

The Kisses of a Satyr

by Krista Clement

Hazel brings me gifts from her mother. Today, it's a homemade loaf of sprouted wheat bread, steaming moist, coated in plastic wrap. She lives in the small house at the end of the street and doesn't know I watch from the window when she goes to school in the morning.

We sit underneath the old locust tree in my garden. Delia brings us drinks. The glass of sweet tea stands untouched on the garden table. Hazel takes little sips of lemonade. With my eyes I trace the curve between the soft points of her lips as she presses them to the glass. Shifting awkwardly on the rope swing she tries to balance her glass in one hand while holding onto the rope in the other. I've been telling her about the garden, what Delia and I want to plant come spring. Her eyes are cloudy and unfocused. She nods at the right places but I know she isn't listening to my thoughts on forsythia.

Placing the glass on the table she reclines into the swing, plaid skirt sweeping up her thigh and legs idly kicking. Now I'm the one feigning interest. She tells me about her fight with her mother. With a puff of irritation she blows her blond curls out of her face. Her new pointed breasts are almost visible through the sheer skin of her shirt. She is ripe, firm and soft--like the golden plums in August before they fall from the tree. If I touched her skin it would be tight at first, but if I pushed hard enough she would give way underneath the pressure of my hands.

"Do you think she's right? Do you think I'm fat?" Her question demands an answer. I look at her green eyes, nose dusted with freckles and round cheeks battling definition.

"You're beautiful, Hazy."

It isn't suspect that I should use terms of endearment. After all, she caught fireflies in my garden as a toddler and called me her "Grandpa Number Three." She smiles and her legs stop twitching. We both listen to the throbbing of a bumblebee. She will leave me soon.

"You remind me of a girl fell in love with once, you know." Widening her eyes she jumps, turns scarlet, upsets the table. My ice tea crashes, flooding her lemonade tumbler and dripping onto the grass.

"Sorry!"

"Delia'l take care of it. C'mere and give me a hug before you go." My voice is gruffer than I expect it should sound. Hazel is near. She leans down and my lips skim the hollow of her throat. I put my arms around her and squeeze. She kisses my cheek, just a flutter, eyelash brushing my skin. I grab her and pull her down into my lap.

"I better go. My mom needs me at home," she says. Soft. Smooth. Firm. Sweet. Maybe I'm pushing too hard. I kiss her on the cheek and she stiffens in response. My heart bleats.

"I really got to go now!" I loosen my arms and she squirms, springs, throws me a confused smile before exiting out the vine latticed gate.

Hazel doesn't come around anymore.

I watch from the window as she walks to school. Delia says she's started dance lessons. Delia says, "It was nice she always came by to visit but it's a good thing she's getting a little exercise. If you ask me, she was turning into quite a pudgy young woman."

I look down at my clubbed feet, transformed into cloven hooves.

