

Die for the sunset

by lisa rosenblatt

We drive past the entrance to the highway, down a secondary, local road. The car shakes as the road bends. Her headlights shine, ensnare everything in their glare. I have a helplessness; wave, demand attention. She puts one hand along the side of the highway, one down on my hip and presses on the gas.

“Are they hitching...” she asks,
“...by the side of the road,
waiting for a ride.
shall we pick them up”?

a line of women waiting for a ride.
(*In straps and silk jackets, torn tights*))

... red shirts, benches, like the one outside of the cafe in the first town that we pass through together; barely get to say hello to, together. as we hide our eyes behind sun-glasses, they say, “Here everything is planned but the economy,” they say, first it makes sense and then “Everything makes sense but the change” they say, labor markets and computer bytes and all's for free. Everything sucks when it is just thrown in for free. Sitting on the benches is free. we stop here so the journey will be
(as it must)
perfectly timed.

We get through the border somewhere — then crash.

We lie in bed and get back to discussing how long a year is, although no one talks about what a woman is or a man and they are just there. Rocking chairs rock. Sitting and spinning, just like

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spider's spin waiting for him — to make coffee, to fluff the sheets. The woman at the rest stop has her eyes down and the man at the rest stop greets us, but just the two of us. We have our eyes hidden behind dark sunglasses although lenses succumb.

I wait for you and ...

... deep throating gives a feeling of time and nausea and ...

And both sometimes. but that is beside the point.

You say very little when all is ready, the coffee and all, and afterward, during the ride, and even less as suddenly thirteen women pile in. They shouldn't be here, we know that they shouldn't be here just as they shouldn't be by the side of the road hitching a ride but we are all just working they say and you can't say much as you are busy not having anything to do with it, and then you get in last and say you'll wait, just kind of get in at the end and say you will wait it out and I believe you.

We are still able to articulate, all thirty from the side of the road scrunching together in the back seat, tired from trudging back and forth.

Finally, we get to Kalnikov or Rasnikov, that is the name, you know the name of the town but you are not saying much to me at this point. we are already tired, drained, with thoughts so embedded they can't go away. But there are more to enter, and there is not very much room.

There are not enough chairs. The waiter brings out more chairs and the waitress sits down, everyone wants to stay in Kalnikov or Rasnikov, yes, they say, for a day or two and rest a bit. She is not a waitress she says but we call her "the waitress" unless we are her then we call ourselves us or me or I or what we call ourselves and

when you read *the Messiah from Stockholmin* German out loud for everyone I say, “Ach, but there are no concrete politics” — you say what you say and then she laughs, long and loud — is this in? she says, I, I am waiting it out, there isn't much room is there?

“I once mistrusted skinheads,” she shouts from the bathroom, her hand stroking the nylon, fingers grazing the smoothness and pulsating life just out of reach, the thigh imprisoned beneath the taut surface (her hand has never been still for more than three minutes at a time) — “twice” she shouts about mistrusting skinheads and her fingers dig in to flesh — is this in? she asks. It is possible to move your position, (I so much would like to) either there or there... “I'd like to,” I say.

You laugh “look, I am not going to do it.”

But still, I wonder if it is about mistrust or timing.

Can't seem to put my finger on it. So I wait it out.

You know a lot about mistrust and you laugh because the table is beautiful, our table and a laugh is something you can trust while trying to differentiate between neo Nazis and orgies, now that's it, in there, twelve looks and glances and although I may not always get it right at least I try... you won't have it though, you say, “ I am not going to have any of this.”

you get the picture you say, you get it in the living room, in the den, in the living room, you get it you say...

all three hundred crumple a bit, foreheads rumple in thought — life might just be completely useless, although we stay and drink another one — in that living room, at least we are all together in there, sharing the sweet drop of comprehension and belonging. “Or

uselessness," they say in unison. That is it. life might just be completely in unison (footnote).

And we find enough room for all three thousand straps-wearing, leg-baring women and it always changes. it was Kalnikov or Raskinov but now it is not — it is the living room, cocktails, and that goes without saying; "What I was saying before," she says or better yet, that goes without saying although of course no one knows what she was saying before so I tell them we'll pay in the end we will, we women, although for what only you can know (maybe for the love or the chairs or who knows other than you?)

We... wemake it she says and you can't have it, she says, wecould sell it, we are the ones who make it, not you.... and you'd buy it but that'd be awfully expensive she says. and she turns her nose just a jot although that is not really very important since the whole thing is merely a thought... but she says she won't do it at all, and I ... I don't know what a resolution is for, or if it is worth it, although everyone does it, and, and they all have just gone and done it, and the women, and why must it be so?

But as soon as they say, "Well...", I blow it again — is there any other justice in this? I am praying daily — into the situation. Promises, things, cash... it would never work. none of them budge. Yes, of course she throws up her fingers in a peace sign. (with a flick of the wrist). I do not end at that, beginning so full of certainty, no place to visit but rather, let's live like... we are getting closer. "They do," she shouts, pointing, they do get closer. I don't know if I want to nor do you know if you do nor you... yet... we still keep going, hey, could all be so simple.

"It is beginning to make sense," she says, so I guess it's time to leave [[[not because I am opposed to the cash but just the concreteness.]]] games games games (there were three). So, casually, as in a game of whispers where the phrase mysteriously

stays the same from the day before, and never again, never again, until that moment arrives again, in twelves or sixties, or twenty fours and thirties or thirty ones or that quite contrary February when we bring everyone here because the other place is too empty since everyone is here at this place will it not stop what I start now I do know now it's so easy to tell you that my brother's son doesn't eat rice, will you pass me the salt, where, oh where is the toilet, hey, I'd like another red wine, and a certain intent of purpose, she says, maybe it is morality (from the game of whispers).

Thousands of those, those horny bastards forget how it all starts and that one works just as well as another and that I love you is so simple so don't do the highway shit she says and who are you and that could never ever be me and the snow reaches just to the window but the blower (the snow blower, this is concrete) will get it cleared even when the drifts are too heavy to shovel, and who shovels just to get to the bottom?... some fool, that is it — “I am truly leaving,” she shouts. Love doesn't exist, dig holes, nor do shovels or people, nor does it dig holes nor do I know why you were suddenly there and then gone. And all that remains is a gap and there are three million of us and we love and actually, nine million or let's say seven or ten million to be radical about it. and now even though superficial or suppressed or something which does not deserve light airy words, a woman, yes, we are, yes, that one with a crazy glint in her eyes talks about friends and the borderland and swings her thumb but we aren't picking up anyone or anything. and it looks as though she would fly right off the chair and out the door with all of us. but all I care about is the two of us at the moment. That is definitely wrong. Please do, though, care about me. And that is what you do in a way although it is all of me and the ways are not marked, but you keep on going, yes, I believe we will arrive although you just want to wait it out.

yet she holds on steering with a determined grip.

Without tangy odors and she says, "no, I won't do it, *i will not stop here.*"

"Okay i will wait it out" I say.

And the sunset is everywhere.

