

This is Not an Indie Movie

by Emily Smith-Miller

He is not going to be standing there with a bouquet of hand picked sunflowers, their bumblebee yellow black symbolizing a new day of warmth. He didn't ride to your house on a bike he stole from a little girl in the neighborhood, in an act of careless passion, to rush over and tell you he loved you with a boombox blaring 'your song' outside your window. He will not try to win you back. She will wake up one day and realize she's started wearing all black no matter what, that she smoked meth just because she didn't have anything left to lose and there was no one to save her from herself. Blame, guilt, the unmade bed she keeps. Clothes and plates, a bag of used prophylactics sitting on her dresser, from who knows who. The cat and the dog. They look at her differently now, no trust, just that dismissive sadness. This is not an indie movie about love and happiness and Al Green songs redone by actresses pretending to be songwriters. This is a documentary of destruction, as she falls through the looking glass she's been smoking pieces of. She has enough empty cigarette packs to build a life raft, but no destination to sail to. Every time the phone rings her heart sinks a few centimeters, the last time she answered they told her she was no longer allowed to live in her dingy duplex, it was still decorated like Halloween in January. Even the cops made a comment on the handmade noose hanging from the ceiling. Her roommate had to throw away the Exacto blade and hide the sharp knives, there were too many blood stains on the carpet already and neither of them could afford another hospital bill after the last one. Money only meant one thing, getting high, medical care and food were super secondary. She only drank the broth from Ramen bowls, the noodles made her sick and ruined her high. There were about a half dozen bowls of dried, brothless noodles sitting around the house collecting insects. Maybe it was waking up on the kitchen floor, in her own vomit, watching the maggots crawl through the soupy green bile sludge, that prompted her to turn on the radio. Maybe it was

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noticing that the window screen had been kicked out the night before and she didn't remember how. But there was the song. Like most songs it flowed and melodically ebbed cadence, it was speaking in folksy rhyme while she wiped her face clean in the sink. It was the song that made her answer the phone. It was the phone that made her take a shower. It was the shower that allowed her to leave the house, and it was leaving the house that led her to the park. On a bench under a particularly ashen tree sat a boy, who had not brought her flowers or played her song. This boy did not say he loved her, he shuffled his feet in the moist mulch, he looked at those feet and not at her sunken eyes.

"Why are you doing this?" he asked.

"Because this is not an indie movie, and I don't think it's going to end with a happy song."

