Let Me Tell You A Story

by John Olson

Let me tell you a story. I can hear the gardeners blowing leaves. They carry engines with long tubes that blow air in a great rush and send the leaves whirling forward as they advance. Fairies dance in a ring as the gardeners approach, oblivious to the whirr of their engines. The fairies are blown into the air, but the gardeners continue their advance. They are serious men. Serious about gardening. Serious about making money. Serious about raising families. Serious about everything. They are serious. Serious men.

How's that for a story? Here's another: pain is intentional, pleasure is accidental. The end result is ice cream. Divorce, garlic, and butter. Fat sentences exulting in breasts. The incomparable feeling of skin brushing against the warmth of one's clothes after the heat of summer and the first refreshing days of autumn.

Skin is a process involving little holes called pores. It's touching. A touching instance of envelopment and fat.

This is a story about spoons. Spoons.

Spoons lie spoon to spoon in a kitchen drawer, sandwiched between knives and forks. There are two grooves for the spoons. There is a groove for teaspoons and a groove for tablespoons.

There is more drama concerning knives then there is surrounding spoons. One rarely hears of a spoon fight, or anyone murdered by a spoon. Spoons make poor instruments for killing people. They're better for scooping up large dollops of ice cream or mashed potatoes. Mashed potatoes slathered with butter. Ice cream under a glaze of blackberry or raspberry syrup.

The weather today is explicit. That's code for gloomy and gray.

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Moisture on the verge of spilling out in the form of drizzle, possibly rain.

A phantom description feels soft and velvet. But a description of what? What is soft and velvet? Isn't softness implicit in velvet? This is a story about velvet.

This is a story about plywood: a sheet of plywood covers a ditch freshly dug at the base of a large condominium building on Queen Ann Avenue North. Why was the ditch dug? Was there a problem with the plumbing? With leakage? Were the bones of a megathere discovered there? Tune in next week for the exciting conclusion.

We all know there is no conclusion. There is never a conclusion to anything. When one story ends, another story begins. Quite often, it is the same story. The same story assuming new proportions, new characters, new affronts and insults, mayhem and murder, banks and cattle. Horses grazing by the side of the road.

This is a story about horses grazing by the side of the road.

Horses grazing by the side of the road.

Horses. Grazing. By the side. Of the. Road.

I have a photo of Paris in my wallet. Would you like to see it? That's me, standing under the Eiffel Tower, and that's Nikolas Sarkozy with his arm around me, and Carla Bruni giving me a peck on the cheek.

Aren't words wonderful? You can say anything. Create anything.

Language is best explained as a form of hallucination.

This is a story about language. One day, there was a synonym loose in the library. It went around burdening a lot of sentences. Someone

needed to do something. A trap was set. The trap was a sentence in which a little emotion was sawn in half and required a synonym to turn the emotion into a feeling or sentiment, possibly even a sensation, or passion. Imagine a passion. A storm of response to a cloud of synonyms erupting all over a field of nouns.

I strain to gather my absurdities into a blueprint. The world is a balloon complicated by cuticles and despair. There are epics. Legends. Stories of great adventure. And they all lead to something vast and incommunicable. A baby's sock lying on the sidewalk. A flag incubated in the warm blood of revolution. Cezanne's vivacious hands. A flash of lightning illumining the chambers and shelves of the library moments after the clock sounds midnight, and the sentences crawl forth looking for nourishment and minds, eyes to bring them to life.