

White girl/boy angst

by Ryder Collins

I'm in the car with my sister and she's taking me to the natural foods store, but I've got this serious need for a drink. A bender, even. It's been a long time since I've got thrown out of a bar, made a scene.

"5 o'clock drunk."

"Huh?"

"I'm gonna start drinking soon's I get home."

I'm 26; too old to be a lush. My sister's 30 and fat and a virgin and no one's ever going to make a comedy of that. Both of us are single; tomorrow's Valentine's Day. I'm secretly hoping for a huge bouquet, a fruit basket, a pickle jar of urine in a lunch bag on my doorstep, even. Some gesture to let me know somewhere someone's thinking about me.

I miss my stalker.

I want to say this out loud, but I haven't even told my sis about him.

The first time he stalked, well, the first time I saw him, it was early autumn, my bedroom window was open. I'd been having trouble falling asleep, having just moved into my first floor apartment a couple weeks ago and owing to an irrational fear of alien abduction that flared up every now and then.

That night I'd fallen asleep right away. Like I knew someone was watching over me. In the middle of the night, for no reason, really, I woke up, got out of bed and turned on the light. Hearing something outside, I looked out the window. I saw what looked like a very tall, gangly man jogging away from the bushes.

I don't know why, but it felt fated.

Soon, he was showing up earlier; as I made dinner, he'd peer into my kitchen window, watch me cutting veggies, boiling noodles, singing along with my music. I wouldn't make eye contact, I'd watch him watch me from my peripherals. He was younger than

I'd thought from our first meeting. He dressed nicely, in Chinos and a button-down shirt.

We didn't talk to each other; we didn't need to. He'd watch me watch TV; he was a gentleman and never watched me in the bathroom or dress/undress. He was also pretty discrete. As it got colder, he started showing up in more layers, a brown corduroy suitcoat, then a black peacoat. My windows were closed, but I left my shades up. I didn't tell anyone. I'd watch out the window if he were late.

I felt something for this young guy, standing, smoking, shivering.

The old lady who lived upstairs with her even older mother finally called the police after about three months. She'd caught a glimpse and thought she was being a good Samaritan. The police thought they were doing their duty when they arrested him.

He turned his head, as they walked him away in handcuffs; I waved good-bye through my bedroom window. It was late, moonlit, snowy, poignant. I wish someone were there to watch it all, to take note, reward us, make us significant.

