

The tenth point of possession being this...

Rev2

by James Lloyd Davis

All that a man will ever truly possess is what he's already eaten, assuming he can keep it down. That's what you were trying to do. Swallow. Chew. Suppress. Possess. Ate a roll. Leftover roll at that, no butter. Whitebread. Bland food. You are what you eat. Bland and not at all complicated. Predictable. Flavor? Highly overrated. Besides, your belly's spooked by the ghost of a little gin. A lot of gin. Morning's not all that easy these days. Unsteady. Hands move in odd ways at odd moments. Unpredictable. Not just the shakes ... shakes are there, but spasms too. Coffee spills on the carpet, tops of your toes. Sticky toes will never do. Sticky toes necessitate a shower. Can't think about that now. Eggs? Forget it. Gin walks the corridors of reflective recollection in your somewhat spleened and splintered internal dialogue.

Love is a battlefield.

Book about a safari in Africa ... as opposed to west LA, you suppose? Where else would they have safaris but Africa? Guys on safari wearing safari jackets shoot things all day, things with funny names ... like dik diks. Dik-diks. Teeny little antelopes with tiny Satan spikes on their lovely little heads. Heads that will grace the walls of boorish white mens' dens, capitalists, of course. Who else could afford safaris, yo? White hunters. Nicely tanned hunters, maybe, but quite white. Shoot things all day out on the savanna, come back of an evening, sit around the campfire in canvas chairs, sweat good sweat, honest sweat, the righteous sweat of teensy-antelope stalkers and killers. Listening to the hyenas cackle and snort under southern constellations. Drink gin and bitters.

Angostura. Pink gin.

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Tall, skinny black guys in white robes and red fezzes lurking close by, hovering like busy British butlers with whisk brooms and bulbous noses. Unlike those busy British butlers, however, these fellows are flicking and shooing away thick flies with the tails of dead zebras.

“Gin-tonic, Bwana?”

“Hold the tonic, Masamba.”

Haha.

Ouch.

It's the head that hurts when you laugh, not your rib, the missing rib. It's missing. She's gone. Took it with her. So how could it hurt? It's not the rib but the absence that hurts. Is that effen deep? Or what?

Sweat cold. Shower hot. Face in the mirror. Wipe face clean with razor, splash face with alcoholic spirits you don't want to drink. Not yet, anyway. You can still afford gin. Alcohol's a septic cleanser, but the guilt won't wash away. Not so easily as that. No reason for guilt but all survivors feel it. They feel guilt because they live. Because they survive. Why?

Movie about a war hero... Comes back home in a clean green suit and pressed pants, medals on medals, handsome chin. Survived but haunted by the spooks of those who didn't.

“Why them, not me?”

“Because.”

Hell of an answer, that answer, but the answer to every question. Why? Because. Just because. Matter of inches? Matter of miles. Chance, luck, fate, the finger of an angry god. Screw the protocols of fate and such. It's because. Just because. Nihilism is the cause célèbre. Je ne sais quois. No entiendo. Nihilism. Nihil. Nothing. Nada Grenada. Nuncanuncanuncanunca.

Sometimes, back then, when you'd stand at the mirror, shave, you'd see her behind you, see her standing in the doorway smiling. Such a sad little thing, that is. A little smile will sustain a man for weeks. Hungry little man, soul starved for sudden smiles when the source is ... her. Sometimes you think you see her. Out the corner of

your eye or glowing at the head of the bed on a dark night. Ghost of a lover, she. Do you believe in ghosts? Maybe.

Do the ghosts believe in you?

Probably not.

