

Schlomo Steel

Hog-Tied

I look hard at my breasts in the slim, long face of the faucet. Covered in wildly curling hairs, nipples not pointed straight ahead or at each other. I slide my pruning hands under them and fantasize that they will begin to shoot pus and blood if I look any longer. Maybe in this way they would deflate.

There are the angrily blooming red swaths in a V that will be my next stretch marks. Like I have a pig aorta or maybe just six segmented oranges in cellophane left to live.

As a child I had wandered to some unknown field where I could pop my body, smoothing it out by cutting away the fat, like a decorator running a palette knife around the edges of a spinning cake. Bodies are like mashed potatoes, I reasoned. Bodies are like princesses' beds.

Truly, I never wanted to fuck him. "If we ever do have sex," he says, like it will be my fault. Something smells like a balled-up bit of dough burning in the back of the oven.

Something smells like sweaty leather and a pine forest. Truly I never wanted to, but sometimes I still think about his thighs.

Like denim couldn't be. Like no matter how much leaning. Like carrying a baggie of lunchmeat around in your breast pocket. Like he was holding the beach up. And could eat a birch log covered in snow and wrapped in gaffer tape.

This is what he gets for dating a girly-man, the wind-up lean underbelly of me croaks out.

The belly under the other bellies.

He made me think about the interfemoral habits of medieval Portuguese priests. To that much I might cop. Something smells like burning nasal prayers on the wind. Something smells like an olive grove.

I pull the oldest trimmest yellowed ivory sweater down over my head. My breasts are the only round thing left about me. "I look like a hog-tied fertility goddess," I say to her.

"Maybe it's too small."

These words whip around a long hair on my chin and get lost on their way to my ears. I haven't eaten in four years and I'm still bumpy.

I'd like to return the favor, but in a different body. A pigeon-toed well-heeled drip of a thing with transparency and inverse stalking steps. Something smells like buffed patent leather and cherry Kijafa. Something smells like rosin and cat hair.

Surreptitious sips of vodka on a ledge facing the street in a plaza where business people lunch and homeless aid organizations distribute supplies. Something smells like my other lover's cologne. It's my hands. Something smells like LSD going up in a gasoline fire and a joke landing along with a bit of ash in the perspiration of an hour-old whiskey sour.

Great masses of coffee ink the linoleum. I can feel all the butter I've ever eaten welling up to escape my skin and shirt. I wipe the linoleum with napkins and the arts section. My abdomen is raised and in the way.

I dream a dinner party on the ocean and I swim out to the banquet. Once I had to swim laps for some tabouli and chicken. "What's your girlfriend's name?" "Mark."

She says my tits look fabulous and I lift the sweater over my head. It snags a little on my stubble before I throw it on a heap of discarded, mangled and stretched wool.

Author Bio

Schlomo (or Erik) Steel is a Russianist, writer and recording artist based in Michigan. His work has appeared previously in "Arsenic Lobster."

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