

EMDR

by Adam Strong

She called it EMDR, which stands for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. Basically, it means training a part of your brain to longer associate trauma with a specific side of the brain. This meant that she had to direct all traffic of the repressed memory to a new side of the brain by moving her hand from top right to bottom left.

“Pay attention to that breathing, now relax,” She said. “What do you feel underneath your skin?”

“A model railroad set with a blanket thrown or it.” I said “Or maggots in my veins, take your pick.”

At this point the muscles in my stomach were hardening into a moonshine belly. Cold detachment, like I'm giving blood, or watching Laurie destroy my whole self worth and ego. That's what Curtis said, me watching her watching him, gave me that stripped away paint thinner feeling.

I remember helping Cliff paint the garage, at his family's place in Florida. Cliff wiped his walrus eyes, his eyelids, rounded and perfectly circular, like the way the pupil and the iris come together in a macaw. His smile cracked open to a full smile at the end of the day when we finished the job. The sweat from the tropics mixed in with the paint thinner we used.

In the therapist's office, I felt like I did that day with Cliff mixed with that time I gave plasma. When I sat in a blown out car seat, the upholstery all shot to hell, with the feeling the white blood cells getting pumped out of my body, and I made and unmade a fist around a wad of what might have been Play-Doh while saline ran right through my veins.

Sitting on an empty plane on Thanksgiving. Nothing more alienating than being alone on Thanksgiving. The stewardesses feel sorry for me with their I-just-swallowed-a-coat-hanger smiles. I put on a happy face and didn't dare drink a thing. Waking up after a huge bender and Dad his girlfriend told me about last night's performance. They told me what I did, and it's a bad dream I can't get away from, performed by a sleepwalking ghost.

A tale of total and complete loss of bodily functions in one of his guest rooms. And then I realize this isn't that bad, until the images came into my brain filled by the descriptions someone else is providing, intimate details of arcs and trajectories.

The therapist and her hands in the air, so it's not so much like painting, banishing the memory away, but more like she's in a street fight with knives. The therapist's wedding ring looks like its grafted onto her bone.

