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Sophie Lefens

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RUBIES

by

Sophie Lefens

You know that it has been weeks since he last washed his sheets, but you decide that you don't mind. It smells like stale shampoo and leftover sweat; like morning bodies, even at night. The smell is dimly masculine and it reminds you of your dad and sometimes you like what's foul so long as it's familiar.

You lie next to this man/boy/guy in a tourniquet of sheets, tasting new love like infants gumming solids. But this thought of your dad moves like ink underwater, spreading and thinning into see-through memories of Greek myths in the grass and your mother hating jazz and fuck you from inside the master bedroom. Then more, the crutches he used when he broke his leg driving drunk and you said nothing, and then tents zipped open, which somehow sounds both wet and dry.

You know these thoughts are out of place so you push them aside, literally moving your head back and forth quickly like a cartoon shaking off a dropped anvil and you laugh at yourself for being cartoonish and you laugh to the man beside you, who knows only that you're burying your chin into his neck and laughing

because ha ha ha, you are having such a good time and isn't this cozy and cute?

And maybe it is a good time and maybe you don't mind sharing this zero-neck-support pillow because you like the way it feels, easy and nice, having his head rest next to yours.

In the morning, alone, you sit on the edge of the bed and notice a tiny black stain at the very end of the sheets where your feet spent the night. You look closer, and see that this black freckle is actually the color of rubies without sun, and when he comes back into the room you ask, and he tells you he cut his toe last week and he laughs because he knows that you think it is gross but he takes pride in it like a ten-year-old with a dead frog and you think, what a sad misdirected attempt at manhood

Outside it's wet-towel raining, no lightning or thunder, just steady slow soaking.