

Love, the Body – Chloe, Year 9, TAS

The air was bitter like acid rain as I stood next to you, on the edge of the high rise in central Chicago, coughing down my fear and choking on laughter that rattled my bones. You held me at the crook of your arm, my hair whipping your face in the wind. You swallowed. You breathed. Why did you do this to me? Didn't the gun feel too heavy in your hands? Were you not sad as you pushed me, flailing, innocent, off of the roof and into the sky? Why didn't you cry?

Tell me your secrets, I'll lock them away. I'm equipped with a well armed safe, and the bars over my heart are rarely broken. All so I can maintain this innocence, this phoney smile on my face. We all are, you will see, not what we're meant to be. My dear, you will see that I deserved what you did to me. In fact, we all deserve it. But that doesn't mean it's due to be done? Do you understand? Are you following?

Tell me your guilt, guilt is beautiful. Haven't you seen it? It's orange, bitter and mawkish, mixed with a familiar kind of grey. Until it's all peachy. Peachy. People say that something's all peachy, all fine. Guilt is all peachy on the outside.

You took my gun from the cupboard in the basement. I don't know why I had it. Maybe just so I knew it was there. Are you listening? Pay attention. Yes, that's what happened. You took my gun. It was a LeMat revolver. I think it was French. I'd never been to France though, they say everyone there is horrible. I think I would love France. Nice people are so fake it makes me sick. You took that LeMat revolver while I was at work. I worked a boring desk job with people who cared little about anything. At least it was quiet. I liked quiet.

Is this correct? I think so. You took that LeMat revolver and walked around the house. You didn't make up your mind straight away— did you? Then you left the house. You would've locked the doors, and checked them. Were your hands starting to shake? You walked down the street. You hid that LeMat revolver in your handbag. No one would ever look in a woman's handbag. No one would've looked twice at you anyway, you were part of the furniture. Some of them might have waved. You would've just kept walking. Down to the bus stop on the corner. It was then that it started to rain.

Maybe you were sick of your mundane life, your working class existence. Maybe you wish for a day you could be classless and free, not a slave to the society that made you the monster you are. Are you listening? Pay attention! I am your mother!

I deserve your respect.

I deserve everything from you.

What did they teach you in that rich school of yours? To smile as you kill? When they read you sermons from their battered books, the only thing they cared to teach from, did they never teach you dignity? Honour?

You came to the ground floor of the building at 11:35am.

I am going to tell you a story. A story of a little girl, lost in the rain. She sat on the swing in the park on the corner, and the rain- the slicing, freezing, bitter rain- hit her face at all angles. Cutting into her skin. Stinging her eyes. The wind whipping her hair. But she waited still, waited, because her mama said she'd be back soon. She said she'd gone to get her an ice cream, because she'd been such a good, good girl. And because she was a good girl, she waited. She waited as the sky began to darken. And nobody, nobody, asked her if she was okay. Listen! You do not understand. That little girl *hurt*, *that* little girl *cried*. And heaven above her spat out ebony drops, acid rain dripping down her little, pale, ice cold face. She looked up to heaven, to the stormy sky and she saw nothing. She looked to her heart, and she felt nothing. The trees looked like monsters looming, the people that stayed in the dark corners did not care, for they had enough problems of their own. But she waited, with her legs crossed, until her stockings, her skirt and her coat were all wet and dripping. Until the council man found her the next morning curled up in a ball on the park bench and whimpering like a kicked puppy.

That little girl had a daughter when she was just fifteen years old. She was still just a little girl. A little girl who didn't think she was such a good girl anymore.

Do you know who she was? Do you know who *I* was? Or are you too blinded by privilege to see?

Give me your tears so I can bottle them up and take them to the ground with me. I wish you would just cry, for society has not quite taught you yet that it is more than just a sin to take a life. It is not just a moral injustice, not just a law. When you take a life, you brand yourself a murderer. No matter the situation. Because the consequences of such a mistake cannot be undone.

You are trapped by the pain that just won't go away, pounding down on your brain with the force of a hurricane. Until you cannot handle it anymore. You tell yourself that you are worthless. Pointless. Nothing. You are slipping, slipping down a waterfall. And I cannot catch you now, I cannot save you from yourself. You cannot dare blame me. I know I was not perfect. How dare you tell me it was me! I tried, tried so hard.

Sorry, I got distracted. Back to the start. Yes, you came to the ground floor of the building at 11:35am. The man told me, 'your daughter just walked in' at 11:37 and it takes about two minutes to walk to the reception on my floor. Thus you arrived at 11:35. I know this. I know a lot of things, and you always hated that. You said I was inhumanly perceptive. While I was sober, that was. You came up the elevator, and at approximately 11:40 you walked into my

office. I had not seen you for three days. You said you went to stay with a friend, but last time I checked you did not have any friends. Maybe you were with your father. That disgusting, despicable, diabolical man. Maybe inside him is that somebody that I used to know, but the ache I used to have for the past was replaced with pure, unadulterated hatred.

And perhaps that crimson hatred spilled on to you. Crimson- the first form of peach. Hatred- the first form of regret.

You grabbed my hand. You led me away. And I went with you, of course I went. You were family, after all. All the movies told us that family is an unbreakable bond, and they will save us at all costs. Those movies are phoneys, just like Caulfield said. Dirty lies. Obviously I didn't learn the first time- family can never be trusted. Blood may be thicker than water, but that makes it so damn harder to swim through.

Even when we made it up to the roof, I did not doubt you. When I saw my LeMat revolver in your hand, I realised the reality of the situation. But by then it was too late. After all, you were my little girl, and I was not going to hurt you. So I stood there as you held me. You held me at the crook of your arm, my hair whipping your face in the wind. You swallowed. You choked on your guilt. I just laughed, until you could bear it no longer. Until you put away the gun. Maybe it was only ever a precaution. Until you pushed me flailing, guilty, off the roof and into the sky. And now I fly.

We are never called a body until death. Before, we are human. But once our time has passed, our identity ceases to exist: we are a body. A body in the ground that everyone wants nothing more than to forget. And so, I won't say goodbye to you as your mother, as now my identity ceases to exist. I am no longer human, I am a body. So finally, goodbye my darling.

Goodbye.

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