

Milkshake And Fries

by Bobbi Lurie

"Dementia," I say, "don't put your fingers in the milkshake." I only call her Dementia cause she doesn't answer to "Ma" anymore.

I'm a good daughter. I take her to lunch every Wednesday. I sign her out of The Home. I hate watching her try to eat. I'm sick of her not speaking.

I text Dexter: *u don't luv me*

LOL, he texts back.

Dexter is a demon. He called me *an over-accessorized hot spot* yesterday evening and FYI: he didn't even kiss me. I slammed the door and left my own apartment. I slept in my car. I wanted him to know how much I suffer for him.

U r all whim was his text.

Stiff back from not sleeping, hacking cough from too much grass, I pick up Dementia on schedule, regardless of circumstance.

Dementia, I say to my mother, *Dexter just texted me. I think he's gonna split.*

Dementia answered, *86, 86, 86.*

Isn't 86 what you say when somethin's gone? I pulled the waiter's arm and whispered in his ear. *What the fuck*, he said, under his breath, looking like a little kid. I pulled him harder and screamed in his ear. *Yes*, he finally said, pulling away like every creep guy I ever met.

I ordered me and Dementia vanilla milkshakes and a plate of French fries. The kid jotted it all down in his memory bank and fled. He plopped down the mess, without a word, five minutes later.

Dementia was putting fries in her milkshake, licking her fingers, dropping the milkshake-stained fries all over the place, including her face, dress, lap. She needed a bib. I was sick to my stomach, watching my once-beautiful mother.

*Mommy...*that word came out again.

86, 86 86, she kept repeating, licking her fingers, scratching her ass.

86, I texted Dexter.

The phone beeped back: *LOL*

FYI, I texted back, *F U*.

Some chick cleared the mess. The kid stayed out of sight.

Dementia got up and started wandering, tasting food from the plates of strangers.

I took Dementia back to The Home, hugging her, without a hug in return, just like real life. She didn't even turn around when the orderlies buzzed her in.

You're all I have, Mommy, I said to myself.

Then I went back to texting Dext.

