



I WAS A TEENAGE SCAVENGER

I'm too nose. I always want to know what I shouldn't want to know.

Always want to ask the flavor of his cum or the number of freckles; how it made you feel to cheat on your girlfriend with her best friend, if it felt any better to fuck a stranger in your parents bed rather than someone you loved. I want to know if you prefer to sleep with your head on his belly or with your nose close to his armpit. I want to know when it started— when did you know you couldn't go the night without hearing her laughter?

Arnold Schwarzenegger predicted that he would come to America, marry a Kennedy, and hold office. Do you dream big too? Did you know that when you watched him lead your best friend up the stairs that years later it'd be your turn? I have dreams all the time, but you know what they say— always deferred and never the bride. I'm the raisin in the sun, hardening and waiting. I like to watch, dirty voyeur, nose to key hole— I'm too nose. I want to know what I can't have— does he stutter or hiccup before he says your name; is it more of sob or a plea bargain?

Sometimes I wish we didn't have possessions. No hers or his or mine. It'd make falling in and out of love easier if you didn't think of yourself as a belonging or of belonging to someone, with someone. It'd be easier to share and to let it go. You're not mine, you belong to the universe in which you were born; you belong to millions of atoms I cannot see, and you are loved by so much— not just me.

It'd be easier to accept betrayal, I think. Instead of thinking of it as a cheating, instead of blaming your friend, you can just think of it as a communal process of living. You must give back the dead to the Earth, as it is the way of things. If your love dies inside of you, stillborn romance, it is a grotesque weight to carry around.



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You can remember how yesterday you were radiant with life and today, you're ashen. You'll go through the labor of things, as it is the way, and then return the ill-fated romance to the Earth. I knew a girl, once, who tried to carry a sad, dead thing to full term. Her skin turned green and maggots festered in her heart; her bed became a grave and there wasn't a priest on this Earth that could lay hands on her.

A long time ago griffon eagles devoured the corpse of a hiker within the hour of her fatal fall. It was very sad. It couldn't be prevented, no, not really, but perhaps we could have slowed it down. The Griffon Eagles are starved of their primary source of food, the carcasses of cattle, because we, humans, possess the dead. We own it and it isn't the way of things. We burn the bodies and never ask if they want a burial or cremation or to be food for scavengers.

Who gave us the right? So I'm saying.

We must return the dead to the Earth. It is the natural order of things.

We must give it back and surrender ourselves to the flow of the world. We must let go. Palms at heart center. We must let our dead hearts go. If it makes you ache, itch, burn inside to watch him move on, to watch her love someone else— return it to the Earth. Let her fall, let her rest and let the vultures have her.

If you're lucky, they'll be so starved and leave nothing but a pile of clothes, bones, and happy memories of when you were in love.