I Follow

by Johnny Dantonio

Those rare, high-cheek dimples on a girl invested in her for-fun literature, not noticing me smiling at her smile. She doesn't flinch at her unwashed wisps sneezing beneath near-sighted lenses, their trendy thick black frames dipped onto the point of a skinny nose and parallel with a hairless jaw line.

A stained, half-zipped, high-school-fashioned sweatshirt covers an ex-boyfriends favorite t-shirt, one she held onto for spite or softness. Both layers are stretched over spandex-covered legs that bend to her chest, her bare toes curling against the worn leather of a college coffee shop chair. Her shoes, left uninhibited below, seem sad but understanding, and she is so in love with something, which makes me so in love with the idea of her.

I gently gnaw on the right corner of the inside of my mouth directly where the canine teeth would pierce if I were to bite down normal with might. Catalytic imagination triggers a nervous, leftward shift of my lips, the raw skin peeling onto the bottom of my right front tooth.

Anxieties comes in all forms and tendencies, and acknowledging them, not stopping them, maybe most vital to harnessing healthy forms of the downward spiral thinking. I am interested to find out that there is no realistic urge to start a conversation with her, rather an attention to write about her. In fact, when she leaves with her tired European flats pinned beneath her armpit and tucks her Ibanez into her left elbow bend, I am more coerced to scribe the passing than to stop it; perhaps my applause to a natural order, a slight glimpse of faith.

I think of her past at the sight of slight arches on her feet and invent a daycare dancer; a mom with make-up patting a four-year old's face with foundation.

Her toes and heels press to the cold tiles as she exits, the calluses on her feet preventing pain or adhesion. She goes home to the

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echoes of herself, washing life's lines that have dirtied on her most ticklish of places.

The ankles of the spandex soak with the suds. Emily rolls them to her calves before she hovers an iron stove and boils water for tea.