

i am so into you

by Mary Hamilton

that's what the boys say. At lunchtime when we go out to the trees by the ball field and I wind them up and send them astronomical like a satellite, like some kind of Sputnik all over the atmosphere, and they get so lost not even a compass or the North Star could tell them which way was home, so they just gotta run and run and run in circles until ashes, ashes, they all fall down and the whole world is spinning like a merry-go-round gone out of control. They tell me the world is spinning so fast they think it might fall right off its axis and crash into the sun, and we'll all burn away until we're nothing but bone, until we're nothing but dust, and I pick them up and tell them they're dreaming, that it's all what-if make believe, and the only true thing in this whole world, more true than that sky, more true than that water, more true than that tricky North Star, is me.

They whisper it in my ear at the basement parties. Where they tell me they love me and I see their noses growing. The seven minutes in heaven when I tell them I'm like a podium and they the soapbox and I have a mic and I break the speakers 'cause I'm shouting words like a rooster wakes the morning and they're the cows in the barn with machines stealing their milk. I'm the farmer counting the cash 'cause their curds make me money too when I sell at the State Fair to all the roundies come from the suburbs and the twisty twisty lanes and all the cul de sacs. Or up on the roof when Max is looking up at the stars instead of down at me and he's calling for God God God and I tell him there's nothing up there. If heaven is clouds, then look at that clear Spic N Span sparkly sky and tell me where all the angels at.

It's like some kind of for real good feeling I get inside when Max tells me just 'cause the clouds aren't there, doesn't mean no one is watching, 'cause I'm sick of doing my business in some kind of shadow-like hideaway. I like that they all can see me, 'cause then it's good and true that no one can hide from God, and I'd rather believe in something like that than to believe in pearly gates and choirs,

'cause only the fat kids who wear braids and jumpers and hang with their moms on Friday nights are in the choir, and hell if I'm going to spend eternity in a place like that. I want to spend eternity under covers. Under a big, thick blanket that I made myself. That I sewed together with a needle and thread. Good things happen under covers, I tell Max, and I want to make me a blanket wide enough to cover this whole state, this whole country even. Yeah, I plan on making for me a blanket that I can spread over the whole top of my house to stop the leaking flood making caused by any kind of crash or rumble or break that God has planned. And, give me enough time, and I'll make a quilt that'll take the universe and wrap it in something warm and real like only I can give.

Max tells me that he saw on tv how all the dinosaurs died because a meteor hit the earth and killed them all like thwop, and that there's probably another comet out there come to kill all us humans and make everything we ever did a rumor that'll be dug up at some point in the future by whatever God decides to create next, and we'll be put together all wrong and put on display in museums. He says, who knows, maybe the comet will come hit us right now, and the pieces of the two of us will be put together like some kind of eight-legged monster, and the future will wonder how we got around. I tell Max to get off, 'cause if that comet does come, I'm gonna be the last woman and I'm gonna be the first woman, and I tell him I'm gonna be the mother of the next generation, and I tell him to just go home so I can get to my sewing quilt making, if that's how it's gonna be.

Sometimes late at night or real early in the morning, I climb out my window and I make my way to the park to meet up with the boys. I get there a little bit early so I can get a good look at that sky and the stars and see just what it is God made before he made me, and all I can think is that it's not all that impressive. Give me a sky and I'll show you what a galaxy is all about. And there was a time I fell asleep out there. When I woke up, it was so bright it was like the sun was right on top of me, and it was like something big and real was choking me. Was sitting on my chest and squeezing all the good air right out of me. And the sky was so blue. And everything was so

quiet. And I never knew the world could be so clean. And when I got home, I couldn't figure out where all that dirt under my nails came from.

Max tells me, "It be like that sometimes," like I'm supposed to give in to the give up and the nothing left to do but sit on these steps and wait for a comet to come and blow me up something times a million pieces so no one will know what my sweet little me looked like ever. I suppose it's something like when you're riding in a car and you know it's going to crash any second, but you can't stop the car because the driver is an asshole who doesn't want to go to prom and that's why you burned him with your cigarette. So I say to Max, I'm not worried 'cause I can change the times and I can turn the hands of the clock, 'cause when it comes to hands, I've got a magic little trigger in my pocket, and I only pull it out to make change for the dollar bills come raining from the money tree I got in my backyard that sprouted when I planted those magic beans, and he got so twisted out he didn't know dog from God and ran his sorry ass home, and I sat on these steps and looked up at the Milky Way stars and saw which one was the comet come to send me to heaven or something cloudlike with gates and angels and such, and I laughed the sky out of my way, 'cause I told God I had other things coming and He had to wait, 'cause when time times me, it equals something like sunshine, and in the daytime you can't see anything astrological but the moon, and any fool knows a moon on the horizon's same size as a moon up top in the middle of the sky, and I'm a smart girl, and I know that no comet the size of a pin prick in a sorry man's spine can wreck me. Can break my skinny little bones.

