

I Like You 'Cause You Like Me

by Stace Budzko

And you don't like much. No handholding or brand name sweaters. No phone calls late at night. This is not you. And you certainly don't go for kisses in the rain or cards from the grocery store with their strange words inside. You don't go for any of that. Never have. Never did. Not you. Atari and Walkmans were first tested on monkeys, you said, and what has this done but prove one thing — we are no different than monkeys. The same went for pantyhose and pushup bras, lip liner and eye shadow, highlights and manicures. Oh how I liked you for all of this. Your dumb dislike. And I'm just remembering that last moment together, the end of a double feature at the Saco Drive-In on a late August evening where sky and screen are dark. There the two of us go back and forth on whether or not the place was truly great because it showed *Weird Science* followed by *The Breakfast Club* or if it was because we were alone in a car, on the verge of something. At first I thought you liked it when I mimicked, *Last year, I was insane for this crazy little eighth-grade bitch*. Which was my favorite line that night, bar none. But not for you. You went for the less obvious. You made us act out your favorite scene with me playing the girl lead:

Me: What's your name?

You: What's yours?

Me: Donna.

You: Donna?

Me: Donna. It's a family name.

You: Oh, it's a sad girl's name.

Me: Oh, thank you.

You: You're welcome.

Me: I'm not sad.

You: Well not at present, but I can see you really pushing maximum depression. See I'm not sure if you know this, but there are two kinds of sad people: there's sad people that were born to be sad, and there's sad people that were once happy but became sad... so when you look at 'em you can sorta see that happy person inside. You see, you're gonna get married, you're gonna squeeze out a few puppies and then, uh...

As we drove away I kept wondering why you liked this part so much. You with the perfect mother. The perfect life. But if you ever do read this, I'd just like to say, I get it. And this is why I like you still.

