

Chinese Restaurant

"at first it was wonderful."

BUT ISN'T IT ALWAYS? SHE WAS MY BEAUTIFUL PORCELAIN DOLL, MY HEROINE, MY SLEEK & SLENDER SEDUCTRESS ... MY MUSE.



BY:
THIS TOWN'S (→)
DRUNK &
STARLA
SLUNK!

I WROTE PAGE AFTER PAGE, BURNING THROUGH CIGARETTES AND PASSIONATELY POUNDING AWAY AT MY TYPEWRITER, COMPLETELY DRUNK ON HER.

SHE HAD TAKEN THE BROKEN LIPS OF A BEATEN MAN AND COATED THEM IN THE SYRUP OF HER SALIVA AND OVERBEARING SEXUALITY



SHE BROUGHT OUT THE DEEP BURIED ROMANTIC FROM WITHIN ME...



and kept me up at night with

a feeling of teenag giddiness and creative drive

I COULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT I HAD.

EATH IN UNE.

I'd come home to her and she'd be lying on my bed, enchantingly sprawled out with long black hair, pale white skin and nothing on but little boy underwear with its soft greys and blues...

SHE'D SMOKE CAMEL FILTER 100'S ONE AFTER THE OTHER, STARING-DOWN AT WHATEVER BOOK SHE WAS READING...

A BEAUTIFUL BOOKWORM, SHE'D READ ME VOLTAIRE WHILE WE LAY IN BED



... WE'D SPEND HOURS STROLLING DOWNTOWN AND POINTING-OUT THE OLD HANGOUTS L.A. WRITERS USED TO DIVE IN.



SHE WAS A DECENT WRITER AND AN
EVEN BETTER EDITOR. SHE NOT ONLY
INSPIRED MY WORK, SHE PUSHED ME
TO GO FURTHER, ALWAYS SUPPORTIVE OF
MY ART...

...WHATEVER FORM
IT TOOK.



SHE WAS A
WIZARD AT
GRAMMAR AND
SPELLING, SOME
THING I'D NEVER
BEEN FORMALLY
TAUGHT. I'D SHARE
MY WORK WITH
HER AND SHE'D
RUN THROUGH IT
WITH A RED PEN.

THOSE NIGHTS THAT I GOT
SO DRUNK THAT I DIDN'T
FEEL LIKE GOING OUT TO
PERFORM POETRY READINGS
SHE'D LIGHT ME UP A
CIGARETTE AND FORCE ME
OUT THE DOOR.




I GUESS I SHOULD MAKE KNOWN
HOW THINGS WERE GOING TO END
UP FROM THE MOMENT I FIRST
MET HER IN OUR CREATIVE WRITING
CLASS. WHEN WE SPOKE OF OUR
FAVORITE WORKS OF FICTION, SHE
NOTED NABOKOV'S 'LOLITA', AND I
FANTE'S 'ASK THE DUST'.



THE LOLITA CHARACTER REPRESENTED A FORBIDDEN LOVE, SOMETHING YOU WANT TO TOUCH BUT SHOULDN'T AND

FANTE'S CHARACTER, ARTURO BANDINI, WAS A DRUNKEN ROMANTIC WHO OBSESSED OVER A WOMAN, LOVED THE *idea* OF HER — BUT JUST COULDN'T HOLD ON TO HER...



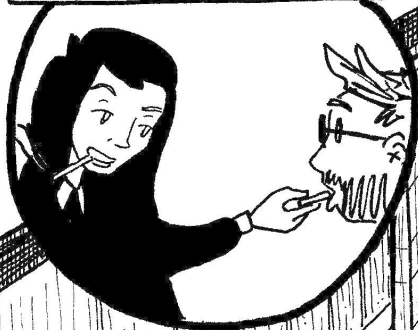
MY LOVELY MUSE WAS LOLITA-LIKE. AND LIKE HUMBERT HUMBERT I HAD TOUCHED MY LOLITA WHEN I SHOULDN'T HAVE. WHAT I DISCOVERED UNDERNEATH WAS SOMETHING THAT I DIDN'T HAVE THE STOMACH TO HOLD ON TO.

I WAS THE GREAT BANDINI TOO, A DRUNKEN FOOL WHO THOUGHT HE WAS IN LOVE WITH ONE THING BUT WAS, IN FACT IN LOVE WITH SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT, AND FAR LESS ROMANTIC THAN I IMAGINED.

SHE WAS TALL, WITH LONG FINGERS AND HAD THIS SEXY WAY ABOUT HER IN EVERYTHING SHE DID...

EVERY TIME SHE'D LIGHT A SMOKE FOR HERSELF SHE'D ALWAYS LIGHT TWO AND GENTLY SLIDE THE SPARE INTO MY LIPS.

SHE SPOKE WITH A SOFT SEDUCTIVE TONE, QUIET, CALM AND COMPOSED AT ALL TIMES AND OFTEN WHISPERED NICK DRAKE LYRICS UNDER HER TONGUE.



BUT HER ACTIONS WEREN'T ALWAYS SEXY OR CUTE...

UNDERNEATH THE EROTIC MYSTICISM

THERE WAS A

SEA OF HURT.



DRINK TO SLEEP

WE WERE PEOPLE WITH CYCLES, RITUALS AND HABITS, JUST LIKE ANY OTHER.

DRINK TO WAKE

REPEAT

I'D DONE THE WHOLE REHAB INPATIENT/OUTPATIENT, AA CULT MEETING, WEAK WILLED "BLAH - BLAH" SONG AND DANCE THING.

TIME AND TIME AGAIN...

IT WAS SOMETHING WE BOTH HAD IN COMMON, REHABS, MENTAL INSTITUTIONS...



...A FAMILIARITY WITH THE SYSTEM.

BUT SHE WAS MORE SEASONED, PRACTICALLY A PRO...



...SHE HAD MANAGED TO WORK SOCIAL SERVICES INTO GIVING HER SSI CHECKS AND MEDICATION.

THE PATTERN WAS CONSISTENT. ALTERNATING BETWEEN MEDICATIONS, TREATING HERSELF, AND PLAYING DOCTOR AND GOD, SWITCHING FROM HEROIN-TO-METHADONE-TO-SUBOXONE-TO PRESCRIPTION PAIN KILLERS...

AND RIGHT
BACK TO
WHERE SHE'D
STARTED



IT WASN'T A PRETTY SIGHT TO SEE HER BURY HERSELF, BUT I KEPT MY MOUTH SHUT, PUCKERED UP AND KISSED HER AND HELP HER TIGHT THRO-UGH THE THICK AND THIN OF IT.

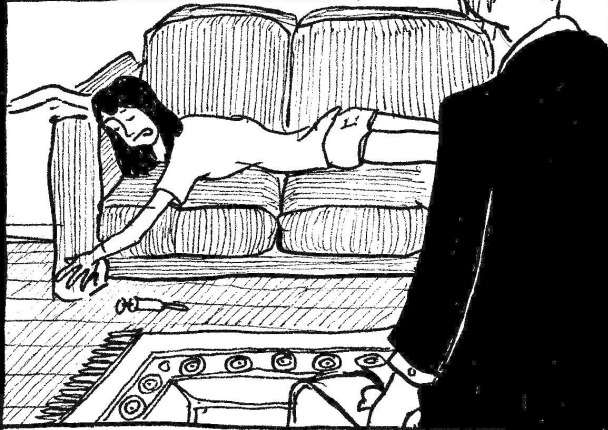
PEOPLE WOULD TURN WHEREVER WE'D GO, TURNED ON BY HER HEROIN CHIC FASHION AND MODEL-LIKE BODY.



BUT WHAT THEY DIDN'T SEE WAS THE GIRL I KNEW, THE MENTAL INSTABILITY, MOOD SWINGS, THE HISTORY OF ABUSE AND THE LOVELY GRACE SHE HAD FALLEN FROM.



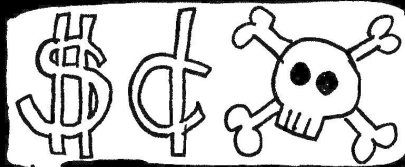
IT ALL STARTED TO CREEP UP ON ME AFTER ABOUT NINE MONTHS... I BEGAN TO GET ANNOYED WITH ALL THE IDIOSYNCRASIES I USED TO FIND ADORABLE...



THE WAY SHE WOULD NOD OFF INTO A SLEEPY DRUG-FUELED DREAM...



OR THE CRANKINESS SHE WOULD GET LOST IN WHILE SHE CAME DOWN...



THE CHOKES ON US



THE CONSTANT SUGAR CRAVINGS IN THE DEAD OF THE NIGHT, THE DIALOGUE ABOUT SUICIDE AND THE GET RICH SCHEMES, MORE WAYS TO SCREW THE SYSTEM INTO PAYING FOR OUR POISONS.

SHE DIDN'T WORK, SSI PAID FOR EVERYTHING. SHE WOULD NEVER HAVE LEFT THE HOUSE IF I DIDNT FORCE HER TO.

BUT I DIDN'T MIND. I'D STAGGER THROUGH THE DOORWAY AFTER WHATEVER I'D BEEN DRINKING, READY TO PAMPER ME WITH ATTENTION AND FOUR ME DRINKS AND FVCK ME WILDLY

YTVRX
STVRX
SLEEPY

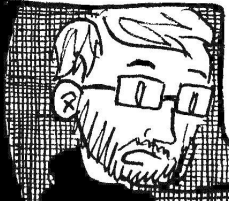
EY, EY
BIG
BOY!

GRAWL.
BURP



WE'D FVCK FOR HOURS. I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE STAMINA TO KEEP UP, BUT SHE WAS A SELF PROCLAIMED NYMPH.

I BELIEVE SHE WAS GENUINELY EXCITED TO WELCOME ME EVERY TIME I'D COME WOBBLING THROUGH THAT DOOR. I WAS, AFTER ALL, THE ONLY PERSON SHE HAD TO INTERACT WITH.



WE WERE FREAKS: DRUG & BOOZE FILLED, LOST AND OUT OF CONTROL, TOGETHER IN A SICK SPIRAL OF UNITY THROUGH SELF

DESTRUCTION



SHE POUCHED ME
THE DRINKS BECAUSE
SHE WANTED ME
DRUNK AND SHE
KICKED ME
SHE CAUSED
SHE WANTED
HAPPY AND ME
ON THIS AND STUCK
LIMBO STATED OF
FOR EVER



IT TOOK ME ALMOST AN ENTIRE YEAR TO FIGURE IT OUT.

WE'D BE OUTSIDE IN PUBLIC AND THEN SUDDENLY SHE'D COLLAPSE TO THE GROUND, OR WE'D HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT ONE OF OUR FAVORITE AUTHORS AND SHE'D JUST FADE OFF FOR A COUPLE OF MINUTES SHE'D GO NUMB, DROP OUT. I'D LOSE HER MOMENTARILY UNTIL SHE FEEL BACK INTO PLACE. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, I FOUND MYSELF EMBA-RASSED IN FRONT OF FRIENDS, PICKING HER UP FROM THE GROUND TRYING TO SHELTER HER DEVILS.



OVER TIME I NO LONGER FELT LIKE THE BREADWINNING ALL-AMERICAN MAN COMING HOME TO HIS TROPHY WIFE AND INSTEAD STARTED TO FEEL LIKE A NURSE AT A DRUG CLINIC OR A DOG WALKER.



EVERY DAY ON MY WAY HOME FROM WORK I'D PICK HER UP AND DACK OF CIGARETTES...

...AND GRAB HER SOMETHING TO EAT, TYPICALLY CHEAP FOOD FROM A CHINESE RESTAURANT UP THE STREET CALLED "CHINESE RESTAURANT!"

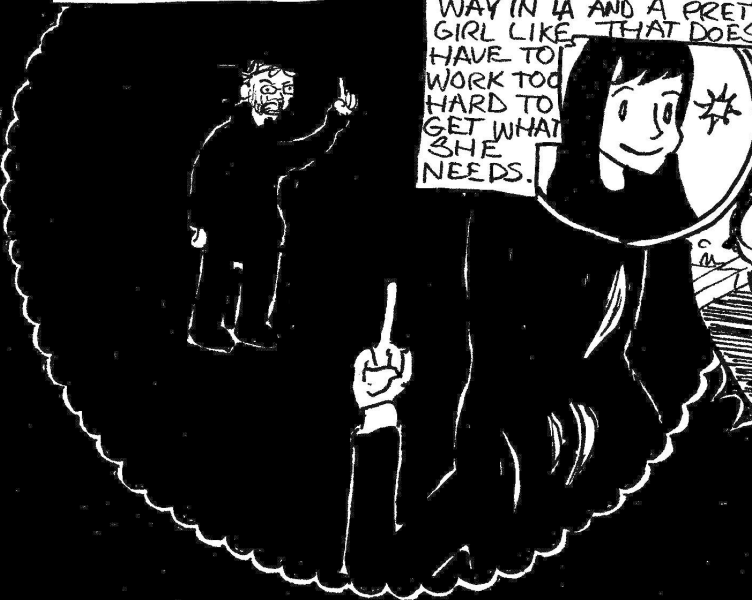


The only thing I wouldn't get for her was her medication.

THE CARS WOULD PULL UP IN FRONT OF THE APARTMENT AND SHE'D SLOWLY MAKE HER WAY DOWNSTAIRS...

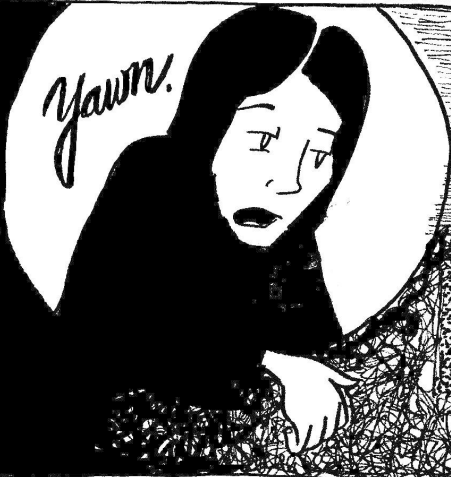
BUT LOOKS SO A LONG WAY IN YA AND A PRETTY GIRL LIKE THAT DOESN'T HAVE TO WORK TOO HARD TO GET WHAT SHE NEEDS.

SLIP THE MONEY THROUGH THE DRIVER'S WINDOW...



...AND CLIMB HER WAY BACK UP THE STAIRS TO OUR DISGUSTING CRAVING FINELY PACKAGED IN A LITTLE PLASTIC BAG OR BALLOON.

SHE ONLY LEFT THE HOUSE WHEN SHE HAD SOMETHING TO DO. SHE HAD NO FRIENDS



I'D TAKE HER OUT FOR WALKS

LET HER GET SUNLIGHT ONCE IN A WHILE

WHY WOULD SHE EVER LEAVE? I GOT EVERYTHING FOR HER, SHE HAD BECOME MY HOUSE CAT. **MY HOUSE CAT I FUCKED.**

I REALLY KNEW THAT I WAS UNHAPPY WHEN THE SEX BECAME UNAPPEALING SHE WAS SO SKINNY HER BONES HURT ME—HER HIP BONES WOULD JAB AND POKE MY WAIST AS I POUNDED AWAY AT HER FLESH. IT BECAME MORE OFTEN THAT MY MOUTH WOULD GO NUMB AND I'D HEAR HER REPEAT THE WORDS, "**ALMOST THERE**" AND "**Don't stop**" AS I TRIED TO EAT AN ORGASM OUT OF THE OPIUM IMPREGNATED BODY.



SOMETIMES I'D FIND MYSELF ON TOP OF HER FEELING LIKE I WAS HAVING SEX WITH A LIFELESS DOLL.

BUT THAT'S WHAT SHE WAS. MY BEAUTIFUL LITTLE LIFELESS SEX DOLL WHO LIVED IN MY ROOM AND SMOKED CIGARETTES AND SHOT JUNK. IT WASN'T PRETTY ANYMORE.

THE SHEETS BECAME RIDDLED WITH CIGARETTE BURNS. I'D COME IN SOME NIGHT AFTER A SHOW AND SHE'D BE LYING THERE PASSED OUT WITH A CIGARETTE IN HER HAND AND I THOUGHT SHE'D BURN DOWN THE HOUSE ONE DAY.



OPIATE ADDICTS GET INTENSE CRAVINGS FOR SUGAR. IT RAISES THE NATURAL ENDORPHIN LEVELS THAT YOUR BODY CRAVES WHEN COMING DOWN AND HELPS WITH WITHDRAWAL. JUST LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE, I DIDN'T MIND. SHE'D WAKE ME UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT AND LOOK AT ME WITH PUPPY DOG EYES AND SAY..

I NEEDED
CANDY

...AND I'D PUT ON MY PANTS AND WALK UP THE STREET TO BUY HER CHOCOLATE AND ORANGE SODA.



THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT GAS STATION ATTENDANT WOULD CHUCKLE EVERY TIME I WALKED IN. WE KNEW EACH OTHER BY NAME. WE HAD SO MANY DIALOGUES HERE AND THERE THAT WE GOT TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER IN A STRANGE KIND OF WAY.

BUT ONE NIGHT SHE STARTED RAMBLING ON TO ME ABOUT THE LIST OF CHOCOLATE BARS AND SUGARY TREATS SHE CRAVED, SHE NO LONGER LOOKED TO ME LIKE A CUTE WEIRD GIRLFRIEND WHO WANTED A LITTLE HELP FROM HER LOVER AND INSTEAD LOOKED TO ME LIKE A SMALL CHILD WHO WAS INCAPABLE OF TAKING CARE OF HERSELF AND NEEDED HER DADDY.

SO I TOLD HER TO

FUCK OFF!

AND WENT BACK TO SLEEP

I BEGAN FEELING LIKE HER ERRAND BOY. I HAD GIVEN HER A PLACE TO LIE AROUND AND GET STRUNG OUT AND I DELIVERED HER EVERY THING SHE NEEDED WHENEVER SHE ASKED...

...ALL SHE HAD TO DO WAS LAY THERE AND GIVE ME A COUPLE OF OCCASIONAL COMPLIMENTS.



I HAD BEEN PLAYED.
I WAS A SUCKER.
SHE WASN'T A GODDESS.

WAS A

SHE

DISEASE

AND SHE
KNEW IT AS
MUCH AS I DID.

I WASN'T
THE FIRST.

THIS WAS A
PATTERN.

A RITUAL.

A CYCLE.

AND SHE WAS PART OF MY
PATTERN TOO, CO-DEPENDANT
AND SELF DESTRUCTIVE.


THIS IS HOW SHE MANAGED
TO STAY OFF THE STREETS FOR
SO LONG, AND THIS IS HOW I'D
MANAGED TO REMAIN IN A
SERIES OF MONOGAMOUS RELA-
TIONSHIPS OVER THE YEARS.



BUT SHE WAS GOOD, REAL GOOD. A WICKED MIX OF CLEVER AND INTELLIGENT. SHE'D TALK ME OUT OF ANY BIT OF LOGIC I HAD TO USE AS LEVERAGE AGAINST OUR RELATIONSHIP BY USING REVERSE PSYCHOLOGY

AND MIND GAMES TO KEEP ME FROM LEAVING. AND I'D FALL FOR IT, LET THE CYCLE REPEAT, GIVE UP, AND GO ON ANOTHER DAY.

SHE'D TAP INTO MY PAST TRAUMAS AND PULL AT THE STRINGS OF MY MOMMY ISSUES.



WELL, I'M NOT GOING TO GET YOU.

YOU JUST WANT TO RUN AWAY BECAUSE YOU HAVE A FEAR OF BEING LOVED.

ONE NIGHT JUST LIKE ANY OTHER, I SAID **NO** - AND REALLY MEANT IT.

SHE THOUGHT I WAS BLUFFING LIKE ALL THE TIMES BEFORE AND TOLD ME TO

SLEEP IT OFF

THAT IT WOULDN'T FEEL THE SAME IN THE MORNING, THAT I WAS JUST DRUNK AND EMOTIONAL.

BUT WHEN THE FOLLOWING MORNING CAME, MY FEELINGS WERE THE SAME, DESPITE THE HANG-OVER AND MONTHS AND MONTHS OF GIVING UP AND GIVING IN.

SHE SPOUTED OFF AGAIN WITH HER OLD PARLOUR TRICKS.

... BUT THIS TIME I IGNORED HER AND STARTED TO PACK ALL HER THINGS.

SHE KEPT SAYING THINGS LIKE,

"YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO BE HAPPY. YOU JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO. BUT THAT'S WHY I'M HERE. I'M HERE TO HELP YOU."

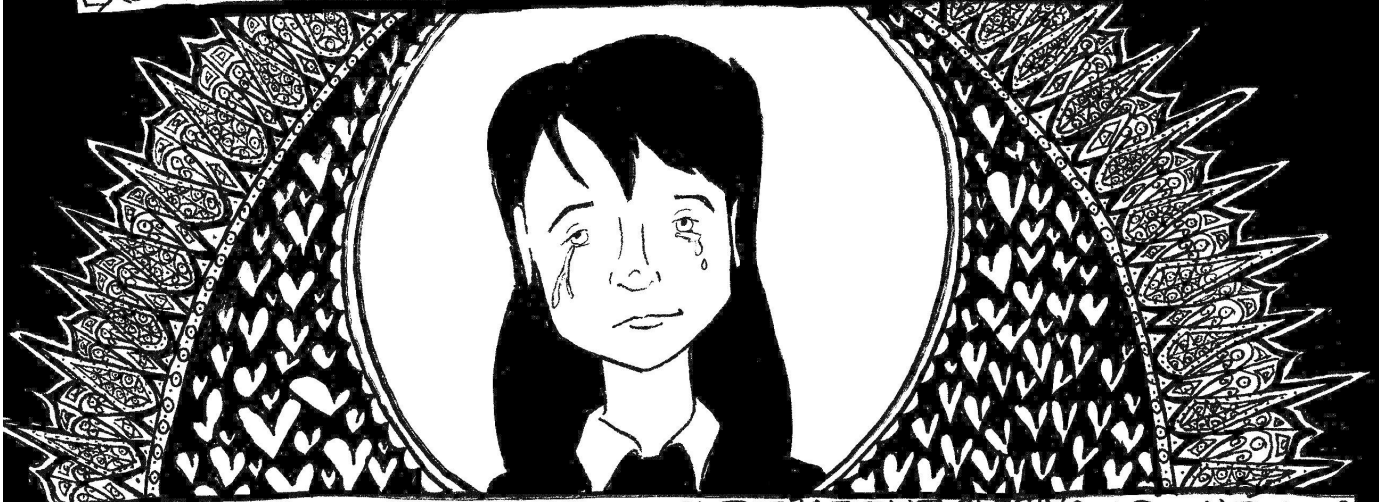
I TOOK ALL HER PRETTY THINGS AND STUFFED THEM INTO SUITCASES. ALL HER BOOKS, ALL HER CAT POWER AND SUEJAN STEVENS RECORDS, EVEN ALL THOSE LITTLE BOY UNDERWEAR WITH THEIR SOFT GREYS AND BLUES.







I STILL REMEMBER THAT GORGEOUS, PALE WHITE FACE, AND THE LOOK ON IT AS I CLOSED THE DOOR SHUT ON HER. THERE WAS THIS GENTLE CALM. IN WHICH WORDS DO NOT BELONG. AND THE ARGUMENT STOPPED. AND THE FRUSTRATION FROM OUR FACES FELL OFF, AND WE EXCHANGED ONE LAST TIRED SMILE WITH ONE ANOTHER.



WE BOTH REALIZED IN THAT MOMENT THAT THE CLOSING OF THAT LITTLE APARTMENT DOOR, THERE ON THE WEST SIDE OF LOS ANGELES, WAS THE SINGLE GREATEST ACT OF LOVE WE HAD EVER SHARED WITH EACH OTHER. IN LEAVING, WE HAD PUT AN END TO THE KILLING OF ONE ANOTHER WE HAD ALLOWED TO GO ON SO LONG.



I LOCKED THE DEAD-BOLT AND NEVER SAW HER AGAIN.

THE END.