

continuously uncomfortable

by Anthony M. Powers

She didn't knock.

I was lying on the couch—where I'd been all day.

I could smell whiskey on her breath from across the room.

It was around 6 o'clock.

First she sat down next to me, but I told her no one else was home,

And then she was straddling me.

Her mouth was on top of mine

but she tasted like liquor and pot

and I couldn't stand it very long.

Then after a little while she stopped

and we sat there,

and she was staring at me

and I was staring but not looking at her

because I was busy nursing old wounds.

But she just kept staring.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

And she kept asking,

but every time she got the same answer.

I didn't want to talk.

I never did.

All I wanted was to lie there in silence and watch cartoons,

but she kept kissing and stopping and asking.

I didn't have an answer

Or maybe I just didn't have the heart to tell her.

And she kept smiling down at me,

and I kept trying to smile back
but couldn't.
I thought about a song that I'd been listening to on repeat all day,
and it almost made me cry
because I could feel myself slipping back into my old ways again
and it always hurt like hell.
Then she wanted to go to bed so we did
and sleep never came
and the next day would be just as bad
and I was stuck in my head
and she was gone before I pretended to wake up
and everything would feel like it did the day before
and the day before that.
It was Saturday and she called me to come over to a friend's
house
and there was nothing on T.V.
but I didn't answer and sat on the porch with my roommates,
chain-smoking.
People kept stopping and sitting and talking and talking and
fucking talking
but never to me
and I just wanted them all to shut up for once, but I knew they
never would
because no one ever does.
And I wanted to call her and tell her everything
but I knew she wouldn't understand
because they never understand.
Never.
A wasp landed on my arm
and I burned his stinger off with the end of my cigarette.
Today was just like yesterday and the day before that.
Some days I just can't smile.
Most days, I guess.

