Mary Domowicz

Narratives

:: mirco-story
:: lyrics
:: flash-fiction

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209 words

Napkin

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Bobby orders a latte and three macaroons. I get an eclair and a kiwi strawberry Snapple. Bobby pays the cashier as I head over to a table by the windows.

I set down my food, take off my coat then sit down; Bobby doesn't follow. I look back and he is, of course, flirting with the woman that had been behind us in line. She has perfect teeth. As she flips her hair, I roll my eyes. Why is it women fall for him? Well, why had I?

As they linger at the napkin dispenser, I look out the wide shop window. Now my hearing has been sensitized so every word of their conversation floats across the crowded cafe to my ears.

"Yes, that would be fun!" she says.

"You won't be able to stop laughing, I promise." His favorite improv troupe, no doubt.

I glance back; she is writing her name and number on a napkin.

I shake my head and think "Poor girl."

I hear them say goodbye.

As he approaches our table, he is grinning.

He sets down her napkin then puts his coffee cup on it.

I look at it, then at him.

He shrugs.

"I just wanted to see if I could get the number" he crows.

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94 words

Cavalier

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did you think how I would feel
when you were so cavalier
did you think about me at all
before
during
or after
when you were lying
to me
or lying
with her
dancing words
around the truth

your touch
is the same
how can that be

wait now
how many times has this been
you shrug
no sorrow for hurting me

I was not enough
inadequate
never finding
the right thing to change
what do you want from me

I need to let you go
since you are already gone
or should be

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700 words

Stain

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Greta puls the pan out of the toaster oven. She smiles at the broiled medley of mushrooms, red pepper and zucchini on the disposable aluminum tray. As she brings the tray to the table to serve, the tray slips free from one pot holder. She jerks her other hand to catch it, instead splaying olive oil and the vegetables onto the nearby unpainted sheet-rock wall.

Doug looks up from his salad and remarks, “Another blonde moment.”

Usually Greta would be hurt instead of angry. Today, she turns to Doug and glares.

“What? I’m only kidding. Yeesh; you’re so sensitive.”

Aargh! That’s supposed to make it all better?! Now she’s more angry than she was a second ago! Ah, but anger, she thinks --as she grabs a pink sponge from the sink then jabs at the wall to get the oil off as quickly as possible-- anger was not something she ever learned how to express. Lately she’d been allowing herself to feel it, but expressing it, now that was another matter. She doesn’t look at Doug as she sponges the wall (too late; the oil has stained) or takes out the dustpan and brush then sweeps up the ruined food. Or as she takes out a rag and wipes down the chipped brown linoleum. All the while Doug is just sitting there, munching on lettuce! Hello-o-O?! Anybody else in this kitchen?

Greta leaves the room. She shuffles down the hall into the living room then flops down on the couch. How long will it take him to realize she isn’t going to make replacement

vegetables? Or finish serving the meal. She worked a full day at the office today too you know. Only to come home and be expected to serve dinner!

That wasn't it. Greta knew that. When they decided to move in together last month, they had agreed to divide the household responsibilities, and she got kitchen duty. But how did that happen; she doesn't even like to cook!

Because Doug had agreed to do household maintenance, like paint the kitchen, that's why. But here it is four weeks later, and he hasn't done that. Hasn't even bought the paint yet. Or a paint brush! That nosy neighbor Mr. McGuin taunted her yesterday: "Still with sheet-rock walls, Greta?" She feels like she's being taken advantage of.

"Gret?"

Doug calling from the kitchen. She's gotta tell him.

"In here."

Doug comes in to find Greta splayed on the couch, looking dissatisfied.

"I'm sorry."

"Just paint the kitchen."

"What?"

"It's been a month Doug. Are we doing this or not?"

"Oh." He looks down at his fingernails. He used to bite them. Greta wonders if he's tempted to resume that habit right this minute.

So that's it. She didn't even know it herself. She thought she was angry because of Mr. McGuin. She's angry because, even though they've been living together, Doug doesn't seem to want to. Or something.

"I heated up some canned beets," Doug offers.

Greta sighs.

Doug sits down next to Greta and takes her hand.

He brings it to his lips and kisses it, gently.

"And I'll paint the kitchen this weekend."

Greta lets out an unexpected "Ha!"

Doug smiles, "Okay, maybe I won't, but it's not because I don't love you."

"I don't know sometimes," Greta replies. "Like when you take the things I've confided to you and tease me about them. You taunt me with my secrets."

"I do?"

"Yeah."

"Oh god; my father used to do that. I hated that. I'm sorry; I didn't realize."

Greta notices she had been holding her breath. She lets out air slowly.

"We need to renegotiate these tasks," she asserts.

He glances down then looks at her. "That would only be fair."

He's still holding her hand. He squeezes it.

"So now what?" she asks.

"We finish dinner?"

"Are we doing this?"

"Yes. Yes we are."

"You want to be?"

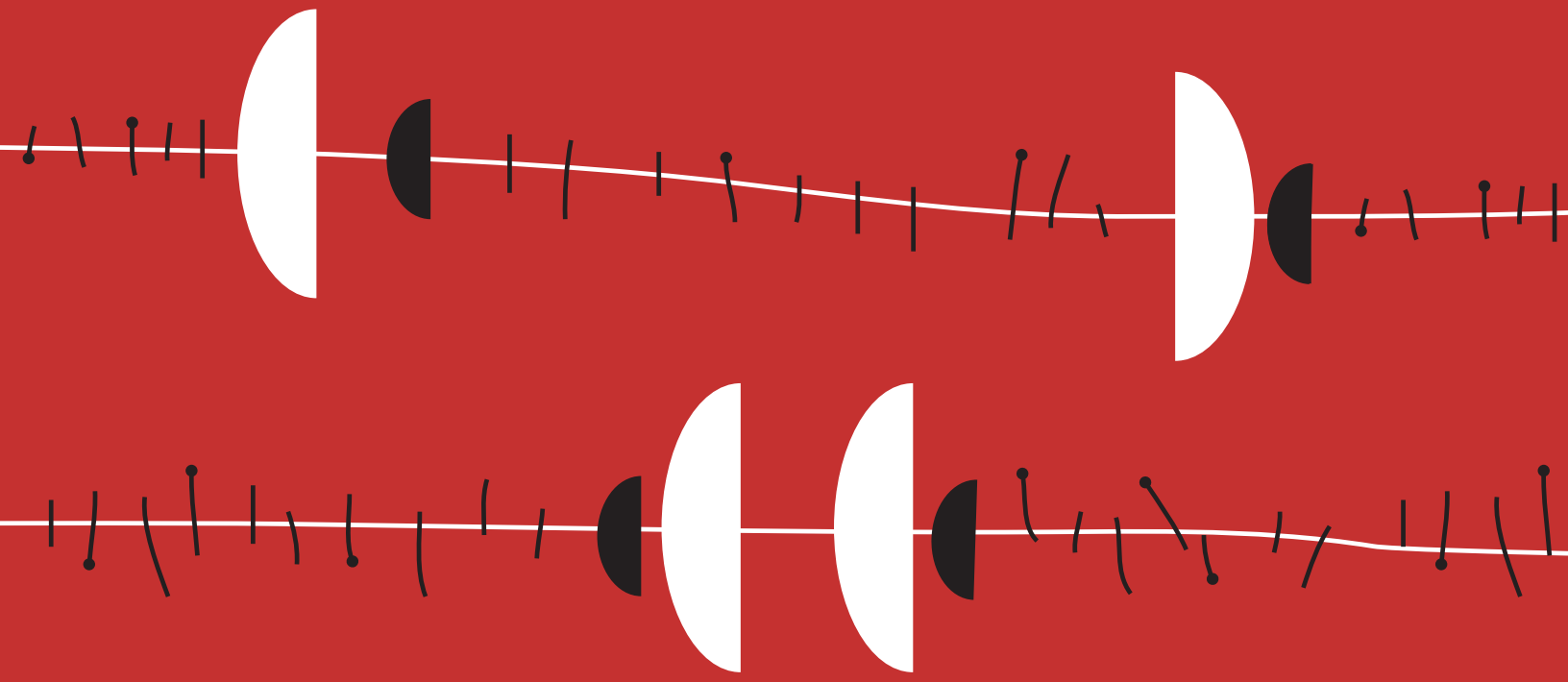
"Do you?" Doug asks.

"Sometimes. Most of the time."

"Me too. Can't we leave it at that for now?"

It wasn't as clear and neat as Greta wanted it to be. She wanted happily ever after. It looks like this is going to require constant vigilance. But for those few seconds, imagining her life without Doug felt empty.

"Yes," she said. "I like beets."



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