

Tendencies

by Jennifer Donnell

Did he do it now? What about now? What about tomorrow, next week, twenty years from now. Will he warn me, leave a note, get better, never get better. Will the threat of it come when I'm happy or miserable, to spite me or in spite of me. Will it be something I said, as I trade him coffee for a kiss, a casual comment about the neighbors not asking for his help, when they move in their grand piano. Will he think they hate him. Will I argue that they don't or just hold him against me. Will he decide he has no value or meaning, that we're all better off without him. Will I say the right thing. Will he stop to think or think too much. As proof, will he decide the neighbors know the perfect person he isn't. Will he decide life is worth fighting for or that it's a fight that doesn't matter anymore. Will I stop asking him?

But I will talk love, I bet I'll talk 'love'. So much love. I will describe his perfection, the God given goodness he can't escape. I'll caress his body, soft and long, and he'll enjoy what he can, despite the mood eating up his appetite for me. Will it be enough. Will I start sleeping on the couch as he cries himself to sleep. Will he take another lover or will I. Will he find out. Will that be his why?

Will he do it with a gun? If it's a gun, will it be a short one, shaved so he can hold it against his head. Will it look like the photograph he showed me, black and brown. I told him he couldn't possibly buy something like that from a Walmart.

Or a cliff, like the ones he drives to. Will he drive and decide to stay, one day. Will he think of how I forgot to kiss him goodbye that morning, rushing out the door, or how I hung up the phone, or about his mother or his father, or the nameless who brought pain.

Will it stop or is it starting. Will he love me when berries have no flavor and joy isn't an attainable reward. Will he sleep tonight. Will I sleep tonight.

