

CEREMONIES



by S. Gray

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All characters in this book are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual persons is coincidental.

Author's note: an earlier version of *Ceremonies* was published in 2015.

Sky and earth are balanced. When one is moving, the other is still.

Anonymous

PREFACE

Ceremonies is an unusual work. Be prepared.

Ceremonies is not a conventional novel. It is a sort of diary, a *Pillow Book*: a collection of scenes, stories, observations, lists and descriptions. The entries are numbered, titled and organized into sections. The reader may want to ignore the numbers and titles and just read the text. The numbers and titles are a structural and rhythmic device.

The book tells the story of the sexual life of Sam, a painter. It takes place in Charlevoix, DeKalb, travel, Carmel, Columbia, New York City, Paris, and travel again.

Ceremonies describes sex frankly, as a part of relationships, rather than pretending it does not exist.

The book explores the rituals that men and women practice with each other.

S.G.

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CHARLEVOIX

1957-1970

HOME

1. I sprawled on the cool, grey linoleum

I sprawled on the cool, grey linoleum, under a crib, in my parents' bedroom, alone. I scribbled drawings on paper, with crayons. A square of light lay on the floor next to my parents' bed. It was spring, and the scent of pollen filled the air. I was five. My penis felt a little hard.

2. As I crouched in front of the passenger seat

As I crouched in front of the passenger seat in my father's old Buick, the pretty neighbor girl reached in through the window and tickled me. I laughed excitedly.

3. My Mom

My Mom hugged me. I liked her smell.

4. I bought Charlotte

I bought Charlotte a piece of candy with my last nickel.

5. I saw

I saw my Mom on the other side of our living room. She wore a big, grey sack dress. She had a bulging stomach.

GRADE SCHOOL

6. List One

We lined up by the big, chain link fence, waiting for the first day at Lincoln Grade School kindergarten to begin. It was fall, and the leaves were starting to turn. Along with us boys were several girls. They wore short dresses.

Later, in the classroom, one little girl introduced herself to me by punching me in the stomach. The others just acknowledged my hellos shyly.

A slight, dark-haired girl held my hand. She smiled at me and said that her name was Nicki. She had a lisp. Because I was baffled by the alphabet, she said that she would help me.

At nap time, we slouched on the thin mats, trying to rest. I peeked at the girls repeatedly.

I dabbed watercolors onto a piece of cardboard, painting a picture of Nicki, just before we had to leave. Then I decorated the cardboard with autumn leaves. When I gave it to Nicki, she grinned.

While we waited for our parents, a couple of us boys peered wistfully through the door at Mrs. Jansen, the pretty young Kindergarten teacher. She smiled at us, looking tired.

7. At school

At school, in the second grade, the line of girls surrounded me abruptly, laughing and poking.

8. In the schoolyard

In the schoolyard, uncertain, I offered her a necklace. She smiled suddenly and rose from the bench. She took the gift, which was thin and gold, like sunlight. Her hand brushed against mine.

9. At home, frowning

At home, frowning, I asked my Mom about the difference between boys and girls. She blushed and spun away. Over her shoulder, she muttered that she would tell me later.

10. Pamela, a friend

Pamela, a friend, pulled out a big book from the shelf at Lundgren Memorial Library in Charlevoix, a small town northwest of Chicago. She told me that it was *The Wizard of Oz* and insisted I had to read it. We walked out and sat on the granite steps by a pillar near the entrance to the library. Overhead, the grey spring sky threatened rain. Laughing, she showed me wonderful colored pictures. Her tanned knee pressed against mine.

11. I dog-paddled across

I dog-paddled across the green-and-black Sycamore River and scrambled up the rocky bank. One of my friends sprawled at its edge. Three more boys splashed around in the shallows further upriver, their little butts wobbling beneath their underpants. We were all twelve years old. Summer sun burned us, and a faint breeze blew. Since it was early morning, the grass was still beaded with dew.

I heard a noise in the woods. Several young girls strolled out of the trees. In unison, my friend and I dove back into the river. The girls caught sight of us and began shrieking with laughter. When we yelled at them, they tried not to laugh. After a moment, one of the girls walked to the river's edge to examine us more thoroughly.

She returned to the others and whispered to them. Abruptly, they began shedding their clothes, then waded into the river in their brassieres and panties. Horrified, we fought our way upstream. The girls stopped and hovered near the bank, their long hair spread out and whipping around in the water. A couple of them tittered.

One of the girls called out, trying to coax us to swim closer. The other boys swore at them. A boy struggled out of the water, scooped up his clothes and escaped through the trees. I shot downstream to the girls, though. Then, one by one, the other boys joined us.

12. When we charged

When we charged up the schoolyard's icy slope, Valentine caught me by the shoulder, her eyes bright, and flipped me onto my back.

13. In my sixth grade math class

In my sixth grade math class, Anna, a little black-haired girl, eyed me. I noticed her. We had just got back from recess. Mr. Osborne, our teacher, began chalking equations up on the blackboard. I peered down at my math book, then at the floor. A spring breeze blew through an open window, making me shiver. I sat in the back; Anna sat to my left.

The teacher droned on. I heard Anna giggle, and people stir around me. She giggled again. After the teacher faced us, the class quieted. He continued talking, his head tilted to one side. I stole a look at Anna. She gazed at the chalkboard, then looked at me out of the corner of her eye. Her cheeks reddened slightly. She made a face.

I bent over my book. When a big spitwad bounced off my desktop, someone snickered. Anna stuck her tongue out at me. I stared at her. She leant forward and glanced down, then scrutinized me hopefully. Mr. Osborne studied us both. He turned back to the chalkboard. The girl's head drooped.

14. I felt myself

I felt myself up for pleasure, standing in my parent's basement. My belly and balls strained. My muscles tensed. Spunk arced out my cock in a stream and onto the concrete, at least six feet of it. My legs felt weak.

15. List Two

In the summer morning, my friends and I ran barefoot, cheap fishing poles on our shoulders, along the hot asphalt street, heading to the Sycamore River. Nicki crouched on her front steps and waved to me as we scurried by. She stuck her thin pink tongue out.

I painted a portrait of Superman in primary colors, the colors making me feel woozy. Pamela said that she liked my painting. A transistor radio playing "Surfer Girl" held to one ear, her brown legs gleaming, she watched me work. We were in her small backyard. It was spring with the sun trying to burn through the clouds.

目合ひ

Nicki crouched over by the other students, her legs crossed and pulled up in front of her, her old green sweatshirt yanked over her legs, her arms wrapped around them. On the sidewalk next to her rested a pile of textbooks. It was on the corner of Carr Street and Sixth Avenue, a few blocks from my parents' home, in the north part of Charlevoix.

Despite the spring sun, I was cold, and I shivered. The school bus was due shortly. I tossed a softball up and down. After a while, Nicki tugged the sweatshirt back up over her knees, exposing the pale blue brassiere over her small breasts. Then, yawning, she dragged the sweatshirt back down around her ankles. I dropped my ball. It rolled toward her.

In Gym, for the first time, we undressed and showered. I studied the other boy's penises, with curiosity.

John, my friend, told me that he did not understand girls. I said that I never thought about them. I just liked them.

At Mass, wonderingly, I thought about the hair beginning to grow around my genitals. I studied the girls at St. Peter's Church, too. Their breasts and buttocks were beginning to swell. Linda, my neighbor, yawned and stretched, pushing her big chest out.

Smiling, I flipped through the book of paintings by a man named Monet that Pamela had given me for my 13th birthday. I loved *Poppies*. Pamela had written my name and planted several kisses on it.

I danced solemnly with Nicki at the Jefferson School eighth grade dance. It was right before graduation in late spring. We waltzed in awkward circles, not looking at each other.

HIGH SCHOOL (Valentine)

16. I hunched over

I hunched over a desk in Junior year Study Hall at Charlevoix High School, chin in hand, watching the snow drift outside like fog, on a Tuesday morning. As the snow brushed against the high, old windows, it made a swishing sound. Somebody sauntered by in the hall outside. My index finger traced the old desk's edge.

Valentine sat a few rows ahead of me, her posture erect, reading a book. Her blonde hair lay like a cape across her pink sweater. She changed her position, leaning forward a bit. I heard her sigh. She flipped her hair back with a hand and rocked once.

Tom, a cousin of mine, looked over at me and waved. I nodded. A big semi-truck crashed through the gusts of snow up on Grant Highway, its engines rumbling. I opened a book and closed it. Yawning, I read a few paragraphs from *David Copperfield*. My 17th birthday was coming up. I wondered what my Mom had planned.

Mr. Kane, the study hall teacher, rose and wandered over to the entrance, peeked out, then returned to his desk. I read a bit more of the book and got lost in it. When I looked up, some time had passed. Valentine swung around and looked at me.

Blood rushed to my face. My eyes dropped. I put my finger onto the book and pressed it down. My breathing quickened. When I raised my head, Valentine was reading her book again.

I glanced over at my cousin. He had his eyes shut. I shook my head. I felt an urge to get up and walk around, but I knew I could not. Snow rattled the windowpanes, and the radiators coughed softly. I shrugged.

After the bell rang for the next class, everyone rose and clattered out of Study Hall. Valentine walked slowly away. I followed her and stood watching while she disappeared down the corridor. As the final bell sounded, I found myself still standing there. I hurried through the empty halls to my next class.

At the day's end, I saw Valentine and some of her girlfriends stroll down the hall and out of the school.

Tom came around the corner and joined me as I walked down the street from the school. We ambled along. I started to speak a few times, but I did not know what to say.

Tom began telling me a long, complicated joke. After a while, his voice trailed off. I noticed he had not finished the joke. When I twisted to examine him, he gazed into the distance, smiling.

I told him about Valentine in a hurry. I added that I wanted to ask her out, but I had never been on a date with a girl. Because I was so intent on speaking, I did not see a snowdrift at one corner and walked right into it, falling head-first. Without a word, he helped me up.

My cousin listened sympathetically, nodding now and then. He bent and scooped up some of the now-melting snow. The sun was hot on us. He made a snowball and shot it down the street. Once, he began to interrupt me, but then he stopped himself.

I stopped speaking suddenly. We found ourselves almost marching down the sidewalk. We slowed down. For a time, we walked along silently. As cars raced past us, they shot up slush.

Tom said that he thought she liked me. I did not reply, peered at him sharply and shook my head. We both shut up and hiked faster, reaching my house. He came in with me.

We lounged around my bedroom, listening to *Between the Buttons*. Tom told me again to ask Valentine out. This time, I nodded. But I muttered that I still was not sure. He grimaced and threw a glove at me, then changed the subject. When I mentioned Valentine again, he threw the other glove at me.

I ran around the field next to the school track, kicking a soccer ball, early the next morning, in second period. Puffs of white breath shot from me. The sky was grey, the sun just coming up. Snow still covered part of the field. I blocked a kick, angled it away from another player, then kicked it back downfield.

A few girls trotted around the track, dressed in gym uniforms, cinders crunching under their feet. Giggles floated across to me. I spotted Valentine racing around the far side.

The coach called a few players downfield. I wandered over to the track, waving at Valentine as she passed. She slowed down, then jogged over to me. She wore a skimpy t-shirt and shorts. Her blonde hair was in long braids.

We started to speak. Valentine smiled, stepped forward and touched my arm. She moved back, laughing awkwardly.

I found myself talking easily with Valentine. She listened, her eyes on mine, and she replied quickly. We spoke for a long while, shuffling around to keep warm. I forgot the time. She had to nudge me, whispering that the coach was yelling for me to return.

I twisted to go. Then we both spoke, stopped and laughed. Grinning, I stumbled back to the field.

I scurried around for the rest of the hour, kicking the soccer ball. Because it was so cold, I cupped my hands and blew into them to keep warm. I hopped from one foot to the other when I was not running around. Occasionally, I glanced over at the track. Once, as she loped by, Valentine turned and waved at me. I waved back.

After school, I raced home and called my cousin Tom. I chattered to him about Valentine. He could not interrupt me. When I wound down, I realized there was nobody on the other end of the line, so I yelled, summoning him back. He said that he had put the phone down for a few minutes. Laughing, he congratulated me.

I ate a hurried supper, wolfing my food down. Hastily, I scanned the lines for *You Can't Take It with You*, a play in which I had a role. Valentine had a part, too. Another rehearsal was scheduled that night. After my Mom shot me a worried glance, I toasted her with my glass of milk.

At about 7 PM, through the falling snow, I galloped back to Charlevoix High School. Other people entered the building, laughing, chatting. I skipped up the steps and reached for the knob on one of the doors. But I suddenly felt nervous, and my hand dropped. I looked away, then spun around and shuffled back down the steps. People pushed past me.

Eventually, slowly, I crept inside. Two students stood onstage, already rehearsing. I trudged down the slanting aisle and sat in a chair halfway down the row. My head bowed, I studied my lines. After a friend shouted to me, I peeked up and nodded. I heard Valentine's voice, but I did not look up.

When Miss Gifford, the drama teacher, called me to the stage to deliver my lines, I stumbled forward. I discovered myself standing next to Valentine and blushed. She started to say something but, after I mumbled, she stopped. The teacher prompted us with our lines. Nervously, I repeated them. She requested me to project my voice.

Valentine said her lines, sounding a bit strained. I responded woodenly, unable to look at her. Above us, the lights burned hot. Sweat dotted my forehead. My back hurt, so I kept shifting from foot to foot. We finished our lines and left the stage.

I wandered over to the other side of the auditorium. Valentine looked at me, her eyes narrowed. Later, when I tried to speak to her, I stammered and retreated. Then the rehearsal ended, and I escaped out a side exit.

17. The older girl tore

The older girl tore my penis out of my jeans. She plopped down on the pile of coats on the bed and curled her short, red skirt up to her hips. Awkwardly, she

twisted her blue panties off. She waved me over and swallowed my penis, her mouth swelling. Hurriedly, she pushed my hips away and flopped back.

After I hoisted myself onto her and punched my penis into her slit, we began seesawing up and down. She rubbed her cheek across my right shoulder. “White Room” floated up from the party downstairs, muffling people talking and yelling. I was drunk.

18. My friends and I hurried

My friends and I hurried into the dark, crowded Charlevoix High School gymnasium. Because the Squires, the band up front, played so badly, I held my hands over my ears. We crowded into a corner. I produced a bottle of apple wine from inside my coat, and already very drunk, we gulped more wine down. My friend Joe urged me to ask a girl to dance. I wandered past the low stage toward a knot of girls. As I slowly edged over, they watched me.

A blonde girl chuckled when I came up to them. Muttering, I pointed towards the floor. She turned away, laughing with the other girls, then shrugged. We walked out while the band was still playing and swayed to “The Sultan”. She gazed over my shoulder blankly. Then the music cut off with a squawk of feedback. The blonde looked at me and walked away, without a word, leaving me standing alone in the middle of the gymnasium floor.

19. A pretty, blonde Senior

A pretty, blonde Senior perched on my lap in the school bus. She slipped her arm around my shoulders. This happened when the bus was too full, and there were not enough seats. Her friend sometimes sat on my lap, too. It was the high point of my day, I confessed to her. She smiled brightly.

20. At the cash register

At the cash register, Jones blushed roughly when she first spotted me. Her head sank, and her fingers froze on the keys. She touched her short, brown hair as I spoke. She nodded and laughed. It was at Brown’s, the store at which she worked.

Later that day, casually, I walked down the sidewalk past Brown’s. It was a warm spring day with a slight breeze. I glanced up and caught Jones staring at me through the store window.

21. At the pool party

At the pool party, Valentine and I lay out tanning. Other teens splashed in the water. Sun burned us. It was early summer, and school had ended. While we sprawled on the grass, without meaning to, briefly, for the first time, I brushed my hand against Valentine's thin, brown arm and her long, blonde hair. She turned shyly in my direction.

22. Each time I found

Each time I found myself hovering over the phone, I shuffled away. A car stopped in front of my parents' house, then passed on. Outside, every so often, a few clouds darkened the sky. No one else was home.

Shrugging, I hunched on the couch and reopened the telephone book, my finger underlining a number. As I dialed, I cleared my throat. When Valentine answered, I said hello.

She responded excitedly. My voice a bit high, I asked her out on a date. She laughed and replied that she had to check with her parents first. After a minute, she returned and said that it was okay. We made plans to go out to the park on my family's tandem bicycle. I hung up, my palms moist.

23. Valentine and I set

Valentine and I set off on the bicycle, rolling down Thomas Street, the following Saturday, a sunny day with blue skies. We bicycled around town for a time, talking quietly. While we peddled, it began to rain. We took shelter in a nearby house, chatting with the people who lived there. Valentine kept smiling at me.

24. Valentine flew

Valentine flew back down in the swing, her skinny rear twisting from side to side, at Shadrach Bond Park. Her mouth popped open, and her blonde hair fell away from her shoulders. She giggled, then clamped her lips together. Struggling, she dipped back, her petite chest pointed up under her t-shirt and her thin legs angled horizontally. Her behind twisted again. I grabbed her slim hips, beneath her bunched jeans her iliac bones hard and sharp, and pushed her up in the swing again.

25. Valentine and I perched

Valentine and I perched on the wall around the Carmel city swimming pool, talking. It was a warm summer night. A hood of stars and a full moon hung above us. Abruptly, we stopped speaking and stared at each other for a moment. Then we kissed for the first time.

26. I sat in Senior year

I sat in Senior year Study Hall that fall, at Charlevoix High School, reading *The Scarlet Letter*. Colored leaves floated past the tall old windows. For no reason at all, I felt myself getting a hard-on. I squirmed, settling my hands over my lap.

27. When I glanced up

When I glanced up, Valentine, a pom-pom girl, shifted her eyes to me and then away and smiled. She whirled and revolved her hips, her small behind and short maroon skirt swinging around. As she dropped to the gym floor, at the fall Homecoming rally, still smiling, she rocked her ass.

28. Valentine slipped her

Valentine slipped her tongue in my mouth. She jerked back and grinned at me. We sat on a green blanket under an oak in her backyard on a hot, sunny day. Her parents lived in the country south of Charlevoix.

After I pulled Valentine down and kissed her, she flipped her leg over mine. I touched her ass and then her left breast. She dug her face into my shoulder, muttering that she liked kissing. But she said that she was not sure touching was okay. She explained that she went to church.

29. List Three

Her Mom drove Valentine and me on our date. As we turned a corner, my father waved at us from another car.

Jones kept looking at me. I saw her out of the corner of my eye. Impulsively, she pitched forward and pecked me on the cheek. She glanced around Brown's hurriedly.

Valentine peered at me, and beneath her green blouse, her thin, little nipples hardened slowly.

She burped pettily and giggled, slapping my hand.

Valentine leant close to me in our teacher's car. It was evening. We sped down the Kennedy Expressway into Chicago, heading to the play *Romeo and Juliet* at the Goodman Theater. "Get Back" began playing on the radio. Smiling, I chatted with her. She put her hand on mine.

When I was not watching, Valentine stole my Doors T-shirt to wear.

Valentine sat next to me in fourth period German class. I got to see her every day. She kept touching her hair and licking her lips.

I explained the math problem to the new girl I was tutoring in math. She had big breasts. I stared at them. She frowned at me and sighed.

I sketched Valentine quickly, then handed her the pencil portrait. She gazed at it with curiosity. Then she leant forward and pecked me on the cheek.

A warm fall breeze through the library's open window lifted Valentine's skirt and revealed her green panties, which briefly covered her lovely rump, then let it drop back down to hide them.

"My Girl" came on my transistor radio. I said that I had always wanted to dance like the Temptations. I added that I wanted a purple suit like they wore. Her eyes shining, Valentine nodded.

One winter afternoon, grey and rainy, I wandered around Valentine's room. Dreamily, I explored her jewelry boxes, her books, her stuffed toys. In her desk, I found a paper upon which she had written my name over and over.

I pressed the flat of my hand on the round of her breast.

30. As we sat

As we sat on her porch swing, Valentine whispered to me that maybe we could do something. I asked her what that meant. She responded that we could fool around or something. She ducked her head, turning scarlet.

31. When I thrust

When I thrust my tongue into Valentine's vagina for the very first time, her hand half-rose to her mouth, and she blinked delicately. After a moment, her hands slid onto her belly. She fanned her fingers across her modest navel.

I licked the right lip and then the left lip. As I sucked hard, they squeezed into my mouth. It was early spring; the smell of the roses below Valentine's window filled the room. My fingers settled onto her oval thighs. I flicked my tongue against her clit, pushing it around for a time. Her hair shone now with the juice. I slid my tongue deep within her.

Valentine rocked her head from side to side, lips pursed, eyes half-closed. She placed her hands on my shoulders and bent forward. After I thrust my tongue inside again, I rippled her musky vagina. I ground at her, my face wet. She moaned and closed her thighs against my cheeks. I heard someone come into her parents' house downstairs.

I bounced my tongue within Valentine. Quickly, I massaged with it. Then her hips jerked up and down suddenly several times. She slumped back and listed sideways on her creamy bedspread. When her hands left my shoulders, she began flushing. She smiled weakly, long blonde hair strewn across the pillow, small buttocks flattened out. On her slight, vulnerable breasts her nipples were hard like needles. She put her teeth jagged against her lower lip.

32. Valentine leant

Valentine leant against me, cooing baby talk, as I drove her around for the first time in my red '62 Pontiac. Her head rested on my shoulder. We rode north up Route 23, the car's tires hissing on the wet pavement. Lightning wrinkled across the spring sky. I mentioned that I was applying to colleges.

33. Description One

Valentine's pink cotton shirt. Small white buttons. Her breasts not large but well-shaped. Arms slightly muscled and elegant. Firm and the flesh pale with goosebumps. Ribs rippling faintly, and a neat line between them, where they divided. The skin tanned with downy hair. Her stomach rounded, though only gently. Her navel a tiny, simple slit.

Valentine's jeans. The zip. Coin slot of cunt. Her belly between narrow, slightly boyish hips. Ending in long, coltish legs. Her small, soft buttocks. Ragged tennis shoes. Long, slender toes.

34. I pushed my arms under

I pushed my arms under Valentine and carried her, blankets and all, to the bedroom. Her breath smelled beery. In the rest of the house, people were drinking and dancing. She clasped her arms around my neck, struggling slightly. After I lay down beside her, she propped herself up on her elbows and threw the blanket over me. Valentine circled my waist with her arms, giggling, her hot breath coming and going, and yanked me closer. She mumbled that she had never been drunk before. She yelled that I was a bad boy for getting her drunk.

35. One Sunday afternoon

One Sunday afternoon, I picked at my food, eating dinner with Valentine's family. Her Dad kept kidding us. Her Mom tried to hush him up. Each time Valentine rubbed her shoulder against mine. After the meal, her mother herded us out into the sunroom and left us alone. Grass waved in the meadows below. She and I held hands self-consciously. When I tried to talk about *Travels with Charley*, a wonderful book I had discovered, she shrugged and yawned. She pulled her hand from mine and said that she really did not like reading, except for the Bible.

36. Valentine dashed up

Valentine dashed up to me, grinning, in front of Charlevoix High School, that fall. She had, it appeared, gotten shiny, brand-new braces. Her thin, pink tongue rested against them, lifted and fell.

37. In my dream

In my dream, Valentine's eyes were just about closed. In her open hand, she held a dewy yellow hyacinth.

38. Description Two

Valentine's behind was boyish compared to other girls. Each cheek was small and distinct from the other. They touched only in the middle and hung in circles over her thighs. In her back pocket was tucked a big, blue comb. Her spine curved up from it. Her perineum emphasized her hips. Her old jeans were tight. A red patch held up part of one cheek.

39. Valentine and I sat

Valentine and I sat on a huge log, our legs dangling, on a hill above the Sycamore River. I glanced around. We were alone. It was cloudy and cool: spring weather. Daisies flowered around us.

Valentine smiled nervously, then settled her hand on my crotch. Blushing, she ducked her head. After she unzipped my jeans, she pulled out my soft cock. She smiled again and looked away. For a moment, she squeezed my penis hard.

Valentine began pumping my cock gently. Murmuring, her eyes half-closed, she rested her head on my thigh. For a long time, she continued to move her hand up and down. Then she glanced at me.

Valentine licked the tip of my cock with her warm tongue, then retreated. I pulled her hand away, replaced it with mine and began jerking my penis. She yanked my jeans down and lapped at my balls, giggling. When her hair got in the way, she straightened and tied it back. I asked her to unbutton her blouse, and she did. She was not wearing a brassiere.

Valentine pushed my hand aside, slipped her mouth over the tip of my penis and bobbed her head up and down awkwardly. Then she slid off the log and stood in front of me. Blushing again, she folded her hands over her eyes. She dropped her hands and lapped against the tip of my penis. When I seized my now stiff cock and began stroking it, she bent forward and sucked on it. Then she leant back.

I came suddenly on Valentine's slight breasts. She flinched, closed her eyes and squealed. She waved both hands. After a minute, I handed her a handkerchief. She wiped her chest off hurriedly. I pulled my jeans up and zipped them.

After a time, I slipped off the huge log. I squeezed Valentine's slight breasts, the hard nipples pushing into my palms. I stroked her stomach, for a minute. As I tickled her armpits, she giggled. Over and over, my hands slid over her belly and whisked across the inside of her thighs. She whined huskily. My hands slid onto her small buttocks and squeezed tightly.

I spun Valentine around and propped her up against the log. Gently, I massaged the small of her back. Then I unbuckled her jeans and dragged them down. Between her splayed legs, under her rose-colored panties, around her wet vagina and its hair, my fingers moved in circles. I slid them up and down the hard, unfolded lips, again and again, and inside eventually. Wonderingly, I reached up and touched her engorged clit. She quivered, stretched tight and quivered again.

Valentine rose on her tiptoes and flung her hands out to steady herself on the log. She squealed and hopped up and down on my fingers. I laughed softly. As I manipulated the lips of her vagina, she panted. She pushed back against me suddenly, then turned and crowded into my arms, sobbing. I held her for a time, gazing out onto the Sycamore River.

After a few minutes, Valentine pulled her jeans and panties back up. We sank down onto the grass, leaning against the log. She nestled beside me, her head on my shoulder. Then she dug a piece of gum out of her pocket, popped it in her mouth and began chewing.

After a time, Valentine grinned and spat the gum into her hand. She unzipped my jeans and replaced the gum with my soft penis. Her cheeks wavering, she sucked on my cock, then pumped her mouth up and down slowly. Finally, she sat up and popped the gum back in her mouth.

Chomping on the gum noisily, her lips smacking, Valentine gulped my hardening penis back in. She bounced her mouth up and down. Giggling, she ejected me and buried her face between my thighs. When she peeked up at me with one eye, she spied the wad of pink gum stuck to my rolling, half-erect penis. Blushing, she flicked the gum back in her mouth with her pink tongue. She smiled at me hugely.

40. I woke early

I woke early in the morning to discover she had left me a present. I opened the walnut box on my table and, beneath some sprays of bush-clover, found a set of children's paints in gorgeous, primary colors.

41. Valentine lay curled

Valentine lay curled in the crook of my arm, sleeping. Her warm, steamy breath tickled my neck. With amazement, I read "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place". I woke her to tell her about the story. She peered at me grumpily and shook her head. She muttered that she had told me that she did not like to read.

42. I kissed her

I kissed her. It was morning. Her mouth needed cleaning.

43. List Four

In English class, Valentine darted her small foot against mine. She smiled, her china-blue eyes dropping down. I smiled back. Grinning, she said something to someone else. She bumped her foot into mine again.

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Valentine blushed at the mere sight of my penis, though she had seen it before. She got very red. Laughing, she covered her face with both hands. Her rounded eyes peered through her fingers. She bent her fingers and placed the tips of them over her mouth.

Miss Gifford directed a girl to cross the stage. I had laid down on the stage, for my role in *The Lottery*, the spring school play. The girl objected, however, because she had to step over me, and she was wearing a skirt. So, I flipped over. I heard her chuckle. As she stepped over me, her foot grazed my ass.

In one hand, I held a brush. I flipped around to examine my portrait of Valentine more closely. Oil paint sprayed all over her breasts. She yipped.

Since she had her period, she gave off a vivid smell.

Ann, a friend, came up to me at my school locker. She asked me to wear a black armband because of the war. It was May Day. Nervously, I said that I did not want to. She nodded, smiled brightly, touched me on the shoulder and walked away.

After I told a dirty joke, Valentine froze. She avoided my eyes, got beet-red and turned away.

I leafed through the *Life* magazine article about Peter Max. I adored his paintings. Jones had handed me the issue, appearing hopeful.

Valentine slurped at my penis. She popped up and laughed outright at how it throbbed.

After I grabbed Valentine, she hugged me, snaking her arms around my neck and her legs around my waist. She stroked my shaggy hair. Then, child-like, she kissed me on the tip of the nose. Her lips parted, and her braces appeared.

44. Valentine said

Valentine said that she was not comfortable with me. When I replied that I did not know what that meant, she shrugged and turned away. She muttered that she did not want to talk about it.

I asked Valentine what made her uncomfortable. She said that she did not know. Something about me. After I said that would not help me, she shrugged again and responded that she was sorry.

Then Valentine murmured that I was a bad influence. That I drank, and that I touched her. That it was against what her church taught her.

I said that I did not know what to do.

45. Jones smiled abruptly, uncontrollably

Jones smiled abruptly, uncontrollably, leaning next to me on the counter at Brown's. She grabbed the hem of her cotton jacket and wove it back and forth. When her shoulders and hips flared back, her pencil-tipped breasts arched forward. She shoved her hands in her back pockets and jerked her chest from side to side self-consciously. Her lips opened and closed, twitching. She touched her short, dark hair. As she went on thrusting her breasts out, I shook my head. I stepped away from her.

46. In my Pontiac

In my Pontiac, Valentine bent down and dabbed at penis with her tongue. A light up on her parents' porch flicked on. Her head lifted. No one appeared on the porch. After her head dropped back down, she sucked my cock in slowly.

47. Nervously, I left

Nervously, I left the group of boys lounging against the wall. It was the end of the year dance. We had just graduated. The Breakers, the High School band up on the stand, broke into "Standing in the Shadows of Love". Dancers milled around, a few taking a step or two. I watched the girls, then tried to get over to them. One of them eyed me. The crowd closed, though, and prevented me. For a minute, I wandered around, then returned to my friends.

48. Valentine crouched

Valentine crouched on the bed, her long, blonde hair pulled back, her knees pressed against her small chest, reading the *Sunday Tribune* comics, nibbling on an index finger, in her parents' home. I had brought her some hyacinths. She ignored me. I picked up the paper and studied the color of the *Prince Valiant* strip. Outside, summer rain pelted the windows. I put my hand on her shoulder, but she shrugged it off.

49. The morning

The morning Jones' family was scheduled to move, I walked over to her house to say goodbye. I found her sitting outside on the steps. She rose when I approached and greeted me, her eyes moist. I stooped down and plucked out a few blades of grass. The grass was wet with early morning dew. As I straightened up, Jones, red-faced, slapped me.

50. I kept putting

I kept putting my feet in Valentine's lap in her livingroom, but she kept shoving them off, making faces and nasty comments. She yelled at me to stop.

51. The girl in the St. Peter's choir

The girl in the St. Peter's choir began singing in a soft, hesitant alto. She stopped, however, reddened and bowed her head, her thin, white shoulders caving in.

52. I sat in

I sat in Valentine's living room with her and her parents, trying to make conversation. Now and then, one of us glanced out of the farmhouse window and over the rolling hills beyond. It was early summer. The blue sky held a few clouds. Her mother grimaced and tried to be pleasant. Valentine remained silent. She scowled, then stormed out of the room.

53. On Tuesday, I drove over

On Tuesday, I drove over to Valentine's home to say good-bye. I was off to attend Northern Illinois University. When she came out of her house, I said that I wanted to stay in touch. She shook her head. Looking sad, she muttered that she did not want to. She said goodbye.

DEKALB 1972-1974

UNIVERSITY
(Nicki)

54. I lay naked with Ross

I lay naked with Ross in the grey room, my heart beating hard. Though we had removed our clothes, I still felt very warm. Her animal scent was heavy and forbidding. I gazed at her triangle of hair, squat and black. Then I stared across the room, without thought. Wind hissed through the trees outside her Douglas East dorm room in DeKalb.

Tentatively, I slipped my arm around Ross and grazed my lips against her cheek. She returned my kiss hungrily. I placed the palm of my hand against her fat, little breast. We kissed again, thorough, patient.

I lay mute for about ten minutes, aware of the heat of Ross' body. Trembling, I slid my leg over both of hers, pressing my weight against her belly. I flicked an index finger inside against her cunt's pliant walls and yanked it up and down. She moved convulsively. We exchanged some words. Then my cock, erect against her perineum, jerked briefly and almost unnoticeably, wetting the pink cotton sheets beneath us.

A few minutes later, Ross stroked my cock, like a small, wet bud now.

55. Ross called

Ross called and said that she did not want to see me anymore. She mumbled that she was going on medication and entering therapy. After I finished speaking to her, the phone clicked, and the dialtone buzzed. I called her back, but no one picked up.

56. I scurried along

I scurried along the snowy street in front of the Douglas East dorm. A girl in a window called out to a boy that she loved him. He grinned. Grimacing, I shook my head. I went on alone.

57. Nicki and I stretched out next to each other

Nicki and I stretched out next to each other on the couch, in her Neptune West dorm room, on a red coverlet, in front of the TV. I started to caress her breast. Lispng, she told me to take off my jacket. Then I poked my fingertips into her yielding breast, squeezing it. Beneath my fingers, her nipple stiffened hard and

rough. As my fingers massaged, her unbuttoned shirt slid against the back of my hand. She bent toward me. Her fat, young breast, cupped in my palm, shifted under the flannel shirt. She began to ask me what I was doing. Slurring her words, she started to repeat her question, then faltered as if she had forgotten what she was going to ask. I said that I had not known she was planning to attend Northern Illinois University. She nodded and replied that she was a dance major. I added that I had not seen her since grade school.

I unbuttoned the rest of Nicki's shirt and flipped it aside. Tentatively, I bent down and sucked on a large, stubby nipple. Her hand grasped the nape of my neck. I pulled on the nipple, then bit her breast's soft underside, kneading it between my teeth. When my lips twisted it, Nicki moaned faintly, her fingers curling over my cheek. I sucked on her thickened nipples, one after the other. My tongue tasted the salt of her sweat. I leant back, took one ripe, white breast and stroked it. I just barely kissed her breast's fragrant brown tip. She struggled out of my grasp and switched off the TV.

58. We raced

We raced past half a dozen sunbathers. A dozen geese waddled near the edge of the East Lagoon. We scattered them when we trotted onto the pond trail. As we shot out from beneath a patch of willows, the sun glared down on us. Nicki put on a burst of speed, leaving me behind. Gravel crunched beneath her feet. Her big breasts bounced wildly beneath her t-shirt. She darted between two Frisbee players, their heads whipping around to follow her. Laughing, she galloped across the bridge to the lagoon's island and flopped onto her stomach. She waved for me to hurry.

59. Description Three

Nicki's short, black hair. Pixie-cut. Her green eyes. Pointed nose. Her soft, pliant lips. Her white teeth, a few of which were crooked. Gap between her two front teeth. Long tongue. Specks of pimples. Long, up-tilted breasts. Big nipples. Her tiny waist. Smallish abdomen.

Wrinkle of navel. Velvety, auburn bush. Her slim, curved-in vagina. Grainy, pink-red vulva. Tiny clit. Tight, little rear. Her thin thighs. Strong calves. Slender toes.

Big brassiere. T-shirt and jeans. Cigarette in fingers. Her strong hands. Her broken nails. Red chipped polish. Coins of ears. Unsteady voice. Wiggly walk. A lovely odor. Glasses she seldom wore. Gravelly voice. Scars on the inside of her left elbow.

Scornful and child-like. Angry. Not too bright. Slight lisp.

60. Nicki lounged back

Nicki lounged back on her bed, naked. When I sat down, she mumbled, her green eyes fluttering. I grasped her hand and pressed my fingers against hers briefly. She stammered. Out of the blue, she started to tell me about *That Girl*, a TV show she loved. I slipped my hand behind her head. As my lips met hers, I pushed my tongue in her mouth. She caressed my long hair and then my beard.

I darted my hand down and pinched Nicki's clitoris. She shuddered and jammed her legs together, crying out huskily. I stroked her thighs. After a while, they parted. I touched her vulva, then propped myself up with my elbows, the hollows of her hips resting below my face. Slowly, I sucked her lips into my mouth, as much as I could gather. My head rolled around.

Nicki pounded her cunt hard against my face. She grunted and moaned, the sounds blending into one another. I thrashed about, my cheeks and beard wet. As my tongue slid past her vulva, I flicked her clit with my index finger. Her lips pulsed against my lips. When my tongue ran in a circle once, she pounded on the bed with her fists and humped her behind up and down. Her long breasts flipped around. She let out a groan, first low, then high. She flopped back onto the bed limply.

61. Nicki dug a

Nicki dug a small, red velvet bag out of her closet and perched on her bed. Frowning, she beckoned me over. She removed several items from the bag: rubber tube, syringe, spoon, lighter, bottle of water, alcohol pads and plastic bag of heroin. When I sat down beside her, she smiled at me.

Nicki cleaned the spoon with a pad. She placed a chunk of white powder in the spoon, then poured a little water on it. She heated the spoon with the lighter, dropped a ball of cotton in it and drew brown tar out into her syringe. Carefully, she set the spoon down, cleaned the inside of her elbow with a pad and tied the tube around her bicep. She grabbed the syringe and injected herself. After she removed the tube, she flopped back.

Nicki whispered that she felt warm. She asked me to put *Eat a Peach* on her stereo. I put my hand on her thigh, but she removed it abruptly.

62. When I groaned

When I groaned, Nicki laughed. Her hand continued to chug on my cock, her grip soft, her fingers relaxed. Murmuring, she rocked on her bottom. Her other hand slid down my thigh. Quietly, she licked her thick lips. I lifted my feet and set them down, felt an orgasm rising and groaned again. Out of my speakers whispered “Living in the Past”. Nicki tilted her face up and stilled her hand. My swollen glans peeked beyond her fist. Two beads of seed rolled from its slit.

Nicki resumed massaging my cock, frowning. I wrapped my fingers in the strands of her wavy hair. She nodded a few times, then rubbed her hand against her slightly acned cheek. After she wound my penis in an arcing circle, she tugged it again. Two students walked by outside my dorm room, talking. Moaning, I untangled my hand from her hair and lay back on the bed.

Nicki flopped down, one arm crooked over my left thigh. She smacked my cock up and down. She spat in the palm of her other hand, then swirled it around the tip of my cock. Mumbling, I thrashed about. Her fist crept up and down over and over. She rose on her knees and grabbed my penis with both hands, her fingers twisting. I plucked at one of her puffy nipples. Spunk streamed out of my cock in links of grey over her hands.

63. I burst

I burst into her room at Douglas East. Nicki and Madison, a friend, were stretched out on her bed, in each other’s arms. After Madison rested her head against Nicki’s shoulder, she peeked up at me. Nicki smiled and kissed Madison. Madison colored darkly.

64. I sat down next to Nicki

I sat down next to Nicki in the back of the Stevenson South cafeteria. When I started to talk to her about her heroin use, she hunched over. It was lunchtime, with people milling around. Glowering, she snapped that she did not want to talk about her dope. I asked her why she took it. She said that she did not know. Then, nodding her head, she muttered that she liked the rush.

65. I rested

I rested on my right side, one leg bent at the knee. Gently, I caressed my inner thighs and balls. I grasped the shaft of my penis and massaged it. As my

forefinger and thumb rubbed my scrotum, I inhaled deeply and shook my head. My thoughts were about Nicki.

I stroked my swelling penis, then paused. My fingertips massaged my balls lightly. After I fondled my belly and thighs, I inhaled and exhaled quickly. I jerked my penis, then stopped and waited. Bit by bit, my body tightened, then relaxed. I grabbed my hard penis again and pumped it up and down. As my balls began to strain, my hand faltered. Then semen spurted over my fist thickly, running down my fingers and catching between them.

66. List Five

In Drawing and Composition class, near the Olson Gallery, I sketched a portrait of my Mom.

While I was speaking, I realized she had passed out again. Like a child, she lay in my lap, her head cradled in my arms. A bit of vomit clung to her lower lip.

Nicki crouched in a chair by the bookcase, babbling inanely. Only gradually did I realize she had in her hands in her pants.

When I leant over and kissed the top of her head, she peered up at me and made a moronic face.

Nicki's jeans were tight. They fit over her cunt, particularly her vulva. They cupped her ass. She could not kneel in them. When she tried to bend, the material strained and sizzled. She grunted to get into them.

As she bent over at the practice bar, her left toe balanced on point and her right leg swooped back and up in a curve almost to her head.

In the vacant classroom, I reached beneath Nicki's coat and slid my fingers between her legs. She stiffened. Quickly, I wrenched her zipper down, slipped my hand under her yellow panties and inserted a finger. When I wiggled the finger, she inhaled. She grabbed my arm and lurched against me. I tugged my finger up and down repeatedly. Suddenly, she yelled at me to stop.

Nicki huddled over by the wall, wrapped only in an Indian cloth, inspecting one of my paintings. She wheeled suddenly and grinned. I glanced over at her. Hooting, she threw the sheet open and flapped it around, showing herself to me.

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Nicki and I and our friends stood on a corner near Lincoln Park in Chicago. It was at a huge antiwar protest organized by the Mobilization in the spring. Wind pushed against us. Hand-in-hand, chanting, we began marching down North Clark Street toward the Loop. In the distance, to the south, the gorgeous skyscrapers of downtown Chicago soared up against a blue hazy sky.

In the Holmes Student Center, I stood chatting with Kevin, an art teacher. Someone walked up behind me and ground their slight breasts into my back. I heard Krysten, a friend, whisper an obscenity in my ear.

I snuggled in bed, waiting for her, late at night. Only the tip of my nose stuck out from beneath the cotton blankets. It was dead silent. Outside, it was raining fiercely. As I was drifting off to sleep, I heard her clatter up the stairs, calling to me angrily.

I fingered Nicki's old jeans pleurably. The seat was shiny, and the crotch was worn a bit thin. The legs were somewhat frayed at the bottom. The jeans smelled of her scent. They recalled her curves.

On the island in the East Lagoon, clad in a halter and shorts, barefoot, Nicki danced sinuously to the Sigel-Schwall band. They played "Hush Hush". Chuckling, she grabbed my hand and pulled me up.

She used that mouth to suck cock.

I could not be sure, but I thought she was winking at me.

As she brushed by me, I touched her smooth, silky arm. Her countenance was unchanged. She did not notice me.

Instead of taking hold of the doorknob, by accident, Nicki grabbed me by my rear. She let out a tiny giggle.

Before I saw her, I recognized her by her scent.

67. On her splayed knees

On her splayed knees, before me, her hands on her thighs, Nicki leant back. Thick bushes sheltered us in Hunter Park. The spring grass was damp because it had just rained. With a convulsive move, one more time quickly, she swooped forward and licked my cock. Her teeth touched me a little. She rocked back abruptly and slapped her hand across her mouth, her breasts and stomach lifting. With a strangled sound, she hiccupped. As her eyes widened, she hiccupped violently, her breasts jiggling. She put her thumbnail past her thick, wide lips and nibbled on it. Her head bowed, she hiccupped again. Nicki smiled, exhibiting the gap between her two front teeth. She started to grab for my cock again, but another hiccup popped out of her mouth.

68. Nicki swatted me

Nicki swatted me on the arm. Stammering, she said that she did not want to argue about using horse. I shook my head. She added that she did not shoot up that often. She undid some of the buttons on my shirt and reached in to tickle along my ribs with her broken nails. As we lay on the lawn behind Neptune, she left her arm coiled around my waist under my shirt. It was late spring but still cool out. I started daydreaming. The track marks inside her elbow scraped against me.

69. Description Four

Nicki lay on her side, her back facing me, the blanket and sheets thrown carelessly over her thighs and calves. A tiny gold earring rested against the lobe of her right ear. Her shoulder blades were arched, and her spine was curved. One leg was angled up slightly. Between the large cheeks of her ass arched the pale cut of her anus. It was pink, soft and clean.

70. In Lundgren Library

In Lundgren Library, Pamela showed me the *National Geographic* magazine with the Altamira cave paintings. Excited, I leafed through the pages. She beamed at me, slipped her arm through mine and laid her head on my shoulder. I was home for the summer.

71. Solemnly, Nicki

Solemnly, Nicki swept into the room, clad only in a long, white linen skirt that hung from her hips and met the floor. A circle of lilies lay far back on her head. As she moved, her long breasts tilted up and down. She began singing a song that I had written specially for her dance class. It was fall.

Nicki broke off abruptly, smiled and said that she was too busy rehearsing to see me right then. After she folded my hands in hers, she kissed them. Still smiling, she removed a flower from her hair and passed it to me. She kissed my cheek and smoothed my long hair back.

72. After Nicki unknotted

After Nicki unknotted the light beige shawl, which hung around her shoulders, it slipped to the floor. She moved one of my window's thin blue curtains over, then shifted the other one out of the way. The sun was setting, and orange light poured over her. Unlit Christmas lights framed the window. Carefully, Nicki climbed onto the ledge and examined the dusty window with a fingertip. She unlatched the window, plucked the orchid from her right ear and dropped the flower out, which slowly whirled down to the snowy street, ten stories below. Cold crept into the room. It was still mid-winter.

Nicki fluffed her long white dress out about her and made a few strange remarks about "The Big, Two-Hearted River", a superb short story I had been reading. Almost as an afterthought, she started to tell me how I would like heroin if I tried it. I was at my easel, painting a portrait of Chloe. I grimaced and shook my head.

Nicki pointed out the window, plopped down on the sill and rocked on her bottom, laughing. In the orange light, her fingers settled on her wide hips, then at her knees. Nicki folded her hands about her mouth and yelled at someone in the street, who shouted back. She pulled her short hair loose from a rubberband and tossed the rubberband on the floor.

Nicki ran her fingers down her thighs and calves, unlaced her boots and kicked them off, one after the other. Lithely, she half-rose and peered out at the frozen cornfields to the west. She rolled off the ledge, colored gray now by the fading twilight. Bending, she picked up her robe. While she perched on the edge of my bed, she talked more about the short story. Then she whispered that she had to take a shower.

After a time, Nicki bustled back from one of the floor bathrooms, chafing her short, wet hair with a thick towel. It was evening now, and the room was dark. She swarmed towards me, laughing, shivering. As she lurched to a halt, she

dropped her robe and toweled her ass with one hand. Wet footprints trailed out behind her. With her other hand, Nicki began to comb out her hair, knotting it in back with the rubberband again. She started toward the small Christmas lights at my window, which sparkled now, mentioning the short story again, making a crude observation. Her lisp was prominent.

I lowered my head, raised it and muttered to myself. Nicki glanced at me and grinned, drying her large breasts with the towel, her head at an angle. Her hips worked from side to side. I put down my brush, marched over from my easel, grappled with the window and slammed it shut. She half-whirled and stammered, laughing softly. Then her eyes turned dull. She propped herself up on the window ledge again.

Nicki tilted back, so I could look out the window. Under a dark sky, below the dorm, among the streetlights, branches of trees waved about. Here, it was warm and cozy. She reached up and touched my cheek. I went over to my desk, flipped open a silver box and took out a joint. After I lit it, I puffed on it. Against the evening's blackness, the Christmas lights twinkled around Nicki. Her eyes dreamy, she padded over, hunched up against a wall and started biting her nails. She came over to me, took the joint and puffed on it, too. Then she dropped the joint in an ashtray and led me to my bed.

As Nicki and I lay down on my bed, she kissed me. I stroked her damp hair. The full moon and the Christmas lights lit my dorm room softly. I took her in my arms and whispered that I wanted to fuck. She narrowed her eyes, and her head jerked. Then she nodded.

Nicki plopped her lips on mine and laid back. She stared at the ceiling. For a time, I kissed her breasts and sucked on her nipples. When she reached down and fondled my penis, I groaned. She grabbed a pillow and stuffed it under her ass. I slid on top of her. We kissed again, my hard cock pressing against her thigh.

I rolled off Nicki, went to my chest and found a condom. Back in bed, I tore open the wrapper and rolled the condom onto my hard penis. She eyed me impassively. I lifted myself back on top of her and fed my cock into her slit. She felt tight around my penis and wet against my balls. We kissed, our tongues pushing against each other.

After I began thrusting into Nicki, she started jerking her hips up and down. We both stayed silent. I dug my face into the pillow under her head. She threw her arms around my back tightly, her calves crossing over my thighs.

We kept bucking against each other, sweaty now. Nicki grunted loudly once. Suddenly, I shot my semen into the condom, grunting. She thrashed several times, whimpering. Then, for a minute, panting, we laid there.

As I raised myself off Nicki, my cock flopped out. I slid down beside her. Quickly, she kissed me on the cheek. For a time, I could not move. Then I unrolled the condom, which had a strong odor, and dropped it onto the floor.

Nicki thanked me in a tiny voice, her eyes far away. I told her I had been a virgin. She jerked her head toward me, staring. I said that was not exactly true. But I added that it was the first time with someone I really liked. She smiled and touched my cheek again.

After Nicki got dressed and left, I retrieved the condom and examined it. It still smelled. I placed it in a tin box in my chest for safekeeping and then sat on my windowsill in the moonlight. The Christmas lights glowed on and off.

73. Nicki rushed

Nicki rushed into my dorm room. Whining, shaking, she bent down. Her hair looked stringy, and her skin looked dry. Then she dove under the covers of my bed, coughing. I asked her what was wrong. She mumbled something, but I could not hear what it was. I began to plead with her about the powder.

74. In the Pizza Villa

In the Pizza Villa, on Lincoln Highway, in mid-winter, I noticed Nicki. She lounged by a jukebox that blared out “The Low Spark of High-Heeled Boys”. People crowded the door behind me, jostling. After I galloped up to the group she was with, I slapped her on the ass. She whirled around in surprise, her hair flying, her eyes big. Squealing, the other girls also spun around. I did not know the girl. She was someone else. People pushed past us, and I stepped aside. When I apologized, stammering, she listened blankly. The girl skipped forward, then tapped my shoulder, giggling.

75. Ross smiled slightly

Ross smiled slightly when she saw me in the Hillside Restaurant, a hamburger joint on Second Street, and spoke over-gently to me. I grimaced.

76. When I called

When I called Chiyo, her roommate answered. Her roommate yelled for her to come to the phone. Chiyo sounded surprised after I brought up the typing I wanted her to do. She sighed wearily. We talked for a while, and sometimes she laughed.

At last, I hung up. I told my roommate John that I thought Chiyo wanted me to ask her out.

When I saw Chiyo again, I did not mention the phone call. We chatted politely.

77. Nicki started to tell

Nicki started to tell me a story about her childhood. I pulled my penis out of her when I realized I was softening. She spun slowly and crouched, facing me, her breasts swollen, the nipples rock-hard, then continued her story. A spring breeze shifted through the window in my Stevenson South dorm room. She glided over to the bookcase and picked out *Cannery Row*, with which she returned quickly. She handed me the book. In the background, "Tamalpais High" played.

Nicki jumped on her bed, catching her flinging breasts, then lowering her hands. As I caught her hand between my fingers, she squirmed around. My penis got a bit softer. She freed her hand from my grasp and waved it back and forth while she finished her story, using the book to illustrate it. She slammed the book shut and planted her hands on her knees, quivering. Her legs closed tight. By this time, my penis was limp.

78. I started to get up

I started to get up, but Nicki grabbed my thigh and would not let me go. When I tried to rise again, she gripped me tighter. I slumped back down on the floor. As she nestled her cheek against my hip, I stuffed a pillow under my head. It was early morning, and sunlight shone on the worn floorboards of her dorm room.

Nicki began tracing her fingers across my belt buckle lazily. Up and down, they eased along my thigh. Her fingers traveled along my zipper. They inched across my ass, then rubbed my balls. Over and over, she retraced her fingers across the same areas.

Nicki started whining and making little sounds. Her thumb and forefinger came to my hard cock and outlined it under the denim. She grew silent, then made a surprised, inquisitive noise. Her fingers kept tracing my cock. I inhaled and stretched. She whisked her hand back and forth over the rest of my middle again.

Nicki ran a finger bit by bit over my cock, swollen now in my jeans. After she stopped, sighing, I whispered to her. She spoke sadly. This time, I sighed. I got up, but she held onto my leg once more. I dragged her a bit, stopped and lay down again. We stayed silent. Suddenly, she jumped up and loped out of the room.

79. On top of me

On top of me, Nicki jerked her hips from left to right and back again. I cried out and nearly came inside her. She smirked and asked me if I liked that. She wore a long red dress, and she smoothed the skirt down. I tried to grab her large chest, but she batted my hands away. At last, because I was so drunk, I could not come. So, Nicki rose and led me over to the kitchen sink, where she jerked me off in a tissue.

80. As I opened my dorm room door

As I opened my dorm room door, Nicki greeted me, stuttering slightly. She declined the wine I offered. It was spring. Below us, on Stevenson South Drive, traffic rumbled by.

We sat on the floor, watching *All in the Family*. Nicki rested against me again. After a time, I raised my hand to her chin, turned her lips to mine and kissed her. She frowned. She had a nose ring in her right nostril. We watched more of the show.

I unbuttoned Nicki's shirt and pulled her shirt and then her t-shirt off. Her breasts were long, rounded and upright. I told her they were the best ones I had ever seen. Blushing, she muttered that she was not pretty, but her body was nice. As I hefted one breast, she caught her breath.

I unbuttoned Nicki's jeans and slid my hand down. After she parted her legs, I began to finger her slit. Her hips started to struggle. She unzipped my jeans, dug out my cock and began stroking it.

81. Nicki crouched

Nicki crouched on hands and knees on my bed, her ass toward me. Her eyes narrowed, she craned around to peer at me. Her mouth split open and close. She flipped her short black hair around sloppily, her large, tear-shaped breasts hanging down, jiggling. As I attempted to insert my cock into her, dog-style, Nicki tried to escape me. Then she giggled. When I tried to plunge in again, she fainted to the left. I missed her once more, my penis springing around. She laughed delightedly and ducked down, hugging the bed. I could not get my cock get inside her.

82. When I got up

When I got up to leave for a moment, Nicki frowned and nodded. I found a copy of Pierre Louÿs' verse and showed her "To Her Breasts". She studied it for a

few minutes, then giggled and stammered that she did not read poems. She added that she thought they would get to poetry in her next semester.

83. List Six

I walked into Nicki's room. Her desk drawer was partly open. I spotted her heroin kit in its blue box. Abruptly, I closed the drawer.

Dreamily, she remarked how she hated it when her panties got bunched up in her crotch.

In Swen Parson library, she called to me, but I did not answer, so she grabbed my book and whacked me over the head and made me yip.

I tossed water on her, so that her big nipples formed through her green cotton workshirt.

With the blue tip of her tongue, she licked the pink palm of my hand slowly.

Nicki lay on her side in my room, lifting one leg as high as possible while resting the other flat on the floor. Her groin and rear strained at her shorts, and her breasts pushed against her t-shirt. Sweat covered her face. She kept grunting. She kept trying to chase me away.

At a party in the Douglas East dormitory, Nicki huddled in a corner with a young blonde woman. They kept touching each other's hands and laughing.

Scowling, she handed me the telephone. It was Ross. It was good to hear from her.

At the Friends Meeting, near the campus, in DeKalb, I listened to the pretty girl speaking.

Tiny bruises tattooed her large breasts.

The light through the silk screen dyed her small breasts a bright red.

In bed, she always made me keep my feet around hers, so I warmed them.

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Nicki yelled at me that I did not understand girls. I said that I did not think about them. She stared at me, then grimaced.

When Nicki finished, spit and semen soaked the hair around my cock and balls.

She squatted in a dark corner of the gallery, wearing the heavy, wooden mask I had painted. She waved her hand. Grinning, she removed the mask and let it clunk to the floor.

As we sat side by side, watching *Band of Outsiders*, I fiddled with her nipples. She ignored me.

Finger in cunt, tongue on clit.

84. On a mild spring night

On a mild spring night, at her parents' home outside Charlevoix, in the above-ground swimming pool, Nicki tossed me a beach ball. I threw it to Kaylie, who pitched it to Frankie. They all wore string bikinis. When they flung the ball back and forth, their young breasts and asses shivered. They kept giggling.

Later, Nicki and I kissed in front of her parents' house, perched on her Chevy. I fondled her big right breast, then sucked on the swollen nipple. I slid my hands around to the small of her back. Two small red tattoos adorned the base of her spine, six inches apart. One at a time, gently, I touched them. Then I sucked on her tongue hard.

85. I could smell

I could smell another man's odor on Nicki.

86. Jessica and Nicki crouched

Jessica and Nicki crouched on the carpet, opposite me. In my dorm room, it was dark. Outside, a little C-moon shone, and a light rain fell. It was late spring. A bootleg from the Allman Brothers at Syracuse University played in the background.

I sipped from a plastic cup of white wine. Jessica and Nicki had already emptied their cups. Nicki whispered to Jessica, peered at her and smiled. Jessica glanced at me, then away. Frowning, she gazed at Nicki and shrugged.

I set my cup down, then settled my hand on Jessica's warm, rounded thigh. She peered down at my hand. As Nicki giggled, she leant over and bumped her lips on mine. I grabbed her large right breast and squeezed. She grinned, then rubbed her shoulder against mine. A little drunk now, I dragged her to me and pushed my tongue in her mouth. She threw her arms around my neck. People down below us on Stevenson South Drive got out of their car, slamming the doors.

Nicki and I broke apart. Jessica frowned again. I slipped my hand in hers. Nicki kissed me again, her tongue swaying against mine hard. I smelled the wine on her breath. After I lifted her t-shirt and shoved her bra down, I bent, sucking on her left nipple. It swelled in my mouth. Nicki moaned. She cupped her fingers over my cock, erect now in my jeans, and squeezed it roughly.

I glanced over at Jessica. She had blushed bright red. I kissed her lightly. As she shook her head, her thick, wavy blonde hair fell over her face abruptly. I cupped her pert right breast. Nicki knocked my cup over, a little of the wine spreading out over the tiles.

Jessica shivered suddenly. I pulled at her blouse, then unbuttoned it, her breasts dividing, then settling. Quickly, I scooped my hand under her bra and lifted her left breast. She dipped her head. Murmuring, Nicki closed her fingers hard against my penis again, tore at my belt, yanked the zipper down and freed my cock. She stroked it. My thighs stiffened.

Jessica lurched against my shoulder. While Nicki held the shaft of my cock, Jessica brushed her index finger over the tip. I took Jessica's chin in my hand and kissed her for a time. Slowly, she kissed me back. Nicki jerked her hand up and down my cock. Jessica began rubbing her thumb under the tip. I leant back and removed Jessica's blouse and bra. Still flushing, Jessica grasped my cock and began jerking it up and down, too. I moaned. Then I dragged Nicki's t-shirt over her head and unhooked her bra.

Jessica and Nicki released my cock and stared at it. Suddenly, Nicki darted down and lapped along its length. I stretched again, reached over and played with Jessica's stiff right nipple. Below me, Nicki licked slowly. Jessica kissed me again, her breath smelling of weed. Her lips were hot. She ducked down, dabbed her tongue at the tip of my penis, then straightened and began sucking on my nipples, one after the other. I grabbed a bottle and gulped down more wine.

Jessica flopped down beside Nicki, sucked my cock into her mouth and bobbed her head briefly. I moaned again. Nicki pushed her tongue at my balls. I propped myself on my elbows, then laid back. Reaching up, I caressed Nicki's left breast and Jessica's right breast. Patiently, they sucked and licked at my cock and balls. I gazed out at the moon, feeling faint. Rain still came down faintly. "Statesboro Blues" whispered from my stereo.

Jessica peeked at me. I grabbed her right arm and struggled up, then helped Nicki rise. My big cock bobbing, I led them over to my bed. The girls stripped their clothes off, then they worked together to remove mine. We plopped down on the bed. As they both slouched half on me, their breasts puddled against my ribs. Their hands darted across my chest, then at my penis. A faint light from the moon came through the window.

Jessica rolled over, found a pipe on my bedside table, lit it and puffed, marijuana smoke hovering over us. She laid the pipe in an ashtray, then turned back. When I stuck my tongue in her mouth, she made a muffled sound. Nicki laughed. She flopped forward and sipped my cock in greedily. Then she leant back and laughed again. Jessica kept kissing me, murmuring. Nicki began bouncing her mouth on my penis again. After Jessica broke the kiss, she ducked back down to my cock. She and Nicki both licked at the tip of my penis.

At last, I sat up. Woozily, I found a condom in the tin box on my table and rolled it on. I grasped Jessica by her shoulders, pushed her on her back, crammed a pillow under her ass and slid on top of her. Her hips were wide, and her cunt had a wet blonde tuft of hair around it. She was sweaty. When she parted her legs, I fed my cock inside her and began thrusting. She hissed. Nicki shifted to one side. Jessica raised her legs, crossing them over the back of my thighs. I pushed into her over and over. Nicki kissed me on the cheek, then smiled wildly. I kissed Jessica, digging my tongue in her mouth. I sucked on her tongue hard. She began bucking against me.

I slid off Jessica. Grimacing, she stared at the ceiling. I seized Nicki and swung her around, her ass facing me. Quickly, I peeled off the condom and replaced it with another. I aimed my cock at her swollen cunt and shoved it in. She grunted, her full ass angled up as her shoulders flopped down. I began dipping in and out. Her ass bobbed up and down, and her short black hair swung to one side. I burped from the wine. Jessica looked dazed. When I slapped Nicki's rear, she gasped, then began rocking her hips fast.

Abruptly, I yanked my cock out of Nicki, put on a fresh condom, settled back onto Jessica and began plunging into her again. She threw her arms around me. I forced her arms up above her head and held her hands down. After Nicki crawled alongside us, she smiled and stroked my back. Grunting, I came hard in Jessica. She began bouncing her hips. Then we were still. I heard people in the hall outside my room, laughing.

I turned to Nicki and kissed her softly. She kissed Jessica on the cheek, then thrust her tongue in her mouth. Moaning, Jessica kissed her back. She groped for Nicki's large breasts. After a time, I slid bit by bit out of Jessica. Finally, both girls broke apart and huddled against me.

We rested for a time. The Allman Brothers swung into “Hot ‘Lanta”. At last, I reached down and started fingering Nicki. Nicki flushed, raised her hips and tightened her cunt. She clutched at my free hand. Her hips circled. She cried out abruptly and swore. Grunting, her hips thrusting, she came several times.

Then both girls lay with their arms over me, their eyes closed, in the moonlight, with the spring rain whispering down outside.

87. The American Literature class

The American Literature class finished. Nicki met me in the hall. As we walked with me out of Reavis Hall, she threw her arm over my shoulders. I described a short story on which I was working. Then I said that I did not know about being in school. I added that I did not think I was doing well.

It was early afternoon. A late spring breeze floated around us. When Nicki seized my hand and began to chatter, I smiled at her. Skirting around Evans Field House, we strolled through the campus. Beds of gold daisies decorated the grounds of the Field House.

Nicki kissed me while we waited for the stoplight to change at the corner of Lucinda Avenue and Annie Glidden Road. She laughed and rested her head on my shoulder briefly. Then we arrived at the Stevenson South dorm and entered.

As I gazed out my dorm window, Nicki leant against me. I touched her cropped, black hair. She had cut it even shorter. It was bristly now. She peeked at me and parted her crooked, white teeth. Gently, she slipped her arm around my waist.

Nicki ambled across the room to the small table by my bed, picked up a tiny bottle and unscrewed it. She touched Lavoisier scent behind her left ear, her eyes calm and sleepy. She clasped her hands and rested them across her belly. I studied her. When I waved her back, she returned. Her short, copper-colored nails rapped at my chest. She observed me quizzically.

I touched Nicki on the arm. The scent of spring roses wafted through the open window. She sighed. Then she whispered to me, asking about my painting.

After dinner, the phone rang. Nicki mumbled that she was sick, real sick. She asked me to come over quickly. She began to weep. I hurried across the campus to the Neptune dorm. It was evening out, and the sun was setting.

Out of breath, I burst into Nicki’s room. She huddled on her bed, shaking. She had turned slightly blue. Alison, her roommate, sat with her, holding her hand. Nicki jumped to her feet and rushed into my arms. She babbled. Her pupils were

dilated. When Alison asked what was going on, I yelled at her to call the campus police.

Nicki slumped against me, her eyes closed. Alison stared at her, her mouth open. I shouted at her again to call the police and tell them someone had overdosed. She darted over to the phone and dialed. I dragged Nicki up and down the room, her breathing labored. I stopped and slapped her twice. Several times, she gulped loudly. Again, I pulled her around and around.

After fifteen minutes, the police and medics appeared. They laid Nicki on the bed and gave her a shot. Then they loaded her onto a stretcher and carried her to a waiting ambulance downstairs. I climbed in with her.

In the Sycamore Hospital emergency room, the doctors hooked an IV to Nicki's arm and strapped an oxygen mask over her face. She tugged the mask off her face and asked where I was, lisping. I told her that I was here and held her hand. She nodded finally.

After a time, I left the emergency room and trudged down to the end of the hall. I stared out the glass doors and into the darkness, shaking my head.

88. I held her

I held her cunt like a sacred object and kissed it reverently.

89. Strolling along Lucinda Avenue

Strolling along Lucinda Avenue, near the Holmes Center, I asked her about her heroin use again. She shook her head. Then she yelled at me to get fucked. I shouted back at her that I did not want her to hurt herself. Her eyes narrowed, and she stalked away.

90. We snuggled

We snuggled in bed together. Nicki sang out that she could feel my hard cock. But she just lay there when I touched her. She felt cold.

91. Nicki and I hopped off the bus

Nicki and I hopped off the bus to Swen Parson Library and entered through a side entrance, in early summer, near the end of the school year. We found a vacant table upstairs and piled our books there. The scent from the lilac bushes in front of the Castle, one of the administrative buildings, drifted in through a nearby window.

Guffawing, Nicki knocked her shoes off and lounged back in the hard, old chair, then kicked me in the ankle lightly. A student next to us shut their book with a bang and got up to go.

I opened a book on design. Nicki giggled loudly and pointed behind me. I twisted but saw nothing. As I turned back, my books began to tip into my lap. I caught some of them, but she finished pushing the rest of them over the edge until they banged to the floor. She laughed uproariously. While she chortled, I rose, slipped and fell slightly, then pulled myself up.

The section librarian made a sign for us to quiet down. Snorting noisily, Nicki buried her face in her arms. The librarian rushed over and ordered us to leave. We gathered up our things and headed for the exit. Before we left, Nicki spun and blew a kiss goodbye to everyone.

We wandered over to the East Lagoon. Summer sun warmed us. As we walked, Nicki babbled. I looked over into the black pearls of her pupils. After we settled down, she began to read, her head bowed, and fell silent.

I did not open my book. I turned to Nicki and said to her that I did not want to see her anymore. I told her that it was the smack. She started to cry, then nodded.

TRAVEL

1974

TRAVEL

92. That summer

That summer, in Charlotte, as I climbed onto the Greyhound bus to New York City, I noticed a girl sitting halfway down the aisle, gazing out the window. She was pretty: long black hair, green eyes, full lips.

I swung into the seat beside her and began stowing my things. At last, I turned and said hello to her, smiling. She said that her name was Isabella. I told her my name.

Isabella said that she was from Texas and was going to Vermont. She added that she had been living with her sister, and her brother-in-law did not like her, so she was going to stay with friends in Burlington. When she reached down to retrieve a bottle of water, her blouse slid up and her brown back and pale blue panties showed.

Miles slid by. People and buildings appeared and disappeared. Summer crops were still in the fields. While we talked, Isabella kept touching her hair and licking her lips. I patted her hand once.

Isabella rose, muttered that she had to go to the bathroom and pushed past me. She did not return. At last, I rose and struggled to the back of the bus. She was slumped in the seat next to the bathroom. I slid in beside her.

Isabella grasped my hand, smiling. I curved over and kissed her. She thrust her tongue into my mouth. I touched her pert breast. After she put her head on my shoulder, she caressed my chest. We kissed again, just touching our lips.

I pushed my hand between her legs. She frowned, then kissed me again. When I squeezed her cunt, she flicked her chin up and made a sound. Her nipples poked through her orange cotton blouse. I smiled. Isabella, though, jumped up and darted back down the aisle.

After a time, I rejoined her. We did not talk. The bus pulled into Washington, DC. I told her that it was my stop to switch to buses. She nodded and started to say something, but then she stuck her lower lip out and turned away.

I exited the bus and trudged into the terminal. A few minutes later, I returned outside, searching for Isabella's bus. I wanted to speak to her. But her bus had already left.

93. In the summer night

In the summer night, she reached toward me and pursed her fingers against my zipper. She tugged my jeans open, snaked her hand inside and grasped my penis. Gently, she drew it out, flopping a little against her fingers. We lay on a blanket at

Coney Island. Waves crashed on the shore. Languidly, she bent down, her brown eyes slitted. Her coarse, dreadlocked hair was barely visible. She kissed the soft, pliant tip, her broad, pink tongue swirling against its length. Murmuring, she sucked the glans past her big lips.

94. I slept in the

I slept in the small tent with the young woman. I did not have a tent. It was raining hard. She had invited me to share her tent. I did not touch her. It was in east Tennessee.

95. The Romani woman

The Romani woman sitting across the aisle from me on the Trailways bus outside Detroit caressed my hair and squealed that Gypsy girls would love my long hair.

96. Another pretty girl

Another pretty girl waved at me as she sped by. About noon, a police officer pulled up and questioned me, warning me not to stop cars inside the Dixon city limits. A girl slowed for me. As she banged the stick shift around, her arm hit my arm. She complained to me about the school at which she taught. Without warning, she braked the car near a long valley. Her hand shoved past my face, pointing out vast fields of poppies nearby. Then we drove on.

Early in the morning, I walked on again. A photographer snapping shots of siloes offered me a ride, explaining how he wanted to preserve their images while they were still around. A young girl gave me a lift. We chatted easily. She said that her name was Rivkah. She crouched at the wheel, laughing hoarsely, her long, red hair glistening in the sun. When she dropped me off, I stared at her car until it rolled out of sight. I stood on bluffs above the wide Mississippi River.

I thought about my future. The river wind ruffled my hair. The sun roasting me, I plopped down on the short, dry grass and daydreamed for a time. Across the river, dark rain clouds gathered. It was early fall. I had flunked out of school. Wearily, I hopped down some long cement steps, two at a time, and trudged over to the Mississippi River's shore. Nicki crossed my mind. I had not called her, and she had not called me.

North of Galena, I found myself being picked up by another pretty girl, who was heading west. I told her, on second thought, that I had changed my mind. I said that I wanted to return home.

CARMEL

1977-1980

FACTORY (The Yellow Kid)

97. Groggily, I stumbled

Groggily, I stumbled through the Realtek breakroom to the timeclock. As I punched in, I held onto the clock. Realtek was a plastics factory on the outskirts of Carmel, a small town near Charlevoix. Out of the corner of my eye, I noted a new girl, a thin, young blonde. I shuffled to the back of the factory and began unfolding and assembling cardboard boxes, stacking them in piles off to one side.

At midnight, when the buzzer rang, the overnight shift ambled in to replace the evening shift. The foreman brought the young girl to help me temporarily. She said that her name was The Yellow Kid, her Southern accent prominent. Her hands fluttered anxiously. I showed her how to make boxes for the plastic watering cans.

Once, she stared at me intently. I jumped slightly. Then she looked away. After the foreman yelled for The Yellow Kid, she mumbled goodbye and followed him to a press. I watched her. On the way over, she whirled around and glanced at me, pursing her lips.

Later in the night, at her machine, I caught The Yellow Kid peeking at me and smiling.

98. Afterward, we lay together

Afterward, we lay together in my apartment, at Reilly Apartments, cuddling under a thin blanket and sheet. Down the street, a rooster crowed. The Yellow Kid stirred, her left breast pillowing itself on my chest. I kissed her lightly. Faint sunlight glowed in the room, making her look copper. A few fall leaves drifted by my bedroom window. It was the morning after we had gotten drunk at the Tempest bar and ended up in bed together. She remarked casually that she had to go. Sighing and nodding, I asked her about contraceptives. She snorted and growled that it was none of my fucking business. I said that I just wanted to fuck her.

99. Nonchalantly, The Yellow Kid

Nonchalantly, The Yellow Kid showed me the Deena Red high heels she had shoplifted from Kmart.

100. List Seven

I draped the rounded copper beads over her up-pointed breasts.

The drunken girl and I sat in the pick-up truck, necking, outside the Town Tap. She pushed me away and hunched over, though. Abruptly, she straightened and raised a finger. Then she spun, leant out the window and threw up.

Dreamily, I crouched on a bench in Oliver's Woods and scribbled. I had a sheaf of papers, erotic writings I had done about old girlfriends. Crickets around me sawed. As I watched, a crow landed on the branch of a nearby oak. I started writing again.

She bit me.

Her tongue tasted of smoke and wine.

In the sunlight, cheap red pearls lay gathered in a pile, on the shabby green blanket, near her curled brown hand.

In front of the other patrons in the Tempest bar, giggling drunkenly, The Yellow Kid kissed me and goosed me. She stuck her tongue in my right ear, dribbling spit. Everyone guffawed. She howled that I was her sweet thing!

I wet the fleecy hair of The Yellow Kid's vagina with the lacy semen of my penis.

On top, as I penetrated The Yellow Kid, I held her arms down. I murmured that I was going to make her come.

She stooped down, her blonde hair waving forward like a curtain, and smelled the hollow of my hand.

Her blue jeans were out at the knees. Her yellow panties had edged up above her belt-loops. Her silver zipper showed.

At the Realtek lunch table, The Yellow Kid's collarbone turned a patchy red. She looked at me funny, a Braves baseball cap pulled low over her forehead.

She held my cock like she was worshiping it.

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Since I was so drunk, I could not come with The Yellow Kid. She started snarling and waving her hands.

My penis came loose. Shivering, The Yellow Kid inspected it, then reinserted it. Some ejaculate clung to her fingers.

The Fourth of July fireworks fountained, then exploded over our heads in Sunrise Park. The Yellow Kid huddled against me, between my splayed legs, in my arms, as I leant against an oak.

Her flannel shirt was wrinkled up on her little arched buttocks by static electricity, uncovering the lower third of her left buttock and all of her right buttock.

My lover's words were good.

101. As I lay on her

As I lay on her, supported by my arms, I gazed down at The Yellow Kid. My thick, sheathed penis met her slit. I moved until it shot right up her vagina. She flinched. Immediately, we kissed. She jerked her head away and grabbed my hips. Then she screamed.

102. She said that

She said that she felt she was ugly. She stated that she had crooked teeth. Her Southern accent drew out the consonants. She told me that her Daddy called her The Yellow Kid after a cartoon character.

103. Anxiously, The Yellow Kid asked

Anxiously, The Yellow Kid asked me what 'fa-lay-ti-oh' was.

104. As I thrust

As I thrust into her dog-style, The Yellow Kid grunted loudly over and over, and her slim back arched. Her skinny buttocks strained. Her tight cunt squeezed my cock hard.

105. I spoke to

I spoke to Lisa, over in the corner, at the party in my apartment at Reilly Apartments, over on Leah Lane. She was a friend. When the Yellow Kid turned and saw us, she hurried over and put her arms around me, looking hard at Lisa.

106. I told Mike

I told Mike, a friend of mine, that I just wanted to fuck women. I did not understand them.

107. We bumped over

We bumped over the grassy fields, parked, then jumped out of my Opel Izusu. Stars shone down on us. In the distance, the Putnam County Fair's bright lights blazed. The rides' roars filtered out to us, and people's shouts echoed. It was a hot August night.

The Yellow Kid grabbed my hand and dragged me through the wet grass. The other girls and guys followed. We ducked under a few ropes and emerged between two tents. Before us, a small roller coaster rattled past. The Yellow Kid pushed me over to a cotton candy booth, where I bought her a cone. Some of our group disappeared.

The rest of us trailed down the Midway, inspecting the booths. Once, we halted and tried our luck at a baseball toss. We lost, of course. When we paused to take in some farm exhibits, the Yellow Kid stepped behind me and passed her arms around my waist. She rested her chin on my shoulder. Cotton candy scented her breath.

Max, a friend, persuaded us to go on the Ferris Wheel. The Yellow Kid and I bought tickets and climbed in a car. After the ride rose part-way, I convinced her to stop swinging the car. She snickered at me. Eventually, we perched at the top. Spread below us were brilliantly colored lights. She continued to poke me and would not stop. I kept shaking.

When the ride was finished, the Yellow Kid helped me over to a bench. The rest of our group gathered around us. Several young men staggered by, clutching beer cans, bellowing. We wandered down the fairway. Loudspeakers roared "Thunder Road". The Yellow Kid bought me a helium balloon that bobbed above us as we continued along.

While we looked around the booths with the games, I caught sight of my parents. We trudged over to say hello. I introduced my friends to them. For a

time, over the din of the rides, we chatted. They invited us to their house after we left the fair. We promised them that we would stop by.

Then the Yellow Kid and I rested on a bench near the petting zoo. She rubbed my back with one hand, her head on my shoulder. Our friends scurried off to ride the roller coaster. The Yellow Kid jumped up and bought us some peanuts. By the time we finished them, our friends had returned.

As we stopped to watch the bumper cars, the young guys with the beers reappeared. They yelled at the people on the rides. One, though, stumbled around and saw us. He made some remarks. None of us acted like we had heard him. After a minute, he stopped. When we were ready, we left.

Our group stood by the Tilt-a-Whirl for a time. The Yellow Kid chafed my hands between hers when I mentioned the cold. In a small voice, she thanked me for taking her to the fair. We got lost down by the funhouse, then ended up in a field near our car. For a long while, we stared at the twinkling, rainbow-colored lights of the fair. They made me feel dizzy. As everyone watched, I released the balloon. It floated up and got lost in the moonless sky.

108. List Eight

I met Jan in the summer. I met Rose in the spring. Thai kissed me at Christmas time. Sarah left me in the late fall. Nicki and I made love at Easter. I gave Valentine a painting in early June. Janie gave me head in my car the day before Halloween.

Janie pulled her little, blue stocking cap down over her blonde hair and just above her brown eyes. She smiled innocently.

My penis dipped far down into her vagina and tapped the tip of her womb, and Janie jumped suddenly.

Janie kidded me about how tight she was.

As we sat eating dinner, Janie slid her foot out of her shoe. She reached up with her foot and stroked my cock. Her face remained impassive. Eventually, I rose and sauntered away, with a big hard-on.

When she drew close, I smelled a slightly off-putting odor on her, like she had not washed recently.

Janie orgasmed in slow motion. Her lips turned purple. Her collarbone darkened. Then she squirted copiously over my face.

When we fucked dog-style, I backed out of her vagina, without meaning to, my stiff penis dropping suddenly and bouncing around.

Sharon told me that she was surprised to see me out with Emily.

Timidly, she thanked me when she came.

Janie explained that I could only remove her brassiere if I performed it with one hand.

As I was masturbating, Janie walked into the room. She spotted me and threw her arm over her eyes, cackling hysterically.

Because Janie and I had fucked and sucked so much, our genitals were sore.

Janie kneeled in front of me, her wide ass in the air and her narrow shoulders propped on her arms. I rolled a condom onto my cock and pushed my cock deep inside her. She reached back between her legs and began caressing my balls.

Janie held my penis in her mouth and throat, her lips against my belly, her head quivering.

109. The Yellow Kid snarled

The Yellow Kid snarled at me that I did not understand girls. Shrugging, I said that I did not think about them much. I added that maybe I should.

110. Behind Realtek

Behind Realtek, the Yellow Kid, chuckling, dragged me over to my Buick and pushed me into the car. It was late fall, and the rising sun was beginning to bake the parking lot. As she muttered, she deftly unbuckled my belt and jeans, jerked my zipper down and freed my cock. Hastening, she swabbed lotion on her rough palm and fingers, grabbed my penis again and started manipulating me. She dropped my cock, though, by accident. When I came before she was able to pick me up again, she laughed abruptly.

111. The Yellow Kid and a girl

The Yellow Kid and a girl wrestled on the floor of the Green Hill bar in Algonquin. She screamed at the girl and punched her in the mouth. People around them whooped. I did not know what they were fighting about and shook my head.

112. I curled up in bed

I curled up in bed in my apartment on Leah Lane. Yawning, I stretched. I began to touch myself, thinking about The Yellow Kid. I wanted to fuck her. After I stopped and called her, however, all I got was her answering machine.

113. Description Five

The unbuttoned blue garment swaying over her chest. Healthy-looking breasts, young, up-right, tear-drop ones. A shadow on the soft underside of the right one. A brown mole marking the inner curve of the left one. Small slashes indicating pegged nipples. Her pale, exposed ribcage and stomach.

The garment removed. Her breasts separated by a wide cleft, a bit of ribs rippling between them. Light hair covering them almost invisibly. Virginal, nut-brown nipples and aureole perching astride them. Another mole on the rise near her left arm, wispy blonde hair curling out beneath the arms, where the folds of her breasts descended.

114. List Nine

When I asked her to roll the condom on for me, The Yellow Kid fluttered her eyes and wiped her tongue nervously, stammering that she did not know how. After I showed her, she still could not manage it. She started to yell at me.

As I emerged from the bathroom with no clothes on, she leaped up, whooped and pointed a finger at me.

Experimentally, The Yellow Kid wrestled her hips at mine. Accidentally, my penis fell out of her vagina.

When she tugged her panties on, the cheeks of her behind plopped into them and settled.

The Yellow Kid rubbed her bloody lips all over my tongue.

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My penis was soft and brown. It curled over my slack testicles, twitching occasionally.

The Yellow Kid asked me gruffly if she had fucked me okay.

She snatched a thin, cotton t-shirt from the floor and was about to slip it on but, changing her mind, dropped it and sauntered away, her pert breasts bouncing in slow motion against her wide ribs.

When she climaxed, the Yellow Kid's cunt curled, then tightened around my finger, and she yelped loudly again and again.

She blew a loud raspberry with her thin lips.

As we held onto each other, the bedroom door opened, and someone flipped on the light. For a few seconds, they studied us, then flipped the light off and shut the door. Their footsteps clattered down the hall.

My cock hardened, then softened, all within a minute, when she spoke of my painting.

She had eaten raspberries so that her narrow tongue was stained red.

When we were introduced at the street dance in Carmel Square, one fall night, she stuck out her hand to shake mine. I stared at her hand, at her heavy breasts and then at her hand again. Drunkenly, giggling helplessly, I reached up and shook her big right breast over and over.

After getting out of work at Realtek, in front of the Carmel Library, I ran into Carla, a young teenager. She could not stop giggling and stammered every third word. She horsed around with her girlfriend, falling over her, but kept her eyes on me. The girlfriend bawled out that Carla had crush on me.

115. The Yellow Kid and I

The Yellow Kid and I crouched at the bar in the Town Tap, drinking. I asked her why she acted like she did. She asked me what I was talking about. I replied

that she fought and stole. After shrugging, she muttered that that was the way she had been raised. She mumbled that I was an asshole.

116. On a Sunday

On a Sunday, in the fall, we woke early, at first light, rolling out of bed. I hurried off to the shower. The Yellow Kid finished the last of her preparations, then followed me in the shower. I packed the last of the food in the knapsacks. She emerged from the bedroom, pulling on a t-shirt. We lumbered down the stairs, carrying our bikes. While I checked the bikes, she returned inside and got our knapsacks.

Then we set off, spinning down Leah Lane toward the center of town. Mist still floated about in patches. We stopped at Route 47, a busy highway, waiting for the traffic to pass. The Yellow Kid was silent. Around Carmel Square, past the Opera House, we walked our bikes, stopping every so often to look at things in the store windows. We climbed up into the white bandstand and sat on the steps for a while. It was late summer. The sun was starting to burn off the mist.

By 8 AM, we had crossed Route 14 and pedaled far out into the country, pumping up hills, coasting down the other side. We halted near the Sycamore River and lugged our bikes back into the woods. For the first time that day, the Yellow Kid talked at length. We chained the bikes to trees and trudged back to a small bridge made out of railroad ties, knapsacks on our backs. As we walked out to the middle of it, the river below us, sunlight fell in patches on us. She fell silent again.

We dug out our food and began munching on it. When I spat into the river, the Yellow Kid poked me in the ribs. She gave me a plump strawberry to eat. A flicker sang at length, and overhead a plane growled by. I pulled out a copy of *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* and began to read it aloud to her. She rolled her eyes and grimaced.

After a while, The Yellow Kid yawned. Finally, she threw her sandwich down, snatched my book and tossed it up on the bank. She started giving me a backrub until I became drowsy. After I stretched out on the warm wooden boards, she joined me. I complained to her about my frustration with painting. But I added that I was glad that I was painting again. She nodded and shrugged.

In the late afternoon, we left the woods. On the way back, we halted at a farm for a drink of water, slurping at a hose, wiping the sweat from our bodies with towels. The farmer joked with us. When we rode off again, he waved to us. Near Route 14, The Yellow Kid sang out "Lost in the Supermarket". By now, we were tired. Once, we rested on the top of a hill overlooking Carmel.

As it was getting dark, we reached my apartment. We stowed our bikes in a back room and collapsed on the couch. Both of us smelled sweaty. Yawning, the Yellow Kid crawled closer and rested against my chest. I slid my arm over her shoulders and kissed the top of her head.

117. When I entered

When I entered the Tempest, I saw The Yellow Kid sitting at the bar, sipping a Heineken, looking extremely drunk. I went over to her and said hello. She spun around. Suddenly raging, shaking, she wanted to know where I had been. She yelled that I was supposed to meet her two hours ago. Flushing, I mumbled that I was sorry.

118. The Yellow Kid dug

The Yellow Kid dug into her shoulderbag and displayed a nickel-plated .32 Colt pistol. My eyes got big. She smirked. When I asked her what it was for, she shrugged. Suddenly nervous, I turned away.

119. The Yellow Kid strode toward

The Yellow Kid strode toward the living room couch in my apartment, crashed down and poked me sharply. She snorted at me. It was dark; the apartment buildings across Leah Lane blocked the sun. Winter wind rattled a nearby window. "Alison" crooned on the radio. We kissed, then she lifted her loose, white t-shirt up over her head. She yanked her blonde hair back into a long ponytail. After my arms looped around her tiny waist, her arms linked around my neck. She spoke to me, slurring her words, her brown eyes slitted.

The Yellow Kid clicked open the catch of her jeans and wrestled them off. Clumsily, she tugged a thin tampon out. She shoved her jeans to the floor, grabbed a towel from the nightstand and stuffed it under her hips. Quickly, she wrapped her arms around my neck and swung my lips to hers again. One of her legs flew over both of mine and weighed them down. She put her hand on my hip, then grabbed my ass.

We kissed again, our tongues flicking, still lying on our sides. The Yellow Kid flipped over and fit her broad ass against my belly, like spoons. Her left shoulder blade was adorned with a yellow cow tattoo. I rolled a condom on. She grasped my cock and jammed it between her legs and into herself. I grabbed one of her pert breasts. She grunted noisily. As she turned her head, we kissed again. I began rippling in and out. She shouted out an obscenity. The couch springs

squeaked. She moaned and brushed a strand of her hair out of her face. Hoarsely, she cursed again.

I dispatched my semen inside of The Yellow Kid, bit by bit. She rocked her hips fast, then slow, and seized my hand, suddenly inhaling. The Yellow Kid grunted several times and swore loudly.

Her back was sweaty. After her legs lifted, she rolled away. The condom was streaked with blood. Gazing at me with narrowed eyes, she rose and pulled her t-shirt and jeans on. She curled up on the window seat. Snow drifted down outside the window.

Suddenly, The Yellow Kid sneered that she did not think she wanted to fuck me again.

120. I strayed by the room

I strayed by the room accidentally. It was at a party in Charlevoix. A young, red-headed woman sprawled on a bed. Lazily, she touched herself inside her panties, stabbing one of his fingers. She glanced up, her quiet eyes meeting mine, and grinned. Then she withdrew her hand and held it in her mouth. Slowly, she inserted her hand and began to finger herself again.

121. Description Six

Thai's boyish ass. Her long, straight, black hair. Gently rounded belly. Dimpled navel. Simple slit. Red-painted nails. Her shyness. The Wayfarer sunglasses she sometimes wore. Hazel eyes. Slurred accent. The tight t-shirt and jeans she wore. Dancer's legs. Quiet.

122. List Ten

As Thai danced, she seemed to forget herself. Normally, she was pretty withdrawn.

When I raised the green blanket, she blinked up at me, her long hair almost covering her face, her eyes fearful, her mouth half-open. Her golden shoulders poked through the black web of her hair.

Around my condomed penis, Thai bobbed up and down. Her juicy vulva curved open gradually and then closed tight slowly.

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Her vagina wilted little by little, its lips losing color and softening. The moisture dried somewhat. Left was its heavy, pungent odor.

Except for her skinny breasts and flared hips, Thai looked like a young boy. She appeared a bit androgynous.

Thai licked my cock timidly as if afraid it would soil her. Her tongue tapped against my balls. She only sucked the head. And when I came, she would not swallow my semen in her mouth. Instead, she caught it in her hand. But then she bit me.

Shyly, in my car before work, she dabbed at my cock with a handiwipe from her purse. Then she pecked me on the cheek.

Thai pressed up against me in the bed. She murmured that she loved to nap with me.

Reverently, she took my pencil portrait of Valentine and examined it.

123. On the bridge

On the bridge constructed of railroad ties, over the Sycamore River, I sat dangling my feet. The wood underneath me was warm. I had brought along some watercolors and a pad. It was mid-spring, sunny and hot, with a breeze. I thought about what I could do in life. I thought I could paint. Picking up the paint and paper, I stared at them. I began sketching a portrait of Ross.

124. I knocked on

I knocked on the Yellow Kid's door. When her roommate came to the door, she informed me that she was out with a guy named Nick.

125. The Yellow Kid growled

The Yellow Kid growled that she had just started her period, and we did not need birth control. My cock throbbed. So, I shoved it into her.

126. List Eleven

At Realtek, the Yellow Kid checked out my rack, out of the corner of her eye, her face tilted up. Then she opened her mouth and stared intently at my groin. Her head dropped, and her eyes flicked up to mine. They flicked back between my legs. She turned to the plastic injection machine that she was operating, smirking.

She crouched in front of a big mirror set on the floor, putting on her make-up, naked. Her eyes narrowed. She half-smiled, coldly. Her thin ass rested on her ankles.

The Yellow Kid made a face before her lips touched my penis. After a few perfunctory sucks, she slumped back on her heels and twisted her head away. She passed the back of her hand over her lips once. Rain clicked against the windows of my apartment softly. It was dark in my livingroom. When she took my penis back in her mouth, her eyes closed, and her nostrils flared. Suddenly, I shot my semen in her mouth. She swallowed involuntarily, gulping several times. She fell back on her rear, then looked at me, her eyes wide. She screamed at me and jumped up.

The side of my hand folded into The Yellow Kid's rubbery breast by mistake. She slapped my face on purpose. She barked at me to watch it.

She jerked her hips convulsively, poking her fingers at her straw-colored genitals. After a moment, she produced two shiny metal balls. She rolled them wet and clicking in her palm, then flipped them across the room to me, one at a time.

She whispered that she kind of liked to see me climb up the stairs to her apartment with a stargazer lily and a hard-on.

Since she lay hidden beneath the sheets, I could not tell which end was which.

The Yellow Kid bent over to pick up an oil portrait of mine and straightened. She wedged her thumbs under her tight, pink panties to pull them down over the half-moons of her ass, her narrow hips swinging up one at a time.

At Realtek, Victoria, a married woman, called me over to the plastics press at which she was working. She said that her press had seized up. I picked up an iron bar, climbed up on the machine, inserted the bar and worked the snag loose.

Victoria smiled brightly, held my eyes and touched my arm. She wiggled her breasts. I stalked away, grimacing.

The Yellow Kid held her hand over the telephone speaker as, laughing, she tried to set up a blind date for me.

The Yellow Kid finished using the toilet. I entered the bathroom too early, though, and caught her pungent scent.

Curled up on the couch, I watched a public television show on the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. The Yellow Kid leant against me. I kept pointing out paintings that I loved. She kept shrugging. I said that sometimes I got so bored in Carmel.

She snatched at my small, soft buttocks constantly.

On a late summer afternoon, I hurried over the Madison Street bridge. I was on my way to the Union Station to catch the train back to Carmel after spending the day at the Art Institute. When a wolf whistle sounded, I kept going. The wolf whistle repeated, more insistently. I glanced around. No one was in sight. At last, a girl yelled at me that I should look up here, honey! I peered up to see two girls sitting in a window of the Civic Opera House, their legs dangling out over the Chicago River. They waved at me. Grinning, I waved back.

127. She lay sprawled

She lay sprawled across the bed, so I brought her a cone of red and yellow irises. Smiling, I scattered them across her rounded shoulders and breasts, which were the color of just fallen snow.

128. As he lay

As he lay limply in the lawnchair, the back of his head indenting her taut belly, The Yellow Kid gave another guy a backrub. It was during the brass band concert in Carmel Square. I did not know who he was. Then I heard her call him Nick.

129. The party had ended

The party had ended. It was 3 AM. I lay half-asleep on my bed in my apartment at Reilly Apartments. Two women camped out on the couch in the

livingroom. They had said that they were too drunk to drive home. Outside, it was a gorgeous fall night, and crickets clicked over and over.

One of the girls complained to the other that the couch was uncomfortable, then she giggled. I called out that they could sleep in my room. Silence followed. Then I heard whispers. One of them laughed and yelled to the other that they could just suck my cock.

A couch squeaked, and then one of the girls appeared at my bedroom door. She was blonde and thin, and her eyes were merry. She wore a blouse and shorts. After the girl dove into my bed, I slipped my arm around her shoulders. She dug her face into my chest. She whispered that her name was Megan. When I pulled the blanket between us loose, she burrowed underneath. She hugged me tightly. I was naked.

The other girl came to the door. She padded over slowly and stood peering down at us. She was brunette and curvy, and all she wore was a long-t-shirt. After she perched on the edge of the bed, Megan peeked up at her. The girl slid down beside me, staring. I asked her what her name was. She said that it was Anya. I told them my name.

As Megan cupped her hand over my cock and began twitching it, my hips moved. I dug my hand under her blouse. Her breasts were small, and her nipples were stiff. I kissed her. Her breath smelled beery.

I looked over at Anya. She gazed at Megan. When I looped my arm around Anya's shoulders, she stared at me somberly. She and I kissed. Megan continued to caress my penis. My legs stretched. After I stuck my tongue in Anya's mouth, she drew back, grimacing.

I turned and kissed Megan. She dug her tongue in my mouth, her hand tightening on my cock. She straightened up suddenly and tugged off her blouse and then her shorts. She left her panties on. Then she flopped back down and began masturbating me. Her breasts quivered.

Anya leant over and kissed me on the lips, her eyes half-closed. She smelled like beer, too. I stroked her cheek. Megan caressed my balls, murmuring softly. After she asked Anya to take her t-shirt off, Anya removed it. She had full breasts. I folded my fingers around one of them. She shivered, then settled against me. I lifted the blanket and tucked it over her.

Anya reached under the blanket and touched my penis. When she felt Anya's hand, Megan chuckled. They both trickled their fingers around. I kissed Anya on the cheek. She shook her head, her warm breath pulsing against my chest.

Anya wriggled around, ducked her head under the blanket and kissed my cock lightly. Megan massaged my penis. Anya began licking my cock. I groaned. The windows to my room were open, and a breeze wafted in. In the distance, a car alarm began to ring.

Megan twisted around, flipped the blanket up and started lapping at my balls. I grasped Anya's right breast and Megan's left breast, stroking and then fiddling with their nipples. The car alarm fell silent.

Moaning, I shuddered. Megan laughed. After Anya swallowed my hard cock halfway down, her head began bobbing. I stroked her silky ass, then ran my hand up and down her back. Her hair whisked against my hand.

Anya sat up and studied me, smiling. Megan sucked my cock in her mouth. Anya dove down and thrust her tongue in my mouth, gripping my head. Megan popped her head up and down on my penis. My hips matched her mouth.

Anya leant back, grinned, then bent down and licked my balls. As she and Megan swerved their tongues over and over on the tip of my cock, my thighs stiffened. Then I mumbled that I wanted to fuck them both. Megan glanced up, panting, and whispered that they were not ready for that. Anya did not say anything. She continued licking. Megan rejoined her.

All of a sudden, I came plentifully, squirting semen onto their lips and then their faces. Anya jerked back. Megan tilted her head away. Anya wiped her face with her hand, grimacing. Megan licked my cock a bit more. I lay there, dazed.

When Megan asked me if I was satisfied, I nodded. Anya stretched out against me. I kissed her. After Megan struggled back up against me, I kissed her, too. Their lips were sticky. Morning light had appeared outside, and birds started to chirp softly.

130. The Yellow Kid turned to me

The Yellow Kid turned to me and dug in her pocket. She produced a piece of aluminum foil and unwrapped it. A wad of yellow-gray resin was stuck to the foil. Smiling, she said that it was PCP and asked me if I wanted to buy some. Quickly, I shook my head no and muttered that she was crazy. She replied that I should fuck off. She explained that she was selling PCP to a lot of people. Grabbing her by the shoulder, I yelled at her that she should not be selling drugs.

131. Description Seven

Her virginal mouth. No make-up. Her lips curved, flaring at their edges. Slight wrinkles etched on either side, straight up and down. A long indentation above, surrounded by the rise of her upper lip. A line of down across it.

Lips tugged down. Parted. Cheeks dimpled. Square white teeth cut into lower lip. A gap between her two front teeth. The light pink of her gums. Her wet, grainy and rose-pink tongue. Elongated flat and wide. Curled.

132. The Yellow Kid and I crouched

The Yellow Kid and I crouched on a bench in Carmel Square. She rubbed her right hand up and down her left arm repeatedly. It was late fall. Locusts buzzed. An evening breeze had risen that cooled the air slightly.

The Yellow Kid scowled. She stood up, then plopped back down. She flicked her blonde hair out of her face, sighing loudly. After I asked her what was wrong, she shook her head. Then she snapped that she thought she was pregnant. She rolled her eyes and hit me hard in the arm.

I mumbled that I had warned her that we needed to use birth control. She called me a fucker. She leaped up and stalked away.

I trailed after her. The Yellow Kid halted. I took her hand and led her back to the bench. When she asked what we were going to do, I replied that I did not know. Two little girls skipped past us. We watched them head over to the big, white bandstand and climb up its stairs. They pranced around.

I asked The Yellow Kid if she wanted to have the baby. She looked at me but did not say anything. When I asked if she wanted to have an abortion, she hung her head. Finally, she muttered that it was none of my business. She jumped up and raced away toward the Opera House.

Two days later, The Yellow Kid called me. She informed me that she had gotten her period. Then she hung up. Though I phoned her, she did not answer.

133. List Twelve

She bit on the plump grape. Her tongue trailed around her lips, wiping off the clear juice. Sucking, she cupped one in her mouth. Her back rested against the elm beneath which we sat in Sunrise Park. I flipped open a drawing pad. My boombox played "Got to Give It Up". It was late fall and a bit chilly. After she spat out the seeds, she stuffed another grape in her mouth. Hurriedly, I began to sketch her. She yawned and muttered that she was bored.

The Yellow Kid bent over at the factory office's windowseat to peer out at the new snow. She stuck out her little rump and wiggled it around unconsciously.

At a window in The Yellow Kid's apartment, in an old house over on McSorley Avenue, I sat reading *The Grass Harp*. She slouched in front of the TV. I called her to come and listen to a paragraph. She ambled over and listened, then asked me what the big fucking deal was.

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At the bathroom sink, I doused my genitals with the Malathion.

My buttocks rose and fell between The Yellow Kid's legs, and in reaction her knees swayed up and down.

At breakfast, The Yellow Kid's twin insisted on sitting in on my lap. She was visiting from Tennessee. The Yellow Kid smiled at me placidly.

It took Remi a long time to give me that blowjob.

The Yellow Kid wore two mismatched earrings in her right ear.

Caroline asked me to urinate on her. She said she would sit in my bathtub. Frowning, shaking my head, I muttered that I did not think so.

The Yellow Kid promised me that she would stop wearing panties. She said that I had finally convinced her.

At the Tempest bar, we pressed elbows over *The Jumping Frog* electronic game. The Yellow Kid eyed me coolly. She snaked her hand onto my ass and squeezed it hard. She leant over and jammed her tongue in my mouth, making me jump. Her breath was warm and beery.

134. On break, in the middle of the night

On break, in the middle of the night at the Realtek factory, I hunched on top of a pile of unopened boxes. I read from my *Mentor Book of Major American Poets*, the one with the cream cover. The Yellow Kid stole up behind me and studied it over my shoulder. I closed the book and set it down. Frowning, I said to her that I wanted to leave Carmel. I explained that there was nothing for me here. I added that a friend of mine in South Carolina said that he would put me up and that I could paint there. She looked at me, expressionless.

135. Intently, I sketched

Intently, I sketched the iris on the table. It was early winter, though no snow had fallen yet. Bright sunlight filled my apartment. Sipping tea, I studied the flower. After a time, I went to take a nap.

About 5 PM, the phone rang. It was The Yellow Kid. She asked if she could come over. I said that she could.

A few hours later, The Yellow Kid tapped softly on my door. She slunk in and headed straight for my bedroom. I followed her. She laid down on my bed and beckoned me over. As we laid together, The Yellow Kid lounged in the crook of my arm. She said that she wanted to ask me something. I nodded.

The Yellow Kid whispered that she had a way of getting into the Chevrolet plant in Belvidere. She explained that we could load up a van with auto parts. Smirking, she said that she knew someone who would buy them at a good price. We could make a lot of money for a little work, she added.

I grimaced and shook my head. At last, I responded that I did not think so. The Yellow Kid gazed at me stonily.

Later that night, I was dreaming about Paris. A burst of knocking on my door woke me. When I answered it, The Yellow Kid rushed in and flopped down in a chair. I flipped on the overhead light.

Hurriedly, The Yellow Kid told me that she was in trouble. She said that she and her girlfriend and some male friends of theirs had burgled the Chevy plant. One of them was her friend Nick. They got away with a lot of parts, but the FBI had staked out the farmhouse where they had hidden them. The male friends would not inform on the girls. So, she had only been questioned, not arrested.

The Yellow Kid was shaking. She started pacing up and down my livingroom.

The next day, I woke up late. I had overslept. I dressed hurriedly and drove over to Carmel Square. It was a cloudy day, and snow began to tumble down.

I entered the Family Restaurant, across from the square, waving to the Yellow Kid. Perched in a booth, she called to me. After I joined her, she kept sliding her hands up and down her thighs. Angrily, she asked me where I had been. I did not say anything. Then I told her that I could not see her anymore. The Yellow Kid froze. I said that there was too much shit. Guns and drugs. Anyway, I muttered that I was moving to Columbia. I mumbled that my friend said that he would let me stay on his couch.

The Yellow Kid jumped up and punched me in the mouth hard. Shouting, she stormed out of the restaurant.

COLUMBIA

1980-1983

GROUP HOME

(Sarah)

136. In Columbia

In Columbia, in Sidney Park, in its northwest corner, I sprawled on a flat rock, looking out over the spiral fountain and the big waterfall. It was summer and extremely hot. Up by the fountain and waterfall, though, it was cooler. A beautiful woman with long, cornrowed hair crouched on a bench some distance away. She had a slight gap between her front teeth. I waited for her to speak.

At last, she said something. I joked back. Smiling, she murmured that her name was Sarah. She had a very faint Southern accent.

Later, when we ran into each other near the small sky-blue pond, we chatted for a while. She looked elegant in her green blouse and tight jeans.

The next day, Sarah met me under the white oaks on a slope above the pond in the park. She produced a red blanket and spread it out, smiling. In the distance, to the east, soared the skyscrapers of downtown Columbia. We talked for a time, lounging on the blanket. Finally, I leant over and kissed her. After I told her I had been wanting to do that, she smiled again.

In my house in Mill Hill, a neighborhood in West Columbia, later that day, I called Sarah. When she answered, I asked her for a date. But she kept asking me what I had said. In the end, she sighed and mumbled that maybe later we could, since she was always busy with her children. Then she muttered that she guessed it was okay.

137. I asked Sarah

I asked Sarah if she would put in a good word for me at Michonne Home, the group home for people with developmentally disabilities in Columbia at which she worked. She shrugged, then nodded and mumbled that she would.

138. As Sarah took each step

As Sarah sauntered down a hall at Michonne Home, a couple of large bounces occurred beneath her pink sweater, moving independently of her body, recoiling off in a different direction.

139. Sarah kissed me

Sarah kissed me. Her red lips parted from mine. She drifted to the window, wrapped in a white silk robe. When she ran her fingers over the window's foggy glass, a grey swath appeared against the whiteness of the window. Her breath made it white again. She brought her fingers to my cheek, beads of water clinging to her fingers. Her eyes stared blankly at me. Outside her second-floor apartment, near Five Points, it was dark and cool. I grasped her robe and pulled her toward me, kissing her one, two, three times.

140. In my house

In my house, I pulled Sarah over to me and held her hand. Suddenly, she muttered that she was not sure she wanted to be in a relationship with anyone. She said that she was trying to figure out her life and yanked her hand away. Ducking her head, she murmured that all she had ever cared about before was being pretty. It was all she worked at.

141. Sarah called me

Sarah called me late at night. She said that we could fuck if I wanted. She mumbled that she liked to fuck. That was all, she added. Then she hung up abruptly.

142. List Thirteen

As she reclined in the chair in my backroom, my paints, lemon and rose and azure, spilled in slow motion over her brown torso: upright breasts, arched stomach, slitted navel, rounded belly.

The phone woke me about 3 AM. We were in my bedroom. I rolled over Veronica to get to it, and she stirred in her sleep. It was Anne. Before I was able to hang up, she began laughing drunkenly and asking me questions.

Smiling, she told me that I used my smiles well.

When I rose to leave the office at Michonne Home, Sarah glowered and nodded. She looked down, then to the side. She was shaking. A client at Michonne Home had just punched her. Sarah huddled in her chair, holding an icepack to her left cheek.

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Under the faded blue of her jeans ran the faint lines of her panties.

Sarah insisted that she still would not let me paint her portrait.

Sighing, she muttered that nothing was worse than waiting for her ADC check.

I found Sarah in the livingroom of Michonne Home. She had come to pick me up. It was her day off. Abruptly, she reached down and grabbed my cock. Automatically, I reached up and seized her up-tilted breasts.

At the Moosehead Saloon in Five Points, laughing, Sarah snatched one of my cigars, lit it and puffed on it, her almond eyes narrowed, her full lower lip slack. Up on the stand, a cover band played “Purple Rain”.

Murphy, one of her sons, hid behind her skirt when I arrived to pick her up in her small apartment. I smiled at him.

We strolled along the Riverwalk on the Congaree River on a windy fall day. Red maple leaves had caught in the boulders. Near the Gervais Street bridge, a young man studied Sarah’s fine legs. She was wearing white shorts. After he passed, I remarked on his stare. Startled, she glanced around, searching for him.

When I completed administering medications to my clients, I joined Sarah in the office at Michonne Home. I picked up her Wayfarer sunglasses and ran my fingers over them slowly. She had just removed them, and they were still warm.

I showed her a folder of erotic sketches and writings that I had been working on. She asked me what I was going to call it.

Sarah always kissed me like she was making an offering.

143. Sarah and I walked

Sarah and I walked through the Riverbanks Zoo, holding hands. She said that sometimes her life had been hard. Frowning, she added that years ago she wrote her mother a letter. In the letter, Sarah told her mother exactly how she felt her mother had treated her when she was a child. After she finished reading the letter, her mother cried.

144. I kept thrusting

I kept thrusting, popping past a ring of muscles in Sarah's vagina. Her skin, particularly around her breasts, began flushing. I dropped down and nibbled her neck. Slowly, I pumped. As my penis rocked from side to side, she grabbed my head and stuck her tongue in my mouth. She groped for my ass. I rose on locked arms and started thrusting quicker, her ring of muscles still massaging my cock. Her long right leg half-tossed over mine. Sarah bucked her belly against my belly, grunting like an animal. We moved faster. My balls strained and strained. We slowed. When I tried to pull my sheathed cock out, she would not let me, at least not right away.

145. Marthe smiled

Marthe smiled when I unbuttoned the thin sweater she wore. As I pulled it off, she bowed her head. I shivered. When I cupped her breast, its thick, brown nipple stirred. Downy hair rose on her skin.

Marthe had met me outside Platinum West in West Columbia. She was a dancer there. From the club, through the heat, we walked over to my house in Mill Hill. Sweat ran down our bodies in streams.

But here it was cooler. Only grey light disturbed the darkness, wafting across the floor. As Marthe took my shirt, it sent her face into shadow. Her bell-shaped breast was warm now under my fingers. When I looked at her, her green eyes seemed mesmerized. She touched her long auburn hair vacantly, then lifted her arms to me.

After a while, Marthe stopped nuzzling my jawline. She stood in the window's shaft of dust motes and light, then apart from me in the early evening shade. Bending, she slid off her jeans. When I held out my hand to her, she slipped her hand into mine. In bed, we took hold of one another.

Later, by the floor cushions, Marthe stood, her weight on her right hip, her left leg bowed. She smiled a little too brightly, gazing into my eyes. Her eyes looked glassy. She whispered that she had taken Ecstasy after we had arrived at my house. Giggling softly, she hugged herself.

I lounged in a chair by my bedroom door. Bit by bit, Marthe pushed her fingers under her worn jeans' waistband, slid them down to her crotch and bunched them up. Gently, she massaged her bead and lips. She bit her thick lower lip, her eyes narrowing. Her mouth dropped open, and her tongue licked at her lips over and over.

After a few minutes, the lump under Marthe's jeans began to writhe. Her head arched back and rocked one way and another. Her dark red hair shook. While she

thrust her legs apart and her rear back, her slim hips began to squirm and pound forward and backward. She hopped about. Her body quivering, her chin weaving, she moaned. Then she hunched over, panting, heaving, her legs bowed gingerly.

Marthe flopped into my bed, her eyes half-closed. Under her jeans, she traced her hand along her vulva. Rain began to beat against my bedroom window suddenly. Her fingers tapped at her vagina, then rubbed slowly. She parted her legs, glanced up at me and smiled. She licked her lips repeatedly again. In the distance, on Santee Avenue, traffic rattled by.

After Marthe wet her finger, she shoved it back into her jeans, massaged her cunt again and then turned to stare out the window. Her green eyes returned to me, the pupils hugely dilated. She leaped up, ran over and stood bowed over me. And abruptly she danced across the dark, curtained room, her hands in her pants, like a marionette.

146. Sarah and I sat

Sarah and I sat on the front stoop of the Michonne Home in the evening. Suddenly, she turned to me and stammered that she had once worked for an escort service. She told me that she had gotten tired of men fucking her for nothing. She said that all men liked her for were her looks. Glaring, she muttered that she was tired of it. I said that I liked her for being Sarah and took her hand. But she snatched her hand away, swore softly and shook her head.

147. Sarah, clad only in

Sarah, clad only in a floppy pair of my pants, zoomed into my living room on roller-skates, spun and whizzed back out, all on one leg, cackling merrily. I smiled but then turned back to reading *Pale Fire*.

148. I felt

I felt the peculiar, breath-taking sensation of a swollen cock in a tight cunt.

149. Description Eight

Sarah's cunt. Tight little coils of hair surrounding it. A small clitoris but big vulva. Her carnation labia. Over the arch of her anus. Wet. Swollen. Her tight passage.

150. A pretty girl

A pretty girl approached me near the waterfall in Sidney Park as I was painting a portrait. It was fall, and the smell of burning autumn leaves filled the air. She explained that she had seen me at work on the painting. She said that her name was Harper. Smiling, she said that she liked my painting and wanted to buy it when it was done.

151. In the dark

In the dark, Sarah settled herself onto the sill of one of her apartment's big loft windows. Outside, in Five Points, fog coasted by. Sheets of it got tangled up in the branches by the window. Pinned above us was a full harvest moon. With an intent face, she picked up a mirror to look at herself and was struck by its light. As it was set down, the mirror clicked on the soft wood. She blinked her slanted brown eyes and waved her hand elegantly.

152. Sarah said

Sarah said that she was smart, and she was creative. She was a good writer. She began crying. She was more than nice tits and ass. We were sitting in the dayroom of Michonne Home. I nodded and slid my arm over her shoulder, but she moved away. She muttered that she did not feel that way about me.

Carol, one of our clients, was passing by the dayroom. She saw Sarah crying, came in and put her arms around her. Sarah reached up and patted Carol on her back.

153. Description Nine

My penis was long and thick, a deep pink, lined with blue veins. Thick, black hair curled at the root, spreading across and downward. The skin was soft, the core firm. Underneath it ran a wide, bulging vein. A ring of tender skin erupted suddenly into the glans. The tip was shaped like a condottiere's helmet, peaked, arched. A small slit crowned it.

Beneath my penis nestled my two thick, narrow testicles. They were draped in a loose pouch of skin, which was covered with light hair. Veins crisscrossed them.

154. I slumped on my side

I slumped on my side in my darkened bedroom in Mill Hill. Sarah sprawled beside me on the bed, her face level with my groin. She spoke moodily, pouting again. Moonlight glinted off her nose ring. She rustled about, her thick lips smacking. Slowly, tightly, she sipped in my soft cock. After a pause, with a snap, she sucked it in to the end.

Afterward, Sarah talked about another guy she was seeing. I listened but did not say anything.

155. Sarah's daughter and I

Sarah's daughter and I bent over, playing with a kitten. She skipped out of the room, then returned, sneaking up behind me and cupping her hands over my eyes, giggling. She asked what my name was. I told her that it was Sam.

156. On Monday afternoon

On Monday afternoon, I walked into the If Art Gallery, carrying a small portfolio with prints of my paintings. Smiling, a slim blonde woman sitting at a desk rose. I opened the portfolio to show her a print. She studied it and then touched my hand.

157. Description Ten

Red Cloud's eyes. Michelle's breasts. Thai's legs. Valentine's hair. Thai's soft voice. The Yellow Kid's skin. Thai's ass. Skinny's lips. Jones' grace. The Yellow Kid's breasts and rear. That girl's smell. Sarah's belly. Christie's tongue. Anne's almond eyes. Valentine's cunt-lips. Nicki's dance. Emily's teeth. Nicki's nipples and giggles. Legs' laugh. Talia's big nose. Michelle's bald genitals. Red Cloud's intelligence. Emily's fury. Michelle's inexperience. Sarah's voice and walk. Janie's nose-cone breasts.

158. List Fourteen

After I finished helping a client shower, I found Sarah smoking a cigarette outside the Michonne Home. Smiling, I remarked that she had nice fat. She narrowed her eyes, then glared at me. I smiled and pointed to her big breasts. She stuck out her lower lip.

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A dewy, red poppy and its frail, green stem rested along the cut of her juicy, pink labia.

She wore handcuffs, her arms were stretched over head from a hook in our bedroom. After her thigh touched the radiator behind her, she hopped away quickly. Her breasts and ribs pointed up. She looked lovely.

As my lips sunk stickily into Sarah's, our teeth clicked, and her squishy tongue bounced off mine.

While Sarah and I wrestled, she hugged me playfully as if to lift me but instead to my surprise threw me over my folding chair and onto the grass at Lake Murray. She rushed over to me with concerned cries. But then she began poking me, giggling.

Parvati rolled her hips purposefully when I sucked on her thick, rosy lips, my tongue rimming along them. The red star tattoo on her hip danced.

Parvati darted her long tongue out and curled it inside my ear. Her gold tongue ring nudged me.

I lay with my head in her lap, my eyes closed, on the bench in the Interactive Art Park, near the *Rocket Queen* statue, her fingers a little over my face, so that I felt their warmth. It was still summer.

She reminded me about the time that she helped me come.

At last, tearful, Sarah clambered up and cradled my head carefully, her brown eyes barely open, her mouth slack, cooing.

Sarah grabbed me when I was walking down the hall at the Michonne Home. She yanked me into the tubroom and threw me up against the wall. Panting, she shoved her tongue in my mouth. It was late at night.

She stepped her bare foot in a puddle of paint and squealed angrily. She had not noticed the paint running and dripping from the canvas I was working on. Light leaked through the windows. For days, with little sleep, I had been painting a portrait.

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I mailed Sarah a letter saying that I did not like her just because she was beautiful. She did not write back.

In the studio, the potter laid her clay-stained hands on mine.

159. Lucy, our friend, met us at the door

Lucy, our friend, met us at the door of her parents' loft in Spring Valley. We stood on her porch for a time, chatting. Neighbors were burning autumn leaves, and their smell was heavy in the air.

Lucy beckoned to us. Inside, a party was winding down. I made my way up the stairs in my stocking feet, lost my balance and fell forward. With a straight face, Sarah helped me up. Her hands were very warm. Sarah smiled suddenly and led me over to a man standing by the bar. She introduced me. She said that his name was Carl. It was a guy she went out with occasionally.

160. Sarah skipped in

Sarah skipped in my door, grabbed my shoulders and pushed me to my bedroom. Hooting, she stripped my clothes off and shoved me onto my bed. She pushed a pillow under my ass. Her big breasts bouncing, she stripped and hopped on top of me. After she grabbed a condom from my bedside table, she rolled it onto my hard cock. Snickering, she rubbed her cunt on its tip. Sarah stuck my cock inside herself and started humping up and down hard. Roughly, she ground against me. I touched her long, coarse dreadlocks. She sang out for me to make her come. Then she snorted and snorted.

161. Late at night

Late at night in bed, for me first, for me only, she displayed her pert, satiny breasts.

162. Sarah slashed

Sarah slashed the air with her fists, darted over to the radio and turned it up loud. "I Love Rock and Roll" exploded. Drunkenly, she danced around, her large breasts revolving. She grabbed my hat. Before I realized what she was doing, she

had sailed it out a window. Dull thuds exploded overhead suddenly, from the tenant above. Giggling, she skipped away.

163. During the Friends Meeting

During the Friends Meeting, near the University of South Carolina campus, Sarah sat across from me. Afterward, she rushed over and hugged me. But then, at lunch, she reiterated that she did not want a boyfriend.

164. I finished

I finished one of the several portraits I had painted of the women who worked at the Michonne Home. The women were old and handsome. Using turpentine, I began cleaning my brushes.

165. She huddled on

She huddled on the narrow windowseat in my backroom, reading “The Bridge”, absorbed, while I made space for myself beside her. I put my hand up under her dress and past her panties and inserted my index finger in her slit. As I wiggled my finger, her smile dwindled and, flushing, she pushed my arm away.

166. I trotted up

I trotted up the stairs to Sarah’s apartment and knocked on her door. It was a brisk winter day, grey and rainy. After a minute, she answered the door. She gazed at me, then stood aside, without a word.

We perched on her couch. She looked at me expectantly. Because her children were at school, her home was quiet.

Abruptly, I told Sarah that I really liked her. I said that I knew she was reluctant to be in a relationship. I muttered that I wanted to be with her. I added that I loved her kids.

Sarah made a face and tapped her foot. She growled that men never listened to her. She wanted to know how she could get me to hear her. She asked if fucking her was not enough.

When she rose suddenly, I stood up, too. Then I left.

167. Sarah tightened her

Sarah tightened her cunt against my cock, then circled her legs around my legs. We were in the back seat of her Chevy. She swallowed my tongue, her tongue stroking mine. As she groaned, she bucked her hips. Her vagina retreated until it retained only the tip of my penis. Smoothly, she inserted it again, her hips struggling. She pulled her tongue from my mouth and washed my ear with it.

Sarah rocked her hips up and down, stuck her tongue back in my mouth and dug it around. Spunk washed from my glans and up her vagina. Murmuring nasally, she milked the last bit of my semen into her vagina. Then my penis tumbled from her cunt. Straightening, I banged my head on the window. After she placed her hands on my shoulders, she kissed me.

Sarah disentangled her legs. She fell away, hunched up, then crawled into the corner of the seat. She peeked out toward the light in her apartment's living room. Smiling, she put her hand on my soft, wet penis in its condom.

168. When she passed

When she passed the windows in my livingroom, she stirred the big, clay windchimes strung along them, turned, startled, then closed her slanted, dark eyes, listening to them.

169. Sarah let me

Sarah let me take her kids out to a movie and McDonald's. She went out with Carl.

170. I left to use

I left to use the washroom after she finished sucking my cock. When I returned, Sarah had folded my clothes neatly and piled them on the couch, one on top of the other.

171. Sarah and I

Sarah and I walked along the Columbia Canal with some of our Michonne Home clients. A spring breeze twirled over us. I said to her that the first thing I liked about her was that she had had a hard life, but was trying to heal, and that she was a great mother. Not that she was pretty. She smiled, but her eyes narrowed. She hurried down the path to catch up with the clients, leaving me behind.

172. My Mom and my aunts

My Mom and my aunts huddled around her kitchen table in Charlevoix, telling dirty jokes. It was at a family get-together. I was back visiting. Blushing, I fled the room.

173. "Shit", she said

"Shit", she said.

And flipped her hair aside and bent over to the lighter I held. Then Sarah leant back, puffing on the cigarette, and snuggled closer to me under the covers of my bed. Two thin streams of smoke issued from her nostrils. She gazed across the room. For a while, silently, we lay together.

I glanced at the streetlights outside the windows. I looked at Sarah. She still stared across the room. She put out her cigarette and cast her cold eyes at me. Her hand came stroking the hairs of my chest, and then she slipped her hot, wet tongue in my mouth.

Later, Sarah slipped out of the bed and curled up in the big, stuffed armchair by the walled-off chimney. Her strong, brown legs kicked up over the chair's arm. Still in bed, I watched, chin in hand, as she twisted her bottom around, her large, up-right breasts shuddering beneath her long t-shirt. Her mahogany brown eyes were impassive. The light of the tall bronze lamp behind her streamed past her. It caught the loose strands of her black hair, changing them into dark threads.

When I turned away from her, Sarah drew near, blocking the light from the lamp. She kicked the bed, making it shiver, laughed raspily and slapped me on the thigh. Roughly, she flopped down against me. After a moment, I pulled the thick, woolen blankets from between us. As she lifted her hips, I pushed a pillow under her ass. And silky, hot breath flowered against my bearded cheek.

Later, Sarah huddled against me in my bed, clothed only in her old-fashioned panties, bathed by the early evening light. I had turned off the lamp and lit some candles. Her right hand moved slowly beneath her panties. Her head bent forward. She stayed silent.

After a moment, Sarah sat up, her eyes half-closed. Her hand fumbled with her vagina. As she arched her back, she muttered to herself. She pulled her hand from her panties. She blew me a kiss, then looked away from me. Sarah lay back, her shoulder wedged against mine. She murmured that she was sad. Carefully, she pushed her fingers into her underwear again. Sighing, she turned her face away from me.

Then Sarah curved her hips up and revolved them in a complete circle twice. She whispered a coarse remark and whipped her hips up and down slowly. After

she twisted toward me, muttering, she rubbed her cunt again, then pulled her hand out. Puffing, Sarah collapsed against me. She ground herself against my thigh several times. Her forehead smacked against my shoulder over and over. She kept quivering.

Sarah whispered that I should put a condom on, then wriggled out of her wet panties. After I had rolled a condom on, she rose on her knees, grasped my penis and sunk it inside herself. When our hair meshed, her cool buttocks curled down over my thighs. A candle flickered behind her. She wriggled her wide hips, my cock moving deep within her. Briefly, I closed my eyes.

As she laughed, her breath hissing in and out of her mouth, Sarah bounced up and down a bit. For a moment she swayed, her full breasts shifting. Squishing, she arched up and fell down my hard penis. She began going backward and forward from my hips. Softly, she moaned. Her belly rippled. I tightened my leg muscles.

While Sarah rocked on me, her breasts shuddering, I started groaning. The candles wavered. After more thrusts, I grabbed her hips and jerked up to meet her. Our mingled grunts filled my bedroom. Wind sighed. Sweat pooled on my chest.

As my breathing deepened, Sarah's hips accelerated. She squealed, saliva flying from her mouth. I slammed her down on me. Her head dropped, her lips sagged, and her black cornrows swung forward. She jammed her thighs against me and moaned. I inhaled, then emptied up into the condom inside her.

174. In the middle of the cold spring night

In the middle of the cold spring night, Sarah put her foot against my ass and shoved me out of her bed to go turn up the heat. I shuffled across the room, then flew back under the covers, where she wrapped her body around mine, murmuring.

175. John, my roommate

John, my roommate from college, called and reported to me that Nicki had gotten married and had a daughter now.

176. Sarah inspected

Sarah inspected one of my portraits of her, then shrugged and laughed. She muttered that it did not look like her. Laughing again, she said that it was after she let me paint her, and she called me honey.

177. I loved

I loved the things she did in the ear to me.

178. In the car to the Michonne Home

In the car to the Michonne Home, Sarah sat next to me, her arm pressed into mine. She said that she did not think about me when I was not around.

179. Early afternoon sun

Early afternoon sun lit my apartment. As I lay on Sarah's belly, my hips fluttered. She murmured painfully. My penis began to poke her with increasing speed. She studied me, her eyes slit. I ducked my head, and her hands fumbled for my hips. Over and over, my penis snapped past her vulva. A lot of my semen spat out and washed up and down her vagina.

180. When we were alone

When we were alone, we lay, our arms wrapped around each other, our heads together, barely moving, in the darkness.

181. Description Eleven

Sarah's womanhood was richly molded, like a fine black and coral flower. Her dark rounded outer lips were surrounded by curly hair. Her slender lips arched at the top and split into two petals at the bottom. A hard, little bump, a girl's cock, nestled above her lips. Hidden deep within was her urethra while beneath winked the star of her anus. Her vulnerable, oval thighs thrust out around her vagina, creases where her thighs and groin joined. The cheeks of her rear flattened round against the bed. Her vagina radiated an odor of almost smoky musk. Light sparkled off her hair. Her womanhood was pretty and well-formed.

182. Sarah clapped her hands

Sarah clapped her hands together delightedly when she saw that my penis was hard at last. Giggling, big breasts bouncing, she scrambled for a condom, but then she tripped.

183. I told Sarah

I told Sarah that it was too bad that some women depended on symmetrical features for their self-worth. She looked away, then nodded. Sarah said that she had started to attend a 12-step program and that it was helping her not to care if she looked pretty.

184. Sarah stabbed

Sarah stabbed her fork into the spaghetti and lifted it to her mouth. After she set down the fork and wiped her lips, she sipped her wine. She smiled, displaying the gap between her two front teeth. We were at the Backstreets Grill near the University of South Carolina. It was raining lightly, and outside streetlights shone on the wet street. It was late spring. Avoiding my eyes, she continued drinking the wine. Suddenly, she said that she had quit her job at the Michonne Home. She said that she was thinking about moving to Colorado.

185. List Fifteen

I wrote a bill of sale for a painting to Harper, the woman I had met in Sidney Park. It was the portrait she had seen me making. She said that she loved its garish colors. She told me that it looked like a Hans Holbein crossed with a Peter Max or Heinz Edelman. It turned out that she was rich. Laughing, she handed me a check with a large fee.

After lunch at Michonne Home, Bill, a client, and I sat on the porch. I asked him why he had such a good relationship with Annie, his girlfriend. I talk to her, he replied. Anything else? I wondered. I am nice to her, he said. Anything else? I inquired. I talk to her some more, he responded.

Sarah put on her pale-yellow brassiere. It bunched up her large coffee-colored breasts in its cups.

As soon as I slapped her rump, she made an 'oh' with her lips. Hooting, she spun toward me, knocked me down, threw herself on top of me and began tickling me.

After I came, Sarah sucked my cock for an hour. Her mouth brought me from softness to hardness repeatedly. She made my cock sore, her eyes crazy.

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I lit incense and blew it at Sarah's breasts, where it caught beneath them for a second before it wafted away.

When Judith caught sight of me, she hurried across wide Assembly Street, near the South Carolina state capitol building, and flung herself into my arms.

I complained to Sarah that I was working too hard on my portraits. I felt like I did little else. She pursed her lips and nodded but did not say anything.

I drove my Honda Civic into the gas station. Sarah jumped out of her Chevy and sauntered over to me. Smiling, I asked her if she wanted some candy. She laughed, murmured that maybe she did, stuck her tongue in my mouth and tumbled it around vigorously.

As I emerged from my car to go into the downtown Columbia Post Office, I spotted Judith. I had not seen her in some time. I said hello to her. My throat was gravelly, however, and my voice broke. She looked at me, startled, and passed by. When I returned to my car, she was still standing by her car. She mumbled that I was an asshole and smirked.

Sarah and I crowded together on the small bench in the new Richland County Library. Before us hung a copy of *Bordighera*. While I drew a small pen portrait of The Yellow Kid, Sarah read from *The World of Light*.

I could only fall asleep when I held her tightly in my arms.

When I kissed Sarah, I smelled the scent of her face.

She darted the pink tip of her tongue out, her maroon lips closing in two thin curves over it. She patted her short, neon green hair.

As we lay together in the bathtub, her voluptuous body sprawled before me, she slapped my hand, telling me it tickled.

186. Sarah muttered

Sarah muttered that she was not used to a guy like me. She said that all she knew were men who just wanted to fuck her. I said that I would like to be more

than a guy that she fucked. Sarah replied that she had already told me that she did not want to be with anyone. Frowning, she asked me if I did not understand that.

187. Her strong, once broken mouth

Her strong, once broken mouth had held many things -tongue, cock, word, wine.

188. I straightened a painting

I straightened a painting on the wall. At the City Art Gallery, a small exhibition of my portraits was on display. I had begun to paint in primary colors again. Sarah stood alone, sipping white wine. She had on a little make-up. She wore a lemon-yellow, low-cut dress.

189. After Sarah asked for

After Sarah asked for a wet washcloth, I retrieved one from the bathroom. She instructed me to lie on my side in the bed. Then she wiped my anus thoroughly. She tossed the washcloth on the nightstand. Sarah leant down and washed her tongue against my anus. When she tickled it, I stiffened. She inserted her tongue and flicked it over and over. I jerked slightly.

190. As she whimpered

As she whimpered, I fingered the short, sharp bruise on her right thigh. I smoothed the small bruises curling over her shoulder and the marks mottling her swollen lip. They had resulted from a game of touch football in Trenholm Park that summer afternoon.

191. At the Michonne Home

At the Michonne Home, I was finishing paperwork. I glanced out the window to see Sarah walking up the sidewalk. She glowered at me. In the office, Sarah closed the door and flopped in a chair. She muttered that she was not just pretty.

192. I curled up

I curled up in a blue-cushioned booth in Ray's Diner on Two Notch Road and ordered breakfast. It was a sunny Monday morning in October. Sarah slid in

opposite me. Abruptly, I asked her about her Colorado move. Her eyes narrowed, and her cheeks flushed. She snapped that it was no fucking business of mine. She brushed her lips against mine briskly and then jumped up. With a long-legged stride, her full ass jerking from side to side, she marched off.

I placed the phone back in its cradle. It was right before Christmas. I had left a voicemail for Sarah. For a few weeks, she had not returned my calls.

But then, late that night, I spotted a car stopped in the dark street outside my house in West Columbia. I scurried over to the window. Beneath a streetlight, Sarah looked over at me, then drove away quickly.

A few days later, the phone rang. It was Sarah. She asked me brightly how I was doing.

One Saturday morning in May, I woke up. I looked out my livingroom window. It was a cloudy spring day outside.

I called Sarah since I had not heard from her in a while. She said hello to me, abruptly. In the background, people talked, and someone banged. She told me that she and her kids were moving to Denver. She said that they were going that day.

I muttered in surprise. She said that she was busy packing and hung up.

A few weeks later, as it rained late one afternoon, I called Sarah in Denver. I had found her phone number through a friend. I asked her if I could visit her there. She muttered that she guessed not. I hung up.

Two months afterward, late one summer night in June, my phone rang. Someone was on the other end of the line, but they would not speak. Finally, they replaced the phone, and the dialtone buzzed. I sat on my bed and glanced out the window. It was raining again.

One evening, a few months later, in late August, the phone rang again. No one spoke, but I could hear breathing. The calls had continued to happen every so often. As I had learned from a friend, it was always when Sarah was visiting the area.

On a bright spring morning in September, I entered the Columbia Art Museum on Main Street and slid onto a bench. Suddenly, Sarah appeared at the entrance. Apparently, she had returned for another visit. I did not know how she knew I was at the museum.

Afterward, I went downstairs to the restaurant for a snack. I ate it outside in the courtyard. Leaves had begun to fall, and they littered the pavement. Someone walked out behind me. When I heard Sarah say hello to me, I ignored her.

Later that night, my phone rang. Someone hummed a familiar tune briefly. I laughed and asked who it was. They hung up.

193. List Seventeen

On Friday night, Lotte and I sprawled on my couch, sipping screwdrivers. Earlier, we had traveled on a Midlands bus to the Tin Roof to hear Buddy Guy. I kissed her, then yanked off her blouse. When I sucked on her huge breasts, she moaned. She dove her head down, tore my jeans open and began sucking my cock. I dragged her to my bedroom, knelt, pulled her skirt up and stuck my tongue in her cunt. It was drenched with her juice. She dropped to her knees and seized my hips, knocking me back into a wall. Eagerly, she started sucking my cock. Then she popped up. I scurried to my living room to get a condom. After I returned, she mumbled that she did not want to fuck.

On Saturday night, Penn and I perched on my couch, talking. She cried, so I held her hand. I kissed her twice. Before she left, I backed her up in a corner and kissed her again. Her large right breast pushed against me. I reached up and squeezed it. She sighed and muttered that I always backed her into a corner to kiss her.

On Wednesday night, Jojo rested on top of me in my bed and rubbed her body up and down against me. I sucked her bell-shaped breasts. "Eminence Front" played on my stereo. Outside, down the street, I heard some of my neighbors in Mill Hill revving their motorcycles. Jojo dropped down to my cock and began to suck it quietly. Finally, she climbed up and planted my hard penis in her slit. She rode me silently, her hips twitching back and forth.

NEW YORK CITY

1986-1989

STUDIO (Legs)

194. I sat on the porch of my studio, reading

I sat on the porch of my studio, reading *Of the Farm*. Only a few people had arrived yet for the arts retreat at the Silver Bay Arts Colony in upstate New York. It was Monday, a late summer afternoon. I leant back on the padded bench, running my eyes over the lake in the distance. After a while, a car drove up, and a pretty, redheaded woman got out. She sauntered over, waved to some people and stood talking to them for a time. Then she disappeared inside the conference center with them.

I continued to read, finishing another chapter. I was sweaty, and I sipped iced tea. The redhead reappeared, this time with another young woman. I said hello to her, and we exchanged names. The redhead said softly that her name was Legs. The other woman told me that she was Caterina. As I twisted and gazed at Legs, she flinched slightly. I noticed that her eyes were green. Caterina held a tray of ham sandwiches. We perched on the steps and nibbled at them. Later, we walked down to the lakefront and sat in the lawnchairs there.

That night, a group of us hiked along a country road near the colony. Perseid shooting stars soared across the sky above us, like matches being scratched. Legs and I walked a bit ahead of the others and then waited for them. I chatted with her, but she did not say much. After a time, she became a bit more talkative. She told me that she was a New York University graduate student, working toward a master's degree in fine arts for art education.

While we were heading back to the camp, Legs asked me what I did. I said that I was a painter. I had just moved to New York City because it was the place to make connections. I earned enough money from my painting to live on. And I had always wanted to live in New York City! She smiled.

The next day, I lounged on the front lawn in a deck chair reading *Daisy Miller*. More folks drove up, arriving for the beginning of the retreat. By noon, it was very hot, and I was covered with perspiration. I trudged to my room, changed into my swimsuit and went down to the lake for a swim.

After the swim, I changed back into my shorts and t-shirt, then walked over to the dininghall for lunch. I saw Legs, went over and ate with her. We joked. She laughed quietly. Then I got my painting kit from my room and climbed up a hill overlooking the lake. I worked on a watercolor portrait until late afternoon. When I finished, I returned to my room and took a long shower.

I found Legs lying on the west lawn in the early evening. As she and I lay on the grass, two little girls skipped over and climbed onto her, using her as a cushion. She smiled helplessly and rolled her eyes. One of them played with a small wart on her neck. She said that kids were fascinated with it. I asked her why she was called Legs. She said that I was silly and it was because she had great legs.

On Wednesday morning, I sat on the porch again, reading more of *Daisy Miller*. I had been painting all morning. About noon, more cars drove up, people emerging from them. As I meandered out onto the front lawn, I noticed Legs sitting with others and joined them. She introduced me. They were old friends of hers: Peter, a long-haired, young boy, and Cedar, a blonde girl. When the bell for supper was rung, we all headed in and sat together. We made plans for another walk later.

After midnight, we all marched along a back road. Cicadas buzzed loudly. I grasped Legs' hand suddenly, and she smiled uncertainly. As a shooting star fell across the sky, Peter shouted and pointed it out for us. Laughing, I told a story about my nights working in the factory. They listened politely.

In Wilkinson Cemetery, we picked our way through the gravestones until we found a broad one. Legs and I hopped up on it, our shoulders touching. No one spoke. A gust of wind rolled over us, making Legs shiver. When I asked her if she was okay, she mumbled. Peter and Cedar stretched out on the grass below us. Other people entered the cemetery, joking and shouting, then exited abruptly.

On the way back, we saw another shooting star. We stopped to watch it, on the road, with the farm fields stretching out around us. It was dead quiet. Legs did not have much to say and would not meet my eyes. Then we all hiked back to the Colony.

Cedar said something about either being right or being alone.

Legs looked at me thoughtfully when I passed her on my way to bed the next night. For some reason, I had barely seen her that day. I spent most of it with Peter and Cedar. As I walked by, I turned and gazed back at her. She had lovely, small breasts. She rose and walked to the porch to join the others who were sitting there singing. At my cottage, I propped myself against a tree, staring into the darkness.

Later, walking along a country road near Silver Bay, I saw a bonfire. Some friends had gathered around it. I thought about having a partner in my life. I thought about the many women I had known.

On Friday, the four of us curled up on the porch benches. As we watched, Legs massaged Cedar's hand. Children paraded past us, laughing, one throwing me a

kiss. Legs switched to massaging Cedar's foot. After she finished with Cedar, I asked her for a massage like that. Legs took my foot and manipulated it patiently. I thanked her when she was done. She nodded and dropped my foot onto the bench with a plop.

195. In my apartment in Astoria

In my apartment in Astoria, I called Legs. When she answered, I asked her for a date. She asked me what I had said. In the end, she sighed and whispered that she guessed that that would be okay. Then she laughed and said more loudly yes!

196. I requested

I requested a kiss from Legs. Across the dark bay, through her kitchen window in St. George, lights flickered in Manhattan. After she kissed me, I turned away. She slid her arms around me suddenly from behind and hugged me, laughing.

197. In Chelsea

In Chelsea, Elle welcomed me at the entrance to the David Zwirner Gallery. She had arranged for an exhibition of my kaleidoscopic portraits there. Many of my friends intended to attend the opening. Legs could not come. Often, she could not come to things to which I invited her.

198. Legs rose stiffly

Legs rose stiffly the first time I asked her to come lie next to me on her bed. It was a late afternoon in fall. Grinning awkwardly, she crashed down against me and buried her face in my chest. I asked her if she wanted to fuck, and she murmured that, yes, she wanted to fuck.

For a time, I stroked Legs' hand. She smiled slightly. When I nudged her, she lay on her back staring at the ceiling. I leant over and kissed her. She giggled. I lifted the hem of her dress, pulled her underwear down and slid on top of her. Legs laughed and threw her arms around me. She touched my crotch gently. I took out my hard cock, rolled on a condom and pressed my cock against her wet slit. As I pushed my penis in, she inhaled. Abruptly, I began thrusting. Legs was silent, then squealed suddenly.

199. On the mattress

On the mattress in my second-floor studio in Long Island City, Legs sprawled, on her stomach, her arms tossed out, her slight breasts pressed flat, naked. Sweat dotted her forehead. It was still summer and hot outside. My fingers and the oil had loosened her shoulders. I drove my fingers into her shoulder blades, working them hard. Legs whimpered. The oil coated her back. My knuckles wove down her spine. After I formed a fist, I punched it over the small of her back. Legs lifted her wide hips up and swung them, her shapely ass shivering. I kneaded her legs and then her feet. She jerked, spilling the oil over the pillows.

200. She sucked

She sucked on my penis. Bit by bit, I swung around. My tongue dropped into her hot vagina and revolved. She wiggled her hips. Her cunt looked swollen and blood-red and tasted musky. Her mouth bobbed. After a time, she lifted her head and complained that she was too short.

201. An hour late

An hour late, I scurried into the lobby of the Metropolitan Museum. Legs sat on a bench near the left door. When I said that I was so sorry for being late, she shrugged and murmured that it was okay. Legs explained that she had spent her time reading her batik history book. Shaking my head, I declared that she was different from another old girlfriend of mine. The old girlfriend would get terribly upset if I were late. After she nodded, she shrugged again. I smiled and shrugged, too.

202. Description Twelve

Legs' legs were clean-shaven. Her thighs were strong and rounded and drooped elegantly, her knees were ruffled and dimpled behind, and her calves slender and faintly muscular. The knobs of her ankles wound out gracefully. Her feet were long and thin, the heels oval, the arches gently bowed, the toes skinny and curved. Her toenails were glossy with black paint.

203. After a late night

After a late night at a party in the West Village, near dawn, Legs and I entered my apartment in Astoria. She kissed me lightly on the cheek. I led her through the

kitchen and into the living room. She said that she liked the red and yellow irises on the coffee table. I had purchased them that morning. Smiling, she perched on the edge of a chair and beckoned me over.

Legs brought her fingers to my cheek, caressing slowly, grimacing. She placed her hands on my shoulders and pushed me down. When I flipped her skirt up, I saw that she was not wearing panties. Legs pulled my head forward. Clumsily, she humped forward, pressing her soft, wet cunt against my face. Juice coated it. After I kissed her labia, I sucked them slightly. My tongue flipped inside, then flicked her clit. Her belly rippled above me. Murmuring, she stroked my hair.

As I sucked at her vulva again, Legs jerked against me. My cock got hard. The room filled with light from the sun slowly. Reaching up, with a fingertip, through her thin cotton blouse, I flicked one of her nipples. She spread her legs even more widely. But then she yawned, pushed me away and settled down on the carpet alongside me.

And while I watched, with wonder, as outside the whippoorwills began their calls in the dawn's morning light, Legs fell asleep.

204. Legs slouched

Legs slouched quietly in the armchair in my livingroom, in the late morning sunlight, sipping weak tea. Her orange robe had fallen aside, exposing her right shoulder. She was watching me paint. Then she squinted out the window at the new leaves budding on the trees. We had moved in together. When I approached her, she reached for my hand and kissed it suddenly. Smiling, she said softly that she liked me.

205. We found ourselves, then

We found ourselves, then, in the *Solomon's Well* sculpture, holding hands, on a hazy fall morning, locusts buzzing, in Socrates Sculpture Park, by the East River, having spoken not at all that day.

206. As I lay

As I lay on the old mattress in my studio in Long Island City, Legs straddled me. It was night, a breeze from the East River wafting through the big windows. In the background, "Got My Mind Set on You" played softly. Chuckling, she rocked forward and backward gently. Her cunt squelched around my cock. Legs leant down and kissed me, her long burgundy hair dropping down. Abruptly, I

grabbed her hips and thrust up inside her several times. She gasped and tilted back, her stomach arching and her breasts shivering. She whispered an obscenity.

Legs bowed forward and ground her vagina on my penis, grunting. She gripped my shoulders and rolled her hips. I shoved my cock up at her over and over. Moaning, I seized her breasts. Legs yelled at me to lay still. She bent back and began hopping up and down, yipping, until she froze suddenly. Her hips wriggled three times. Finally, faintly, she asked me if I had come.

207. List Sixteen

I said that I was looking for a partner. She asked me, smiling, part of what?

She bent, one foot daintily up on a chair, inserting a cherry-red diaphragm, amused. Then she offered me a tube of contraceptive jelly.

On the beach at Coney Island, Legs and I met her old boyfriend.

She made fun of me until I began to inform her in detail about a wet dream that I had had about her the night before. Then, silent, she studied me with big eyes.

She remarked plaintively that my cock was so big in her mouth.

Clarissa, Legs' friend, arrived in our apartment and joined us in the living room. She slumped in a chair across from us. After a time, both girls reached under their loose blouses, unsnapped their brassieres and passed them down their sleeves. They smirked at me.

She carried my semen around inside her.

When Legs finished giving me head, she rose abruptly and cracked me on the chin with her shoulder, snapping my head back.

She reported to me about "Hawthorne at Antietam", a short story of mine, as we sat on a bench in Astoria Park, overlooking the East River. She held the manuscript in her long, slim fingers.

With my manhood in her mouth, Legs smiled.

At the Friends Meeting, in the East Village, on a Friday night, I sat alone in the Meetingroom. Several bubbles floated down past me. I looked up to see Legs in

the balcony above me, blowing bubbles with a long wand. She waved at me, grinning.

Legs snuggled up to me in our bed. When I suggested a threesome with Clarissa, she rolled her eyes. She would not talk about it. Then she blurted out that she wanted me all to herself.

Walking out of Central Park, after watching *Henry V* at the Delacorte Theater, Legs and I held hands. Stars crowded the sky. It was a mild fall night with a breeze. Legs stopped, rested her head on my chest, then kissed me hurriedly.

On New Year's Eve, in the thick, swirling snow, hand in hand, Legs and I strolled down the middle of Broadway. It was after 1 AM, and all the people had gone. Huge neon signs still blinked. I had cut my long hair and shaved my beard. Snowflakes fell onto my cropped head.

208. Legs turned to me

Legs turned to me, a dark blue beret over her long red hair. My heart stopped. Gazing at her, I realized she was a Pre-Raphaelite woman. She looked like a young Virginia Woolf.

209. I woke

I woke to find Legs coming through the door of my studio, bearing presents of paints and canvases, almost dropping them before she set them down. She fluttered her hands, then showed the gifts to me, stammering, see, see? I told her that they were very nice.

210. In the morning light

In the morning light, Legs bent over the table, using a Tjanting tool to apply wax to her batik tapestry. Then she added indigo dye to the gold and orange dyes already there. She sang softly to herself. She had agreed to work with me in my studio.

Smiling, watching her, I stood in the doorway. She did not know I was there. As she created the tapestry, she looked magical to me. Something shifted in me. I could not take my eyes off her. I could not take my eyes off her. I could not speak. I could not speak.

211. As I thrust into

As I thrust into her, lying on top, I whispered, Legs, I love you. She replied immediately, is that so bad?

212. Legs kissed me

Legs kissed me then as if it had been something she had always wanted to do.

213. When I stammered

When I stammered that her work had been important to me, the poet on the number 4 train smiled at me suddenly. Then she narrowed her eyes and studied me up and down.

214. As I

As I shoved my cock into Legs dog-style, she jerked her big hips around. She fucked my cock with determination.

215. The morning after

The morning after, early, sitting on a bench near my Long Island City studio, looking out over the East River, near the spring daisies, I smelled Legs on my fingers. I thought about my love for Legs.

216. A friend introduced

A friend introduced me to Alice over at the OK Harris Gallery in Soho. At first, we had nothing to say. When I mentioned *The Pillow Book*, she reacted favorably, so we made small talk about that. She asked me a personal question. I asked her one, in turn. We gabbed. She laughed comfortably. In the relaxed silence which followed, she laughed again.

217. Entering the kitchen

Entering the kitchen, I saw a utility bill and opened it to see the cost. I wanted to make out a check for my half.

When she returned from school, Legs asked me why the envelope was open. I explained. She growled that she did not want me opening mail that had only her name on it. Shaking my head, I pointed out that the bill was mine, too.

Legs repeated that she did not want me opening mail with her name on it. She jumped up and retreated to our bedroom.

218. Legs peered at

Legs peered at my cock closely, heaving a sigh, propping her head on an elbow. Her mouth fell open, and the upper row of her teeth touched her lower lip. Her nostrils widened. When my penis jerked, she chuckled. She grabbed my penis but then let it go and rose from my bed. After she glanced to the left, her silky crimson hair passed over her naked breasts like a cape. She peeked out the window at the boarded-up air conditioner shop across the street. A spring breeze drifted through the open window. It was late at night.

Legs padded over and rested against my back, circling me with her arms and pressing her small breasts into me. She slid her hand around my cock. A bit of her Vashti perfume drifted to me. She murmured a few words, then moved her hand up and down my penis slightly.

Legs curved around and flopped down in front of me, then pushed me onto my back. Watching my reaction, she sucked in my cock. Her fingertips caressed my balls. She slurped lingeringly, then pulled my cock out of her mouth and kissed it on the tip. Frowning, she closed her eyes.

Roughly, Legs grabbed my penis and began licking it. Her tongue arched along my cock. She licked it again, lifted her hair back and kissed the tip perfunctorily. She giggled and kissed it again. When she rolled it between her palms, I winced. Outside, a car rumbled by on 18th Street.

Legs jerked her hand up and down along the shaft, then pressed her lips over the tip. As her tongue washed under the corona, I slapped my hand onto her head. She flicked her mouth off my cock and seized my wrist. She sucked on my index finger, her eyes searching mine again. Bit by bit, I removed my finger.

Legs returned to my penis and sucked it in to the root lazily, humming. Her head tilted back, then tilted forward. My balls jerked. She reached up and pinched one of my nipples. I closed my eyes and grabbed the side of the bed.

As I sent my spunk into her mouth, Legs swallowed, observing me placidly. My cock throbbed against the inside of her cheek. She removed it and sat up. A single string of semen hung across her open mouth and teeth.

We snuggled in bed. Legs whispered that she was not done with me and then called me boy. She asked me whether I had ever had anal sex. Laughing, I said that I had never tried it. She replied that she had not either. For a time, we lay

there quietly. Overhead on the bedroom ceiling were pasted fluorescent stars arranged in the constellations. A C-moon was glued to the end of the cord to the ceiling light. Another spring breeze wafted through the room.

Legs began tickling my cock with her tongue. After a time, I was hard again. Suddenly, she flipped over and presented her ass to me. I felt myself getting even harder. Twisting, I found a condom and a tube of cream in the bedside table. After I unrolled a condom onto my penis and lubricated Legs' anus, I asked her to raise her left leg slightly. I prodded my cock against her anus, then pushed it in. She was extremely tight.

When I grabbed her left hip, Legs quivered. I began bucking in and out, her red hair fragrant against my face. I ground into her. She was silent. Moaning, I thrust several times, then came powerfully.

Afterward, I asked Legs how it felt. Faintly, she said that it felt different.

219. Legs turned away

Legs turned away from me, flipped her skirt up and yanked her panties down. She bent forward. We were in a backroom at a party in a loft in Greenwich Village. Below us, along Sixth Avenue, people in costumes and floats bustled by in the Halloween Parade. We were drunk. When I rammed my hard cock inside her, she moaned. She began bucking against me silently. She panted. I grabbed her hips and kept plunging into her vagina.

Legs stumbled forward slightly, then caught herself. I grasped her shoulders and ground into her. She yelled out suddenly. A moment later, someone opened the door to the room, laughed, then closed the door softly. I jerked my cock out of her, ripped my condom off and sprayed spunk all over her ass. She squeaked and hopped up and down.

220. List Seventeen

I asked Legs why she was such a good, kind person. She made a face and replied that she wasn't sure she was. But then she said that her mother and father were like that. They were kind, and they loved her.

Impulsively, Legs traced a finger along the line of my eyebrow. Gently, I touched the sunflower tattoo below her left breast.

As she entered the room, I lost my smile slightly.

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I entered the room to see Alice shyly flirting with another guy.

I wrote a receipt to Harper. It was for a second portrait of her, naked, in loud, shiny colors. She handed me another large fee, this time in cash.

I typed another piece on Thai into the series of erotic drawings and writings that I had been working on. I scanned in a drawing of her.

Sarah's Texas accent. Thai's whispery sound. Nicki's lisp. Janie's chirpy speech. The way The Yellow Kid slurred her vowels. Michelle's Long Island accent. The flat tones of the girl I picked up on the number 7 train. Red Cloud's St. Denis accent.

She ran her fingers over my cropped hair. She said that she really loved to do that.

Suddenly, Legs said that she felt scared all the time.

"Tell It to Your Heart" came onto the radio that sat on my windowsill. I bowed my head, listening. Outside, snow drifted like smoke. I thought about the women I had known.

Legs cried because I did not know what she had not told me.

I explained to Legs that I had jumped off a cliff a long time ago. I asked her if I would ever fly. She looked puzzled. I whispered that I meant breaking through with my painting,

221. Fumbling, I

Fumbling, I reached for Legs' fingers and stammered that I cared for her. She responded that all she wanted was a good life and a good partner.

222. Suddenly, I woke up

Suddenly, I woke up. Legs woke up, too. Sleepily, she reached for my piss hard-on. We nestled together, warm, somewhere between awake and asleep, her fingers curled about my member. Because the curtains were drawn, I did not know if it was day or night. It had snowed, and wind was pushing against the windows

hard. I asked her what time it was in Legs-land. Cooing gently, she fell back asleep.

223. I daubed at a

I daubed at a watercolor of Red Cloud clasping a lily to her large breasts. The colors were gaudy red, yellow, blue and white. On my stereo played “I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For”.

224. I fed her

I fed her my index finger. Her broad, thin lips with smile lines around them folded and unfolded. At last, they drew my finger in. Her teeth nibbled on it, and then her lips sucked on it. She released my finger. Murmuring, she wet her lips and lifted my hand to her mouth again. Her tongue kept licking my finger.

225. Weeping, Legs asked

Weeping, Legs asked me why I tried to tell her how to suck my cock. She wanted to know if that was all I wanted from her. She said that I told her that I loved her so much. Grimacing, I replied that sometimes she was very sexual. Legs said that really was not her. I shook my head.

226. Sitting in the movie theater

Sitting in the movie theater in Times Square, Legs and I watched *The Russia House*. She reached over, placed her hand in my lap and squeezed my cock. Quickly, she glanced around. She bowed her head, unzipped my jeans and dug my penis out. Staring up at the screen, Legs began pumping my cock slowly. I inhaled suddenly, my legs stiffening. After I put my right hand on her slight left breast, she shook head “no”. I removed my hand.

Legs flicked her thumb at the head of my cock, then kept jerking her hand up and down. Murmuring, I raised my hips. I looked over at Legs, who was smiling. When two people walked back up the aisle, Legs snatched her hand away. Then she grasped my cock and started tugging again. Grunting, I ejaculated abruptly. Legs thrust a napkin over the tip of my cock, and my cock soaked the napkin. Chuckling, Legs produced a plastic baggie from her purse and deposited the napkin in it.

227. Legs said

Legs said that she knew why I had never found a partner. She pointed out that I was always working on my painting. When I replied that some people were just unlucky in love, she laughed loudly at me. I whispered that I wished I had children. She looked at me but did not say anything. After I mumbled that I still loved her, she did not respond.

228. Legs and I

Legs and I sat across from Nancy, a couples counselor, at 726 Broadway. Smiling, she asked us what we had in common. We looked at each other but did not say anything. She asked us where we had met. Again, we did not say anything. Finally, after a time, I said that I thought that I was right when we had conflicts. I added, I think I look at things objectively.

229. List Eighteen

I pored over *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, enthralled. My mother bought me the book *100 Years of Comics* as a birthday gift and mailed it to me.

Next to me, in a dark corner of Draft, an artist's bar in Triboro, Skinny rested her head on my shoulder, snoring peacefully. She had passed out. She had just moved to the city.

Legs sat next to me at the Green Party meeting in Astoria, knitting. I glanced down and unexpectedly saw her small, bell-shaped breasts beneath her low-cut blouse. Her long, red braids framed them.

She phoned me the second I woke up. Somehow, she always knew when I had awakened.

Her hands on her hips, Legs squinted down at my penis. At its tip, a bead of semen glistened.

Quietly, in my studio, she sat in a chair, her head bent over, patching an old pair of her jeans. A single lamp lit her. Snow piled up on the window ledges outside. She did not look up. I turned away from her.

Trembling, I stammered to Legs that it was taking me a while to work my penis into her vagina. I added that she was the tightest girl I had ever fucked. She groaned, then murmured twice that she knew.

I practice avoidance, Legs informed me proudly.

As I crunched through snow on the sidewalk along 18th Street, a Van Morrison song came out of an apartment window. It reminded me of Sarah.

230. Legs slid away

Legs slid away from me and perched on the edge of the bed, her legs extended, her ankles crossed. She peered at me, her hands folded in her lap. Then she glared at me, rolled her eyes and uttered a cliché. At the same moment, we slid toward each other. I told her that I was thinking about moving to Paris. I had sold two more paintings and had some real money now. I asked her if she was willing to go there, but she did not answer.

231. Legs and I settled

Legs and I settled on a bench, near the Hudson, in Riverside Park. Holding hands, we gazed out at the river. Spring had arrived: blue sky without clouds, crisp temperature. A bed of lilies nearby waved. The river was a green streak. I started to ask her about the arguments about sex, money and work that we had been having. I said that I had been thinking about how people can be together, stay together. I could not figure it out, though, I added. Scowling, Legs muttered that she had a headache. She said that she did not want to talk right now.

232. Legs typed

Legs typed at her word processor. Muttering, I asked her if she would like to go for a walk. I said that I had not spent any time alone with her for a long time. She replied that she had to finish a paper for her art history class. Sighing, I decided to walk to my studio.

233. In the living room

In the living room, Clarissa huddled across from Legs. They whispered. I heard my name mentioned. Legs peered at me, and Clarissa made a face.

234. In my dream

In my dream, the girl perched on the windowsill, wrapped in a sunburst quilt, silent again. Her glossy, red hair spread over the quilt. The room was dark, lit only by the fall moon, which had partly hidden itself behind banks of clouds. Inches from her, beyond the glass, thin rain fell. Below us flickered the white, yellow, green and red lights of mid-town Manhattan. We were staying at a friend's home.

I went over to her and stuck my hand beneath the quilt, grabbing her hot, wet breast, its up-tilted, hard tip against my palm. She inspected me, then made a gesture. I removed my hand, turned away and settled in a chair near the door.

She rose from the sill, stumbling over the quilt dragging at her feet. Slowly, she unwrapped the quilt from her hips, displaying her genitals. Glossy, rust-colored hair circled fat, pink lips. She dropped the quilt shut. A little at a time, she turned her back to me. She hoisted the back of the quilt and exposed her bottom. Two plump balls, pink and trim, a tail of hair at their cleft's bottom. Unhurriedly, she let the quilt descend.

In the moonshine, she drifted back over to the window, the quilt cupped about her. I sighed. The girl drew the quilt tighter around her, and her head fell to one side, her long red hair descending.

235. In bed, in the dark

In bed, in the dark, I asked Legs if she wanted to fuck. After she shook her head, I nudged her. She turned her broad back to me. Sighing, she told me that she had to teach tomorrow and was really nervous about it. I whined that I wanted to fuck.

Legs rolled out of bed and ran to the living room. I called out that I was sorry, but she did not answer.

After a time, I trudged into the bathroom and balanced on the old bathtub's edge. The window was cracked open slightly, and chilly winter air leaked in. Snowflakes began to drift down outside. I heard Legs go back to the bedroom. When I returned to our bed, she was silent. I did not say anything.

Later, I got back out of bed and sat on an old mattress in my backroom. I got a beer from my small refrigerator and sipped it. I thought that Legs was mad at me. I called my friend Steve. He asked me to have a drink with him.

I walked down 31st Street, turned right onto Borden Avenue, through the falling snow, and entered the Sparrow Tavern. Inside, it was dark. An old bar and a few tables occupied most of the space.

Steve waved to me. After we crouched at the bar, he ordered us two Heinekens. We downed them, then drank two more. We kept drinking. A Rolling Stone song played. Steve smiled and said that you cannot always get what you want. He asked me about Legs, but I shrugged. I said that I did not know what to do.

Later that night, I walked home unsteadily down the slushy sidewalk. Legs was still in bed. I went to my backroom and sat in front of my easel for a long time.

At last, I rose and went to our bedroom. I shook Leg by the shoulder, waking her. I asked her if I could speak to her for a moment. Looking surprised, she sighed and nodded. She sat up in the bed. I stammered that I wanted to cook her a big Thanksgiving dinner. I hoped it would make up for all our arguments. She looked away. Sighing, she said that she had already made plans elsewhere for Thanksgiving.

I told Legs that I remembered the first time we had met. I had seen her before she had seen me. She had come to the Silver Bay Arts Colony. I had watched her get out of her car and speak to people on the lawn in front of the conference center. I had thought that she was so pretty.

Legs turned to me and smiled. She folded her arms around her knees. I said that night we walked and shooting stars had fallen. Legs nodded. She said that she recalled. She bowed her head, her auburn hair falling forward, and was silent. Then she muttered that she had to get up early the next morning for class, so she had to go back to sleep.

The next night I hunted in Legs' desk for typing paper. She was lying in bed, reading about Chuah Thean Teng. I found letters she had written to herself about our relationship. I sat down on a chair and read them. In the letters, she detailed why our relationship had failed and why there was no hope.

Legs came into the living room, carrying her textbook. She walked over to the door, pushed it open against the dirty snow piled on the front step and peeked out into the darkness.

I stammered that I had found her letters. Legs turned toward me. I told her that I was sorry for reading them. I mumbled that I would really like to work things out and that I had realized what I had done wrong. I said softly that you must learn to move and learn to be still. I have to tell you what I need only when I really need it. I must go along with what you need as much as I can. Work with that. Love you like a friend. Legs looked at me and shook her head. Then she smiled and said loudly, oh, you mean you have to compromise! She began to laugh, but then she stopped herself.

Legs shook her head. She said that she could not do that. She stated that I would have to take what I learned into my next relationship. She left the door and perched in a chair. After she folded her hands together prayerfully, she leant back.

Her gaze wandered across the living room, then returned to me. She said that she was planning to move out.

I proposed marriage. My hands shook. Legs widened her eyes. She stared down at the floor, silent. She shook her head. She pointed out that we argued too much. She said that we wanted different things in life.

The next day, I trotted up the stairs to our apartment, returning home from the Steinway Library. The snow had stopped. Legs and some of her friends were moving her out. Clarissa, one of them, asked me how I was doing. I replied, smiling, that I was okay. She smirked.

Before she left, I told Legs that I might need help with the rent. With one person there, the apartment cost a lot. I explained that I needed some rent money until I found another roommate. She looked at me, but she did not say anything.

I told her that if I could not get rent money from her, I would have to take her to court because she was on the lease. As I did not know where she was going to move, I would have a subpoena delivered to her school. My fists were clenched. Her eyes widened, and she nodded.

I hiked back to the library. At a small desk in the back, I sat staring at the wall. I swore, opened my worn copy of *The Pillow Book* and read for a time. Then I scribbled words for a story about Valentine and me acting in a play.

After a few hours, I left the library and walked down 31st Street. It had snowed again earlier. The streets were ragged with white. I circled around onto Astoria Boulevard and struggled through the piled snow in Astoria Park. Panting, I leant on a fence overlooking the East River. Ice floated midstream in the river. The Upper East Side twinkled. The sky was grey with night.

When I returned, the apartment was empty.

A few days later, when I arrived home from my studio, I noticed my answering machine blinking. Legs had called and left a message. She said that she would send some money. She would have to borrow it from her mother. She hoped that it would make me happy.

In my apartment, I kneeled in front of the fireplace and built a fire. I stared into it for a long time. Snow was falling again. It was very cold outside.

After a while, I rose, padded back to our bedroom and stretched out on our bed. I focused on the ceiling with the florescent stars and moon.

I got up, wandered into my studio and stood there for a time. Then I rolled down the blinds. A tiny teddy bear with a red cowboy hat was pinned to one of the blinds. Legs had tacked it there when we had moved in together. I collapsed onto the floor, weeping.

PARIS 1998-2001

CITY
(Red Cloud)

236. In central Paris

In central Paris, in the Luxembourg Gardens, near the pond, on a sunny but cold day in spring, I huddled on a metal chair. I read from *Days of Rage*. A young woman looked around, came over to me and asked if I was using the chair next to me. I said, *oh, pardon, je parle appel le français*. Then I glanced up. It was Red Cloud. She did not remember me. Finally, I gave up trying to explain who I was.

237. Red Cloud and I

Red Cloud and I perched on a bench on the upper terrace at the Musée d'Orsay, near the huge clock, looking across the Seine toward the Louvre. She poured me more cheap Cabernet Sauvignon. Behind us, in the restaurant, a combo played "Nuages". She said that she loved my multi-hued portrait of her. She murmured that she wanted me to paint *belle peintures* for her. She wanted to be my Hébuterne, my muse.

238. In the long grass

In the long grass of Vosges, on a hot early summer day, Red Cloud and I lay, kissing. Later, we lost ourselves in the woods. At day's end, she and I leant on the railing of the curved bridge over the pond, gazing at our reflections. After she took her leave, I found a note by my jacket. In elegant characters, she had written my name.

239. Red Cloud bent over

Red Cloud bent over the sink, staring out the small kitchen window of our apartment, above the framer's shop, west of the flower market, on the Île de la Cité. Below her, the Seine rippled past. Her big, pink breasts hung out of her green silk robe. Her ribs rippled between them. Her brown hair was piled on top of her head. She reached over casually and brought my fingers to her stiff right nipple.

240. Red Cloud unzipped

Red Cloud unzipped my jeans and removed my cock. We lay on a blanket on La Grande Jatte, hidden by some trees. A hamper with roast beef sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs and white wine sat nearby. It was a pretty day in summer.

Red Cloud kneaded my penis gently. As she kissed me, I grasped her large right breast through her blouse. Murmuring, she brushed her thumb beneath the glans. My cock thickened. She began stroking her hand up and down, turning her head and staring at me.

I started thrusting my hips. Red Cloud chuckled. Her fist pumped harder. When I came suddenly, she jerked down and caught my semen in her mouth. Then she spat the semen in a napkin. A little sweaty, her lips pursed, she tucked my penis back in and zipped up my jeans.

241. Alice and I

Alice and I hunched opposite each other on the bed in the loft in Montparnasse, sharing riddles. All too often, the answers were obscene. She would nod benignly.

242. List Nineteen

The phone rang. It was Elle, calling me from New York City. She informed me that I had sold several portraits to the Marquise de Marmyon. She said to me that the fees added up to a lot of money. When I hung up and reported this to Red Cloud, she hopped up and down, yipping.

I asked Red Cloud about birth control. She smiled brightly and replied, *pilule contraceptive*. I muttered, *préservatif?* Red Cloud looked surprised, then shrugged and whispered, *peu importe*.

As we lay together spoon-style, I fed my cock into Red Cloud's anus. I looped my hand around to her big left breast. Whimpering, she jerked her hips. She muttered, *arrête ça....*

Delicately, Red Cloud fixed a girdle of bluebells about her naked hips. Her breath smelled of gin.

With my hand, I led her in a slow dance.

I confided to her that it was taking me a while to get used to sleeping with someone every night again. I could only seem to nap lightly.

I asked Red Cloud where she got her name. She said that her parents were acrobats, and people had names like that in the circus.

From under her blue robe, from between her fat, curved breasts, she removed a spray of rose plum and presented it to me sweetly. It had the mingled smell of the flower and of her body.

At a particular moment, for no obvious reason, she quoted an unknown but strangely exciting poem to me.

A tender, brown flower gored by a thick, red root, above the cheeks of her ass, below my belly.

In the early evening, in hot mid-summer, Red Cloud and I curled up on the low wall in the Place de Grève, the square before the l'Hôtel de Ville. A man with a gold hoop performed. People watched the merry-go-round. Across the Seine, the lights of the Left Bank sparkled. She told me about her day at the clinique médicale, where she was a nurse.

In the Musée de l'Érotisme in Pigalle, when we looked at the dildos, she poked me gleefully.

Red Cloud called out to me that my mother was on the phone. Mom chatted with me brightly. She confided that she was planning to get a ring through her eyebrow for her 82nd birthday. I smiled and muttered that it was great. Then she sang out that she loved me and hung up.

Red Cloud jerked at my penis violently, plopped her lips on its tip and kissed it gently.

As I listened, Red Cloud and her friends started playing "Contrôle". Now and then, they performed in a band on Pont Neuf, near to where we lived. She sang and played her red accordion, grinning. The name of her group was Mr. Beck.

Red Cloud's scent and stain varied.

243. Red Cloud poked

Red Cloud poked at the stones and keepsakes on my oak table. In pidgin French, I ordered her to stand still. She froze, then made a face. Glancing away, she called me *connard* softly. I set my sketchpad down and whispered to her. After she listened closely to me, she picked up the pad and traced the lines of the drawing. She questioned my sketch in hurt tones. Her forehead wrinkled up. I said that I was sorry and offered to tear up the painting. She smiled suddenly. *Mais je suis ta muse!* she said. I asked her why she was my muse. She replied, *créativité est magi....*

244. That morning Red Cloud

That morning, Red Cloud drove her Opel down the Avenue Montaigne in a careless manner. Quick and hard. She slowed down but then returned to driving fast. As she zipped along, she discussed philosophy. She took corners on two wheels and darted through stop lights, without stopping. In a blur, she passed other cars. Laughing, she slammed to a halt in front of the Plaza Athénée. She sang out that she did not think she liked driving.

245. At the Friends Meeting

At the Friends Meeting in central Paris, that fall, I sat in worship. Red Cloud sat nearby. Then she came over and held my hand.

246. Red Cloud yanked

Red Cloud yanked her tight, black skirt up, then bent over the kitchen window lintel. She was not wearing panties. She stared at the round granite tower across the Seine. Snow had begun to fall on the river. After her long, brown hair waved forward, she pushed it back behind one ear. Solemnly, she glanced at me over her shoulder.

I ambled up behind Red Cloud, took out my cock and rubbed it on her ass. She ducked her head. I kneeled and tongued her cunt. She was drenched. As I straightened, rolled *un préservatif* on my penis and nudged it in, she stayed silent.

I began sliding in and out, panting. Red Cloud did not move. Suddenly, I inhaled. I reached around, slid my hand beneath her blue blouse and red scarf and squeezed her large left breast. She began bucking her ass against me.

“Baise-moi....” she murmured.

After a few minutes, I began to pump semen into *le préservatif* inside Red Cloud. She grunted and grunted. Then she pulled herself off me, sank to her knees and licked my sheathed cock, gazing up at me blankly.

247. Glaring at me, Red Cloud

Glaring at me, Red Cloud slipped her arm through mine and pulled me along the Rue de Vaugiraud. It was early evening. She ordered me to hurry up and yanked on my arm. She snapped out a curse. I nodded and did not respond.

248. Description Thirteen

At the base of her spine, above her rounded ass, she displayed two diamond piercings, ivory against pink.

249. Red Cloud kneeled

Red Cloud kneeled and bent forward, her big-nippled breasts beneath her white cotton shirt piling onto her thighs. The Paris metro thundered underground nearby. She pushed her wet, dark hair up on her shoulders, flipped a big white towel over her head and bound it tight. Slowly, she chafed the towel. Her left breast oozed out over her thigh, rose and fell. Her spine twisted. A little moonlight veiled the girl. As wind rolled over her and carried her scent to me, she unknotted the towel and tossed it crumpled beside her.

250. When I asked her

When I asked her what she wanted for her birthday, she replied that I did not have to get her anything. Immediately, I raced out the door to the Rue Saint-Louis en l'Île to shop.

251. I finished the canvas

I finished the canvas and called to Red Cloud. She stumbled over and shoved me away from the easel. The bright primary colors reflected onto her pink skin. As she examined the painting, she put her hand on my shoulder. She made a few apt remarks.

252. When the phone rang

When the phone rang, I picked it up. It was Red Cloud. She murmured something about my penis and what she wanted to do with it. After a time, she told me to take my cock out and start masturbating. Red Cloud said that she was playing with *sa chatte*. She started moaning softly.

253. I dreamed

I dreamed Legs and I had a child. We named her Zoe.

254. I gave Red Cloud

I gave Red Cloud, my lover, as a sign, a plum-red robe, wrapped in five yards of beaten white silk.

255. Afterward, she produced

Afterward, she produced a thick, purple cloth that had been warmed. She washed my cock, then my balls. Then she perfumed them lightly. My genitals appeared softer and smaller. She cupped them loosely in her fingers, like something precious. She whispered that she performed this to keep me clean and for pleasure.

256. Description Fourteen

Red Cloud's deep, chesty voice, a contralto.

A young girl's face. Lined forehead. Large, brown eyes that narrowed at times. Deep lines cut around them. Big lids. Dark skin beneath her eyes. Up-tilted nose and firm jaw. Tiny, gold nose ring she occasionally wore. Lips thick and wide. Big tongue. Pronounced cheekbones. Thick, brown lion's mane of hair. A short neck. Brown mole on left side of neck. And the pink lobes of her ears.

Large, pink breasts, probably thirty-eight inches. Areolae two inches across with nipples big and chunky. Left breast perhaps a bit larger than the other. Layered with down. Seeming to float when she walked.

Long, strong arms, thin tapered fingers. A sturdy ribcage. Flat stomach and flared hips. Indented waist and strong back. Tiny cut of navel. Little belly rising and falling, a mole dotting its left side. Tattoo of a black rose on her belly.

An almost furry vagina above a big perineum. Big ribbons of lips surrounding small inner slivers, red over pink. Dimpled clit. Boyish, muscular ass. Slit of

rectum. Long, athletic legs, powerful thighs and calves. Disfigured left knee. Bulge of ankles. Short, curved toes.

Brainy. Heavy Parisian accent. From St. Denis. Seemed heavily perfumed. Maternal. Warm.

257. Red Cloud asked me

Red Cloud asked me if I had been with a lot of women. I said that I had not been with many. She wanted to know if I had learned anything. I responded that I had learned some things. I said that I was trying to learn more.

258. When she tried to park

When she tried to park on the Boulevard Saint-Michel, Red Cloud bumped into the car ahead of her. She dented the other car's fender. Laughing, she hopped out of her Opel.

259. At the École Nationale

At the École Nationale des Arts du Cirque de Rosny-Sous-Bois, in northeast Paris, Red Cloud rode her acrobatic bike forward on the high wire, a pole balanced in her hand, about ten feet in the air. She taught there occasionally. I perched on a chair, watching. The school was in a large tent, its walls and ceiling black and gold, with a red top and scaffolding and towers scattered around. Blue and white mats covered the floor. Teachers and students performed in other sections of the tent.

Red Cloud whipped her bike around, then tipped it back. The students applauded. As Red Cloud started laughing, she tilted her pole up to the right and then left. Then she zoomed back and forth, her bike zinging softly on the wire. Her feet pumped up and down. When she glanced over at me and smiled, I smiled back.

Red Cloud wheeled forward to the platform on the left. She hopped off her bike, secured it and the pole, then glided down the ladder. She tripped over to the students and spoke to them softly. One of them, a young girl, red hair in braids, popped up, swaying slightly. She giggled. Red Cloud led her to the ladder and beckoned her to climb. She said to her, *tout ira bien, Amélie*.

After Amélie scurried up the ladder, Red Cloud followed her more slowly. Then they balanced up on the platform, talking. Red Cloud clipped the support cords to Amélie's stomach brace, a student underneath them taking up the slack.

Then Red Cloud unhooked the bike. Gingerly, Amélie slid on the bike, then took the pole from her. Red Cloud tapped her on the shoulder, and she rolled forward. Below them, the students applauded. Amélie made a squeaking sound.

Amélie moved along the tightrope, murmuring. Though she wobbled, her support cords kept her upright. Looking anxious, she carefully balanced the pole. Red Cloud called out to her, *la patience....* Amélie stared straight ahead. She pedaled slowly to the verge of the opposite platform, then stopped. Red Cloud said, *bien!* Amélie shivered and hunched forward. The students clapped softly.

Red Cloud said to Amélie, *maintenant reviens vers moi.* Amélie lowered her head, straightened, then began pedaling backward. Midway down the wire, she halted suddenly, quivered and moved back a few more feet. Then she began to fall to one side, and one of the cords held by the student flung loose. Arms flailing, yelling, Amélie sailed out from the wire. One cord remained attached to her. While Amélie twirled silently, Red Cloud dashed out onto the wire.

Amélie plunged into the net below the tightrope abruptly, bouncing up and down. The bicycle and pole fell just beyond the net. The students scurried up to her. Red Cloud swung down, then landed just outside the net. I stood up. As Red Cloud bent over the net, Amélie began crying and holding her leg.

Red Cloud yelled, *appeler SAMU! appeler SAMU!* Other teachers and students ran over. One of the teachers produced a cellphone and spoke into it. I trotted over. Red Cloud reached in and grasped Amélie's hand, speaking softly. Amélie was mute and white-faced now. I went over and placed my hand on Red Cloud's shoulder, but she shrugged it off.

After about fifteen minutes, emergency service workers in blue uniforms with red stripes on their chests raced in. They assessed the scene quickly, then supported Amélie as they cut through the net. Lifting her onto a board, they strapped her in and carried her out of the tent. Red Cloud accompanied her.

Late that night, Red Cloud came padding up the stairs to our second-floor apartment. She had been at Hospital Saint-Antoine with Amélie. She ran to me and curled up in my arms. Shaking her head, she whispered that Amélie had broken her leg, and she began to shiver.

260. As Red Cloud

As Red Cloud straddled me, she rose slowly until the tip of my penis got popped by the ring of muscles in her vagina.

261. I walked past Heloise and Abelard's tomb

I walked past Heloise and Abelard's tomb in Père Lachaise Cemetery. It was spring. I noticed ceramic flowers on some nearby graves. Staring grimly, a young woman clung onto the chain link fence surrounding it. A cynical thought crossed my mind.

262. In my studio

In my studio, I set my brush down. Red Cloud sat reading *The New Yorker*. She leant over suddenly and turned on the radio. It played "Kiss from a Rose" softly. I went over to her. Smiling, she looked up and asked me to lay down with my head in her lap. As she resumed reading, she caressed my hair. She whispered, *mon chou*.... But then she yelled that I should get back to painting.

263. At the UGC Ciné Cité

At the UGC Ciné Cité in Les Halles, in the back row, we sat watching *Orpheline*. She laid her head on my shoulder. Her hand slipped over onto my penis and squeezed. She looked around, then unzipped my jeans, exposed my cock and ducked head down. Her wet tongue touched the tip of my penis.

264. Red Cloud and I strolled along

Red Cloud and I strolled along Rue de Montparnasse. We settled onto a bench under a pair of Linden trees. It was a spring night.

When Red Cloud sighed, I asked her what was wrong. She stammered that relationships were so strange. She began to tell me about her visit to some friends last night. I had been busy painting, so I had not accompanied her. They had watched some old episodes of *Star Trek*. One of her friends was a guy named Johnny.

I thought that I was getting dumped again. I leant forward on the bench.

Red Cloud had mentioned to Johnny that she had met me some months previously and that we were living together. Johnny became upset. It turned out that he had had a crush on her, and she had not known. He stormed out.

Red Cloud sighed again, and her head drooped. Taking her hand, I nodded. I told her that I was sorry and that I was glad. She looked at me, her eyes narrowed.

265. Outside the Crazy Horse

Outside the Crazy Horse, a man asked me something in French. I explained that I spoke little French. He asked, in English, if I wanted a woman. Shaking my head, I scurried away.

266. Red Cloud came

Red Cloud came in the door. She swore softly, then explained that she had had an exhausting day at her clinic. After a moment, she spun and hurried to our bedroom. The bed squeaked as she lay down. I went over to the bedroom door and asked her if she wanted to talk. She shook her head, still face down on the bed, then muttered for me to leave her alone. Sighing, I returned to my manuscript.

267. In the garden

In the garden of the small Giverny hotel, the woman's head floated beneath me. Her lips pushed and pulled, and her tongue squirmed. They made squishing sounds. A smell of sandalwood rose from her hair. It was summer, and a charm of finches rustled down into the garden. When she bit me hard, I could not keep from crying out.

268. We huddled in Sainte-Chapelle

We huddled in Sainte-Chapelle on rickety wooden chairs. The colors of the windows made me drunk. Red Cloud shook me. Finally, I whispered to her that we were inside a kaleidoscope. She nodded, frowning. She whispered that was inspiration for me.

269. My hand lay cupped

My hand lay cupped between the legs of Red Cloud's tight jeans; the movement of the Citroen on the Grand Boulevards ring road made her come.

270. Her head bowed

Her head bowed, Red Cloud groped behind herself and drew out a wet washcloth. With both hands, she wiped it across her large breasts, wetting and soaping them bit by bit until they were dimpled with goosebumps. She dumped the washcloth behind her, grabbed a towel and dried her breasts thoroughly, one at a time. My cock inched up my thigh.

Outside snow flew, coating the Quai des Orfevres like a light dust. People hurried by in the late evening light. Blue candles flickered by the windows.

Red Cloud produced a bottle and squeezed lemon-scented oil onto her fingertips. She applied the oil to her breasts smoothly, coating them until they shone. Drowsily, she rubbed it into her chest. Beads of it dripped from one of her thick nipples. After a stream of oil flowed beneath one breast, and halfway down her ribs, she dabbed at it.

Red Cloud put the bottle down and wiped her big breasts with another washcloth, filling it with oil. She picked up another cloth and finished cleaning her chest. Her head bobbed. When she glanced over at me, my cock twitched. I lay tucked in bed. I touched myself once.

Red Cloud peeked sideways. She threw the cloth down, grabbed a can of baby powder and shook some powder on a cotton ball. Delicately, she dabbed the cotton over her chest, whisking it around the nipples. White powder covered her breasts finally.

Red Cloud set the powder and cotton down, smiling. As I sat up, she bathed her nipples in Guerlain scent. She stuck her tongue out and up and to the right. I closed my eyes and opened them. After her tongue disappeared into her mouth, her upper lip drew back. She shook her big breasts around and twisted slightly, displaying the two diamond studs on her lower back.

I came over to Red Cloud, bent and flicked her thick right nipple with my tongue. She flipped a wrist over my neck. Her hand stroked the back of my head once, then twice. She laughed lightly. Over and over, I kissed her chunky left nipple, her perfume tart on my tongue. I licked her right breast. My tongue sought the hollow of her throat, then swung back between her breasts. Roughly, her breasts smacked my face and buried me for a moment. I crammed my face in them, breathing heavily.

When I pinched Red Cloud's pliant left breast, white and then red fingermarks appeared on it. I sucked on her left breast, then straightened. She smacked her thick lips and laughed again. I held the breast up in my hands and sucked on it. She struggled and cried out, her chest flopping. I grasped both of her breasts. After she yelped, I let them drop apart. Powder clung to my hands and lips.

Red Cloud smiled, pushed me onto my back and wrapped her large breasts around my penis. She mounted me and rocked from side to side, her breasts massaging my cock. Suddenly, she straightened, yanking her breasts up and down, smiling again. I squeezed her left breast, then worked the wet nipple between my fingertips. She moaned and bucked over and over, her big eyes blinking. Her breasts felt hot around my penis.

Suddenly, I shot semen up onto Red Cloud's large breasts. She moaned, then bent over, panting. Laughing softly, she released my cock. Spunk glistened on her breasts. Smiling, she complained that I had messed up her boobs again.

271. List Twenty

Red Cloud bustled in the door. Smiling, I laid down Ava Gardener's *My Story*. I asked her what she had done today. She plopped down beside me and grinned back at me.

When I walked into the Friends Meeting, the girl glanced up and smiled at me. Her eyes brightened.

Red Cloud tried to deep-throat me, but she produced only retching sounds.

Anne-Marie, Red Cloud's older sister, who was visiting, sat down, smiled and murmured, *tu sais, je te trouve mignon....* She did this, however, only when Red Cloud was not around.

Wrapped in a creamy towel coiled at her waist, her wavy, brown hair streaming past her shoulders, she arranged the stalks of dried sunflowers in a grey vase. She chatted with me in French. I crouched at an easel, painting her. She sat down at our piano and picked out "O! Superman".

Red Cloud and I wandered through the Marche aux Fleurs market, near our apartment, hand in hand. The scent of the plants was thick. The spring flowers had arrived and were displayed in rows in the stalls. We were circled by bright colors.

She slipped her blouse off and, limp-wristed, touched her large nipples with her fingertips. Then she hefted her big, lolling breasts, cradled them, like a Madonna with an infant, and lowered her head.

At the party in Montmartre, we huddled in a corner. “Les Choses les Plus Simples” played on the stereo. When friends of Red Cloud’s arrived, they rushed over to us. They yelled that she should visit them at their new summer home in Nice.

While we lay side by side, belly to belly, Red Cloud grasped my soft penis and tucked it inside herself, chuckling rhythmically. The black rose tattoo on her belly writhed.

Red Cloud, smirking, whispered a story involving something obscene in my ear. Then she folded her hand over her mouth, laughing.

I trotted down the stairs at the Pernety station. Two girls chatted. One with hair black as a crow’s wing murmured, *maintenant....*

At the Musée de L’Orangerie, Red Cloud and I examined Soutine’s *Gladioli*. She clutched my hand excitedly.

Deep teeth-marks streaked her wide rear.

Red Cloud mentioned that she had been raised on a farm in Normandy. Later, her parents joined Cirque d’Hiver.

I finished typing on my computer, then handed her a thumbdrive containing brief sketches about my lovers. I asked her if she wanted to read them. Scowling, she muttered that she did not read things on the computer.

Listlessly, Red Cloud drank some water from a glazed clay pot I owned, and the water ran from her mouth and caught on her up-tilted nipples before it poured between her big breasts and down her outlined ribs and stomach.

On our tiny balcony, smiling, Red Cloud handed me the pipe. I puffed on the marijuana, inhaled, held it, then exhaled. She giggled.

272. My lover handed me a sheet of paper

My lover handed me a sheet of paper. Intently, she kissed me on the lips, then hurried out the door. I sat down on the wide windowsill in the sunlight and unfolded the paper. It was a vivid description of the night before. She was unusually graphic, unconsciously poetic. Without opinion, she used obscenities

several times. The heavy paper smelled of lavender. A thick spray of purple asters was attached to it. Sometimes, she wrote me such things afterwards.

273. Grimacing, I said

Grimacing, I said to her that I was sorry. I had opened the EDF light bill to see what was owed without Red Cloud being present. I had wanted to pay what I owed. Red Cloud yelled, *idiote!*, then muttered that we should open the bills together. Once more, I said that I was sorry. Finally, glaring, she growled that I should stop telling her that I was sorry.

274. In the Louvre

In the Louvre, across from *The Cradle*, I confessed to Red Cloud that I had been in love with a woman in New York City. She gazed at me, nodded, then looked away. Quickly, I grabbed her hand and kissed it. She glanced back at me, her forehead wrinkled. Then she smiled. She said softly that she guessed she could live with that.

275. Red Cloud and I cuddled together

Red Cloud and I cuddled together late at night. Our bedroom overlooked the Seine. When the Bateaux Mouches slid past, their overhead lights sparkled, and their music sounded faintly. The windows of the dirty white apartment buildings across the river were dark. It was a warm summer night.

Red Cloud kissed me lightly. Yawning, she stretched. I asked her if she had ever made love to another girl. She said that she had not, but she would not kick one out of my bed. I smiled. After a time, I asked her if she would ever want to be with Sabine, her friend.

Sabine was sleeping in the room across the hall. She was visiting from Lyon, where she taught in an *école élémentaire*. She was blonde and big-breasted. Red Cloud glanced at me, but she did not say anything. For a while, we lay in silence.

I rose finally, pulled on my jeans, went out of the room and across the hall and knocked on Sabine's door. After a moment, I heard her say, *oui?* I said that it was me and asked if I could come in. There was a pause, then she said that I could.

Sabine was sitting up in bed, a sheet clasped to her chest. I smiled. I said that Red Cloud and I wondered if she would like to join us. Sabine blinked, then frowned. She ducked her head and did not respond. Then she shrugged and asked if Red Cloud wanted her to come. I said, *oui*.

Sabine swung her legs off the bed, the sheet wrapped around her, and padded past me. I followed her. Sabine halted in our room, her head down. I pulled off my jeans and slid under the covers with Red Cloud. Red Cloud had a sheet clasped over her breasts, too. When she smiled at Sabine, Sabine dropped her sheet. Her cunt was shaved. Smiling, too she walked over to our bed and climbed in beside me.

Red Cloud and Sabine's arms pressed against mine. My cock stirred. As I twisted and kissed Sabine, she kissed me back. I stuck my tongue in her mouth. She made a sound. I reached up and squeezed her large left breast, its nipple soft under my hand. As her lips dropped onto mine again, our tongues tossed.

After I turned and kissed Red Cloud, she placed her hand on my shoulder. I grasped her big right breast. Its nipple was hard. Her breath quickened, and she broke from our kiss. I felt Sabine kissing my neck. Twisting again, I found Sabine and Red Cloud facing each other across my chest. After a moment, they kissed lazily, their tongues flicking. I joined them, and our three tongues licked each other. Sabine leant down and sucked on Red Cloud's left nipple. Red Cloud moaned.

Sabine rolled over and threw the blanket off us. She grabbed my cock and slid her mouth over it, her blonde hair falling over my thigh. Red Cloud watched, then bent down and began licking my balls. One of the women giggled. I thrashed slightly. After Sabine spat on my penis, she seized my cock and began jerking on it hard. Red Cloud bent up and lapped at the tip of my penis.

Finally, abruptly, Sabine broke off, straightened and nudged Red Cloud away. Murmuring, she swung a leg over my hips. I grabbed her hips and pushed her off. Red Cloud giggled and said to Sabine, *attendez*. She showed her a condom, then unrolled it onto my penis. Panting, Sabine settled onto my erect cock. While Red Cloud slumped against my chest, kissing me over and over, Sabine began bumping her cunt up and down on my cock. Red Cloud rose and straddled my face. Groaning, she pressed her vagina against my mouth. I stuck my tongue inside her and moved it around.

Sabine thrust her cunt down on me and rocked her hips back and forth. When Red Cloud ground her vagina against me, I reached up and grabbed Red Cloud's ass. Grunting, Sabine started to buck up and down. After a few minutes, I moaned and began shooting semen inside Sabine. Sabine muttered, *je viens, je viens....* She crashed her hips down and froze, then began shaking.

Red Cloud growled, *léche-moi plus fort....* I dug my tongue hard in her cunt. She began panting, then shivered suddenly, froze and shivered again. Quivering, she flipped herself off me and lay by my right side. Sabine slid off my cock and rolled over onto my left side.

I snaked my arms around Red Cloud and Sabine. They were sweaty. My penis was soft in the condom. As Red Cloud dug her face into my chest, panting, Sabine reached up and kissed me, her tongue whipping. I stripped off the condom and pushed the two women down to my penis. Roughly, I began jerking on my cock, then, after a minute, erect again, I came hard over both their faces.

Red Cloud started giggling. She swiped a finger over Sabine's lips and licked my semen off the tip. After Sabine slid her hands around Red Cloud's waist, she kissed her. Red Cloud kissed her back, then humped herself down between Sabine's legs and started flicking her tongue at her bare cunt. Sabine cried out.

In the morning, I woke to see the summer sunlight bursting through the windows in our room. Red Cloud and Sabine were asleep, their heads on my shoulders. Smiling, I stretched. Sabine woke slowly, then looked up and flushed deep red. She muttered, *oh, je suis tellement gêné!* She grabbed a sheet, wrapped it around her and fled the room. Red Cloud began snoring softly.

276. I leant out

I leant out the window in my studio and watched the passersby in Rue de Montparnasse below. It was late fall: gray sky, cool, early sunset. People with scarves strolled by with their net bags of groceries. Some wore backpacks with bread sticking out of them. After a time, I turned back to the painting I was making. My cellphone rang suddenly. It was Red Cloud. She wanted me to know that she was thinking about my painting.

277. At the Closerie de Lilas

At the Closerie de Lilas, I hunched over a table, drinking white wine and writing a piece on The Yellow Kid and a bike trip in the country. The table was the one with Max Jacob's plaque.

278. In another foreign city

In another foreign city, perched on a windowsill, she pulled a length of thick chunky beads out of her slit. Preoccupied, she poked them back in. Linked to the beads were tiny copper bells, which rang a little when she moved them. A thank you gift, they had been sent to her by Sabine.

279. Description Fifteen

Sarah's long coffee-colored hands and tapered fingers. Nicki's scarred thumb, her chunky fingers. Red Cloud's knife-like nails. Thai's slender hands. Ridge of veins across the back of The Yellow Kid's. Cherry-red nails. Big mount-of-venus on Sarah's. The Yellow Kid's callused fingers and palms. Corn-silk hair on the back of this other girl's hands.

280. That winter

That winter, as we wound down the N12 to Paris, Red Cloud veered off the road briefly.

281. Red Cloud collapsed

Red Cloud collapsed onto a chair and stretched her arms, yawning. She rose, sauntered into the bedroom and crumpled on the bed. In the hall, I picked up our suitcases and stored them in the closet. I put her purse on the bedside table. Her blue birth control case fell out. Because we had just returned from a long trip to Normandy, we were both weary. I heard her snoring. I laid down, too.

When I woke, I saw that Red Cloud had been watching me sleep. I had had a lucid dream. She leant down, touched my cheek and kissed me tenderly, almost maternally. Her long, brown hair descended and blocked the early evening light.

I smiled at Red Cloud and rose to use the bathroom. Then I crawled back into bed with her. She was asleep again, but she woke up. After I slid my hand on her hip, she murmured. We kissed. It was the middle of the night. When I pushed my hand between her thighs, she said softly, *non....* I looked at her. She muttered that she was tired and to leave her alone.

I sighed, nodded and rolled out of bed. Slowly, I went to my studio and crouched on a cushion. My mind wandered to The Yellow Kid and the first time we had fucked. I began massaging my penis. After a few minutes, I came. Then I wiped myself with a paint cloth, stood and gazed out the window at the darkened Paris skyline.

Back in bed, I snuggled up to Red Cloud. She was asleep again. I fell asleep, too.

282. For some reason

For some reason, that summer, she wore the top of her red string bikini on the beach at Merville but not the bottom.

283. Red Cloud screeched

Red Cloud screeched into the courtyard, shooting up showers of gravel from beneath her Audi's tires, Patti Smith howling, "Smells like Teen Spirit" on her CD player.

284. Next to the open terrace

Next to the open terrace doors, in the huge old bed, Red Cloud and I slept together. It was on a warm night in late summer at the house we had rented in Vosges. Melisande and Sabine lay on either side of us. Melisande was Sabine's partner. Red Cloud had invited them for the weekend.

285. Glaring at me, she dared me

Glaring at me, she dared me to write a poem about her breasts. I challenged her to write one about my cock. *Merde*, she muttered. She told me to write one myself. Because I was speaking it better now, she declared that I had to write the poem in French. I laughed. She insisted that I should not just paint hard, but that I should write hard, too.

286. Red Cloud clasped

Red Cloud clasped my head in her hands and touched her big lips to mine, then turned away from me. We sat side by side on the concrete embankment over the Seine, across from the Palais Bourbon, our legs dangling. Linden trees waved behind us. A tourist batteau glided by. It was a clear summer day.

Red Cloud turned back to me. She pushed her tongue in my mouth, found mine and licked it. When I slipped my arms around her waist, she placed her hands on my shoulders. I sucked her tongue into my mouth, her tongue squirming against mine. Abruptly, she tore her lips from mine. She moved closer to me, then settled her head on my shoulder.

I told her that I wanted to tell her how much I cared for her. She sat up and looked at me, her forehead wrinkled again, and murmured, *je sais*, and then that she did, too. After I took her hand, she squeezed my fingers.

287. Walking across the Pont Saint-Michel

Walking across the Pont Saint-Michel, Red Cloud asked me about my painting. I responded that I wanted to be a good painter. I thought that was enough.

288. Her odor enveloped

Her odor enveloped me.

In the early summer morning, after her bath, Red Cloud ambled about on the other side of the room. With clarity, I saw each of her gestures. She braided a brush through her hair patiently. As I watched, she set it down and spread cream from a jar over her underarms in a thin coat. She scraped them with a razor, her arms crooked over her head gracefully, one at a time. She smoothed the cream over her long legs and shaved them clean. Water was slopped beneath her arms and over her legs and dried. She perfumed and powdered her underarms, her lips pursed. Her legs got powdered.

Slowly, Red Cloud douched. She twisted forward and examined her genitals with arched fingers, the tips touching her vulva. She wet a washcloth, curved and cleaned her anus. Lazily, she swished her powderpuff between the cheeks. After she rouged her nipples, she painted her labia. She perfumed her genitals. Smiling, she dabbed a little perfume on her clitoris.

Red Cloud stretched full-length. Lightly, she powdered between her big breasts and over the rest of her body. She perched on the side of the tub, flipped open her compact and applied a trace of make-up on her eyelids. After she marked her eyebrows, she tapped a faint touch of rouge on her cheeks. Her lips got covered with pale red lipstick. She grinned at me.

Red Cloud reached for the powder puff and swirled it between her breasts again. One of her legs lifted and tapped against the linoleum. For a moment, she seemed lost in thought. Then she rose and padded out of the bathroom. I followed.

In our bedroom, Red Cloud chose lime green panties and slipped into them. She pulled on a blue t-shirt and over that a green silk blouse. When I sat down on the windowsill, a sultry breeze rolled over me. She stepped into a long, gray skirt that billowed around her. She bound up her hair in a loose bun. A necklace of Roman coins was dropped around her neck. Brown sandals went onto her feet.

Red Cloud turned to me, smiled and raised her hands. She whispered, *ah, la la!*

289. Clad only in her white anklets.

Clad only in her white anklets, Red Cloud skipped around the big house outside of Paris.

TRAVEL 2007

TRAVEL

290. The woman and I

The woman and I faced one another. When I hooked my arm around her waist and drew her to me, we kissed again, deeply, slowly. I stroked her wavy, blonde hair.

She sauntered away from me, clicked open her shorts and stepped out of them. Smiling, she stripped off her white panties, then returned to me. I crooked a finger between her legs and flicked it. As she walked up on my finger, her legs moved gingerly from side to side. We kissed again. A spring breeze hissed through the screen door of the small farmhouse I had rented northeast of Carmel. Overhead were dark clouds.

After a moment, I removed my finger. She pulled her scarlet blouse over her head, and I dropped my jeans. My penis was thickening and rising. We ambled into the bedroom and laid down together between the sheets of the bed. When we embraced and kissed, she caressed my behind. I stroked her pert breasts. We kissed again, this time for a long while.

I parted her thighs and rippled my fingers against her slit. She murmured. For a minute, I bent down and tongued her vagina. Then I straightened and shoved a pillow under her ass. I slipped on a condom. Quickly, I lifted myself between her legs and inserted my bulging penis inside her. When I began grinding up and down and from side to side, she inhaled.

She hugged me, cooing. As I kept lifting and dropping myself, she showed her teeth. Her elegant legs splayed out beside mine. I rose on my locked arms. When she gripped my shoulders, her pants reverberated in my ear. My penis circled in and out. Her breathing stopped.

Abruptly, she twisted on me and cracked her knees up, squealing. She called out for something, then her legs parted again. I dropped down against her. My cock pierced her, ground and withdrew. Her vagina yanked at me. Our hips blurred together. As she squealed again, she threw her arms around me. I emptied myself into her. After I fell beside her, we slipped our arms around each other and began to cuddle. The heavy scent of the red orchids blossoming outside the open window filled the room. Rain began to patter down suddenly.

291. She slipped into

She slipped into my room that night in Kyoto. Like Nagiko, a cap of flowers lay braided about her head and moonlight glistened off her long black hair. Her courtly eyes flickered up at me. Smiling, she slid her pale lips over my lips, her

foreign tongue moving over my tongue. The violet dress she wore rustled. Fall leaves rattled across the open pavilion. Stepping away, she lifted her gloved hands to me in a magical gesture.

292. Her light

Her light brown hair shone where the sun hit it. She had pearl skin. Her eyes were large and clear. She was plain-spoken.

293. I sat on a bench

I sat on a bench, in the sun, above the Seine, near the front of the Musée de l'Homme. It was fall. The last roses blossomed along the embankment. I drew on paper, with pastels. Suddenly, I looked up. In the distance, I saw Red Cloud striding down the sidewalk, calling to me joyously.

Charlevoix, Carmel, Evanston, Columbia, New York City, Paris, Big Lick:
1973-2025

CEREMONIES

Ceremonies is an unusual work. Be prepared.

Ceremonies is not a conventional novel. It is a sort of diary, a *Pillow Book*: a collection of scenes, stories, observations, lists and descriptions. The entries are numbered, titled and organized into sections. The reader may want to ignore the numbers and titles and just read the text. The numbers and titles are a structural and rhythmic device.

The book tells the story of the sexual life of Sam, a painter. It takes place in Charlevoix, DeKalb, travel, Carmel, Columbia, New York City, Paris, and travel again.

Ceremonies describes sex frankly, as a part of relationships, rather than pretending it does not exist.

The book explores the rituals that men and women practice with each other.