

Sound of Stars

Dewdrops clung to Audrey Rose's naked body like so many stars. In the morning light they sparkled and warmed. Audrey Rose stretched, sending dew drops rolling down the curves of her body. She shivered. She whispered to the sun. The words disappeared.

Beside her bed of pine needles was the play *Jesus Hates Me*. He had found her. She pulled her legs under her and opened the play. Before the end, Audrey Rose read the lines "The stars. People say they twinkle but they're wrong. Stars don't twinkle. They weep. Tell me you hear them. Tell me you hear them weep," she closed the booklet. Holding the play close to her heart, she carried it over to a noble tree and began to dig. When she had a hole big enough she ripped the pages into tiny pieces and buried them.

That night she curled up to listen to the stars but she couldn't hear them. He appeared with a two bear skins, wine and a smile.

"Hi Audrey Rose."

"You found me."

"I brought you something to keep us warm tonight." He spread one bearskin on the ground, picked Audrey Rose up and placed her on the dead skin. She got on her knees and sniffed the scent of the bear that had once lived here, ran her fingers over the long hairs, then curled into the fur. He wrapped the other skin around her body and crawled in beside her.

"Where are your clothes?"

"I forgot them somewhere."

“Tomorrow we’ll get you some more. Tomorrow.” As if there was no tomorrow.

He opened the wine. The petals on the Mules Ears and Columbines gently unfolded around them. She could feel him in her heart, deep in unknown places. A piece of him lived within her.

Being close to him ripped her insides apart. She took the pain silently.

He held her eyes in his and wouldn’t let them go. The flowers, the grasses filled with dew, overflowing, spilling. Below them, the river rushed by, pulling at the banks, carrying trees, grasses, sands away to other places. The cold tried to creep in but they warmed the air around them. Audrey Rose cupped her hands, captured his life and poured it over her heart.

When his eyes finally let go of hers, she was confused. She didn’t know where to go.

His toes seemed so far away. The places she knew, had wanted, disappeared.

Tentatively, she moved her body against his, strange to feel right side up. Audrey Rose carefully put her hand on his chest, over his heart. Without a thought, he moved her hand away and rolled over. His breath came more deeply. The dew on the flowers spread to Audrey’s face, ran down in streams and rivers.

She crawled out from under the bearskin and fled into the trees, towards the stars. She scrambled up the tallest tree and let the drops of dew run free. She heard a low growl above her. With wet face she crawled up a few branches. A mountain lion lounged, limbs hanging over the branches.

When the mountain lion saw Audrey Rose, his ears pricked up and he let out another growl. Audrey Rose screamed at the top of her lungs and lunged at the cat. She bit the cat's neck, tearing fur and skin away. She swallowed the flesh, warm, the bristly fur. The blood quenched her thirst. Audrey Rose stared at the mountain lion until he retreated from the tree and disappeared.

Audrey Rose climbed even higher into the branches, closer to the stars. She could hear them now. She hugged the trunk of the tree whispering over and over to herself.

“Done.”

-Do not attempt to recreate the events of Audrey Rose's life. They will result in internal and/or external death or at the very least a yeast infection.

-Jesus Hates Me a play by Wayne Lemon was recently performed at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts.

