

Things I Should Have Done

- #2

by Cherise Wolas

I do not trust Shay anymore. We were about to cast off in her skiff when two merchant marines showed up on the pier. Flirtatious as always, Shay beckoned them with a big smile, her bikini top two sizes too small. They walked over fast. I wanted dry land, to be on the pier, walking away. In the boat, Mario sat next to Shay and Luigi next to me. Six months at sea, they were newly on leave, set loose in Marina Del Rey. They were Italian and young, but at least a decade older than us. I knew I should leave. Truly, I wanted to leave, but could not bear being seen as unsophisticated and unadventurous. Until the early evening, I was pleased I had stayed. But then it was night, and there was a motel room key, and a second-floor motel room door, and a dingy room with two queen beds covered in rusty bedspreads. Overlooking the marina's tar road, water and boats in the distance, sat a battered table seared with burn marks, tattered magazines under a cheap glass ashtray that read *Jolly Roger Motel: The Place For Fun*. The darkness inside scared me. I sat down on the chair at the scarred table. Shay fell onto Mario, the two wildly kissing on the bed closest to me. Mario hoisted Shay's enormous tanned breasts out of her small sundress, and up into the moonlight. Her fat brown nipples were wet and glistening, erect from Mario's tongue. Shay's hands snuck down his pants. His pants pooled around his pale and hairy ankles and I started to turn away, truly, but Mario's quick movement, flipping onto his back, kept me fixated, horribly, for a long time, his penis, uncut — I knew the difference — standing upright and swollen. Shay's hand descended, gripped, slowly started to twist. I heard Mario groan. Luigi sat on the other bed, watching me watching them, then licked his lips and gestured for me to join him. I turned away and stared out into the moonlit night. Luigi sighed, then cursed me in Italian, rapid, angry, muffled.

I knew what he meant. When the room grew electric with Shay's groans, I turned back. Shay's mouth, a perfect round wet O, sealed itself onto the tip of Mario, the aural puckering intensely loud in the silence. Her mouth went down, then up and off, the sound like a plastic lid ripped off a sweaty container. Then she started all over again. I left the room and sat outside on the motel stairs and wished: that I was girl who smoked, that I could call home, that I was brave like Shay. When I can't sleep I think about the sparkling water, laughing and flirting with Luigi, kissing him in the skiff. Luigi didn't touch me, didn't grapple me prone onto that second queen bed, didn't force me, did not take a single step towards me, while I sat fixed in that chair at that window. He must have felt cheated and misled, cock-teased, considering the way the afternoon began and how the evening played out. When I can't sleep, I think about the girl in *The Painted Bird*, raped with a Coke bottle in a sunny field, and wonder how I allowed myself to end up at the *Jolly Roger*. I am still a virgin, and that is okay with me. I never hang out alone with Shay anymore. Sometimes I think it's because I do not trust myself.

