

## The Structure of My Hipbones

I am Sixteen

1.

I set my heart beat to the metronome's automatic option, drained my left hand's veins to finger paint my lips—provocatively, unlike my mother's—ground my father's orchids in the blender, and poured their nectar into abandoned perfume bottles to rub their sticky scent on my shoulder bone's crease. In my mind, I pictured ripe fruit drooping into the cage of my barren hunger. I could have imagined the sprouting stems, those young boys, who pretend to be men—their fathers' lies disguising them as sterile tendrils, unsure angel blossoms sprouting into themselves—but I saved that for later use. It will be provided as justification for my outright objection to their suggestions of digestion.

Sincerity was me—wrapped in metallic polyester. I was in heels too high for me to see the virtue of my position, too low to come out breathing.

2.

The loopy white mirror my mother bought me—so that I would stop trying to catch my reflection at every angle from the windows of the boutiques and plastic surgeons' offices in town—stands with a haphazard posture in the front, right corner of my room. It leans against the thick yellow wall which she painted when I fled to summer camp the summer that I learned to flaunt my breasts slyly for a free chocolate chip ice cream sandwich at the shop Granny's Sweets.

The loopy white mirror shrieks something about my sharp jawline and beefcake breasts that makes me wonder why Jordan Samuels had deemed them ice cream sandwich worthy.

The vulgar blush on my cheeks laughs in response to shame that creeps up my throat, and, as my bottom slightly lifts upwards in rare appreciation of the pig fat and butter that had been latched onto my cage, I speculate on the matter: was there any possibility that the ice cream sandwich hadn't yet been digested because my stomach, knowing itself unworthy, had rejected the spitefilled, sweet cream goodness years ago when I had ignorantly lapped it up?

I wash hundreds of tiny suns of belly bile down the toilet's pure water and spot only barely broken down chunks of the two carrots that I had savored moments ago. Seven months ago, I learned how to stimulate myself.

Whole carrots, raw.

I had schemed up this ingenious method of self-satisfaction after mistakenly discovering how my dad achieves his own. The first time that I indulged myself in the lulling carrot love making, I realized that the messy mix of satiation and utter objectification that I was experiencing must have been what it had felt like when my mother had fed herself to me. The trick is leaving them out of the refrigerator for precisely enough time for them to rest at room temperature. The thin end of the carrot is to be eaten first, to tease the lips. I guess you can look at it as my attempt at reconciling myself with those countless moments of intimate molestation that had been forced upon me in my infancy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>She fed herself to me before I had learned that I could withhold consent. Sugar. She rubbed sugar around the brown of her eager nipple with her thumb. My naked lips were helpless. I was voiceless. My lips were the object of our closest moments of enmeshment. The way that she described what should have been considered my necessary nourishment made it sound like it had all been for her—a transcendental experience of lustful intoxication or something.

I crawl to my bed. But this time I am a decent. My soft, starchy sheets are a white dress that tickles my skin as I hug my knees in my cradle. The artificial breeze that my fan generates hums that lullaby that my mother never learned how to sing.

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He drove across the horizon. He sketched lines on the sky. He tucked time in between the pinks and darkness.

He was bred from fire, godblood.

I say that I am sorry after I splatter my drink on his chest.

He runs, he hurries, to ramble on that, “oh don’t worry, it was nothing, really...I don’t mind. What’s your name?”

I eye him up. I stutter. I admit that I have lost myself between the walls and the candy and condoms spewed on the cement.

But he won’t have it.

He wants to know me.

I tell him not to try so hard to say things he would think I’d like to hear.

He blushes as I rush to retrieve my self-restraint.

I have heard boys hide from girls who speak their stances freely, so I catch my breath just before it slips out of my mouth and clouds steam around his shirtless frame.

“You talk like a goddess.”

I've given up on faith.

He slips a melody under my white dress that I have heard repeatedly since I found my lips.

He tries to light his matches on chest.

He burns to ash, to nothing.

Then his eyes drip out and ooze and deeply puddle onto the cement forming the thick lines which leash me to him.

I try to say the moment isn't in the sky, but he claims that the stars have shot him up, onto a cloud somewhere—somewhere he says legs entwine and petals peel off of bodies more quickly than lips take to part, but he won't seem to acknowledge my fear of the skin that I wore yesterday.

His heart beat is ticking to the sound of his shirt buttons popping, and the clock harmonizes, clicking away my life.

He's chewing ice. He claims that it is because he is nervous, but I don't see his tongue leering to lace itself around the thought of me trapped in a tutu ranting on and on about all of the times that I was sad and cried.

He is just pretending. He just wants to launch his ice pick tongue into parted, painted lips.

I spit a wad of apprehension onto his abdomen somewhere between rejection and my wedding vows.

My words and his pelvis piece apart as he chomps the last piece of ice.

I am the ice crushed by his sharp shark teeth.

Then he leaps—out of the sky where our desires collided and clawed at each other for the kill. He picks back up his eyes and testifies that he will try to forget that night we picked flowers and each other.

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I wake up without a whimper. My bed is a cliff, and I dangle over the ledge.

The loopy white mirror calls me, and I stumble over to make sure that this cadaver I am withering within is real.

My reflection is forced. I smile shyly.

That dream reminded me that it is Friday night and all that I want to do is bathe in butter cream icing and frantically pick at the baby prickles of blackened devil hair that divide my navel and mock me.

I decide that my eye slits are my wounds—punctured—they bleed.

The night's mascara trickles down my naked, shaking bones.

Drip, drop.

I quiver at the thought of the shirtless hunk of godflesh who had just tried to wrap his chain around my neck and crack veins in my teeth.

What if he had stung my dry, puckered lips?

He might have traced my petals to the stem of my desire, impregnated me with his razor tongue, and left traces of his toxic nectar in my gut, forever to remain a part of me.

Disgust churns in my stomach and bubbles of objection pop between my fangs.

His fluids would have tried to quench some thirst that they would have claimed I cannot name. I am certain that there had to be some substance to the juice he bore—if he had warffed down a cheese burger or chocolate or something, putrid calories may have lingered in his saliva.

I would have despised myself.

I pictured what would have become of our lips' embrace, and felt the weight of jumping from the grocery store to my overpaid therapist's office who still doesn't understand my inclination for caking my heart in batter and deep frying in sizzling grease.

Drip, drop.

My flesh is stretched across the fragile canvas; my makeup and every detail that I do and don't remember about the series of the top one-hundreds that signify my life are ice cold paint splattered chaotically on my pale skin.

I scream.

Drip.

Because the blood I drained from my mother is drying.

Drop.

My lips are cracking.

Drip.

My perspiration clashes with the scent of my perfume.

Drop.

The stench of the dirty filth concealed by my father's orchid's loveliness attacks me.

Scream.

My eye slits are my wounds.

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