

Go On, Go There.

By,

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Genre:

Psychological Literature

It started last year in the fall. I had been experiencing sharp abdominal pains of increasing intensity. My bowels still functioned, but in a detached fashion, as if they weren't concerned with the sensations they inflicted on the rest of the body. I continued on my daily regimen. In the morning I ran a few miles, ate some toast (usually followed by various 'medicines'), and then I might enjoy a beer or two. I was mainly functioning below my own level of awareness. I made travel arrangements with my mother. I broke up with my girlfriend. I was broke and felt lucky to find half of a cigarette in an ashtray.

When I got fired from my job I began to worry about money. I spent a lot of time worrying about money. It distracted me in my conversations. It was rumored that I never trusted Germans, but now it was circulated that I thought Austrians were sound. I was distracted. My friends struck me as foreign, and sometimes I imagined their entrails. Ideas began to formulate around the same time I started noticing the hairs.

I'm blonde but I've always had a black hair growing out of my shoulder. I say I'm blonde not out of vanity's sake but just to draw attention to the discrepancy between the two colors. The hairs on my chest are light brown. I find the blonde hairs disgustingly bland. Maybe it was my inherent aversion, my love for the dark hair, that provoked-well the point is, I would never debase myself by insinuating that it was a conscious decision on my part, but let's just say I wasn't unhappy about the long dark

hairs that began to grow around my shoulders and on the front of my thighs.

From then on I started dressing in long sleeves. I ignored Roman who cowered when I entered the room and began to relieve himself in a manner not fit for a domesticated animal.

I was to meet Nadia at six. Driving to meet her I imagined her scent. It was an irritating pleasure. I had noticed it the first time we were intimate. It was at her job at the nursing home. She was cleaning the rooms alone except for the occasional orderly and the head nurse that was stationed at the counter. I followed her into a recently vacated room, freshly wall papered. Our movements coincided towards the bed, but it was her that grabbed my belt buckle, pulling me on top of her as she fell backwards onto the bed. Eying her suspiciously, I spit out the breath mint I was choking on. I fought for control, as my senses were filled with her. I looked for a distraction and noticed the almost imperceptible flakes of skin dotting the mattress cover. There were straight gray hairs on the pillowcase. I flipped her over and stayed as far away as possible. I shoved her face into the pillow. It was her hot sweat, mixed with the smell of decay that was causing me problems.

I wiped the saliva from my mouth, annoyed by this new distraction. There was something pressing me and these distractions were not worthy, or rather to say, they had no way of being incorporated into whatever seemed to be brewing. It was

intangible, but it was hard to relax. Headlights flashed behind in the rearview mirror and these ideas were startled into submission. I was near drooling.

The Waffle House seems small. Nadia's car isn't in the lot. My abdomen is hurting. It's hurt a lot lately. It's hard for me to drink. I try not to drink liquor. I've seen some bloody, fleshy looking debris in the toilet and wondered from what part of me it originated. I walk across the street and throw back a couple of shots at the local bar chasing them down with some soda and a breath mint.

Certain things were worrying me lately. Well there's my landlady, just for an example. I know I have some problems; but when I pay my rent on time I expect certain reciprocation. It is natural to raise an eyebrow or even salivate a little when appraising someone's posterior, but when that person alludes to some possible (unforeseeable?) discretion on my part, well, that's where I draw the line.

This was around the time I started noticing some more significant changes. I had begun to smell meat. Like with my landlady, I always found her attractive, but I was never conscious of her smell, or the faint beating of her heart for that matter. I was continuing to grow hair. Certain things were worrying me. I stare across the bar at the bartender's perspiring tits and don't leave a tip.

I got home relatively early but I was worried about how I might feel when I woke up. I looked through my mail. A bank statement, collection agency notices, *What is post abortion stress?*, nothing very interesting. I popped in a video of Nadia. The screen flashed 7:30 AM. That would be yesterday morning. She was looking for her shoes. That was sort of a ritual for her. At night she flung them off with abandon. Her innocence was attractive to me. It was something I constructed myself. These videos helped. When she was alone she was totally helpless. I'm not very technologically intuitive, but with these cameras I did my homework. That's not to say I'm not intelligent. I can't say that.

I couldn't sleep so I went to Anna's. She lived uptown with her 'husband' Tomaso. The train was running on time and I briefly contemplated my good fortune. Tomaso was Italian. When he was relaxing he wore one of those flashlights you could strap to your forehead. He was an artist. He did metal sculpture. He was always prepared to sculpt, even in the dark I suppose. The first night I had been at their place he'd gotten a shard of metal lodged in his eye. He was afraid to go to the hospital because he thought he might get deported. I remember him with his face pressed against the mirror trying to dislodge it with a sewing needle and not having much success. He was cursing because his own light was blinding him.

We played Twister. I figured I would enjoy the game because I was quite good at it. I was flexible. My face was close to Anna's ass and I remembered the time I woke up with her tongue in my mouth. It was shameful. I was unresponsive. It was a missed opportunity and it wore on me like many other things. My mood was fading. Tomaso was trying to give me his leather jacket. Anna wanted to show me something on her computer. She designed scenery for stage productions. She was Swiss but spoke mostly Italian. Finally I was tired. I sat on the couch. Nadia came in and people started drinking and taking pictures.

There was a time when my dreams were pretty heavy. It was hard to tell they were dreams. It hadn't happened lately. On this night I dreamt about my father. My father is a nice man in the most complete sense, a real and good person. Given my own sense of self, I had some questions about what he was really about. I mean only in my worst moments. Well, in this particular dream I was naked and looking a little less manly than I usually felt. I'm inclined to spare the description. The gist of it was that I was there naked and my dad was standing there with a telephone pole in his hands. He was beating me into the ground like a nail. I was trying to stay as straight as possible with my hands clasped to my sides. There was no pain, but my bones shivered in an unpleasant way. He cursed me, but not my mother, who was standing by shaking her head disapprovingly.

When I woke up I was having problems. There were sharp pains in my abdomen and one side of my stomach seemed to be bigger than the other. I had an appointment for a CT scan but I couldn't remember for when it was. No one seemed to be home. There was a note that said, "Out to breakfast, tried to get you up." I went to the bathroom and considered my options. I looked in the mirror. Twenty minutes later I came out. I did some push-ups. I tried to ignore that my eyebrows had grown together and seemed quite a bit thicker.

I looked through my pockets but couldn't find anything documenting my recent assessment at the urgent care center. I'd never been one to shirk away from pain. The only thing that bothered me was that I'd always heard that there weren't very many nerves down there in the abdominal area. My guts hurt on the inside. There was the occasional sharp pain, but it was more like something festering. It itched. It felt like there was that something that needed to be scraped away. I'm well aware of the current trend associating the mind and body inseparably. It didn't comfort me.

I did a little shopping. I had to think. I yawned and felt a pain in my chest. I was walking in the direction of Woodhull hospital. I'd been there a couple times before.

An Indian shopkeeper stared at me through the window. At the store on my block I'd almost made friends with the clerk. He was Indian as well. I came in every day and he'd always asked me

something or had some bit of news. It was a pure relationship in a sense. There was nothing to gain or lose. He seemed amused by how much I drank and he always asked about my girlfriend. He looked about thirty. His pinky nail was grown out like he did cocaine, but I had my doubts. I didn't see him for a while and a larger man who spoke a little less replaced him. As a joke, my girlfriend and me asked about the first man, who also had worked at their sister store, a little closer to the train station. The two clerks kind of looked at each other and smiled. They smiled a little bit.

"He killed himself."

"Why?"

"I guess he didn't like to be alive anymore."

It seemed ridiculous to me that they would understand his emotions. I was devastated. I sat on the stoop with my girlfriend and cried, shivering. We had planned to buy some groceries and make dinner, but decided not to. I couldn't put my finger on what he'd wanted. It was distracting.

I stepped into the Greenpoint Tavern. I couldn't go to the hospital. The bar was dark. Goiter man was here. His goiter was slick with grease from the fish he always brought in with him. I dreaded when he would come over with his ridiculous ideas, spewing fish and spitting out bones.

There was a lot still on my mind. There was Nadia, and there was the landlady as well. She was still young. I began taking

laxatives. Six to twelve hours; that concerned me as well. The suppositories were effective after fifteen minutes. I didn't feel that was necessary. Shawn. She came by twice this month. She told me my apartment stunk. I was aware of it myself. I knew it was something in the apartment. Years ago when I was still in school, well, on break actually, my cat had crawled up and got stuck in the broken sewer pipe we had in the basement. Up until then we had been incinerating the 'refuse' ourselves, with a propane torch. When we got back there was a horrendous smell. It wasn't so much that the cat was dead as that it had been wet for almost three weeks. Our landlord charged us \$14,000 each for the plumbing. Anyways, this smell was different. Shawn had twitched her nose coming in, grunting. When my eyes moved up to her face, she lowered her eyes. The next time I saw her she mentioned she'd bought some cleaning products for the tenants to use 'communally.'

I would be here permanently I supposed. That's what I had always thought. My skin looked grey even in the sunlight.

My first kill was premeditated and brutal. It was the one thing I told myself I could never live with. I had thought it through on many occasions. I knew I could never come back. When I was down on my knees I'd always thanked God that I'd never had that stain on my soul. Even during one of my 'episodes', I seemed to be under his protection. I could imagine myself on the edge of

the precipice, poised, thankfully powerless, as my limbs froze, shuddering, unable to throw myself down.

In the blood stained mirror I was unrecognizable. My soul slipped away painfully dripping red down my forearms. I appraised my reflection, staring myself down like a discarded lover. I smiled licking my fingertips and then spit out the blood in disgust.

I remembered back to the monastery. This was in Italy. Rheinhard had woken me up for adoration at 2:00 AM. He was an old criminal. He was German besides that. Well, he had a German name at least. He was reformed in the sense that he wouldn't kill you. The first night I'd said,

"Laciamе stare, porco miserio." Leave me alone." Sleep was my only solace.

I'd caught hell the next day. All the logs I split I had to carry up myself. From then on when he woke me up I went into the chapel. I found a comfortable position on my knees and fell asleep for an hour. I read some Italian prayer books and found them appropriate to my needs. We talked a little bit in the middle of the night. In the background we could hear the bass from the clubs down in Torino, a city that was said to be part of the 'triangle of evil'. I didn't know what the other two cities were. He told me I should pray for my enemies; anyone I hated. A few people came to mind. I found myself able to sympathize. After all, look at myself.

I left the body where it was and crept to the bathroom already feeling less human. I was still constipated and my eyes began to tear up. Last week I'd watched a documentary on the Red Army during WWII. It was called "Blood in the Snow." Stalin had said that any Red Army soldier caught retreating would be killed as well as his family. I'd already known that, but it came to mind as I examined the porcelain tiles on the floor. I wanted to call Nadia but it didn't seem right. I had claws now. It was frustrating. I knew she wouldn't understand. I tried to think of something positive. I decided I would take my clothes home and wash them. Maybe I could take them to Anna's. I didn't want to go home. Not yet anyway. I had lost my confidence, but I was concerned about when it might come back.

They had discipline there at the monastery. There were lots of rules. There was discipline. That was what I lacked. That was why I was changing. I didn't want to pray. I wanted to be made to pray. My eyes had turned yellow. It was close now. My heart swelled. I once had cause. I once had strength. I cursed my selfishness. Cracks formed around my nails. My knuckles began to distend. There was a rusty taste in my mouth. I spit it out, smiling. Nadia finally drove up, smiling as well.