

How Zin Prepares for Early Winter While Saint Bernards Cause Major Traffic Jams along East Houston

by Kyle Hemmings

She sings off-key while her married lover shadow-boxes his one-dimensional and split-off selves. Or stepping out of the shower, nothing but a stingy trickle of tepid water, Zin claims that as a cross-eyed child she was a musical prodigy, never nurtured. The married lover says to try overdubbing, go electronic, or go to Japan. He tells her to lock the door on the way out. She'll hail a cab and say *Let's waste the day! I've hit the lottery!* She imagines the married lover off to sabotage a junior administrator who keeps making not-so-subtle passes about his perfect rump, his thick biceps, his dark almond eyes that speak passages from 19th century mystery novels. In the afternoon of newly acquired absence, Zin feels like she hasn't been laid in 13 lunar moons. She wants to catch an East Village party animal and have him cook her a rabbit stew. She wants to wake up in the open moist mouth of sex. To forget the sloshing sounds of feet trudging through winter and heartbreak. She wants to cry next to party animal in subway stations and bury her face in his leather jacket. In a Tribeca bar, she'll try to explain how she got the name, Zin, but brushes it off, saying it's too long of a story. Anyway, her mother could never spell. In party animal's bed, she leaves him with anti-climax and a psalm she once composed when

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she was small and forgetful. Or on the street, she picks all the women who could have been her mother, who could have given her a different name, a different shape, if only the man was right, if the time was ripe. Under the cracked eyes of tenement windows, she rushes to catch up to herself. So she can stay warm. So she can share a cup of blueberry-flavored green tea with a familiar voice, a slimmed-down life. Still, she's cold. Still, she's shivering. Winter always causes a mild schizophrenia when the trees lose their color, when the trees fold into themselves.

