

mouth to mouth
a monologue

Remember. Eyes closed.

Eyes closed? Now then.

Spent prom night at a cast party. Saturday night. Things started late.

Moving from room to room. Peeking into the ballroom.

Yes. A ballroom. Didn't want to be there, though. Didn't want to be seen there.

Local arts matron had this stately mansion. Been there plenty of times. The party house. Imagine it. Better than a prom. Big stairs in the foyer. Two sets, one on each side. People always sitting. Up and down. Show business.

Okay. Okay. Here goes. Up and down the stairs. Noises in the ballroom. Full of queens on quaaludes. Enough of that. Friend keeps turning the corner. Grinning. Keeps popping up.

"Leave me alone." "She's looking for you." "Yeah." "Go find her." "Yeah."

"She's yours if you go find her." Eyes closed, remember. "She's yours."

That sounds awful, doesn't it. "Yours." If wanted. If wanted. And drunk on top of that. And there for what if wanted. "Go find her."

That kind of party. Cups of beer from the keg. Quaaludes in the ballroom. Business. Business. Running from room to room thinking there's another pot simmering. A third party of all things. Don't want to mess that up. Going to Six Flags tomorrow. Something may come of that.

Not to be dwelt upon. "Just go and find her." Just go. Do something.

Wait. It's getting there. Now then. So no more running away. Turning around. No more reservations. There on the staircase.

There on the staircase. An idiot looks up the stairs. A walking advertisement for Banana Republic looks up the stairs. Panama hat and tropical shirt. Upper buttons open. Give em a glimpse of the man flesh.

There. Up there. Alone on the staircase. No one else present. Rare moment. "Just find her." So now found.

Capri length jeans. Everyone in jeans. Jeans were the thing. White button down oxford. Maybe a blue oxford. Cuffs rolled. Curls of hair hiding the collar.

“She’s not going to follow you around. Just find her.” What to do now?

Sixteen steps to the second floor. The choice to sit. To climb to the eleventh step and sit. One step below. Looking up to the step above. And on the step above a face that used to seem too large. What was that about?

“I didn’t do the dance exactly right tonight.” The face and the voice curling about it. The voice curling and slurring slightly.

“I didn’t see it.” Seeing. That didn’t come out right. And seeing. Something troubling. Unsettling

From the first day in freshman homeroom the face seemed too large. Felt like it was always intruding. But now. It’s different.

Maybe it was always meant to be right there.

Maybe that’s the wish. Right there.

Patience. Eyes closed. Now,

“I’m glad you didn’t see it. I messed up.” Leaning back, shoulder against the wall, a step above, face wide and right there.

“I mean I’m always looking for the swords then. I never get to see it. We’re on right after the dances.”

Were on. Show was over. “We were on after the dances.”

Then the face comes forward. There it was. That was the crush. That was the face, too wide, head tilting from side to side and back.

Still too fast. This should take more time. Eyes closed.

Now suddenly running down a sixth grade hallway. Lee Ellen Roberts running behind in mock slow motion. “Kiss me kiss me kiss me.” Very funny. Running from that and hiding in the boys’ bathroom. It’s not real if it’s asked for. It’s teasing if it’s asked for. Hide and cry. Hate being followed.

Now the eyes are asking something, face smiling and waiting, turning side to side like a doorknob being tested. Quietly.

Give me a moment.

Deciding to look. Deciding to climb the stairs.

First kiss, remember.

Should have been younger. Should have taken less time to get there. Should have and sooner.

Now. Remember. Eyes closed. Then. Mouth. Open. Mouth. Leaning in. To know what leaning in means. Sliding on the staircase. Noise in the ballroom. Together. Knowing it's safe to lean also. Up to the face. Eyes closed. Neck. Bending. Back bending in also. Sixteen steps. Mouth stays. Mouth says kiss me kiss me kiss me. Mouth close. Mouth open. Drinking in beer and toothpaste. Resting against the wall. Tilting down. Starting and finishing. Beer and toothpaste and a touch of something acid underneath. Pulling away to look. Eyes open. Eyes closed. Going back to the acid. The acid's the best part. Crying in the ballroom. Figuring out how it turns into making out. Arm out to touch a shoulder. All of a sudden. Climbing up a step. Hand down bracing on a knee. Breath and contortion. All of a sudden. Neck bent. Mouth.

Then pulling back again.

Not yet. Eyes still closed.

Looking one step up. Looking as if to say smiling as if to say

"It's fine." "Isn't it."

A touch of spit by the lower lip.

To kiss and disappear. Trying to smile and not hate the thing in the mirror. Smile. It will be fine. It's fine. Wipe it away.

A touch of spit, a drop.

Reach out and wipe it away. Trying to seem confident. Smile and wipe both sets of lips. Make it a joke. Try to really be there, really there, a step below, close, alone with both.

A little more time. Just a moment. Eyes closed. Still.

Wait.

Mouth reaching back in. Leaning in again.

Now then. Just for you.

I she my her me I she mine I hers you she me I she mine her I you she

she her mine I me you she hers she I she she

Okay. That's it. Eyes open.

Done.