

In Memory of Lost Things

by XXXX

What they used to do is hide in the cupboard, and would suddenly acquire the philosophy of “whatever happens happens,” so that they would finally find themselves grabbing each other's body parts in wanton excess until they both explode under the weight of their own pleasure. The small space and the darkness made it exciting. It also had the advantage of hiding their faces from each other, because they secretly thought each other hideous. It is just one of those things you cannot bring up and be in love at the same time. They even hid it from themselves.

They didn't even know why they didn't use the word “sex” anymore; they just went ahead and made “cupboard” a verb, so that when they talk about cupboarding, they really mean having sex in the cupboard, and sometimes the help would be working around the room and suddenly he and she would come out completely naked, with unidentified fluids in various locations on their person, and, completely ashamed, would run to their room. The help would usually just say something like, “Oh, sir, madam, there isn't anything I haven't seen yet,” but, of course, truth be told, she had never seen anyone make love in a cupboard before, but she understood, because they were both pretty ugly.

They met at a museum. A mutual friend was having an exhibit on postmodern art, which generally meant it was a brightly lit room with crap on the walls, and before you enter you need a ticket and you sign a form legally binding you to accept what was presented there as art. They sat on two sides of a long bench, and he said, “Have you seen the one with the dog penis nailed to a wall?” And she said, “Yeah. I think that's saying something about the sexuality of religious figures, and the dogged mortality of Christ.” And he said, “I think it's more about how sexuality just appears out of nowhere in a world where sex is commodified. So, you know, you're

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walking and suddenly, whoops, a dog's penis on a wall. What's up with that.”

“You're legally bound to say it's art,” she said. “That's what's up with that.”

They were hideous, but the chemistry of recognizing the awful and the obscene was there, so he asked her if she liked coffee, she said she did, and when they got back home as he was getting the coffee from the cupboard, she spotted the darkness there and got the idea. They pretended it had something to do with kink, but it didn't. It was their first time in a very long time, and it felt good.

One day she came to his apartment and some renovators were taking down the cupboard. He walked in the room, and they stared into each other's eyes for a while, and between them, the noise of drills and hammers and nails scraping the wall as they were pulled like teeth.

She knew: it was over.

