

She tolled me

by Rich Haber

Where do I end? Extremities: finger tips, toe tips, the hair of my head?

You end she told me, at the edges of your consciousness. What about pheromones? Jesus, she licked the sweat from my temples, first time we danced. And man, did we dance.

Fill out the application for connection, I don't come easy, she said. Fill in the blanks, fill my tunnels... can you read between my lines, boy? I told her make sense, you're aphasic. Empty your mind on sand dunes in the sea, find who you are and tell me, she replied. I rose to empty the trash instead, empty inside. I willed into being a Being, asked It what I should do. Obey your innermost desire, It said. Obey and obey, then wait.

My fingers drip with her blood and love juices. It's just red salt water, she said, with clots of uterine lining. Don't you like gravy on your yucca? she said, soaking her fingers in my hair, across the back of my neck.

You hunger for an end to your hunger, I told her. You hunger for touch, for my touch inside, for skin. No, she replied, I want warmth, not snow. Maybe short periods of cold wet snow, against our nipples, our genitals... Come on! She jumped from the hot tub and ran toward the snow-covered slope.

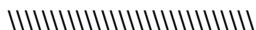
I looked at the Sierra Madres behind her nakedness, wondering why it had taken a lifetime to get here. The neighbors, I shouted as she doffed her halter, breasts jutting free. Fuck 'em! she said dropping, rolling, screaming in tears. Come on chicken!

Later I listened to the cacophony of squeals my nerves sent to my

brain, colliding with thoughts, blood whooshing through my ears, her heartbeat tight against me. Squeeze me harder she demanded. Harder break me damn you fuck... I leaned back and let her ride.

Miles Davis, Cal Tjader, Latin jazz, filaments of honey flowing around us. We're antelopes, geckoes, fireflies, among our human forms, dervishes whirling within spherical music.

Hold still my man, she said, her body gripping me like a hand, releasing then gripping again. I smiled into her as she engulfed my soul, sent me flying from womb to coffin to present.



When do I end? When is the instant of death, of life, conception? The soul flows in, out, both at once a mystery, like history. Reality, congeniality... is there an instant recognition of kindred spirit, one synapse of enlightenment?

You're looking for instant karma, you Dharma bum she told me. Read some Kerouac. Now is the only moment of truth. Realize that all your solutions are transitory. Try a little tenderness I told her, some compassion. We had a wild moment in the wilderness, here, together. Take a moment.

Too much span of attention, she said. Speak to me of marriages of minds, lapse of memory, as long as it takes, of cabbages and queens. We became friends early. You were late for dates, being outside time, I replied. Out of body, lost in time, out of your mind, outta sight.

You're mad as a hatter she said. Eons, eras of epochal proportions go by before you call me. I said recalibrate your linear thinking, incubator baby. I whispered permutations of wonder, told her secrets only the sufis know. We ate French goat cheese laced with mescaline, wore burkas and walked through Memphis Egypt. When

she's good and ready, I'll know. Maybe I'll know.

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Why do I end, I asked. And your rationale?

Do you have a choice? she asked. Old age, father time. Right to death, write to live, rite of passage into eternal damnation, salvation, the Void. Infinity takes too much effort, I told her. It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing, babycakes. I showed her how I could swing. She laughed.

In near-death neighborhoods I've met the collective unconscious, she said, found godhead, godhood, goatheads, figureheads, fucked the prince of peace and his religion. Lots of luck, I wished her. Your imperative was discovery, the dimensions of a point, the beginning of a circle, surface of a sphere, all tangential to a world without end, inside a moebius loop.

Common sense, Mr. calculus, she jeered, stroking me, stoking the fire again. How do you do that, I asked. Boy, she answered, don't you know lovers never say goodbye? That subatomic particles straddle the Mayan illusion? That harmonics and wavicles dance on Krishna's eyelash? I explained the negation of that which exists, a will a way, Shakespeare and Junior Bush in the same genus and species. Sing it, swing it, man! she rejoined me.

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How do I end, tell me I said.

Is this an examination? Details details, God is in, Freudian projection is out, she asserted. Try peyote rituals, silly rabbi or crystal balls, hairy Harry. Ask the gypsies, with their god-given right to steal, having stolen the fourth nail meant for Jesus. Seek the Sybil, get ouija bored, read tea leaves, enema droppings, cowpats and clouds, Yanomamo visions... search the Hong Kong opium dens.

You'll end pleading for one minute more, Dorian Grey, green around the gills, on resurrection row, dontcha know. It's all smoke 'n mirrors lad, you hyperbolic cholic alcoholic she giggled. On a sliding scale, you're on the downhill of a bellcurve distribution. These are the endtimes, apoplectic poco pocka lips. We'll be fried together, up the yinyang sandbox, up the river and down the hall, dancing with one ball waving free she said, fleeking my left one painfully.

I'll not go gently, blessing enemies, hating recrimination to criminalize hate. I'll be in the saddle with you lovey, one ball etc, expecting a miracle, beating my dead horse, waking from a dream of the cycle of life and death, seeing all my ancestors, with a shit-eating grin, knowing finally that no one knows.

We'll watch Houdini make it back, she assured me. But then she laughed and my world yet again came apart at the seams, or so it seemed.

