

MARIA & TIM ARE FRIENDS

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1.

For days at a time he looked at her from one side of the tank to the other side where she is. Then everyday he placed one cheek and one gill on her one cheek and one gill. He loved her and she was very sick. She was so sick and he would stay by her side even when she wasn't eating. She rested in the cove. He tried to push her out into the world because he had no other way and knew nothing else. All day, everyday, he loved her too much. When the day came, another came. They took her away from him and down the drain. He ignored the new one they gave him because he knew all he had to know. Males like him procreate out of duty. He had no duty except to himself, floated to the surface quietly. That fool should've had his when he had the chance. Meat is always a good source of protein. He could've taken her whole.

2.

You know her, you know her well, a woman was kidnapped a few weeks ago and last week they released her. A woman was kidnapped and she escaped. They first gang raped her. This is highly unusual as an event for these people. Who knew fucking a stranger could be so much fun? You know her – the one in the year book, the one mentioned in phrases about the ex, the one you know, left. Afterwards, she began to quote dervish tales and they listened in bewilderment. After settling in and coming back to herself, she remembered who she was and cooled her blood and heart. She told them that she could feel nothing, interrogating her is only getting a secondary source. Quotes and refutations flew. They had to let her go, she was too good and no good for them to use. So here, she's back. A broken limp somewhere, a baby in her ass, half crippled, now, back home, dancing in the middle of the room to pop chords and unwounded boys. Quietism gets dull in death.

3.

All you have to do is turn off the phone. Turn her off. Your mother talks too much and so do all our moms. You stop outside a bar to smoke a cigarette. He stops and says, “Whoa, whoa... don’t hurt me now pretty lady.” Smile, oh smile. It’s been so long since you heard something like that. Mommy is talking too much, gives you heartache. Your heart flutters, murmurs death threats: coaching English to Frenchmen, single again, being a lawyer, going to the dog pound. She’ll know why you’ve gone away, a Royal-Adler wrapped tightly around you, letters and stamps padded your kitchen drawers, a freezer stuffed with ice. She’ll listen again, when listening becomes a matter of sundown and radio hits. We all must read some kind of news.

4.

Maria wants to spend money on butter today. Guns are on the back of her mind but she'd rather get a new pair of earrings. She can only spend money on guns though, because she isn't very photogenic and can't get a cool job. Guns last a while. They're heavy, metal. She becomes a don't-wanter, sells everything she owns fairly quickly to a thirty-something-year-old for a one-way ferry ride. The money is spent on butter but really on guns. She sees seas and sunrises. She remembers not to be limited by payments and remembers by scenes and bruises. One of the ferry rides makes her sick and she returns with gold in handfuls, buries it in the backyard of her mother's house, and jumps off the car that is to transport her to collect rent.

5.

“What about The Split?” “No, no, Darryl doesn’t like The Split. He can’t handle it.” The Railroad is not too hot either. In fact, it’s probably the one that’s least in value. Maria would have to walk right into the dining room with the bathroom behind that. She’ll have to turn left to the kitchen and walk further to reach the work area and more forward to her pillow for comfort and the rest of it to watch the television and answer the phone next to the cat litter. Let’s simply live side by side, huh? There’s nothing too cozy or wrong about that. Tim shakes his head, “No, no, it won’t do. I don’t want to pass through your room to get to mine.” The 80s Angular is way too low. Tim smokes too much to have to be forced to breathe in the second hand. They finally decide on the one without a down payment, a light in the front hallway, a view of the corner deli.

6.

Personal bankruptcy filings: Newark is in A and Brooklyn is in J. Manhattan office vacancy rates are 12.9% downtown in November of this year. Qu'est-ce que tu fais pendant le weekend? Maria breaks 1 million in her investments. Quel âge avez-vous? She's going to purchase land and drill holes through it to see if there's gold or oil or postcards from her father, from South Africa. Maybe she'll buy a few more apartments in the coming month, that all depends on who dies first, there overseas. Mommy would like a new house too; maybe she can buy her one. Believe it only when you see it. Why would you trust? Have faith in a few friends and that's more than enough. Trust steals money from you just as when you're ready to spend it. Don't do it. Save the coupons for desperate times they say but Darryl reminds Maria that it's also sweet at times to spend coupons frivolously when times aren't so rough. It's only paper with fine print. Get over it. Tim licks up the coupons, pastes together new wallpaper.

7.

“I want to see you. I want to settle with you.” She got confused but quickly recovered. He’s talking about something else. “Where do you want to meet?” They meet for dinner somewhere in town and sit across each other. She squirms in her chair, pushing it closer to the table then backs up because she has pushed too far. She leans on her left arm but that doesn’t work because her entire body is leaned to the left and that’s uncomfortable. Walk the outline of your continent then jump over to the country you’ve been living in. Look because there’s nothing left and when you look when there’s nothing left things turn up in bits and files. She says that there’s nothing left to say. She says that sadness should be corn starch in the toppings of strawberry cheesecake. She says she doesn’t move much anymore. She moves a few states over from his. Life is impeccable. The mortgage is paid off from the inception. The swashbuckler is dead. She drowned him on her way to sign contracts. Go far. Go home to yourself. Go home with no one. Her house is not big enough for one. He jogs around different counties in the same region. All the post offices are for sale. They are going cheap. She sits in her tub with a bottle of whiskey, thinking of skies and clouds and flames. Life is cheap, here. All is here. She drops her chin. Things are alright, now. That’s the way things go and time has passed.

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