

Sing Sorrow Sorrow

by Anne Lauppe-Dunbar

She watches him as she moves through the thickening crowd, tequila glasses slung, snug against her belly offering the possibility of more than just a shot.

She sees him fumbling with his trousers for the right change, shows him the smallest glimpse of her tight nipple through the coy slits in her dress. This is, after all, her hallowed ground.

The city crowd are twitchy from a day on padded seats; fast bucks number punching, and that elusive killer deal. Their laughter (initially inclusive) will soon turn derisive, laced with venom and a need for sex. Their eyes follow her as she makes her way through the crowd; she is their evening's wet dream. Lean closer, she smiles, smell my perfume let yourself be taken to a wild forest where owls grow and trees fly.

It is her eyes that demand attention; they sing of black fathomless places, a place for them to enter and push to a shuddering greedy bliss. She pauses, eyes drifting here and there, her mouth an endless painted smile - as endless as the Tequila bottle. She collects clean shot glasses from the bar, jokes with her colleagues as she places each one in their small holders on the outside of her leather belt. They know to laugh, to take care, to back away if she gets too near. They call her Tinker on account she is so vibrant and small, so perfectly formed, so electric to watch as she works the crowd, but her face can change from light to black; one moment she's there, the next she's the green moon or predatory night owl.

The city suits tremble with anticipation, they sidle; brushing so near she can feel their heat as she pours another shot, another layer on sour beer. They think of girlfriends waiting at home, legs spread, eyes shut. Mission. Position.

She could give them so much more.

The moment draws out slowly, blissfully, she pours - such anticipation is the best. He must be ripe for picking, soft fruit ready to drop.

Caught in her headlights. A rocking hard on. A willing sale.

She will take him because of the empty space in her birdcage. Deep in the catacombs under the city floor she has been busy; the wide rounded arches holding cage after cage of swaying death. Only small pieces, she has no need of the rest.

Tinker works the crowd waiting to catch his eye, to gently remind him that he, for tonight, is the chosen one - the lucky one. He quivers; big bones under loose skin.

She has everything so carefully prepared, so clinically laid out; from the razor knives snug in their tight plastic sheaths, to her big knives that will slice tendon from bone. They hum a silver tune, a metal thrum that soothes her when the waiting becomes long — *he will come, he will come*. Against her skin the tequila bottle answers in chorus with the murder song — *sorrow sorrow*.

The night is darkening; heavy with drink the herd are let loose, only one will be penned. Dazed he waits. The pack spew out into the sharp night. He wavers, but her smile is ready and she pours him a glass of a different mixture, a golden liquid that will calm him, and as he drinks, low in her belly, she feels a hot burst of wet delight.

He stands shaking his head like a dazed bull as she hangs up the leather holder; the glasses glint once, twice, then are hooded.

They leave through the back door. He reaches for her, clumsily unbuttoning his shirt - the promise of her small nipple making him twist with desire; pinpointing her as the only thing in his universe. She leads him down into her world, allows him to rub her tight nipples until they hurt, to push his penis hard against her tiny form as he grunts and pushes, pushes then sways, hands falling useless to his sides mumbling, dribbling and moaning as he tries vainly to hold on to what he desires so much. She is gentle with him, placing him tenderly on her special chair, straddling him as he groans eyes wide and frantic. She sings to him stroking his hair, his mouth and, as she touches his penis he tries to arch. His eyes now red with fear look up then sideways; his mouth offering up white muted moans — high above her he can see wicker bird cages on metal hooks swinging in

silence, rocking in the slow breeze; shadows spidering from one domed ceiling to the other. He moans once more then is silent.

The task begins. Her silver tools are awake and humming. She sees his eyes are still open and because he is brave, because he was once strong she kisses him gently, slipping her tongue deep between his slack lips, tasting beer and the remains of the drug he had so unwittingly taken. She notices, when she moves, she is so small that even standing full height to his sitting, her head is level with his. This makes her laugh with childlike delight. He watches her fill a clean syringe with pink liquid, tries to speak when she holds his arm to find a vein, but he can't, he can't even hold his head which now lolls against the chair sides. If he doesn't close his eyes now she will have to cut them out. She wonders if she should tell him, but decides no, she has so much to do that any interruption is best avoided.

She works fast, placing the now empty syringe next to her blades, collecting the black, red, and yellow buckets from their resting place across the room. She croons to him singing *sorrow sorrow*, and as he watches her eyes frantic and white, closing them as his bladder empties - a long wet gush that spills, stinking, dripping onto the floor. She laughs again turning to pick up an old white towel, dropping it on the new thick plastic sheets around his chair, mopping the liquid with quiet efficiency. Then wringing the towel's yellowed water into the first bucket, she leans against the counter to look at him.

He is so beautiful, pale pink skin, unblemished, young. She feels a tug in her belly a long- ago memory of motherhood perhaps? Too long and too distant, but then he opens his eyes again (she notes admiringly he is still able to see) so she takes the smallest knife, the baby of the family, a fragile blade, delicate almost see-through, pulls back his head using the thickness of his hair to hold him just so, then straps the belt across his neck holding everything in place. She slices, delicately at first, though the eyelid until she feels the connection gently break, lifting carefully pulling out one weeping eye then the other. Each white peeping tom she places in the yellow bucket, along with his urine.

Then she begins her real work, her natural calling, choosing a slice of his back - she hasn't seen such a clean sheet of skin in years so she strokes it with gentle fingers moving the fine hair one way and then the other before she cuts.

His last breath gasps out as she severs the right arm, more likely a heat attack than the drugs she gave him and she pauses, wishes him a fair journey, telling him kindly that a part of him will always be here, in the birdcage that he will fill.

She has to tidy away all the waste starting with his arms, slicing through skin, bone and marrow. She has her knives sharpened after each cage is filled by the one who has always served her, making sure she stays safe, whispering to her *it is time*, when a new hunting ground must be found — as it is now.

As the night moves on she slices until she is blood red and all that remain are three full containers. These she carries, with a little difficulty, to where she found the well, a dark endless hole that eats their contents without a sound, these are then transported further away far below by her helper - to a place no one knows. She tips each bucket noting the thump and splash, then builds a fire in the huge hearth burning plastic along with all her clothes and the chair; she has no more need of it. Finally Tinker showers, washing away his blood with a glad heart, her fingers touching deep inside her as she whispers out a gentle moan.

The skin she crafted is now ready and dried by the fire. She strokes it then, lowering the last empty bird cage, places the final small square inside. As she pulls the rope to re-hang the cage she sings to all her skin birds, her darlings, her children, *sorrow sorrow* little ones, sing sorrow sorrow.

