

9/29/21

A CHILD'S PARABLE

Yuri wants a child she wants it so badly it hurts it hurts imagine the biggest emptiest place you've ever seen, the emptiest place in the world, that's what it felt like, that's what it felt like, her body was empty empty empty and she needed a child she needed one quickly, can you hear it? That's time passing- time passing quickly, time passing wordlessly, time passing silently and time passing childlessly. Time passed and she was emptier than empty could be. She was a faulty machine. She was a half-person and she knew she lived a half life because a child a child a child could only complete her, couldn't it? Hole hole hole she was nothing but a hole.

The store's bright lights were a migraine. The store's lighting was the Death of the West, the store's lighting was so bright and so yellow and buzzed so loudly she thought it could turn into a wasp and sting her dead at any moment, and still she stalked it's aisles, crossing off names on her list like an executioner. The products had no meaning, no weight - they became forms. Here a cylinder, here a cube, here a pyramid, and she threw them into the basket like a mad geometrist, their colors bright and blurry and heavy. Down the list she went, killing each by name, following the maps and the labels. It felt good to become a machine briefly, to complete a task so often it took on a divine and pure quality. But that filthy light boring into her belied the beauty of her work. That light burned the shapes and turned them into bleeding lumps, the light seared her eyes and turned every bright shade of green and crimson into a variation on piss. She checked out at the counter.

And so all the shapes turned into one - a flat rectangular box. A brown box. A brown box she placed in front of the brown door of the inflated house. The house was painted the most forgettable, the most inoffensive and the most status quo shade of blue.

CHRISTINA had a child and CHRISTINA had food and CHRISTINA could pay someone childless and foodless to get them for her because she lived in such a big house, and when you live in such a big house it would take too long to find your way out so you need to pay someone else (someone who lives outside of your house and has not yet gotten lost in it's interiors) to get the food for you. Yuri placed the food in front of Christina's door like a devotee placing an offering at the foot of an idol. Yuri uttered a silent prayer for Christina and Christina's small child. Yuri pulled out her telephone and indicated that the delivery was complete.

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Yuri left her offerings at Christina's door every sunday. Each visit, she would pray. Each visit, she would gaze into the thousand windows of the house. Each visit, she would burn to see Christina's small child. Each visit, she would forgive God for not giving her all that she wanted, for she knew he made her suffer only so her joys would be all the more complete. And she left, and went back to her garrett.

Christina would come out and pick up the box only when she was sure the woman who delivered it was good and gone. Christina felt ashamed that she paid someone else to buy her food. Christina felt that she was a failure of a woman. Christina did not do any of the things she was supposed to do. She never breastfed, as she found it demeaning, she had a wet-nurse come in and nurse her child. She never cooked elaborate meals as she thought such activities were surely a waste of time, and only ever prepared simple and direct dishes, which accomplished the most straightforward goals of nutrition. Christina spent much of her time perched at the end of her armchair, staring at her daughter playing in her playroom, making sure her daughter would not get hurt.

Christina also wasn't sure what her husband looked like anymore. She saw him often, and they did all the things she was sure marriage was supposed to do. They exchanged information and a series of facts about their respective lives. They exchanged observations about natural and unnatural phenomena. They kissed and had sex. They assigned one another tasks to complete in the other's absence, such as cooking, cleaning, and calling doctors. But Christina found that every time her husband looked away, she would forget his features, and she waited anxiously for him to turn back around so she could remember them again.

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Yuri held vigil. God spoke to her the night before and told her that this was the Sunday, the blessed Sunday where Chrstina would present herself. She knew this because God had made it so. Four of the shapes Christina ordered from the store were not there. Four foods Christina asked for, Yuri was unable to provide. And Yuri knew - she knew that this was not the so-called

supply chain or the tyranny of restockage but it was God's hand and God's work. Yuri held vigil over the brown box of food. She waited. Time passed. Christina opened her door.

Christina was more beautiful than Yuri could have ever imagined. Yuri immediately wanted Christina to tell her what to do. If Christina didn't speak within the next minute, Yuri knew that she'd have no choice but to speak herself, and she felt the words coming into her, the words filling her up - "Whatever you want, I will give you, whatever you want me to do, I will do, tell me what you want." But Christina spoke -

"Thank you, for this food."

"They did not have four things on your list. You will not be charged for the things that they didn't have."

Yuri was surprised that she had the ability to speak. Yuri was surprised she was still standing.

"That's okay, we probably don't need them anyway."

"What do you need?" Yuri felt herself asking before she could stop.

"Nothing. I need nothing." Christina replied, without thinking. It was only when she closed the door that she realized the strangeness of the delivery-girl's question. She stared at the girl's retreating figure. She realized she could not remember the delivery girl's face to save her life.

She turned back into her house and was seized by panic.

"BABY!" she yelled, and felt it echo through the thousands of rooms in her home.

Her daughter peered out from between the banisters of the stairs.

She looked at her daughter, relieved she could still remember all of her features. She carried the box of food to the kitchen. The kitchen was the size of a football stadium. Her daughter stared at her from the stairs.

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Yuri held vigil. No box, no shapes, no foods or jobs, she stood outside Christina's house on Monday night for one purpose. She had to see Christina's child. And then, after seeing Christina's child, she would bless the child, and she would bless the mother, and she would take her own life.

Strangely, the house was dead. Not one window in the thousand had a light. Not one room in a thousand had a rustle. But, lo, look -

Like a jumping sparrow, a small girl in the driveway, the driveway the size of a golf course. The small girl jumped with both legs together, holding a rope in her mouth, like a bird with string, and she spat the rope out into a pile of rope she had gathered at the corner, like a nest. And she jumped about.

Yuri felt so filled with light she knew she would explode at any moment. She closed her eyes to keep the sight of the child from immolating her. She was breaking and bursting at the seams of her flesh, and she felt her flesh shrinking and her womb expanding, inflating like a hot air balloon until it swallowed her body up and she became a massive cervix. She felt, quite strongly and quite plainly, that she was a standing mutilated lump of flesh. Yuri turned away from the child and breathed.

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Yuri arrived the following Sunday with no box. Christina opened the door and began to cry. She cried until her body became sand.

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Yuri remembered her husband's face, even when he turned away. Yuri remembered it because it was the face of the man who had given her a child, and would give her another. Every night, he would fill her, and every morning, he would leave her, but Yuri was not alone because she had her little daughter, and she had her big, thousand-roomed house, and once a week, on a Sunday, Christina would arrive with a box of food, and the two women would stare at each other, content, divine, fed.

End.