

My Morning Song is Better than Yours

by Corey Zeller

We made a game out of telling each other stories and the only way to win the game was to end it by saying: ...*then you realized you were on another planet*. I like games like that. I just wish I could have been more clear about the shape of us reflected in the black of the TV that wasn't on. I just wanted you to know how slow everything moved in there. Like tar all over you. Like what you only kind of hear when you sleep outside.

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Bitch, they say, is a good word for the dog-red gums of the sky. I say *bitch* when there is some static in the air. We go whirling in it. And I just feel so bad like sinking my teeth into something really soft but hard enough to take it.

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I hear it most in the getting-up. My life talking on the other end of sleep. How it boils over into a slow mess in the window's sun. How the sun coming in here is coming in different than it would anywhere else in the world. Its bubbling up in front of me. Rising like I don't know what. And the worst of it being the *I don't know what* of it. Because I just really don't know.

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So you're driving and driving and driving. And it's a long road. And there's no one on it. And it's the middle of the night. And you're driving and driving and driving. And then, all of a sudden...

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And I just want to say that my morning song is better than yours. I want you to hear it buzzing in me like an old radiator. I want you to

do what you've done before. To press your ear against the skin and listen for the static.

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I go. Gone being accounted for. Because even as I sit here I am gone. But going is here. I see it across the room like a shadow I haven't made yet. One that stretches like *yet*. *Yet* like a mouth inside a mouth that runs its teeth against its teeth. I grind my teeth on their other set. Which means there must be a word behind my every word. Because a mouth with two sets of teeth must have two tongues.

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What I mean is that the closer you get the harder it is to see. And its so hard to see when you draw me near.

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I had a toy. He was an action figure with a red beard. I liked him so much that my mom bought me two of him. So how can I account for the fact that one of them is missing both his legs and the other is fine? Why is it I lost the one with legs but the one without is still in my dresser drawer?

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All quantification is justification. Just wait and see when it adds up.

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There was a picture of you and that picture hurt me more than anything can say. Even though the picture didn't do anything. It didn't move. It was just standing all in lipstick in an apartment but it hurt me. It hurt me because it was young. It hurt me because it had never even thought to think of me.

