

Oh Portland.

by Sean Brown

The purple sweater brought out the blue in her eyes. Fantastic eyes made of ice, she was a stunner, and she knew it. I met her at Slabtown, the bar, my bar. She had challenged me to a game of ping pong, winner buys the next round. Ping pong for drinks from a girl with icy blues; the night was looking up. We got down with the get down at 21-16, though she may have let me win. Something about fragile egos and delicate sensibilities.

Blue black hair cut at obscure zig zag angles; she grabbed my hand, and pulled me into the instant photo booth. She wore my hat and made funny faces. She stuck out her tongue and then played serious. And of course, we kissed on the last one. Or at least I thought we were going to, but she ducked away at the last instant, with a playful, "you wish."

Out in the cool fall air, hand in hand again, we made our way down the hill, under the 405 and into the Pearl. We stopped at Low Brow, and Blitz, and Henry's. We laughed at the pretension and the money and the insecurity. We popped into Powell's and kissed, for real this time, in the Orange Room. We jammed across Burnside to Rocco's and had slices of Vegan Pie chased with Barnyard Massacres and PBRs in Dixie cups. She was stunning with pizza sauce all over her pixie face. She laughed and kissed me again when I tried to hand her a napkin.

From there we sauntered over to the Ace Hotel, got cappuccinos from Stumptown, and hung out on plush leather couches in the lobby. We watched American Apparel Models dance with Polar Bears and Drag Queens, it was glorious. Glitz and glamorous glameratti, looking skinny and beautiful and obscene. It was alright. It was beautiful. It was wonderful. It was puppies and kittens and lemon spice babies.

We sashayed down to Second Avenue, and then we Let The Wild Rumpus Begin! We drank whiskey and witnessed Irish Magic at Kell's. The cigar room stank of Old Money, but we were only Old

Poor. The mood was all kinds of wrong. So we tried The Thirsty Lion, but it was the same lame with a different scene. We were getting surly with each other, the our vibrations no longer in sequence. But then came the Tunnels.

Shanghai Tunnels saved my life. Saved my love. Saved my night. We got Rainier in the bottles, and pronounced it the correct way. We laughed and held hands again as we watched that silly man with his silly shaved head hit on beautiful girls to no avail. I ask her to come up to my apartment in the charmingly run down Western Rooms, in a charmingly run down part of town, to stay the night. Clothing Optional.

She declined.

