

The Diet of Worms

by XXXX

He had stared at the back of his neck for so long that images of his nape flashed into view randomly throughout the day like interfering signals from a station just out of reach, DESIRE CHANNEL, or something, reminding him of his skewed priorities, his failed attempts at telepathy, his hours in English class wasted instead on the anatomy of the nape.

He read about tapeworms somewhere, probably during Civics, lectures on Southeast Asia and sanitation, &c., and decided that he could probably lose weight doing that. You eat something completely unhealthy and you lose weight, which seemed like a pretty reasonable deal, all things, primarily weight loss, considered. He was losing sight of his penis during showers, and he knew this was a sign, along with harsh noises from the bed whenever he got on it, waking up during the late show with ice cream all over himself, catching himself eating that final slice of cake, and it was he who was responsible for making it the final slice in the first place. If he was quick he could lose the weight without going blind, or getting seizures, or growing tumors. He took mental note of when to expel the colony before taking bites out of the undercooked pork, and managed to hold on long enough to ingest just enough to ensure a decent generation of *T. Solium* were given a bright, but relatively short, future in his gut.

He lost weight, over the next few weeks, and during English he would whistle to himself to get his attention, would wear shirts with witty remarks, talk loudly about topics they said he liked, tapped him accidentally on purpose, but to no avail, until one day he dropped his pen and he picked it up for him, saying, “You dropped your pen,” and he went, with a redness he couldn't avoid, “Thanks. Such a klutz.” Twirled a finger round his ear, crossed his eyes, exhibited his tongue. The face behind the nape—in front? He

couldn't tell anymore—smiled and returned to his position, that woeful position. He thought this was the start of something. He now knew he exists, and through that ideal slippery-slope that would be on the dance floor in no time, then on that creaky bed, then on some apartment, eating home cooking, watching talk shows, reading books in lamplight while holding hands, waking up during indigo-tinted days, naked, tired, in love with the world for a change...

Minutes, days, weeks. He never turned again. All that weight lost, that charm turned on, and for nothing. He dropped his pen again, at some time, but his seatmate, vanilla plain, had taken up the duties of picking up after his inability to hold writing apparatus. When it was time to take the pills for the tapeworms, he held his stomach and said, "Thanks for your service boys," before taking a supreme gulp with Coke and waiting the hours required. He lost quite some weight, though he was unsure which were from the sleepless nights and which were from the parasite troops. The throne called late enough. "Good job, boys," he said as he sat there and stared without expression at the blue-tiled walls. "The Admiral appreciates your service."

