

In the Arms of Strangers

So I send my ex a happy birthday and there's a volley of back and forths. Stirs up feelings I had forgotten for a day. Dammit. All the cigarettes I smoke at work can't shake the feeling. I want to tell him I love him and I fancy the idea of running out of the restaurant and straight to the airport. But I can't. I don't. I'm all mixed up in emotions. Part of me is just that I don't care. Part of me is fantasizing about him having a terrible time. Part of me is understanding. That last part is talking me through how I should be more forgiving of people because they're "only human". I take another drag. I haven't had a drink since forever. Since a few hours ago. I'm starting to feel hungry.

What do we hunger for? I think on my part it's friendship. I love the people in my life, dearly. I love the strangers I meet even more. It upsets me that people are boring. After I clocked out I met up with Steph at Black Market. Everyone had been drinking for a few hours at Crowdaddy's. I hate being sober at a bar. I'm not myself. Those feelings we spoke of earlier still simmering in my belly instead of beer. Even after two shots of jaeger and a Fransikanner Spaten, I can't even get a little buzz. I confess to Steph that it's been terribly difficult to get drunk these days. She just sighs and says "Oh, Babe...." There were so many pretty fine young things. Everyone got up in a good dance groove when they played the Smiths' There Is a Light. The lyrics sounded so well placed against the walls in my head. Cutting and coherent narration of my evening. I did want to go out and see people and be part of something even if I was failing miserably at it.

We tell our friends, the all coked up and drunk ones, that we have to go home to give Fuki meds. I left, sober and sad, lit another cigarette in the parking lot and sat in the car staring at my phone that had no messages from anybody I wanted to talk to. When I get home, I feel my legs like spaghetti for an instant. I was tired. I haven't been sleeping well and when I do it's only for about three or four hours. I'm tired and my spirits are in the troughs instead of the crescents.

I sit down to take a shit. Part of me was telling myself that I had been wanting to fart. That if I was farting I might as well just take a dump and get it over with. Part of me was saying that I should not be flatulent at the party. Part of me didn't want to go out at all.

Messages from my friends. Where are you? What are you doing?

I feel like not answering and just going to bed but I knew that if I had, I'd just have stayed up lying there staring at the dark walls or playing Voxel Invaders.

So I don't. I do I mean. I answer my friends as I'm wiping my ass. Yes, I'll be there. Yes, I'm going.

I jack off to ideas that I shouldn't have and savor the fact that his boyfriend is so gay he quotes Lady Gaga.

I'm better than that. I'm better than them. I am a cool person and I am a good person on top of that even if I don't fit the mold and even if I'm not so pretty, I've never lacked good company. People genuinely love me and I sincerely love them. I am just a big baby.

So I wash my hands, put on antiperspirant, look myself in the mirror and post something inspirational on the Facebook. It took an inner dialogue with myself to realize again that things aren't so gloomy. I empty a water bottle someone had left earlier and fill it a quarter ways with vodka and a quarter ways with cheap orange sugar drink. Tampico. Walk myself over to Steph's just as one of her friends, Diana, another sober soul at the bar, is leaving.

We make plans. The kind of plans no one ever intends to follow through with. I walk up the stairs and as I walk up towards Steph's door, in the dark din of the hallway, a light flickers. I take it as another conversation with God. This is where I should be. Good thing I came out.

Inside I'm greeted with hellos and hugs and two strangers. Two girls that i've never met. I think one is named Belinda and the other Ellie. I hand the bottle around and everybody winces. Pussies. Inside I revel, proud of myself and confident in my lack of taste buds. They say that thing's all vodka. I say it's not. Something so orange can't be. Also I know it's half and half so I just stare.

It's a limbo party. The launching pad. Spring board into the water. Someone says we should go to Fresca's house. That she's invited. Naturally my coked out friend invites the entire shin-dig. We drive over and are received tepidly so me and Janice, this big boobie hoe who I love, we suggest walking over across the street. Their lights are on. Surely there is a party.

We walk over and are frigidly invited to remain on the the patio, the owner's guarding the front door like a fat kid guards a bag of chips. Steph hadn't wanted to come anyhow. She's had intimate affairs with a few of the roommates. I lie, just two I think. But she's really not feeling it and after our little clan gets the brush off, after one of the people from that house audibly says that they have no booze. No booze but beers in their hands. I proffer that we head back to my place. I just bought a gallon of vodka today and it's still more than half ways.

So we make our way back. Back to the Circle K and back to my apartment behind it. It's beautiful the sound of people running up stairs. The creaking. The anticipation of Sorry the place is a mess. It makes me feel as if I'm using it right. I have this crazy notion that homes should be lived in and guests invited. That although I fear my dishes breaking, I fear living alone in spite of it. I offer food that I made earlier. Not too bad tasting pastas. Everyone's in awe of my digs. They say it's so big. 3 bedrooms etc. Everyone graciously says I'm a good cook and I blush. It's not that bad. It's good food when you're drunk. Janice is at the stove heating it all up. Her boyfriend Rob is slicing that loaf of Italian bread. It's good. It's good to have people in the kitchen near the hearth. It means that your life is alive. That you're being human. That you should forgive yourself for thinking that sometimes you are a demon.

Steve and a few others are in the restroom, I assume, doing blow. Let them. He's been hyper all night. Let them. He's been outrageous but nice.

A gay guy's lying in my bed in the dark under a blanket. His friends are egging me on to go make out. But I don't wanna. I shouldn't have to.

Etc. We finish the food and the vodka and then the crew peters out. It was a nice time. A good time. Near morning but just before blue dark.

That's what life is about. It's about living. It's about staying awake when you honestly could or should just pass out. Live life for the people who aren't in it. Live life for your dead dad and your dead grandma. Be crazy. Be drunk. But always surround yourself with good people. People who understand how precious it is to stay up and converse. People who don't mind kidneys hurting and gout or the run off of the drainage of your sinuses.

Be love. Be kindness. Be giving.

The world is rough enough without you and your airs. Quit taking yourself so seriously.

I think back to last night and my conversations with god. Moments and coincidences. That cute guy I liked with the blonde beard who got up to dance near us when they played the Smiths. That same guy I saw standing outside the Circle K when I walked the dogs and the few words we exchanged.

Everyone likes my pennies. Everyone likes a show and big dogs are a show and something worth commenting.

The world is hard. The world is difficult to maneuver. The world can be terribly boring and slow coming. But the world is also filled with a bunch of other people who feel the same way. You should take comfort in that you're not alone in the dark. You should take comfort that on the savannah, a fire or a spark brought us together. So light up your own spark. Hold that candle in the wind. You are a lighthouse. Beam bright for all those ships in the harbor that made it past the rocks. Beam bright for all those ships yet still navigating on those sharp shores.

Beam bright in the arms of strangers because we're all just very distant relatives.