

We measure all this distance in Longing

by Timothy Gager

When I talk to You Things Happen

At work I decide I want to leave my penis at the office. You're about eight hundred miles south of me in Boston so what the hell would I do with my hard-on and why would I bring it home to nobody? During Monday Night Football, Brady throws a pass and I suddenly feel aroused. The cleaning crew must be dusting my desk. That decision is a bad one; the combination of ingredients plus the feather duster are making me crazy: It will stay on my desk until after Christmas when we plan for you to visit for a week then celebrate New Years together.

You're going to be a Bread Winner

You live in a house with the homeowner. You live for free because he lets you; you're unemployed, and the two of you are friends. You make light of his multiple gay partners walking in and out all day, all night. On the phone, you say, "I've decided to make some money by filming some of it, making a film and titling it The Nascar 500. It's a great money maker and here's the gimmick: instead of the usual porno soundtrack it would be the sounds of stock cars racing around the track. The pit crew could shove squirt bottles in their mouths and change the guy's rubber like a tire when it starts to wear out. If it slips out during the race I'd edit in the noise of car wrecks and the flagman would wave yellow flag."

"Interesting," I say. "I hope you can move out of there as soon as possible."

Shared Commonalities

It's how we first connected. We both knew dead people. Lots of them—and when the people we loved died, it was tragic. Together we make a list: Cancer, car accidents, gun -shot suicide, a second with a friend hanging off a basement pipe. She didn't forget the “please god, take me” late stage emphysema scene she had with her late uncle. These are all weighed but we have bonus heartaches and hardships which for us are the minor variety, for others they'd be pretty rough.

There are more lists: Both of us have been married and divorced, both of us have kids. We are poor. At some point, we've been in jail. We've struggled a lot.. Also, we love food.

Travel Companion (not Frommer's: not even close)

Your plane lands at Logan Airport and you're wearing a long coat with nothing underneath. We find a place in Terminal A where we can have private in-public displays of affection. “I've heard the white zone is for loading and unloading only,” I say before I find the perfect place where I can pull your hair, and caress your soft breasts without anyone seeing. We get home and stay in bed for 24 hours, we do everything. We even make sounds of auto-racing. “There are a lot of advantages of not leaving that thing in the office,” you say to me.

“We have more things in common.”

"We both like food."

"I know that. I know a lot of things."

The Ball's Going to Drop: Ten...Nine...Eight...Seven....

Before we kiss, we drink a lot at a party. My friends do too, so for once we both blend in. I can't decide if this binge is celebrating or blocking out you going home tomorrow. Maybe, if we have enough booze, we'll be so drunk you'll miss the return flight. I'm aiming for that because the weather report is clear, no storms, no delays on the horizon. The television shows a motorcyclist that's about to leap over a graveyard. If he misses the ramp, he's in the shit. I've felt I've ridden that bike before and in the end they scrape me off the pavement. Then I wave, "I'm ok."

Departure and Arrival

You tell me they ran out of drinks on the plane you wanted to miss. At home the door is left open, and your roommate is having some dude on the living room floor. The leaving, the arriving, the roommate, all-in-all it's a bad combination as they continue as if you are invisible. When this guy you've never seen before runs into the other room to get dressed, the roommate turns to you and says, "I had to think about Jose, remember from last week, to get off." You say, "vrooom, vrooom," and he looks at you like you're crazy and then you unpack.

