and the dancing celluloid pictures on their shiny shiny screens.

The sun hates us, hates us all; why else would we turn red and burn, our skin blistering and peeling off our muscle whenever the sun has its way? I can feel it when it's there, even when I'm inside; I know it's trying to reach me. The hats, the glasses, the shirts, I hide even within my own skin, but it's no use. I turn on music so I don't have to hear its angry voice; I turn on the air conditioning to drive its fingers out of my house; I hide inside my bed and I sleep and I never dream.

I can be naked in the night; it wraps me in its cool hand, caressing me. The night is my lover and my love, but often it's stolen from me by the jealous stars. I talk to the clouds,

plead with them to come so that I might go out to the night once more. They listen to me sometimes, I know they do. I hear their voices whispering back to me; it sounds like blowing leaves and the hush of wind; theirs is the secret language of the sky. I don't understand the words, but they comfort me like a mother murmuring to her child; "My baby, yes who's my good baby, little boy, hmmm, sleep tight my little one, rockabye, baby, in the tree tops, when the wind blows the cradle will rock." Yes, the cradle will rock, and I will be sung softly to sleep by the whispering voices of the clouds, so soft and sensuous, dancing above me.

I'm hungry tonight so I whisper to the clouds that I want to go outside. I watch through the window as the sky thickens and the moon sulks, fading. They answer me, the clouds, the clouds my friends.

I float out the door, or perhaps I skitter, I walk, I stride. The night loves me, it caresses me, it kisses me and I close my eyes and open my mouth and kiss it back, arms wide. Forever friends, bring to me what I need, oh night! Night and dark and hunting and hunger and food and fun, the wind carries me these promises, making my blood hot and fast.

I don't see the litter and the dirt, the weeds in the cracks of the sidewalk, or the cracked windows and rusting cars that surround my little apartment near campus. Student housing, a new name for the slums of temporary visitors on campus; the powerless and the poor, who still dream of future rewards and deny their more than likely future pain and suffering and loss. When you live for the future you are a ghost to the present. I am a ghost on the wind and the night, floating down the street bathed in strobing sodium light and dancing neon. The rushing swish of tires and the hum-putter-growl of engines warn me away from the main artery of traffic. I seek instead the quieter lanes and darker corners.

A great tree bursts up through the sidewalk here, outlined in monochromatic efficiency by a streetlight that rises obscenely through its branches, penetrating its soft mantle like a phallic knife thrust through its leafy breast. And yet the tree embraces it gently. Life and death. The tree knows the secret. I lean against it murmuring, tell me tree, tell me too, let me in on the joke. How do you live and thrive amongst all this?

The tree doesn't answer me, but instead laughs with the clouds and shares their whispers. I listen to their private conversation feeling like a sneak, a thief, a voyeur peering through the curtains, as the couple inside join together, oblivious. The hard bark shifts under my skin and I revel in the coarse pain and pleasure of it.

I used to walk to the malls and the other busy places, where I could brush against the people and smell their sweat-filled skin and the perfume of their fear and desperation. But over time they changed, or I no longer saw them in the same way; they became bloated and disgusting. The fat white woman in the grocery store sloshing behind her trolley, feet slap slapping in their flat shoes on the concrete floor, the metal basket loaded with the crap that created her. My eyes felt filthy just seeing her, and the others like her. The overweight black man all tough and macho and soft around the middle, fuzzy slippers incongruous on his stockinged feet, baggy sports-wear crying out for lost and hopeless dreams, of things that never were and never would be, glory not only lost but never found. Talking smack on the phone, yo bitch, what the fuck do you expect, they's got five kindsa' shit here what do you want? I aint got time fo that shit. The dark eyes of a child peering out from hollowed sockets; the waif and its haggard drug-infused parent shuffling, staring at the shiny goods. The young couple feeling anger and frustration with each other but not showing it yet. The old man and his cane, thick dandruff on the frayed black collar of his good Sunday shopping suit.

I can't see them anymore, I can't bear it.

I stand with the tree and try to forget these things, but hunger nibbles at my edges. I run my hand through my hair and it comes back damp with dew and slightly oily. I smell the life inside of me, the life around me; my own sweat and pheromones mixed with the dusty odor of the tree, the green of recently cut grass. I hear laughter. The laughter calls to me.

I used to hide inside my house, away from the angry sun and the jealous stars. I explored the world electronically. Once I discovered what could be done online, I was captured by it, enticed and seduced by the easy intimacy, the sexy private details, the casual laughter and cruel taunts; it all seemed so much more real, untainted by the flesh. I found the rooms full of old people pretending to be young, their desperation poisoning my screen. I found the rooms full of young people pretending to be old... or the rooms where the old preyed on the young, hunting them openly. Oh yes. Where were the rules? The decorum? I want a young 13-16 girl with a webcam, P2P me IM me PM me oh fuck me yes, you know you want to cyber you tease you slut, throbbing 10 inches looking for petite friend. The language was different, the codes specialized to the medium, but the intent was always the same. I recognized this hunger from parties and bars, and the dance floor and lecture hall. Here was need and it was looking for a way. A way in. They burned with their need and it would destroy them in time, as I knew so well.

I met some people from that world, but they're not the same in person. The profile teases you; I love moonlit walks and champagne on the beach, but in reality it's Coors watching football on Monday. The cute little transgender on the 'net with the perky tits and smiling cock actually smells like stale cigarettes, and the perk isn't quite the same in person, and the voice and the wig and the lighting -- the magic goes away, doesn't it? Of course it does, but there are ways to recapture the magic, aren't there? There are always ways.

In memory and mind, yes, and you know what they say, you are what you eat. Hehehehe. LOL omg rotflmao. Give it to me big boy, let's see what you're made of.

But that was then and I've since had to move on. The night is the one constant; since the very dawn of life it has been here with us. In the beginning there was night and it scared the shit out of god so he lit a candle, a night-light so he could sleep, quaking under the covers of his holy bed. And now what do we have to show for it? Thank you, thank you so very much.

Across the street is one of the many churches that litter the landscape, dark tonight, empty, but still sitting in its own special miasma of righteousness and hatred and perversion. I've entered these places before, during visiting hours, those few times when we are allowed, privileged even, to stand before the divine presence and be fed his words pre-chewed, just a few at a time, by the man with the golden spoon and the pious attitude. The friendly smile and the soft cool handshake, the slap on the shoulder, hey, if you want to join us, come join us, it's good to see you today, come again soon, come join with us. Be one of us, because we aren't going to hell. And the darkness behind his white teeth whispers, *but you are, you fucking loser*. But 1 billion Chinese can't be wrong, can they? Statistically speaking, where does that put you and your little church?

Church summer camp was fun that one year, oh, when was that? As I cross the street in the shadows between the lights, I remember the rubbery hard paths that crossed between the cabins. Lying on her back in the grass was this bitch dog, legs splayed, rubbing her back in unselfconscious joy, feeling the itch and one with its relief. *She's ready for you Jack, she wants you!* Laughter from the sons of ministers, laughter that masked their own bestiality and needs and desires and lies; sex hidden behind pious doors, nothing has changed except the curtains are brighter. The girls turn away pinkly, but you know where they will be once night falls.

A group of pretty people stand aloof; students, still thin and thinking yeah, I'm hot, I'm beautiful, I'm strong, I'm young, I'm forever. They sneer at me and turn their backs as I cross their litter-covered yard, with its beer cans and bottles scattered like fallen leaves, cigarette maggots crawling across the sidewalk. Their laughter is loud, voices forced over

the thumping music, fueled by vodka and tequila, piss poor beer, and the hot sweet smoke of the cannabis, ahhhh, pass the chronic will you?

The night swallows me again and I slide down its smooth throat, my lover taking me in. I dance and sway with the night, the wind my partner, the clouds my spies as they watch me, warn me, comfort me.

I hear the ritual sounds now, the thank you come again, I had a great time! Laughter and alcohol-filled blood swirling around inside of them; remember, buzzed driving is drunk driving! Hahahahaha! Yeah, I'm fine, goodnight! Yes, the night, my night, my dear thing.

This one is pretty, in a loose flimsy top and short pants, what are they called now? Culottes, not the loose skirt/short type, though, that the oh-so modest ladies wear; we are not to wear what pertaineth to a man amen. No false modesty here, with skin-tight spandex just over her knees, showing calf and comfortably flat bright shoes that cover what must be cheerfully painted toes. Her crimson fingernails wave in the night, catching the strobe strobe strobe of the streetlight, flickering unreal. She steps out of the puddle of light, her bright colors fading into yellow leeches pervasions from the sodium light screaming in pain, burning in its borosilicate glass prison; and then fading again into the natural grays and blacks of the night, my night.

She passes right by me, not even seeing me, and I smell her; her molecules touch me across the night air, caresses of whiskey and beer, oh my, and her own sharp maddening sweat mingled with precious oils and tinctures. If she only knew what disgusting sources came together to make that perfume; the thought of it almost makes me giggle, oils from the anal glands of a cat! The sweat from beaver's pores, the rutting scent of the deer; musk, civet, castoreum. The olfactory call for sex, carnal advertising; take me, I'm ready! Molecules of lust squeezed from their hosts, diluted, mixed, flowers added to mask their true intent. I am excited by this, almost unbearably, and the hunger claws at me. *Take me*

now the molecules cry; they brush against my skin and I draw them into my lungs, binding them for all eternity into my own flesh. *Take me.*

I brush against her hand; her skin is cool against mine, and I imagine what it would be like to take her. There is no real pleasure anymore in a quick burst of lust; the thrusting and slapping are quickly over, it all fades so quickly and it is all so distinctly unsatisfying. I feel her, though; I rush through her pores and diffuse into her blood and lymph; I am the air in her lungs, the sodium and potassium that fire her nerves. I feel the tightness of her bra, its straps and chestband, unnoticed through familiarity, but pressing against her flesh anyway. I feel the swish swish of her legs and the hardness of the concrete underfoot, made unsteady by the spinning world. Ooooo, why do they drink so much? It makes me dizzy like the stars do; at least the alcohol doesn't laugh and smirk, it does not have a malevolent stare, nor any lewd winking.

I am her and she is me, and we walk unsteadily down the street, the lights overhead a slow strobing of bright then dark. The swish swish of her legs merges with the shushing of traffic as she weaves her way towards the busier, nicer part of campus. But too fast, too soon, she will miss the fun if she goes now. So her shoe slips, mmmhmmmm, how could I have anything to do with that? And it is a low shoe, how can you fall out of such a thing, you clumsy girl! Perhaps you've had too much to drink, or it's this broken sidewalk. Her breasts dance for a moment as she stumbles and catches herself, her hair swaying, a squeak from her red lips echoing off the stuccoed walls.

I remember once when the hunt was harder, but there was a satisfaction then; the curved beauty of a blade or the solid pounding of a rock; the slow and sensuous descent into black, carried by fingers wrapped around a slender neck. Sometimes the old ways are still best, but with all of the rush and fuss and bustle, it's harder to find idle hands to put to good use. There are still days, yes, some times, mmmmm, maybe tomorrow. But it's such a hazard, and these toys do not last long; they break or they get put away in a steel closet and can't come out to play anymore.

Now.

Step, step, my girl, my beautiful girl, I love you now and forever, be mine.

Step, step, distracted, limping, and around the corner, who could see that great beast of a vehicle? Red and mighty and masculine and virile, guided by the compensating fool with one hand on the wheel, the other holding a laughing box to his ear.

No screech, no cry of tire before the thump and echoing thump as she hits the ground. The suspension of this beauty is smooth; the tires glide over any hazards in the road, the small bumps along life's path. Finally there is a screech as he realizes what just happened, what he just did.

I am inside her still, wrapping myself around her; I feel her broken bones, her crushed ribs, the pain of ruptured organs and the pressurized bursts of blood through failed passages. Her brain slowly swells, filling its space, pressing, and darkness fills her from the inside. I hold her lovingly in my arms, I am her and she is me, perfect and beautiful, forever. I carry her out of her broken shell.

She is so beautiful. I will love her for a long time.