

Possession: Notes for Zulawski

by Jamie Grefe

Love is a smear, a dying dog, or milk-birth, a fingered meat grinder.

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“How do you intend to live now?” Fetal position as twitch. Epilepsy: adultery externalized. Nights at the hotel, nights abandoned and shirtless, drunk in blue stains. Resolution falsified through leverage. We are restored by tears, groped and dried, gripped by God, wet, kneeling or forgotten.

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Blood smeared in the hugging choke of her courtier. Our only recourse is to confront life with the benefits of a choke. “Please, don't make me force you.” Should misery be a reassurance when love is destroyed? There are reasons: “My wife doesn't live with me anymore.”

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Meat in the kitchen. An electric knife. Blade to meat, an act of masochism. Grind meat. She grinds her hand in the meat-grinder. “Are you afraid I won't like you?” A severing of voice. The act is shared in the husband's own bloodletting: saw to wrist; self-pity, denied. Alone with meat, “It doesn't hurt.” But, the truth, the affair, is revealed in the unveiling of the beast, her private contempt. Her lover.

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We indulge brokenness into life. Forbidden monsters, kept to ourselves, humans are the exploiters. “For me, God is a disease.” She is the shock of the void: embodied, deformed. Death is a ragged whip-moan. In this position, the wife, possessed, face to face: whimpers, adolescent shrieks. “Faith can exclude chance. My chance can't explain faith.” Or, roles. “Does betrayal bring me small rewards? Am I afraid of myself? Am I the maker of my own evil?”

Madness is a misalignment of what goes where, a series of questions, but desire creates impossible spaces.

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There will be bells and tunnels, the unexpected occurs like a miscarriage, the birth of illusion. Delirium is unleashed, a squealing lunacy of our final frustration. A dance. Ritualistic fervor. Overcome the body. Transcendence, primal and sacred is a birth-drip.

Unspeakable. Only breath, only body. We recover ourselves in the purging of life. Lucid terror. "If I beg and yelp, will you still walk over me?"

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God gives it back dirty. Is this revenge for a life without faith? An embrace? "Do you believe in God? It's in me." Yet, is God still under the porch where the dog died? Our empty house is full of meat and water. Her orgasms are knives. The real glimpse. "Almost," she says, "almost . . ."

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Possession is transfigured. Possession, a suffering from self to other, strengthened by the wounds of having loved. Christ said, "It is finished now." The consummation of love is a marriage in blood-smattered lips, fallen from the spiralling staircase, air-raid sirens, our safety. The drowned world, head down, breath held in suffocation or supplication.

All quotations are from Andrzej Zulawski's 1981 film, *Possession*.

