

What If?

by Sean Taylor

She looks up with her eyes, her head on my thigh, and tells me,
“In France, prostitutes, working women, are raising orphans,
meanwhile their actually amazing adoptive fathers pay to jump on
the beds of completely fake lovers, these sterile men, celebrate their
legitimate children's birthdays in the places illegitimate children are
conceived.”

“Does it cost more or less to jump on their beds?”

“And the women, they put band aids left over from last night's last
calls, on the elbows and knees of the children, call them elbow pads
and fall down spots, because they know how to fall over and over
and over again.”

“Can you adopt if you work for the circus?” I asked her

“You can but you have to state a residence aside from the one inside
your head, it's hard if you're always traveling. You also have to state
your sex, which the bearded women and the Siamese twins haven't
found out about yet, but the children in the circus paint men's faces
white with wonder and learned the English language solely through
finishing the sentence “What if?”

“What if?”

“Yes What if?”

“What if the lion was afraid of the mouse?”

“What if the hoop was on fire?”

“What if we painted the tent so bright everyone could see us?”

“What if I was raised in the circus?”

“You weren't, you were raised in the opera house, and now you're half deaf, but you play the piano with short fingers and nimble wrists, that jump over candlesticks in the night while everyone rests, and the trick of it is, my child, everywhere is a circus as long as you can finish the sentence, “What if?”

