

“Stand straight,” Madison says

At Waterfront-Park, I can see the I-5 Bridge and the Columbia-River. Cars move across the bridge. “My knees are stupid,” I say. “Let go and let me fall,” I say. “I want to fall.”

“This is embarrassing.”

“I’ll just fall a little. It’s only grass and grass’s soft or something.”

Madison lets go.

A very-thin woman’s sunbathing on a chaise-lounge. I can see each of the sunbathing-women’s muscles and bones so I imagine disassembling the muscles and bones and stacking them, with Madison, maybe layering the muscles and bones and tendons and other things, like liver and kidneys and intestines, and building something, a bicycle or boat, a dock out into the Columbia-River. I’d tie the bones and muscles with the women’s thin blonde hairs. Madison would help me. “Would you help me Madison?” I ask.

“What?”

“Build a boat.”

“Oh.”

“With her,” I say. I point at the sunbathing-woman.

“Fuck you,” the woman says. She stands and removes her aviator-sunglasses. Her bikini’s yellow with red polka-dots. “I’m beautiful, you fat bitches,” the woman says. “I’m pretty.”

“She’s strong and sinewy,” I say. “We’ll build a car with her parts, drive her somewhere.”

“You wish you were me,” the woman says. “You’re jealous.”

Madison points her eyes at the woman’s eyes. “I’m sorry,” Madison says. “You’re not a victim, probably. Probably nobody is.”

“What the hell does that mean?” I ask.

“Eat shit,” the woman says.

“I don’t know,” Madison says. “It’s cold, isn’t it?”

The woman moves toward her car and the car waits heavily in the shade with wide-tires and chrome-rims and the chrome-rims are beautiful and the car-windows are tinted and closed, and I want suddenly to be the car, or a car-part with Madison—or the car could be something else, a person or a poodle, a silver-crutch—or with the woman sitting quietly in the car, Madison and I could disassemble the car and disassemble the woman and sort and categorize the car-parts and woman-parts and take them and design and build new women and new cars and drive somewhere, and drive somewhere else on the I-5 until we drove everywhere on the I-5.

“Everywhere in the world,” I say.

“What?” Madison asks.

“I don’t know,” I answer.

Johnny went on a trip to the coast for the first time. The shore was rocky but he ran to the water nonetheless. Running in with his shoes still on, the water splashed all over him. When he was knee deep, he dove in headlong, letting the air slowly escape from his nose. He finally felt free. Free after all the anguish he had recently been through. Despite all the bullshit, it finally felt like it was going to get better. It was finally over.

the jack of clubs
by anonymous

the one-armed
midget
by tao lin

I see the one-armed midget
in the Union Square Station
struggling in place
in front of the turnstiles
He has a beard and other things

that make him look bigger
and taller. He doesn’t care about me.
I have to get away from this person.
I walk past him. I think about him
for the next four hours.

I think he is a strange and desperate person
who will do anything to relieve boredom.