

Epithelial Sample

by Mimi Vaquer

I found my black dot nucleus. School got me in the 10th year with the numbers spilling outta my head, but now I got the cell on my mind. Everybody's floating around this joint all pink and green college clean, yellow face Japanese, or the jet-headed Greeks with their hairy bug arms. They've all got their mouths open with the words swallowing each other whole, pushing me out like some flat golgi body pressed against the membrane of this cess-pool restaurant. But I got me mine.

They leave me working lunch cause nobody's sure I'm up to the feenese of the night. I can drop a gyro dinner fine enough for my little man boss who toughs the thin skin with his barbed tangle tongue, but my fingers ain't fine enough to pour amber glasses of Mo-schko-FEE-lero for the hoity toit that plant their asses in the A seats at night. That's come around to alright with me. The Bulgur wheat Sofias and the pissy not-Russian Rigas didn't sit right with me anyhow. I break in the back away from their latte hot gossip ring and sop up the dish boy sounds and coffee grounds floating in my regular cup of Joe.

That's where I found Cleeve. All quiet coming around picking up tubs to take to the soap. I stopped him once and grabbed his hand hanging grey by his side. The hot water had sucked it small and wrinkly, and the color had seeped out into the bleach. I held it up and laughed at the white against his brown face before he snatched my fingers into the deep wet of his mouth.

He's got school and lives with his mama. We crawl on the couch and look at his Shakespeare and pictures of that same cell that got me thinking. We talk about his GED and maybe how soon the time'll come to move out of this town. Our fingers braid together like a sweetgrass basket, but the street folks look like we're Tower of

Babel bricks raining like God's Kingdom come. Black and white don't cook together right in a Deep South oven.

We sly smile around the corners and keep it down from the boss. I guess it's irony, walking around Fellman Grounds down the sidewalk holding hands, burnt with disapproval. And the only ones who might think it's right OK, they've got us holding tight to our secret stealing kisses in the back by the beer. We keep a night feel on our borders, pushing our fingers in the thin membrane, until one day the insides will all spill out while the broom keeps silent in the corner.

