

The Last Supper

by Misti Rainwater-Lites

There are no funerals no memorial services no graves, just endless mounds of ashes. No one will be remembered. Coyotes sniff and survive. Armadillos ain't sentimental.

Still. Cougar and Sally conducted the last day with deeply felt ceremony and ironic gravitas. Of course there was music. What do you think this is? Showbiz Pizza? No, baby. The wax spun hot in San Antonio, Texas. "Odelay." "Abbey Road." "Straight Outta Compton." "Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)." "Axis: Bold as Love." "Daydream Nation." "Violent Femmes." "Donuts."

"What do you think Elton John is listening to right now?" Sally mused as she stirred the macaroni on the stove. She was grateful for the unsalted grass fed butter and extra packet of powdered cheese. Cougar swigged his IPA from the turquoise and hot pink can and mumbled, "His lover's heartbeat, probably. He's burned out on music by now."

"How late is now," C.J. (their only son, a teenager) mumbled.

The family of three sat at the scuffed faux oak table in the friscalating dusklight consuming the feast that would be their last. In addition to macaroni and cheese there was grilled chicken and shrimp Caesar salad, Chef Boyardee pizza and coconut cake.

"Have a beer, son. It's okay," Cougar said.

"I know it's okay. I want to go out sober."

"More for me and your mom, then."

Then they were in the backyard for the last viewing. Saturn, the sad fat moon, the chaos of stars. Everything and all of it the photographs the videos the birthday cakes the Christmas gifts the tears the

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laughter the road trips the Marvel movies the comic books the Easter egg hunts the barbecues the conversations about Jesus and J.D. Salinger stories and arguments about Reddit rabbit holes led to this last exquisite ache this gulp of smoky October night air this splurge of deep tears and proclamations.

"I'm going to a place where there is none of this but thank God and all his angels it happened. I love you. I love you. I love you both I love this all and I'm glad I experienced it," Sally said.

"Me, too," C.J. said.

"Me, too. My god my god. Me, too," Cougar said.

Were there any witnesses? There was the tree, the dear old tree that had grown all those years and now loomed over them shaking its leaves ever so gently. Sally never could remember what kind of tree it was.

