

Why won't you lie?

by Sean Taylor

Small talk is when you lost your job, when your grandmother's wedding ring was going, going, gone down the garbage disposal.

I was half-way home when I realized it was raining, and after five drops I realized I had forgotten my umbrella at work. Good, I thought, I can sport that sopping-puppy look and when I get in she'll sit me in front of that shotty old heater of ours, remove my damp socks and rub my cold feet. It is as if I had just returned from a jaunty mountain expedition, placed a flag upon our new kingdom and all I had to do was walk home from work in the rain. Of course she wasn't home when I got in and the apartment was cold as ever. The microclimates of an in-law in San Francisco can be embarrassing, much more evidently so when the wind wanders the entirety of your square footage. So I head out to crank up the landlords water heater, the dial being my favorite bidding war with the ole Irish women and at level eight it knocks like an old rocket about to take off, level seven just sounds like the warmth wants out.

The wind and rain outside run up and down our street, slamming doors and painting windows rummaging through our trash, this is why some children are compared to natural disasters, and vice-versa.

So I am faced with two options that convey the idea I've only just arrived and very much need warmth. Option one is stand by the door and when I hear her key, snap on the lights as she enters. Option two is have a beer and get the couch wet. Option two sounds like an unwanted-dog option. Option one sounds like something you should never tell someone about. I am not an unwanted dog nor am I something you should never tell someone about.

She works downtown and usually taxis home, the sole purpose of this is so she can open a bottle of Syrah that she will need me to help her finish, keeping me from my beers. If I beat her home, I have my beer and she will save the wine for another night and turn to the

vodka. I will be wine free.

Any other day I would be celebrating, but not today. Today I want to come home to her like our apartment is a house and like our problems are waiting for the bathwater to warm up and feeding the dog we don't have.

I am the dog we don't have.

I linger in the hallway and notice I am dripping evidence, dripping like an hourglass of proof of my existence and I can hear the drops, like a ticking clock.

I run, run like you do when the trash bag breaks and drips all that gross trash juice, I run into the bathroom and grab the blow dryer and start to blow dry my existence from the scene of the crime err, lie. Maybe a vacuum would do better; the cord is always two inches too short or not at all. One hundred percent of crimes make a mess. Do vacuums suck up moisture and lies?

I can hear steps, quick street steps, nice lady shoe steps and then as I am diagnosing these to be hers, I hear the key grind and turn.

She floods into the door, soaked head to toe, worse then I ever was, and stares down at me. I'm in my grace half shivering, with a beer, blow-drying the first steps of the hallway.

My dignity folds like a dying star.

She's cold and confused, her mascara is running down her cheeks like she's been crying and for this I love her more.

"What the fuck?"

"I didn't want to get the carpet wet?"

"You're lying, try again."

"I like your blow dryer?"

"That's just weird. Again."

I think we should move on, away from this moment, but the hallway is very narrow and I am entirely a fire hazard. I am a sopping wet excuseless fire hazard.

Clear my throat...

Remember in August when we met? Your father had just passed and you had held yourself hostage on a rowboat in the middle of Stow Lake. It began to pour rain and your boat started to fill up with

pounds of the bay, and they sent me out like a suicide negotiator in a kayak to save you. Remember I had only just started that job that week and was granted to do so thanks to my falsified Certified CPR card and a copy of Sailing for Dummies? Remember when your mascara was running but you kept saying you weren't crying, that it was the weather that had you trapped?

"I'm telling you the weather has me trapped."

"And?"

And out on that lake that day you yelled "desperation please!"

And I heard "desperate pleas?"

I wondered about first impressions.

"And I love you? And thought we should get home at the same time so nobody is predominately responsible for warming up the covers, cause you know, I know you're just better at warming up the covers."

In August when we met I told you to get into my kayak, that when your ship sinks the preservation acid in the lake will bleed your socks and dye your feet in argyle designs.

And you said, "I like you more when you lie."

And I asked you if the lotion you wore on your legs contained Lanolin, as the scent does attract Koi fish, and whether you felt any nibbling.

And you said nothing.

And then you threw your phone into the lake, then your purse.

So I told you to let go.

Then yourself.

And the toes of your cheap socks broke apart in the Koi fishes' throats and I got fired for diving in after you and not the sinking rowboat.

By the time we reached the shore the ducks all mocked us half dry like showboats, you told me I was bleeding from the head and I said good, now you know me better.

I stood up and pushed her drippy bangs behind her ear and kissed the part of her cheek finger painted by gravity with mascara and rainwater. When I draw back she's smiling and impatient.

And she looked at our feet and proclaimed, "What a wonderful puddle we always find ourselves in."

"Oh, and, my socks are wet" she says for the second time this year.

