

Behind Glass Windows

Audrey Rose walked out of Sunpie's. Behind a plate glass window that opened out of the kitchen he stood. He turned his face away from her, the ostrich that couldn't be seen. Audrey Rose stood on the other side of the window, turned her face in the opposite directions as his. She pressed her body against the glass, could feel the cold distance between them. He turned to look at her. The glass rippled. For a moment there was some spark of darkness filled with bodies, moving together. Her right ear burned where she used to lay upon the soles of his feet. She reached her hand around the window and placed it softly on the cavity of his inner arm. Water spilled over the river, swirled around their feet. Vines grew up Audrey Rose's legs, wilting and dying before ever flowering. As the water retreated, Audrey Rose removed her hand.

Darkness set on Sunpie's. Lights came on, Audrey Rose ordered her fifth Giddyup of the night. The late afternoon sun caught her skirt moving the light around her feet, splaying out over the floor. Some of the sparkles got caught in people's conversations, some of them simply faded. When he walked in he was unrecognizable. It was still his face, his build, but it wasn't him anymore. Audrey Rose had to look twice at the person she used to be able to feel hours away. There was a faded quality, shoulders hunched a little, the light unable to find him even when he stood directly under it. She needed to hear his voice, to see if some part of him were still the same.

"Where have you gone?"

"I've haven't gone anywhere."

"You used to find me."

"I'll never find you again."

"You won't ever find me, will you?" She tilted her head, let the words slide into her ear and be absorbed by her cerebral fluids. She wished a tide would wash them away, but the liquid devoured them, held them close to the grey matter of her mind and lodged them in a crease.

"No," he told her and she finally believed him.

Her heart ruptured into two pieces. The right half slid down from her chest cavity, through her intestines and into her stomach acids, slowly eating it away. Audrey Rose burped. Acids came up with it. She ran to the bathroom. Hovering over the toilet bowl, Audrey Rose threw up half her heart along with yellow bile. She thought she should have choked on her heart. The size of it astounded her. She stood up dizzily and wiped her mouth. She flushed the toilet and sent her heart into the sewers.

Every movement of her body seemed slow, somewhat frozen. The left half of her heart pitched off balance and fell on its side. What had been half of a whole, now looked like a stained daisy petal. Her insides sloshed as she made her way back to the bar for a giddyup to rinse the taste of heart from her mouth.

The first shot didn't help, so she drank a shot of Black Seal Rum, which drenched her mouth with such thickness she couldn't taste him anymore. The sequins on her skirt dimmed. He noticed. He placed his beer on the bar, along with some money and walked out the door.

Audrey Rose tried to skip after him, but her legs would only let her walk. One foot in front of the other. She stood behind the plate glass window and waited, but he didn't come back.

The right half of her heart was caught up in the whirlpool of toilet water. It was pushed and flushed among the excrement of too many drunk people. Each movement forward brought her into contact with the waste that bodies no longer need. Some of it smelled like Vodka, some like lemonade. There was garlic and beans and corn. Between the excrement and the heart, there was no common ground. The heart was responsible for ridding the body of the world she now floated in. They parted for her, moved away from the slimy, fleshy heart. Suddenly the speed of the flow quickened where a strainer separated the fluids from the solids. Audrey Rose's heart banged against the metal, tried to squeeze through it, pushed with all her might and made it through the strainer. The heart wiggled with the water, the pump pulling the organ towards the purifier. Chemicals rained down on Audrey Rose's heart, burning, stinging, cleaning. As her heart moved closer to the gravel she would be dragged across, fleshy fingers plucked the heart out. Soft beating increased as the heart felt the touch of human flesh again. The fingers held the heart up to the eye, to a head that nodded once. The heart was placed gently on a velvet pillow and an ad put in the paper.

Half heart found

Purified

Please call

Audrey Rose never read the newspaper. She didn't like bad news. But someone called about the heart, could identify the scars upon it.

As Audrey Rose perched upon her stool, the palm of a hand moved the pillow towards her.

"I wanted to give this back to you."

Audrey Rose took the heart without looking at him. She asked the bartender for a shot of tequila. She salted the heart, squirted some lime on it and swallowed it down with the Patrón. It landed on the left side of the heart, resting on top.