# Honey Nut Cheerios and Chocolate Milk

*by* Parker Tettleton

Charley calls to say he hasn't heard from me. The blinds are gone, so I take a lipstick off the living room table and draw a circle around his head. I make a half-circle for his gut, a squiggle for the telephone cord. He can come over, he says, just to sleep.

I met Charley five years ago in a town the same as this one minus the name. There were a lot of people in my neighbor's apartment that night and somehow Charley managed to piss each and every one of them off. Until he found me, that is. I was one drink past making a running list of negatives in my head and one short of forgetting to tell him to lock the door behind him.

It's been an hour. I've painted my toenails. I put every bowl and cup in the sink in the dishwasher. I ran the dishwasher. I know the minute I sit down with nothing to do he'll call again. Or worse, he'll knock. Charley's a heavy knocker.

The sun goes down so I take a clean bowl from the dishwasher and fill it halfway with Honey Nut Cheerios, halfway with chocolate milk. Charley always has a face for this. He calls it obscene, an unnatural pairing. Charley's niche isn't linguistic, isn't even a niche to begin with.

His hairy fist meets the door three times. I take my time, even look out the peephole just to piss him off. Separation is a waste of time, he says. I move the bowl over to my side of the living room table. His feet go up before he can ask what that pink shit is doing on our window.

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