

SECRET LIVES OF BLOW-UP DOLLS



Robyn Art

It was not her thighs as such but the idea of them (that is, the body de facto, viewing itself in the mirror and glimpsing the selfsame saggy horror) she felt them to be lump-like, squat, at times, downright dwarfish, surreptitiously Biggie-Sized, the swell of flesh she deemed her “auxiliary ass;” moreover, it was not her breasts but the idea of them—part useful, part liability when jogging or general bouncing—she had never paid for them on the installment plan or used them to give a good whupping, being as they were, in truth, pretty downright unremarkable, again, not the body but its facsimile, the same bunchings, protuberances, inclinations to weeping and yes, things distinctly female (squashy, effluvial, infinitely knock-up-able, prone to tremors and untimely seepage) in the mark of that blood, almost arterial, not the body as such but its twin, not the titty bar heaven as such but his idea of titty bar as the one true Heaven (and not the men themselves but the idea of themselves as Tit Men, Ass Men, or, less commonly, Leg Men) what he liked was the idea of the breasts, the have but not hold, useful in a stag-party sense, there was the way she wanted to live, not one life but lots simultaneously, in fact she didn’t need to marry, no, she just wanted to wear that dress...

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(In the way it was her love for him—beautiful, inconvenient,
and useless—it was not his hands as such but the idea
of them, the quickened outlines of his fingers, each
to each, the way the very thought of him shone a light
through the old dumb body, neither consequence
nor cause, to have but not hold, doped to the gills
and whistling...)

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*but of it the singing, why the lust-fed hands
like a pair of burning tongs, the table lacquered in moonlight,
why the moonlight, inky and desolate, why the lollygagging
in the snack aisle, the lying awake in the room beneath the all-night
fisticuffs of rain, why his hands, why getting felt up beside the bookcase,
why the polite verbiage of clouds, why if not for the life of it
the body, shaken but not apterous, not ruined but ruminant,
a dissonance, a fog, a humming...*

*

It was not him as such but the idea of him, existing only as such
could exist-imagined-the way nothing exists as imagined,
at times, she seemed to be without skin, that is, positively sans skin,
as if she could live not one life but lots simultaneously, she'd come
to look at him as if at a great remove, as if through water,
and always, through that crazy ol' thang called love, still the old
shell of the body goes on finagling free drinks at the bar, one contentious
s.o.b., still getting its panties all in a bunch, at the Dawning
of the Apocalypse it will be waxing its selfsame groin, not much
to show for the Kingdom of Heaven save a freshly denuded crotch,
for it was never the past as such but a house sold out from under, the future
not knocking exactly, but a'movin' eva so close...

*

And because she never had any yen to remain poised, aloft, on the very
precipice along the woe begotten Alamos of love, no, she wanted
to hunker full down in the slumgullion belly of things, to live not one life
but lots simultaneously (his hands, yes, and the idea of his hands)
to live someplace you can open the windows of a spring night,
walk daily amongst the hordes of lean-hipped potential inseminators, to drink long
and deep at the mud-spattered trough and perchance bring forth the own
horrifying likeness, offspring to which the body may impart its cavernous,
preposterous dreams...

*

She was to be, by turns, bloated, somnolent, relentlessly mammalian, a regular at the all-night, never-close, twenty-four-hour-giveaway of love, and though there was the past and its dilapidated scree (the other loves, the ones with vans and spidery tattoos) she never meant to stay this long, unencumbered, the future a darkened smudge like blunt-edged eyeliner over the lid, the old dreams like rotted fruit, crumpled receipts at the back of a drawer, it was true, she had only the most modest of hopes, that is, firm thighs and the adulation of multitudes, to live not one life but lots simultaneously, at the end of the gate be able to say I'll tell you, I'll tell you what....



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