

A Life of My Own - 6

by J. Mykell Collinz

Patrick expands my world. I go places with him I could never go alone. He's older. I'm sixteen, a developing young woman. He's twenty something, a grown man. Plus, he's big and he's mean looking. People take notice of him and, when they see us together, it makes them wonder. They don't know he's my tutor's teaching assistant. And he takes his job seriously.

We leave the car in a suburban shopping mall parking lot and stand in line to catch an express bus to downtown Detroit. We're heading to a spontaneous, unofficial rally in support of Occupy Wall Street.

As we board the bus, Patrick places his arm protectively around me, saying:

"What if the brain isn't the seat of consciousness? It's a receptor organ, responding to universal consciousness. The brain's functionality allows this spiritual entity to assume material form, to animate the world. But we've become captivated by our own individuality. And we've lost our awareness of the connection with universal consciousness, which is our true connection to one another."

All the seats are occupied on the bus. We're forced to stand, packed tightly together in the aisle. I'm breathing heavily, perspiring, anxious to exit, overwhelmed by perfumes, colognes, and body odors. Patrick looks down. Our eyes lock together. My mind stops idling, kicks back into gear. I remember his words, and I say:

"If a collective consciousness exists on this bus right now, I'm not sure I want to experience it."

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"Why wouldn't you?" he replies: "Isn't that the purpose of going to an event like this, to partake in the collective consciousness, to express it emotionally in a justified common cause? If you're not prepared to do that, why did you agree to come along when I suggested it?"

"To be with you, that's why. An official rally hasn't even been scheduled yet."

He smiles, holds me closer.

In a blur of expressway traffic, we're downtown sooner than I expected.

