

# There's Just This

*by Michael Seidel*

I am fluish with love. This makes me uneasy. I wish it were a cough. A simple thing you can medicate with chemicals, not just by coupling. Coupling—why did I say that? Who says that? I mean the clacking together of bones, the willful splitting of fine and tender skin.

I have a ponytail reaches to my ass, tickles the top when I'm nude enough. I rarely get so nude, but the temptation is great.

This love of mine: all but hairless. A condition. Vanity. Not the kind you set a mirror in the middle of. Mirrors itself, itself mirrors. Something of that sort. I don't mind.

All that change. Change we'd saved up. That massive glass jug—fifty odd pounds colored in silver and copper. I think of using the change to take a journey, a trip, a trek. I'll drive my car to every parking meter in town, feed each with a single coin, stay parked long as it lasts. Then I'll inch up to the next spot. I'll send out a press release. Get a sponsor. Piss in cups. I'll live on delivery. When the money is gone—can someone economy-minded outline how long fifty pounds can last?—I'll go home and smash the glass jar in my alley.

Skin, this love's, like scales, the one time I felt, as quickly as something flung.

I have this great idea of going deep as the chin into Lake Michigan and licking at it. Two licks, maybe. Nothing more.

There are garbage cans all along the beach. At night, foxes perch over them and gnaw muffin wrappers. In the moonlight they look like statues. The foxes howl like wolves. The waves startle the them. They run away and never see that it's spitting out fish. In the morning the shore is alive with last flaps. I get up early, grab fish by the tails and skip them like stones along the lake's green surface.

Wonder if the fishes' dizziness is as great as mine. All these months later and still.

I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy.

My worst enemy isn't a fish, it's Carl Eubanks and he is an asshole. He sweats shit and his breath is a series of farts and you should see the awful huge pulsing pucker that is his face. He won a strongman competition at the Racine County Fair back in '87. He was the only entrant. The judges held their noses as they looped the metal around his neck. He threw his scrawny arms up in the air and they had to dispatch a battalion of air fresheners.

From there it only got worse.

None of this is why he's my worst enemy.

The reason's this: If you took Carl Eubanks onto your boat and shot him over the side, there's no telling if he'd sink or stay floating.

That's enough to drive a person crazy.

It's begun snowing inside my house. I want to call my love up and announce how beautiful it is and how wonderful, but the lines are frozen. That's a lie. There aren't any lines. No lines in and no lines out. The air is frozen, conditioned to cubes. Fog as I mouth the words.

Click, click.

All my thoughts bore me.

On the holidays I listen to the sirens that oscillate through my alley with something like expectation. There's so little difference between the sounds of search and rescue. I want the medics to slam me through bars and the cops to resuscitate the movement of my heart, using just their breath.

