

Brian Wilson Says

by Fred Osuna

I. I'm dreaming in over-saturated colors again. The man with the microphone asks me to quickly name all of the songs on the Monkees' second album. I pause, mouth agape, and finally blurt "Your Auntie Grizelda," then am interrupted by the buzzer. The audience groans. I roll over, slam my hand on the alarm clock and try to open my eyes.

II. There is only one other person in the pool, in the adjacent lane. I stop to adjust my goggles and notice his waterproof ear buds. "What kind of radio've you got in there," I ask him, "Music or talk?" "First draft of a sermon," sayeth he.

III. The body pump instructor here is excitedly screaming "Over! Over! Over!" to a disco beat. His class, four women lined up directly in front of him and one man older than me keeping his own time in the back of the room, do their best to keep up. Meanwhile, just through the wall, sweaty men in the weight room pant and grunt in syncopation.

IV. From the piano, I can see her standing motionless in front of the pantry. What's with all these dry goods, she must be thinking. No rice again, no rice again, I tap out on the keyboard. I watch her slide the canister of basmati behind two boxes of instant oatmeal. She is craving fruit and digs deeper into the shelves for a tin of Del Monte cocktail, but finds only a can of beans.

V. After the midday storm, I venture out in my bathrobe to clear the yard of limbs. My house shoes sploosh and gasp in the mud, a wheezy sponge where there used to be a firm lawn. The first new drops begin to fall, tapping my shoulder. I leave the job undone and go inside.

VI. I roam the house, turning out lights, looking for the source of the noise. Venturing onto the portico, I spy the neighbors, barefoot on their back deck, dancing in the rain, kissing. The portable CD player is nestled safe and dry beneath the eaves. It is midnight.

