

“True Love”

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How long ago it all seems
that day when she sat thinking...
Elephants are worrisome.
She crawled along the windowseat and placed her cheek upon the sill, letting
the mild breeze relinquish itself and balm her.

What had she forgotten this day? The station of years ago?
Ripe pears dropping to the grass from the tree on the lawn and the bees clustered there
and nipping and supping at
the white bitten ragged holes, the brown rind edges.
Knowing that these were the sweetest.

She and her mother had been shopping and the train was due.
They had spent a quiet morning over coffee at the breakfast nook.
Delaying and enjoying each other and the steady cool of the morning before it was
all burned away.

Preparing the list... a regular habit... a perfection of their life together.
As many times in such opposite polarity he and she had rushed some things onto a
paper scribbler... and struggled to a neighborhood slum supermarket and struggled
packages home
had cajoled the cashing of a check
had bought the needed bottle for the weekend
had slept the days away.

Yet there was always industry in the life of the two women
the cool before the burning.
And Aino loved the order, the naïve belief.

She drove the car
first with mother to the store and then to the station to pick him up...
Her ability to drive was as dry and starved as what her life might have been
with a hint of dew upon her upper lip,
blonde, and he was blond and strong
too much blond.
Her dear dark mother.

They spent a quiet time in the market, picking and choosing
and doing some small things together.
The boy put the packages in the car.

Gunther had always gone with her for his own pleasure
and the pleasure of carrying bundles,
and she carried too, and they sweated through searing streets and up stifling stairs
and through black blasted suffocating hallways, to the heat of their place
with the crooked floor
with the bathtub in the kitchen
with the sound of his typing and of his lectures
and his knowing so much.

She and her mother had planned their list of groceries
in the breakfast nook and looked out upon the green of the lawn
and before going and getting in the car with Aino driving
they had spent a moment picking out scarves to wear
and tied each others' hair up
tried for the most outlandish
and giggled at all the fussing over snoods
and dressed.

So she drove themselves to the market where in full pride
they quietly went about the job they had planned
and got things like lemons for a lemonade
knowing there was mint in the garden to give it flavor
and there might yet be pears
upon the tree or to be picked from the warm grass, while
chasing away the bees.

And coming home
and changing into other clothes for the evening
and being surprisingly sort of calm
even though this would be the first time he would meet her mother
or she him and his being away so long.

And as the evening was just fingering the day
she got in the car and sat a moment
made herself cool and opened all the windows
let the top down too
and went to the station to meet him
and bring him to her home
for the weekend and to meet her mother.

And she had been all for him, having read
all the letters he wrote

saying he was a fine man and poetic and
saying she wanted her daughter to be grown and make her world
and carry on the pattern of their lives in a new place with a man of her own.
And what did it all matter?
Gunther was marrying Aino.
What had all this to do with her?
If Aino loved him, what had she to do with it?

It seemed as if that market list later on had everything to do with it.
Always the coolness and the morning coffee and being together
with her mother and planning the market list
got in the way
and crept out of the most unlikely places.

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