



A Few Thoughts from Nicholas Rys

(a short and half thought out
collection of poetry and flash-
fiction)

Looking for her would be futile. He would never find her in the sea of inebriated bodies. They all made him sick, desperately throwing themselves into the arms of anyone willing to numb the pain for a night. They were all flailing around; dry humping each other like rabid circus animals; foaming at the mouth, and taking pictures of it! Did they have no shame?

He knew then that he didn't have a chance of finding her. He knew in that moment, as he watched the orgy of self indulgent youths unfold before him, that he had lost Her to Them.

Vanessa's pale and sweaty body shook and convulsed like a rabid epileptics. The drugs were making her dizzy and out of control, but she liked it. She felt complete loss of her inhibitions and for a brief moment thought that she should live every moment of her life like this.

Everything was rapidly careening to what was sure to be the apocalypse, but who cares? Tonight it was all about living life, connecting to others, moving your body, feeling the music, forgetting tomorrow, taking what's yours, living in the moment, shedding your skin...

The Worms are Wiggling to the Surface

"I keep dreaming my teeth fall out,"

"I see,"

"And it's not like this weird, panicky situation where my mouth has been bothering me for a while...it's not even like my teeth being loose and falling out is even the main aspect of the dream. Instead I'm in the middle of another dream, a rather pleasant dream, actually, when all of a sudden my teeth begin to loosen in my jaw - and not all of them, just a few. So I take my hand and wiggle one around a little, and the bastard comes right out!"

"Mhmm,"

"So then I run my tongue over my teeth and as I do they just crumble right inside my mouth. Not knowing what to do with the pieces I spit a few out into my hands... three full teeth and a bunch of crumbled up pieces come right out,"

"I see,"

"But I didn't feel helpless without them,"

"I see,"

"I was all terrified when I felt them loose in my mouth and when I spit them out. That scared the shit out of me. It felt so strange; it really felt like...when I was young...and would loose my teeth, you know?"

"Mhmm,"

"But after they were gone my gums were smoothed over perfectly. There was no blood, no indentations, no harsh transitions from the previous normalcy,"

"I see,"

Craig didn't believe in therapy but this had been going on for too long. Every morning he woke up in a cold sweat. But it wasn't from a particularly scary image, it was from that feeling.

At work he was constantly running his tongue over his teeth to make sure they were staying put. At lunch he was a nervous wreck. He would sit with his coworkers and eat his packed lunch with extreme care. After every bite he would run his tongue over his teeth sneakily to make sure

his coworkers didn't see his obsessive behavior. In short, Craig thought he was losing his mind.

So he did what some of us do when we begin to feel more insecure about our insecurities than usual and made an appointment with a shrink. It was one his company Doctor recommended, which made him feel a little more comfortable about the whole matter. Doctor Jeffers had been his doctor for about five years now, since he began working with the company.

Had it really already been five years? It all goes by so fast, Craig thought to himself. Doctor Jeffers had been there to provide stability and security for Craig, and he appreciated that. It's important that people like doctors and lawyers and the places we work and the people we surround ourselves with not change often. If these important figures remain constant we establish a sense of stability and stability produces a higher work flow and a higher work flow produces more money and more money produces more happiness. And this dream was not a product of stability. This dream was something that upset Craig's normally scheduled days. This dream rumbled from the bowels and quaked below the surface.

But even though Doctor Jeffers recommended Dr. Grant, Craig was nervous. He didn't believe in that psychobabble shit, but this wasn't normal. People don't dream these things. And more importantly, people don't let dreams interfere with their daily schedules. People don't let dreams disrupt reality.

But the anxiety was eating away at Craig. He was beginning to fear that his teeth were really going to fall out. This was something he couldn't tell anyone. Not his coworkers, not his boss, not his fiancé and not Vanessa.

If Vanessa found out that'd be the end of that. But hell, he hadn't even been able to fuck since he started having these dreams.

Craig had been such a nervous wreck that he hadn't slept with his fiancé or Vanessa for the past two weeks. He began to think perhaps it wasn't such a bad idea that he hadn't seen Vanessa since this happened; maybe one good thing had come of this.

Sure, he loved fucking Vanessa, she was tall and beautiful. She had long legs and perfect breasts. She was built like a woman and not like a girl or an athlete. To some extent, she reminded him of his fiancé, but not in the wrong ways. They shared a hand full of physical

similarities, but not personality and not tits. Vanessa had perfect tits.

But despite his physical attraction to her and the excellent sex they had been having on Wednesday nights at her apartment for the last three months Craig wondered if it was something that could occupy his schedule permanently. He loved his fiancé like you are supposed to love a fiancé, but was that enough? I suppose not, he thought. But Vanessa wasn't anything special. He thought she was at first. She worked with Craig. They both had the same career aspirations, which he found attractive. And although she was good at what she did Craig knew he was better than her, which he also found attractive. And his fiancé hadn't even begun to suspect anything. *But perhaps I shouldn't keep pushing my luck*, he thought. I mean, what did he really expect from Vanessa in the end? He knew he would never leave his fiancé for her and he knew that she would just sleep with someone else. Perhaps it was time to break it off, he thought as he sat in the waiting room of Dr. Grant's office.

Craig's palms began to sweat. He began to think about how truly unsettling and unnatural this dream was. What could possibly be the cause? What was the root cause of something so uncontrolled and how did it enter his perfectly controlled life? Craig took great pride in his ability to perfectly place the things. In fact, up until this point, Craig had never remembered a single one of his dreams. This notion had never fazed Craig before; he never had time to dwell on such superfluous things as dreams before. That would have been a cog in wheel of his daily routine.

Craig looked up from the three month old issue of People magazine as a curly haired, middle aged woman with thick thighs and sagging breasts walked through the door.

"Craig Roberts?"

Untitled

Candy coated sea-dreams fill my eyes
(foggy and heavy with salt)
Weighing on my mind

Taking me away from these harmonica tragedies
These shotgun melodies that ring loudly in my ears

Lifting my spirit like a trumpeter's reveille
To the far shores
Where the surf beats against our battered chests
And the sand glistens in our long green hair

Baking on a Wednesday Afternoon in the California Sun

What makes this my life? How do I know I'm not just a dream? How do I know I'm not someone else's dream? Like my fat Ukrainian landlord, Oleg. What if I'm Oleg's dream and he's about to wake up any second and then POOF I'll just dissolve. My entire existence as I know it will just vanish with the sound of shitty Ukrainian pop music at six in the morning.

Or how do I know it's not me who's dreaming. What if the last ten years of my life were actually just part of a dream from the hospital bed after that car accident when I was twelve? What if I'm still in that coma and I just dreamed coming out and living my life for all those years?

What if I'm dreaming right now and I could wake up any second and be someone else. What if I could wake up any second and be someone else...What if I could wake up at any second and be someone else...

The Cost of Pity

When I was 7 years old Sarah Roth and I were friends. I remember she was strange and I remember that she was a Jew. I never met anyone like Sarah Roth before in my small town. Sometimes Sarah would piss in her pants at school during our second period reading class. Mrs. Fagan would be reading from a book and all of a sudden the reading corner would smell like warm piss and Sarah would get red and no one would say anything and Mrs. Fagan would just go on reading.

One afternoon, right before the autumn crisp had taken its bitter hold on our town; Sarah and I were running through the sprinkler on her front lawn when we saw a three legged dog. I remember feeling something drop in my stomach and my saliva tasted warm. I can't recall what Sarah said the three legged dog's name was, but she told it to me and said that he came around every so often. I remember she laughed at the dog. I remember she wanted me to laugh at the three legged dog with her but I wouldn't. I even tried to because I had no friends and I even wanted the weird Jewish girl who pissed her pants in the reading corner to like me but I just couldn't do it.

I thought that three legged dog was the saddest thing I'd ever seen. He swung his lame limbs around like a young child with a skip-it. The dog couldn't stand still; he had to keep juggling his limbs, keep spinning, keep swinging his legs wildly about just so he wouldn't collapse. His tongue hung limply, dangling uncontrollably out of the side of his pathetic mouth, I remember the animal had an ignorant look of happiness on his face. It actually looked like it was smiling. It made me feel sadder that he looked so happy. And I remember Sarah laughing. She wanted me to laugh with her so badly and I wanted to laugh with her too but I didn't.

I still think that three legged dog spinning around and around like a top, tongue dangling limp out of its pathetic, happy mouth and Sarah laughing maniacally and the sprinkler spraying our young, freckled bodies in the warm, soft sunlight might still be the saddest thing I've ever seen.

Psalm to our Green Skin

To the ones
Awake!

To the ones
Asleep!

To the ones
Bathing in their lovers' sheets!

Swimming in each others curves
Curling up beneath the surf!

A Werewolf Broods Beneath

Jake woke up grumbling. Ravaging through the bedroom like a midnight beast sheepishly looking for prey. This is generally the way Jake walked. It gave the illusion he had a sort of unassuming command over a room, like he wasn't trying. But I knew what no one else knew, that he was trying, that he tried harder than anyone else.

Sarah was only somewhat startled by Jake's peculiar behavior at this hour of the morning; she merely stretched, yawned, and strung her perfectly slender body back along Jake's king sized bed. She clung onto his bed sheets with her fingernails like a cat.

Why doesn't she see him like I do? Why doesn't she keep her eyes open a few more minutes and see Jake stare at himself in the bathroom mirror? Why can't she see it like I can? He's more broken than she is but she will never know because she will always stretch, yawn and go right back to bed.

Jake is staring at himself in the bathroom, wondering how a man blessed with such a perfect California physique like his could be awoken by the same nightmare three nights in a row. In the real world nothing scared Jake. He was a tall, tan, athletically built (but not too bulky) twentysomething with a career and a corporate ladder he was eagerly climbing. He had the ambition and he had the looks. He was already raking in a killing compared to the rest of his college buddies. In short, Jake was the Southern California Dream, so what was it that wouldn't let Jake sleep at night?

Well, it seemed that in Jake's dreams he was not as sure of himself. Sometimes Jake would hear a voice in his head. During the day the voice was easy to ignore - he cluttered it with small talk about his recent bonus or his new golf swing - but for the past three nights when Jake and the rest of Los Angeles slept, the voice grew a face.

Three nights in a row Jake woke up in the same cold sweat. Three nights in a row he would awake foggily, and with the same rehearsed carelessness he did everything, saunter into the bathroom, green with the envy of Narcissus.

Then the face off began. The voice in Jake's head and Jake himself wrestled with each other. What either one was saying to each other not even I could say. My powers of observation don't extend to the telepathic.

Wake up, Sarah! Your precious lover *does* think twice, he does know fear; he is human like everyone else - like me. And Sarah, if he has fear in his heart, if he has doubt, how is he any different than me?

A Soldier's Song

Once
This leather skin and
These shaky hands
Were tan and
Strong

Once
I purposefully poised my pen
My eyes could pierce
And these knees held strong
Didn't buckle under pressure
Didn't crack with the whip

But now I limp
Broken like a dog and
Shed tears softly onto newspaper headlines
 How many dead, today?
 How many jobs out there, today?

All lists with answers that are
Piled endlessly
Like a landfill
Like a twisted scrap heap
Covered with garbage and dirt
Covered with lies and comforting sighs
So all the people know you sympathize

Now
The women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo
Whispering spinsters
Spinning tricksters
Nestling into tied up sweaters

Now
We keep the meaning
Buried beneath the grass

No longer sprouting up
Like a well watered plant.
It festers below
Digging in the dirt
As thoughts are exchanged through breast-pocket glances
That always mean more than they seem
But never questions our intrinsic policy

*"But it's bound to roar in again.
It wouldn't be the first flood"*

So these shaky hands wait
For the raging rapids that once tore this town to pieces
To come roaring back.

Scene from a Train Traveling

you think you see me
but you don't see me
you think you see me
but you don't see me
you think you see me
but you see yourself
as you want to be
as you are not.

you think you see me
but you don't see me
you think you see me
but you don't see me
you think you see me
but you see a corn field coughing dust
a windmill winding effortlessly

you think you see me
but you see a stoic silo
a neatly nestled farm house
with clothes hanging outside
crisply starching in the Sunday sun

you think you see me
but you don't see me at all.

