

# Maggie

by Kshiti Vaghela

The Words:

apocryphal, imitation meat, live interment, virtuoso marimba player,  
gang of male prostitutes, self-immolation, Freudian discipline,  
apologetic litany, velcro shoes with spurs, historical  
anomaly, disturbing mustache.

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Why was I going to be eating imitation meat? I shook my head as I sat down on my orange futon. This was a sorry day. I could hear her, scuttling around in my closet kitchen, waiting for some broccoli to self-immolate because she forgot to keep watch. Broccoli. I hated broccoli. I switched on the TV and wondered what apologetic litany I would receive for my feminine, veganized dinner.

I was chuckling at the arrest of a gang of male prostitutes when suddenly I felt something tracing the side of my neck. A split second later, my mind caught up: oh, it's her. There was something about Maggie that kept me from kicking her away. I keep trying to define my attachment with a Freudian discipline, but she was always on top of me before I could complete the thought. I caught her fingers with the crease of my neck as I looked up at her face. It always struck me how apocryphal it was, how utterly devoid of passion, or thought. I quickly let the fingers go and she changed the channel, reaching over the top of the futon. The sound was now being made by a virtuoso marimba player, arms flying over the set. I was half waiting for her to show me a pair of velcro shoes with spurs as she dangled there on the edge, watching the musician.

But she didn't. It would have been no historical anomaly if she had, by the way. She played with the world like it was a toy. Sometimes I

wondered if I'd wake up in a box, a victim of live internment, and scream only to be humiliated later by her laughter, an inch above my voice. She had spent a day with a disturbing mustache drawn with a marker over her slender lips, acting completely oblivious of the fact. At the end of it all, she had kissed me with it still on, laughing, "And no one said a word to me Jared! No one!"

The broccoli was burning.

"Don't bother." She said, "I know you hate it."

She turned and walked off.

