A Sweet Victory is Drawn from Obstinance

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A SWEET VICTORY IS DRAWN FROM OBSTINANCE

Stephanie, you called me yesterday in what was the middle of my night. The telephone was ringing, ringing in my ear constantly, as I made a concerted effort to ignore your intrusion. You were soliciting - that I had decided long before I answered. But, still, I did answer and while you rambled, I imagined that I knew who you were, though we'd never seen each other before. You looked like a telephone with a cord that reached to eternity beyond the wall.

I had been sleeping - but don't ask why - at five in the afternoon on a beautiful, Indian Summer's day in the middle of winter. A day for the beach, the sand and the sun on our backs as we lay there soaking and sparkling from water droplets trickling off and onto the blanket, you said when you called. A day to stay at the beach until the sun had steadied itself just above the waves, warding off, for a few seconds longer, the winter's chill that would soon return to the land and the lovers. But you were working and I, sleeping when you called.

So, if the beach was out, why did you call, to wake me? No, you said, and then you went into your tirade about people, places, and things of which I had no particular use. I looked out the window and remembered the beach as it had been and as it would be. Your couch standing on the shoreline in a double effort to catch both the waves and the warmth. Your bedroom door standing open but inaccessible that night - and what a pleasant night that, but curious and frustrating. A fast drive to Lansing and back only to take the wrong exit and end up down by the river.

Description of the river:
A thin sheet of ice crept out from both sides and covered the milky-brown almost to the middle with pure, and I realized that you could have walked across the Grand years ago in legends, but yesterday was awful late to even try. Looking down the embankment, we could see many trees with sashes of white where the water had once risen behind the ice jam that threatens to flood every year.
Moral:
People along the river have attics but no basements for storing their memories.

The sleeplessness of the wine bathed my murky head because the water-nymph kept refilling my bottle even though I hid it several times. The elves were dancing by candle-light and there was cold with the snow in the headlights and the ice on the river road. Your hot mint tea cured the chill - a fact I sought hard to ignore and did so while sitting on the too-short-couch in the living room with the English driving through to the storm and Lansing.

We smiled our disbelief at Pittsburg until, after much debate, the seriousness became evident and the Englishness returned. I told about Brighton because I thought you didn't know, but it didn't matter.

It didn't matter that I thought to hang-up on your ravings because I wouldn't, you knew, until you had finished. Curious. You made no sense and I wouldn't buy your product. Anyway, you were joking. You were a young lady playing a telephone game with me, with her favorite name, almost her number, and you hesitated in all of the right places with her voice. A mellow, sensuous but deep, almost gruff voice that I had heard many times. It would drone when I daydreamed but refresh, at other times, with the stillness of wine that need only be poured from the bottle to excite the glass.

Later, after I slept again, I called the number you had given me. A woman, her voice scratchy and faint, though not at all like yours, thought me some sort of prank and swore several oaths against the society that had created the likes of which had no respect for the privacy she loathed in her lonely room. I agree, only yesterday she had invaded mine with her call. I smiled and apologized, but she couldn't see my smile and didn't believe my voice. She wouldn't have understood my smile.

Later, after I slept again, I called the number you had given me. A woman, her voice scratchy and faint, though not at all like yours, thought me some sort of prank and swore several oaths against the society that had created the likes of which had no respect for the privacy she loathed in her lonely room. I agree, only yesterday she had invaded mine with her call. I smiled and apologized, but she couldn't see my smile and didn't believe my voice. She wouldn't have understood my smile.

It had been a curious joke -- at that it had been.

Position One:
It was your sister who saw him first, in the shadows along the wall with eyes gleaming. You said that this 'aurora' and you watched as he stood and talked to everyone as they passed his shadowed area. With him, but he permitted no one to touch enter his carefully determined space. You backed away from many too-eager-conversations and time again he was forced to back again for safety; then you stood and moved through the Some time during your talk you noticed a girl. When you pulled it out, did he scream and pull the floor?

You laughed your haughty laugh and moved where your sister was laughing.

Sunday on the telephone, and will you church? I have to stop at my mother's for the artist was scurrying around cutting up the artist was scurrying around cutting up the artist was scurrying around cutting up the artist was scurrying around cutting up borrowing glue. She is an intense person. Tall and awkward with light brown hair, so that she had no option except to ignore I knew immediately that we could be friends. I watched and then, when I offered advice, she gladly, but from a distance. She picked up which lay on the floor and hurried from there. There was four inches of snow on my car.

The March of warm days and snow storms soon and then I'll call you and we can go. They tell me that the family will get together this year with the fishermen from all over. There is a small restaurant there that open strong coffee to people who have been up and stopped there in the morning after we drow...
It had been a curious joke -- at that time I felt sure it had been.

Position One:

It was your sister who saw him first. He was standing in the shadows along the wall with eyes gleaming out as he looked in your direction. You said that this meant he had 'aurora' and you watched as he stood and talked with everyone as they passed his shadowed area. They could talk with him, but he permitted no one to touch him nor even to enter his carefully determined space. You watched as he backed away from many too-eager-conversationalists. Time and time again he was forced to back against the wall for safety; then you stood and moved through the crowd towards him. Some time during your talk you noticed a grapple in his beard. When you pulled it out, did he scream and pass out to the floor?

You laughed your haughty laugh and moved back over to where your sister was laughing.

Sunday on the telephone, and will you pick me up for church? I have to stop at my mother's for some nylons. Then the artist was scurrying around cutting up cardboard, and borrowing glue. She is an intense person who has no friends. Tall and awkward with light brown hair, she moved hurriedly so that she had no option except to ignore me in a way that I knew immediately that we could be friends. I sat and watched and then, when I offered advice, she accepted it gladly, but from a distance. She picked up her sketch pad which lay on the floor and hurried from the room. Outside, there was four inches of snow on my car.

The March of warm days and snow storms should be ending soon and then I'll call you and we can go to the beach. They tell me that the family will get together in Pentwater this year with the fishermen from all over the state. There is a small restaurant there that opens at six to serve strong coffee to people who have been up all night. We stopped there in the morning after we drove in through the
snow storm from Lansing to fish. It was good coffee because the only other that we could get that night was at Dunkin' Donuts in Muskegon. Outside the restaurant there was a payphone and after my first cup of their strong fisherman's coffee, I changed a dollar and went out to make a call to the river.

Position Two:
After the grabble, he moved to the front of the room and began to shout out the names of his friends. He became a back-lighted silhouette with glowing eyes piercing the dark. His rage was growing and growing until the lovely Water-nymph brought him a glass of wine. He received the glass with a warming smile and then threw it against the wall. His beard instantly caught on fire and later he refused to smoke or drink, but just stood there basking in his 'aurora' until the night had finally ended.

You rode your bicycle to work at the five and dime, and got lost in the heavy traffic. The limitation was too great for you to overcome so when you went home you put your bicycle in the back of a friend's car. It was faster that way and much more relaxing.

Together, we talked for a long time on your too-short-couch about life, artists, and 'aurora.' Outside, we remembered it was snowing. Your lap was my pillow and my feet were resting on the chair. I fell asleep there, and dreamed about the wine and the open door. Why did you leave it open? For my dreams?

Position Three:
You were coming in from the cold outside and had just rang the door bell; he opened the door because he was just leaving. You told him that it was cold and asked if he had forgotten his coat. He just smiled and stroked his beard where the grabble had been. Your eyes reflected his tension which relaxed as he moved down the stairs. Other people were coming up and after a quick word with them he left, but you stood there holding the door.

It was quiet and the room seemed. People were talking in small groups and breaking up and going home. The janitor of the room with his broom, and with a in his work, he ignored everyone. As she smiled and I smiled and the smile we had both succeeded.

Soon the river road with the snow by us to the right.

Description of the river:
Ice everywhere, covering everything. White trees standing by the some dark collars showing the extent of death in places, covered the road and was coming from an early spring flood. A concession with cupie-dolls and bowling pins float. ribboned river. You could still hear the crowd on the shore as he passed.

'Three tries for a quarter. How 'bout you gorgeous? Win yer. Show us yer skill! Everybody's moral:
We all have in our own minds some. The telephone was ringing in my over and went back to sleep. This time home.
It was quiet and the room seemed somehow brighter. People were talking in small groups and the small groups were breaking up and going home. The janitor was in the far corner of the room with his broom, and with a concentrated effort in his work, he ignored everyone. As the Water-nymph passed, she smiled and I smiled and the smile in our eyes told how we had both succeeded.

Soon the river road with the snow and Lansing passing by us to the right.

Description of the river:
Ice everywhere, covering everything. Snow in the headlights. White trees standing by the side of the road with dark collars showing the extent of decay. The white river, in places, covered the road and was covered with dark ice from an early spring flood. A concession stand, complete with cupie-dolls and bowling pins floated down the white ribboned river. You could still hear the Barker shouting at the crowd on the shore as he passed:
"Three tries for a quarter.
How 'bout you gorgeous? Win yerself a cupie-doll!
Show us yer skill! Everybody's a winner!"

Moral:
We all have in our own minds some concept of perfection.

The telephone was ringing in my ear, but I just rolled over and went back to sleep. This time, Stephanie, I wasn't home.

/David L. Olsen/