

Black BoBbY BuRiED

by Molly Keegan Kuhn

Bobby turned black yesterday. Not like his ethnicity, or skin color. But his soul. Not his soul. Not black either. But a violet desecrating blue. That kind of blue that use to sit in the ocean, then dried up, and vanished into a big terrifying stupor. He looked at me with craterish eyes and octopus lips. Withering away into a snail.

“Jerald,” he whispered.

“What?”

“I feel great.”

His cheeks were turning into a slimy pink color, he was shaking like an excited stripper, he was sinking into the couch like it was drowning him, he was sliding into a dramatic 1990s song. And he said to me, “I feel great.”

“I’m going to burry you,” I told him.

He giggled. Spit flew out of his mouth and landed on my sneaker.

“I’m going to burry you. Because I’m tired of believing in you. Asshole.”

I said this. Believing. And new I was talking out of my ass. Belief. What is that bullshit?

“Believe in what?” he asked.

When we were boys we took a butterfly and caught its wings on fire. We watched it continue to fly with its flight smoldering. Slowly it turned into ashes...but it’s body continued to drift in the air. We thought this was nuts. We wanted to capture that butterfly and show it to our mothers, but eventually it landed on the sidewalk. And a lady with a stroller rolled over it.

When we were boys I took his hand and helped him across a fallen tree. Climbing carefully, trying to escape the river. He turned around with an evil smirk and pushed me. I was still holding onto his other hand. The moron. He fell in with me.

"I don't know," I answered, "But I'm going to burry you. You're dead to me."

"What?" he started laughing this affable laugh, "Stop being so dramatic."

"I'm not joking," I said.

"Fine," he smiled, "Do it. Burry me."

I lifted him up and swung him over my shoulders.

I carried him to my car and buckled him into the drivers seat.

His limp head crashed on the window, he looked like grape jelly.

We drove past the orchards.

The Trailer Park.

We drove past the zoo, the mall, the ice-cream parlor, the office my dad works in, and the Aquarium. Our hands up against the glass, breathing on the plastic, making disgusting faces at the sharks. Ha ha. Sucker. Come and get us. I imagined it biting my face off. Blood going everywhere.

We drove past Emma. We drove past smoking our first hit, driving our first twelve-thousand dollar mustang, dancing together at a Hawaiian Hula, pouring all the wedding liquor into the toilet, beating on our chest like Tarzan, running away from the police, climbing the jail gate, cutting ourselves on electrical tape, and plenty of women. Sleeping with the dogs, jumping the gun, shooting each other with meatballs. Laughing after the neighborhood Grandma fell down the stairs, crying after she died. Almost getting Emma pregnant, coming home to my mother smelling like vodka and cigars. Bobby dancing with my mother in the living room. Me watching her smile like that.

I took him to the swamp. I parked the car mysteriously. I got him out.

I imagined myself throwing him in the river. He would drown. The same way I'm drowning right now without him. He would call me a bitch for saying that.

He lay on the ground. I decided to dig a hole. He stared at the sky. Watching it change colors, change shape, as I drove to a store, bought a shovel, returned, and started digging.

The sky changed from light, to yellow, to rabbit, to pink, to maroon, to orange, to oil, to my mother, to Emma, to sea urchin ground. And finally I carried his body over and swung him inside.

He just shook his head, smiling.

I cried as I threw dirt on him. Worms. Centipedes. Mud. Sweat. Rock. A dirty tennis ball... "Fuck you!" I screamed, "Fuck you! For forgetting. For everything. You dirty whore. You're a dirty whore! I believed in you! And I tried to warn you! And you slept with her! Which isn't the point! And you're a fucking whore! And you're a..."

The only words I wanted to say were "motherfucker" and "fuckpiss".

But I understood those weren't the words I wanted him to hear. I stood there silently for a while. Watching his knees dance underneath the funeral.

I had no idea what I wanted to say.

I wanted to say, "I love you." And kiss him. But that would be sort of faggot-ish. No offense to fags. But I would run my hands down the dirt and carry him out. I would tell him that I loved him and wanted to marry him. If I wasn't straight. Or if those were the words I wanted to use. But I had no words.

I unburied him. I kissed him on the mouth and brought him home. "Fag," he whispered.

“Shut the fuck up,” I yelled. And he loved that I was angry. And I whispered sweet words to him like, “I fucking hate you, you cuntbag.” And kissed him all over. Getting dirt in my teeth. Crying because I was still swearing and I hate swearing.

I buckled him in; I slurped out the black from his bones, put him in a class, what are those classes? Those...A.A? F.F? One of those classes. And then I sat there waiting for him.

On this dumb bench, across the street from his A.A or F.F, sitting here, drinking a banana-mango-strawberry smoothie. Waiting for him to get out. I brought the shovel with me just in case, as a warning, maybe as a warning to myself, for what he might do, or what I might need to rescue him from. We can't always salvage them from the garbage. Sometimes their left with that fish smell and that old diaper feel...But it's worth a try. I guess. Occasionally I'd like to be buried, but I don't think he'd do the same for me. I'm pretty sure of it.

