

Sensation

by Darin Beasley

Marilyn sits down at the work table and her brother Brooks puts headphones over her ears.

He plays their conversation from the week before when they waited out the rain under an awning.

Now she remembered, as she heard their conversation, that Brooks had stood awfully close and couldn't keep still.

She heard herself say, "Why are you so jittery?"

"I'm not jittery," Brooks said. "It's raining cats and dogs. I'm trying to shield us."

"It's not raining that hard," she said.

The sound of a city bus going by and the shopkeepers in Chinatown talking high and fast.

Marilyn remembered feeling a movie ticket stub between her fingers and turning it over and over inside her pocket.

Their recorded conversation is edited into a thunderous sound that quiets down, a running water sound. And then it is Brooks or someone brushing their teeth and that sound goes inside a radio station's music. Lots of static and a Viennese melody, a waltz and the announcer telling you the name of the station, replaced by a heartbeat.

The heartbeat changes. She hears other heartbeats answer. She wonders how many heartbeats she hears.

Not long ago Brooks had recorded her heartbeat, had asked her to lie on his old-lady green sofa with the thin, lighter flower pattern that made petals and branches of silk. He handed her a funny-looking microphone that was the size of a sticky dot for research papers, a red dot of a microphone, and she worked it up her sweater after Brooks told her the sweater must not block the sound of her heart.

Which one was her heart? Which ones were his friends, her friends? Had Brooks recorded his signature on life? Or would someone concerned with sound and response and existing in a world that creates multitudes of sound, would someone like Brooks stop his exploration and splice his heart in with the others?

Marilyn had not come to his house to listen to sound. She had come to pick up her car that Brooks let her keep in his garage. She sat at his work table. Brooks stood off to the side, pinching his thumb and forefinger together, then tapping his foot. She could see him doing these things but she could not hear him. She took out her iPhone and started filming him. He looked at her. He craned his neck and looked at the ceiling.



Marilyn walks down a street. She has been down this street before. She has a Tic-Tac in her mouth, in fact she has two of the sweet mints on her tongue and she is rolling them around and they click against her teeth. Goldie is asleep in his flat and she is going over to wake him up.

She is going to push toothpaste into his mouth and kiss him. The toothpaste is not as white as his teeth that are white and jumbled. Goldie is hard like a man, and Marilyn has seen her share of men.

Her mother, Janet, has tried with men. A handful of husbands and they had their good and bad points. Some of them were clean and some of them were dirty. They did not live in white houses.

Marilyn enters the code at Goldie's gate and the gate buzzes and opens. She likes dirty.

Marilyn is not much interested in love. She is caught up with experience. Right now her feet in her sandals have dirt between the toes and she could have washed her hair but she did not, she piled it up and over and went outside.

