Los Angeles IKEA Existential Meltdown

by Steven Blum

You're sitting on a repurposed car seat, typing on an IKEA desk. The bed next to you has legs that sit in circular plastic plates to keep out the bed bugs. Your legs are twitching. Earlier today, in a state of manic depression, you pretended you were giving a tour of your apartment on MTV Cribs. "Here's the couch we got," you say to an invisible audience of millions. "We found it on the street."

Sometimes, you compare your living situation to a prison because it makes you feel better. "At least I have a fridge," you think to yourself. You spritz some cologne in the stale air around your sad desk, just to try to remember what it was like being an upper-middle-class kid in the 90's. Then you sneeze because you're allergic.

A cold draft slips in through the windows -- that is the only punishment winter knows how to inflict on Los Angeles. It's more annoying than anything else, like a bee that wants to pollinate with your ear.

Your partner is in the other room, immersed in a goddamn script. The sight of him so focused and full of passion enrages you. How is he able to write when all you want to do is reorganize the bookcase again, buy a wicker basket to hide the computer cables, paint the bedroom burgundy, then burn the whole place down and move to Venice?

You take the pool float that's been taunting you from the corner of the room and stick it in the shower.

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You close your Netflix window, bidding adieu to the fantasy lives that provide momentary pleasure. You close your Twitter account, furious at the New York literati that never pay any attention to your quips. You close Facebook because you're neither pregnant nor outraged about something. You throw the New Yorker across the room because it's just too fucking good.

You sit at the computer and think, there's got to be something you can do with all of this. You're not going to become a YouTube troll. You're going to use all this alienation and loneliness. You're going to be a Jenny Lewis song and rise up with fists. You're going to be a better listener, a better partner and you're going to treat the cashier at the supermarket with the kind of patience Sarah Koenig treats the investigation of a botched murder trial.

You're going to survive winter in Los Angeles.