



SHAKE AND STRAIN

Desert sunrise

1 1/2 oz. Vodka

1 1/2 oz. Orange juice

**1 1/2 oz. Pineapple
juice**

1/2 oz. Grenadine

**Put in Collins glass
filled with crushed
ice and top with
grenadine**



It was the day she stopped believing. Even after devouring her chocolate bunny she found no relief.

His hands were trembling as he tried to make a tequila sunset. No one knew what was happening or why he did it. But there he was all the same, mixing drinks and crying. He slowly poured the alcohol in the cup, spilling all over the table. *How could it have come to this? Is this my life?*, he thought.

He hated himself, but he couldn't stop. Booze trickled down his chin as he sipped. The alcohol burned his neck he had worked so hard to shave clean hours before. Nothing left to do now but get up on the roof and hit some golf balls.

There was no greater release than hitting golf balls piss ass drunk. One after the other, off the roof and into oblivion. The roof was Dave's oblivion.

Trying to destroy little white balls with a golf club, was the way he released his anger of losing his own little white balls in the war. He didn't feel like a man anymore, ever since the Iraqis blew his nuts off in battle. He used to be a real man.

The kind of man who could go to the Roxie in a skirt and body glitter and still



get the ladies.

Ladies always love things that glitter. That was the one thing he learned from his father.

But as he learned in Iraq, it wasn't the same with men. They told him his glitter had to go. He tried to explain to him it was the color of gold, women like gold.

But they put the shit on a grenade and it was gone.

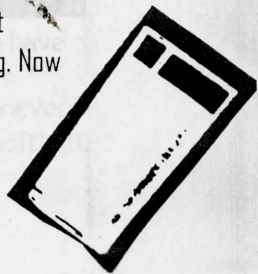
So now he was ballless and not shining. He couldn't even get a lady when he snuck into the villages when he went on watch.

He realized that without glitter he was nothing. Not a man. He had depended on glitter for so long he could no longer live without it. He had two choices, find glitter or commit suicide.

Who sells glitter out in the desert, he thought. He roamed the villages whispering to strangers, "Got any glitter?"

He was met with an array of responses, but most common was "Fuck no!"

NO glitter, no reason to live. Men aren't noticed without glitter, not where he was going. Now plans were changing.



Blue Cloud Cocktail

1 oz. Amaretto.

½ oz. Blue Curacao

2 ox. Vanilla ice cream

Blend, put whip cream on
top and garnish with a
cherry



Her hair is frozen into dreadlocks of icicles, and I already know there is something wrong. Every since we got into middle school her mother started making her blow dry her hair every morning once October hit, April was convinced her daughter's immune system would get better if she didn't leave the house with wet hair.

It is December fifth and Sophie's hair is wet. Her running mascara contrasts to her pale face, and her eyes are screaming to be closed. She is wearing her black pants and a nice yellow button down shirt, with the first button undone, showing the white gold necklace her father gave her last Christmas.

Thirteen years of friendship results in no questions.

I give her a hug as soon as she walks through the glass doors of our high school.

"It's worse," she manages to get out.

Bill, her father, and my idol, has been in the hospital for two weeks now. He got hit by a car while he was running.

"His bone is infected. They don't know how far it went into him, all they know is he won't be home for Christmas."

I take her hand and lead her out of the bright white halls and into the photo lab knowing the amount of assholes infest our hallways. She won't stop crying. I had almost how light her eyelashes were. There are rings under her eyes, they have always been there. But today she forgot to cover them with make up.

I always wanted her life. Her beautiful pale skin, and her adorable eyes. But mostly I wanted to have her father.

He would take her out to play softball whenever she wanted. My dad didn't know how to play softball,

Blue Cloud Cocktail

only baseball. Bill ran everyday. My father had the heart attack special everyday, a hot dog wrapped in bacon by the stand right outside his office.

When my mother first told me Bill had been hit I remember running to give my father a hug as he came home from that night. I hadn't done that since elementary school. He looked at me dumfounded, told me to clean my room, put his briefcase down and poured his bourbon.

My Nana always told me everything was part of God's big plan, and every time I complained to her she would explain how He was just trying to help out in the long run. That and the prayer, "dear Saint Anthony" are the only Catholic I have in me. So I selfishly thought this was part of His big plan, somehow it would make my father and I talk after four years of my mother's translating.

Back to now looking at Sophie's washed out face staring at the empty dark walls of the photo room there is no way I can envy her. Stroking her hair, like she always does to me when I am upset I try to think of something, anything.

My mother lost her father when she was the same age, she was one of ten and the oldest. She went from only making hash brownies to cooking full meals for eleven people. Now my mother cooks the Martins soup once a week that will last a week, partially because my mother still cooks for her family of ten by instinct. She keeps telling me, "No one remembers to cook when this happens," and by looking at her gray eyes I don't question, they already are answering me. Last weekend I brought potato leak soup over to the Martin's house.

As soon as I walked in I could feel the tension. Even the air was waiting for a phone call.

"I don't know what to do. The dishwasher is

broken, "April said as I handed her my mother's still warm soup.

Sophie quickly came to her mother's assistance, trying to figure it out, "I don't know Mom," she finally confessed.

"I don't know what to do. I can't do anything without him. I can't even clean the dishes," she said and burst into tears.

April Martin. The only one's mother in my circle of friends who had a full time job. She always seemed the toughest too. She worked, went to school, and still took care of her two daughters. Thirteen years and I had never seen her even stutter. And suddenly there she was in Sophie's arms, unable to stand by herself.

I didn't want to leave that night, but I couldn't stay. There wasn't enough air for three people in that house.

There still isn't. There is better ventilation in this fucking darkroom.

"Oh sweetie, " I say trying to comfort her, "I am impressed. With all the shit happening and you aren't even wearing pajamas," pajamas is usually our symbol for people to back off.

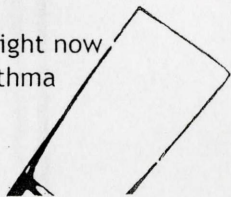
"I know. My mom won't let me. I had sweat pants on this morning. But my mom said if I don't look good, people will know there is something wrong, and it will just make it worse."

And I think of April trying to hold it together, trying to hold the family together with nice outfits. Just like dry hair.

"Drive me home, I want to change," she whispers.

Finally I have something to do. We get in my blue Subaru, which we have named Cookie and blast the folk station.

Talking is just wasted oxygen now. And right now it seems as if the whole world is having an asthma



attack.

The whining woman on the radio sings, "I forget.
What's a flower?"

Looking at all the iced over flower pots I am
praying she remembers.

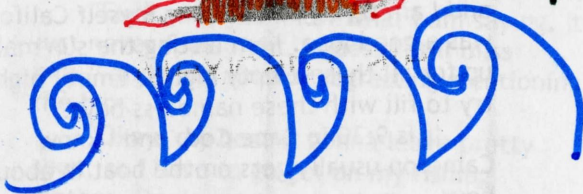
Tequila sunrise

1 oz. Tequila

Fill with orange juice

Top with $\frac{1}{2}$ grenadine

Pour into Collins glass filled with crushed ice





I am looking at the door but his sleeping arm is stopping me from moving. So here I am again, sober and stuck.

Looking at him asleep and snoring, I know I will never get married. I am praying I'll never have to talk to him when I am not intoxicated, I won't even know what to call him. Looking at the clock surrounded by empty beer cans and seeing it is six in the morning, this is a possibility. I don't know the body next to me. I don't know the posters on this wall, but half naked women and athletes are staring at me from the walls, and I see one of the fucking Raiders, so I am getting up.

"Where are you going," he asks still with shut eyes as I try to move his arm off of me.

"To brush my teeth," I say and get out of his bed.

Standing now, wobbling a bit I know I drank too much tequila, but looking at his still body I wish I had drank more. I leave his room polluted with Raider posters and know I will never be going back.

The sun is rising over the mountains now and I am trying to convince myself California was a good idea. I am letting the sun make up for all these empty nights. Empty nights I try to fill with these nameless boys.

It is 9:30 in Cape Cod, and I know Cameron usually gets on the boat in about an hour.

"Why the hell are you awake"" he answers the phone with.

"I don't know, guess I didn't get around to sleeping last night so I thought might as well catch the sunrise and talk to you."



"You know, Shelia, you called me at one in the morning,"

"So? That isn't that bad, you should have been happy to hear my voice."

"Sweetie, east coast. Jesus, put a forty in you and you never remember you moved."

"Not true," truthfully put half a bottle of tequila in me and I don't remember calling him at all.

"Well what's going on, you sounded sad,"

"I did? I don't know. I had a little too much to drink, to be honest I don't remember calling you," I said it. After all he was the one who taught me to drink.

"No video tapes, I hope" he mocks, reminding me of the infamous drunken video of me that I had thankfully left back home across the country.

"No video tape. But I did wake up with someone. I hate waking up with people,"

"How many people? How blonde has California made you?"

"Fuck you, you know what I am saying. It just never feels right. I guess I still miss him," and I am already regretting mentioning the him.

"Okay, my boat is gonna leave pretty soon, so I have to go get on my fishing clothes. Don't get too drunk,"

"Yeah, and you don't go to jail. Miss you, Cam."

Now the sun is up and I know I will be needing yellow Gatorade and saltines for breakfast.

I am thinking of Jake, the him Mike will forever hate. The only one I have ever been



able to wake up to in the morning. The only one I was able to ever go to sleep with sober.

Our first date was the prom. Cameron was going to go with me, but that was before he ended up in jail. I didn't have a dress, because I wasn't planning on going. When Jake asked I told him only if he could find a booger green dress for me at Marshals, that was my own way of saying no.

The next day there it was on my door. A black tie, booger green dress, a truly hideous sight.

Trying it on with my best friends that night, they were in hysterics. They were like an array of pastel flowers, and then there I was in the middle, the stem, only with glitter and cleavage.

My father told me it was too low cut. My mother told me it was a terrible color on me, only Kelley green is fit for the Irish. And I just avoided the mirror, hoping prom night I would be drunk enough to convince myself I was beautiful.

"Shelia! Phone for you!" my mother screamed from the kitchen.

"Hello," I said already knowing it was a boy from my mother's loudness.

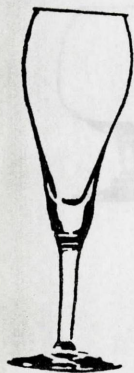
"So you have to come with me now," Jake said.

"My father says it doesn't fit, he doesn't want me to wear it."

"You never said it had to fit. So are you coming with me?"

"If I can find a dress on time," and secretly I already knew of one.

"So I will pick you up around seven?"



"Sounds great, "I said unaware that he had a car,

"Don't bother getting me a corsage, last year I ended up allergic to it."

"Alright, I'll see you then."

So that was that , I was going to the prom with Jake Wilson, the kid who was in my Spanish class freshman year with the dreamer's eyes. The one my friends and I always joked about sharing as a communal boyfriend as we watched him play the guitar at The Blue Oyster.

"So how do you want your hair done?"

Frannie my hairdresser for the past fourteen years asked me.

I went to the place down the street from me called Donato's, because of the location. My mother's biggest thing was to not have to drive me anywhere; she had been brought up in the city, and never got over there being no subways in the Cape.

So going to a barber was a small price to pay. It worked though, even at the dentist I always chose Sports Illustrated over any of the chick magazines.

"Shelia, honey, what am I going to do with you? Did you bring a picture or anything of what you want it to look like," he asked pushing up his mustache.

"No. You never ask me questions, you know that's why I come here."

"No, you come here because you think I am so handsome, and because you know if you go anywhere else I know where you live.



Okay, tell me if you need time to think about this, because I won't mind a smoke," he said while taking out his pipe.

"Half up."

"That's it? I know I am a barber, but still!"

"Fine, make the back curly or something. Just make me look beautiful. Just like Audrey Hepburn."

"You already are beautiful, sweetie. As for Audrey I am not quite sure, maybe Winona. Alright time to wash your hair."

The one thing I will forever hate about getting my hair cut is all the fucking mirrors, I can't even put on make up, it requires looking at myself for too long.

But at least Frannie had distractions. He had pictures of Italy, and saints surrounding the mirror, and on his desk he had pictures of his two children. Looking at them I felt old, because I could already see their personalities beginning, and he had talked about them before they were even born.

"So who are you going with anyway, smiley. Who is the lucky boy this time? That fisherman boy still?" he asked taunting me as he pulls half my hair into a tight ponytail.

"No, something suddenly came up. This kid Jake, I don't really know him. He seems nice enough, though."

"I just hope he is paying. Boys these days, they don't know anything," he says while curling the hair that is still down, "And what came up with this other boy? Are we trying to make him jealous tonight?"

"No, just something came up."





"Tell me, I have the scissors," he said while holding them to my hair.

"Frannie, you cut my father's hair, I can't tell you everything anymore. I thought you were a barber anyway, why all the questions?"

"Because I am a hairdresser for you now my dear and it's on me."

He had promised me when I was four if I got my hair done by him for prom it would be completely free. I don't think either of us expected it to actually happen though.

"So what do you think?" he said while putting a small pink flower from outside at the top.

Looking at myself I try to just notice the hair,

"Good, but no flower."

Leaving in my gym shorts and a nice button down t-shirt so I won't ruin my hair as I changed, I couldn't help but feel stupid. But I guess my town was small enough, that just about anyone who saw me knew it was prom night for Harwich High.

Pushing my body against the maroon door, I twisted the knob, none of my friends could every open it on their own. To them my house seemed forever locked.

"Let me see!" my mother shouted as she ran from the porch through the house, her cigar still lit and in her hand, as her other hand held her champagne.

"Well, what do you think?" I said as I spun around.

"I am sure you will look better once we do your make up, don't worry, sweetie."



Come out and talk to me while I finish this cigar with your father."

"I wasn't worried Mom. Not until now. Does it look that bad?"

"Well, not as bad as the green dress. Go put on your dress, so Aunt Judy can do your make up."

Pissed, and already feeling ugly I walked upstairs.

That was the one good thing when I was with Cameron, no matter how ugly I thought I was, I still usually felt pretty good around him. Maybe it's like that with anyone, when you have been skinny-dipping together on New Year's Day. I thought prom was going to be the night to stun him. Putting on my dress, too nervous to know what Jake would think, I was thinking about what Cameron would say. He would be shocked. It was pink, the kind of dress I would have loved to have for a dance recital when I was nine, but instead we always ended up with some fluorescent unitard, more like the dress Jake had purchased for me. When I tried it on in front of my best friend she told me she envied my hourglass figure. Quickly glancing at myself in it, I didn't feel fat, the belle shape of it hid my thighs, and for me that was enough to put it on hold. I thought in that dress maybe Cameron could love me, somehow we could just fall in love. I would be so beautiful I could fix him, like all those pretty girls in movies.

But I wasn't pretty soon enough. And all the tourists were. The daughter's the fathers brought on Cameron's charter boat, they were those girls. Perfume so fancy, even on





a fishing boat it smelled of roses and peaches. They never had awkward tan lines; they spent all day working at preventing that. My lifeguard tan could be seen even in the dead of winter. Cameron loved them. In a place like the Cape, squirming when seeing something being hooked is the cutest thing a girl can do. I, however, was raised on fish.

Soon enough he would be out of jail, and going to one of those rich schools proms, with the tourist who wants to show her peers she can see past money, she is so deep she is even dating a fisherman. How fucking noble. I'd think of those girls whenever I felt bad Cameron wasn't coming to prom. And looking in the mirror, I actually felt pretty. For once I could almost be one of those girls, besides my lifeguard tan.

Cameron was easy, he fell for beautiful girls. But I wasn't going with Cameron anymore, and Jake was a mystery. Any boy who took interest in me was a mystery to me. I always assumed they were either a complete head case, or were just trying to stay in the closet at all costs.

Ten minutes later, and I was ready, and he was three minutes late. My wonderful Aunt Judy had lent me her lip gloss for the evening, and had put on some pink eye shadow.

"So is this boy going to bail on you too, Shelia?" my father said in between drinking his bourbon.

He was always good at that, knowing the worst possible moments to make fun of me.

"Darling, look at her? Who in their right mind would stand her up?" my mother said as she gently nudged my father's arm.

There was a silence, the silence that always happened when my mother gave him that break in her talking for him to complement me.

"I hope you won't be drinking. And no drugs," he told me.

I know he was holding back from mentioning sex, but after all I was a good Catholic girl, at least he pretended this for his own sake. God forbid one of the Moran girls not be able to wear the families white wedding gown.

The doorbell rang, and my mother ran to the door, so excited she even put down her champagne glass. She drank champagne on special occasions, like my prom, my birthday, my graduation. And on my graduation she even let me have a sip.

"Well, don't you look handsome!" she told him. The problem with my mother was coming from such a big Irish Catholic family, she had become accustomed to talking to everyone like a niece or nephew.

I went out to rescue him from her, "Hi," I said nervously, now feeling like shit.

Knowing my hair looked goofy, and my eye shadow was too pink, and although the dress hid my thighs nothing could hide my childbearing hips.

"I didn't listen to you, I got you a corsage," he said as he handed me a box.

Usually I hate suits on men, and I guess I still did, but he looked better than anyone else to me.



Politely I opened the box, slightly annoyed realizing I would have to wear something I was allergic to all night.

It was paper," It's origami, I made it last night, my uncle from China is here."

"It's beautiful."

As was that night. It was the first night I slept with anyone. Falling asleep to his kiss, I never wanted to leave. My groggy morning eyes noticed the posters of Jimmi Hendrix and Elvis Costello covering the walls, and the big wooden Buddha resting on the snare drum. Nothing familiar, but in his arms, and in that kiss I was home. It was the morning after I wanted to last forever.

So now here I am. Hung-over and awake before fucking nine in the morning. And I kissed a Raiders fan. Maybe this place has made me blonde.

Or maybe I just dreamed the before. Remembering the way he used to kiss my forehead, to warn my eyes of the morning light. I am beginning to believe I must have dreamt him up.

Pink Lady

1 oz. Gin

1 oz. Grenadine

1 1/2 oz. Cream

Shake and strain



It is just like it had been. We smile delighted at the thought that maybe everything is okay again. We imitate the old swings that creak like bull frogs, still they will suffice as our seats to the sky. Our foolish voices echo through the sleeping playground. Our fears have been reduced to the cops kicking us out for trespassing, and mistaking us for drunken teenagers. It is not a day for laughter. So our forbidden smiles must be induced by alcohol. But to us they come as naturally as the tears prior to them.

"Again!" Janie says in a voice distorted by giggles.

And I follow her command and make my bullfrog call.

We close our eyes, pretending we are somewhere else. We clench our eyes so tight, hoping maybe it will make the stars move. We need a shooting star, a prayer, anything. The night smells like summer, and nothing bad happens then. Our laughing ends, and as best friends do we only think, knowing thoughts are only broken by words.

The busy street across the field becomes a stumbling stream. The distance becomes mountains. The cool slide becomes the hard wood floor of the lean tube. We are just tired from a long hike.

There is nothing more to talk about. Our voices are powerless and hoarse from our wasted muttered prayers.

Earlier that day crying foolishly, I was told everything would be okay. Maybe I don't want it to be okay, I'm not ready for a return to normalcy. I'm not ready for anything. Not without her. But the world keeps on pushing



forward, trampling over my dazed body. They expect me to be happy knowing what tomorrow would bring, but all I am focusing on is getting through that day.

I had let the tears wash over my face like a protective coat, I knew they were staring but I didn't care. I usually would wait to cry until I got home and let the tears suffocate my thoughts. But now it is about getting through the day. Just waiting for the night when I can silence all my thoughts and let my mind rest.

He walks over to the swing set, looking too old in his black suit. "PARTY" he mocks. His voice is too loud, and his smile too wide. "I brought your girls a present," he says, showing us a joint in his hand.

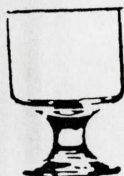
Any other night I won't. But this isn't any other night. Any other night Brian won't be in a black suit. He takes out his fathers lighter, "one year in Nam, better than a year in Columbus, Ohio" and for the first time I think I get it.

"Ladies first," he says as he passes it to Janie.

Janie presses her lips around it lightly and quickly passes it on too me. I inhale until I can almost feel it scraping against my lungs and give it back to Brian.

"Holy shit! Gonna do hits of the inhaler in between each one, kid?" he pats my shoulder and I giggle the smoke out straight into his face.

We look at each other and laugh at ourselves as he takes a hit. He looks all professional as he does it. The goofiness of



him is hidden behind the cool smoke cloud he has learned from practice to release.

"Brian, my turn!" Janie shouts.

"Take it easy," he says as he hands it to Janie.

"It's all gone. I may have more at the house," he says.

"No, save it. It's so clear tonight. Look up, it's the Big Dipper." Janie whispers pointing straight above us.

"That's the little dipper." He corrects reminding us he was the only one to pass A-Block astronomy.

"Well, it sure as hell seems big to me. Who gets to name them anyway?"

"Some crazy old lady who was allergic to cats probably named them."

"Yeah. Because everyone names their cat Little Dipper," and not until now I have realized how funny Brian is.

"What's it gonna be like?" I ask finally.

"What's 'it'?" Janie says confused.

"I don't know. Prom, graduation. The rest of it."

We all look at each other afraid to answer. Because we already had the rest of it planned out. And she was there.

"I am seeing us smoking at a lot of playgrounds. Then maybe we will start going to the nursery school down the street and smoking the crack."

Anything to make us laugh. Because then it's like she's still here. That was always her job.

The sun is coming up over the field,
pretending it's a new day. But a sliver of the
moon still hovers above us. I want to push
the sun back down, suffocating its laughing
rays. The beautiful sky, the warm air, even
the weather is pretending everything is okay.
The sky looks like a thin sheet of pink satin in
front of a dark blue wall. I keep looking
straight, my eyes working so hard I pretend
to see through all the houses. I wish I was
younger, so I won't know what's behind all
these houses. I could pretend it's the desert,
and I could look out into it like in some old
country song.

"It looks like her prom dress," Janie says
still watching the waking sun.



Between-the-sheets

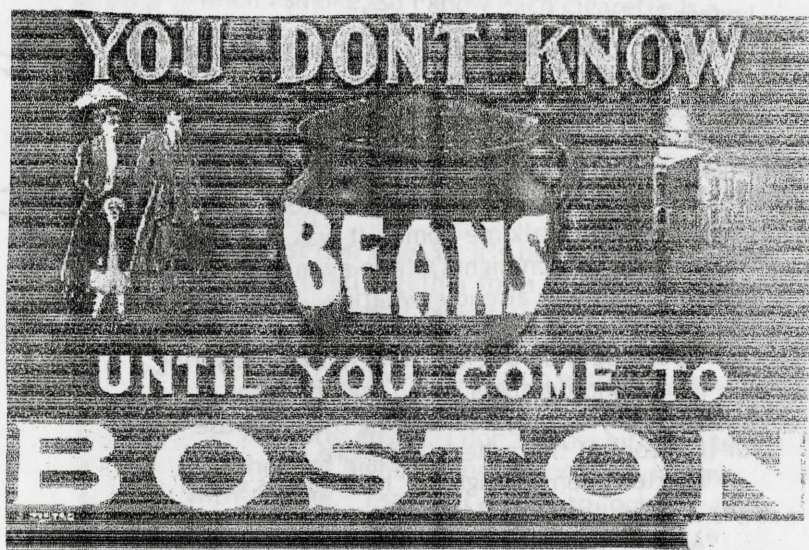
$\frac{1}{4}$ oz. lemon juice

$\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Brandy

$\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Triple Sec

$\frac{1}{2}$ light rum

Shake and strain, pour into a shot
glass



The moon looks half eaten and I am so hung over I believe I ate it last night. I speed up my pace trying to walk out of myself as I light my second clove of the night.

I don't know why he always has to fuck it up. He bought me a three hundred dollar ring, and I bought him a corndog. He told me he wanted to spend his life with me; I told him I already warned him about this shit.

The first time we met we didn't remember each other the next morning. The second time we met it was at one of those classy frat parties, the ones you have to dress up for, where the brothers ask you if you want white or red instead of telling you to flash them for a beer. After about four glasses of two dollar wine they took out the jazz CD put in Snoop and it became a kegger.

He was cute enough and I was buzzed enough.

"Is it alright if I just get a beer this time?" I said to him from across the bar.

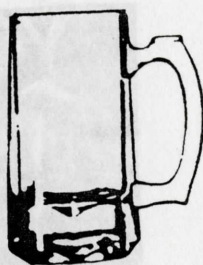
"Even better," he said as he filled my plastic wine glass from the keg.

I did that for about seven more beers, until he finally asked to walk me home. It was one of those humid Boston nights where even before you moved the air was already sweating. Right in front of my hall there was a fountain, for no other purpose than one that one hot day in spring, the school photographer could take pictures of students playing in it and tanning by it and use for the front of the college brochure.

"Liz, let's run through it," he said, his green eyes smaller from drunkenness.

"Austin, my dress is silk, and I need to wear it next week to a wedding,"

"So?" he said as he started to take off his clothes and I started to fall in love. He had one



of those bodies you could tell he didn't work for, it just worked.

After he ran through in just his polka dot boxers he grabbed my arm and started shoving me towards the water.

"Wait," I said as I pulled of my dress, forgetting I was braless, and then remembering I still didn't give a fuck.

Drunk, he let me wear his clothes back to my dorm so I won't have to get my dress wet. Kissing me between the sheets I warned him. I told him I probably won't even talk to him in the morning.

Now it is five years later, I'm bartending and he is in graduate school, and we live five blocks from that same fountain. I didn't smoke back then, but I also didn't live with him. He hates when I smoke, so I know each cigarette is a guaranteed five minutes alone.

"Liz, I don't get it," his voice rudely interrupts my peaceful clove, reminding me I haven't even moved past our apartment yet.

"Why are you out here? I don't need this right now," I say watching his body seem to sway with discomfort.

"I just don't get it. It's been five years today. We have lived together for a whole year now, and you still won't even say you love me."

"I don't" I say as I take another drag.

"I don't know why I put up with this shit," he says now as his soft face begins to tense up.

"Honestly Austin, I don't know either. I told you the first night we met I won't fall in love with anyone," I say still unable to look into his eyes.

"That was the second time we met, and Liz, we were nineteen. Most people change. We changed."

"No, you changed. Things changed. You'll never get it will you?

"If you don't love me why do you stay?" he asks now holding me in tightly so I can't avoid his eyes.

"I don't know," and everything is coming back at me now with such force I have to sit down on the curb.

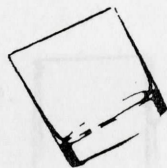
"I'm sorry, I forgot. Just come back to bed, Liz."

"I'll come inside in a minute, I need another cigarette," I say, my eyes focusing so hard his body is just a blur.

I told Austin never to touch me when we fought. Once when he grabbed my arm sophomore year, I freaked out. It sent me straight back to the place I was running from. My father had this habit of shoving me to the ground when he was angry. He used to tell me I would be lucky if any man would marry me, and he prayed it would happen, then he could finally give me away. So here I am now, sitting on the curb, crying like an asshole, with the perfect man inside waiting for me with a wedding ring. I wonder what my father is thinking as he watches down on me. I imagine him up there, whiskey in one hand, cigar in another, laughing his ass off on his own separate cloud. I was his comic relief and punching bag all through high school.

My mother told me it was just that my father loved me too much. The first time he caught me drinking he squeezed my arms so hard he left bruises. He called them "whiskey bruises" and warned me what alcohol does to people. No one likes a drunk, and my blue arms would remind me of that. Crying to my mother she told me that he was just scared, he loved me so much he didn't want to see me get hurt. That day I told my mother I would never tell a man I loved him. And I never have.

Austin is the only man strong enough or stupid enough to take it. I still haven't lit a cigarette



and the autumn air is creeping up on me. Silk bathrobes don't do shit on an October night in Boston.

Walking up the three flights of steps I don't think I could possibly be going any slower, and it feels like I have a fucking elephant on my back.

He is sitting up in bed just like I expected.

"I didn't mean to grab you like that. I just never know what to do with you."

"Nothing," I say as I crawl back into bed, feeling my eyelids become heavy again.

I wake him up the way I always do, tickling his tummy with my long brown hair. Smiling as he opens his eyes, it's like we forgot everything. I guess it's just easier that way. His green eyes look at me in a way I can pretend to be beautiful. Sometimes I am surprised he hasn't already left me when I wake up in the morning.

"Good morning, Lizzy," he whispers.

"I thought you had class at ten today?"

"I do," he glances at the clock, "shit! I have to go."

"Alright, I hope you brush your teeth first. Oh, I have to work until two tonight, I'll take my break at eight and maybe we could get dinner at Barry's," I say as he hops out of bed.

"Okay, eight. It's a date. I wish I could sleep in like you, I should drop out and go to bartending school," he says while pulling on a shirt while searching through the covered ground to find his pants.

"You won't last. Stick with law school, it's much easier," I say laughing.

"I love you," he says now fully clothed, "see it isn't that hard to say," he says as he kisses me on the cheek.

Ten in the morning, five hours till work. I hours will be enough to get rid of the bags under

my eyes. Beauty sleep is essential for a bartender.

I am awakened by the phone, "Hello," I barely make out.

"Hello may I speak to Liz Maloy?" an unfamiliar voice asks.

"This is she," I say rolling over to my side.

"I am afraid there has been an accident. Your fiancé was in a car accident."

"Excuse me? You must be mistaken, I don't have a fiancé," I say wondering if I am still in a dream.

"Well, Austin Green told the nurse to have me call his fiancé, Liz Maloy, this is the number he gave us," I am beginning to hate her voice.

"What happened? Is he alright? I don't understand there must be some sort of mistake," and now the elephant has moved to my stomach preventing me from moving.

"We aren't sure yet. He is going in and out of consciousness and is losing a lot of blood. You should come in as soon as you can. Memorial Hospital, third floor, just ask someone at the desk to take you to him."

I hang up the phone and throw a sweatshirt on over my pajamas. Running down the stairs, I realize I still am in the slippers, but I am not really caring. I jump into my truck and start driving. I can't even tell if I am crying, or even if this is real, all I know is I am driving twice the speed limit. Austin played college football for four years, and still I never saw him hurt. I didn't know his body was capable of being hurt.

I was always the one hurt. I remember my sophomore year in college when I got an asthma attack and we had a black out, he drove me to Memorial Hospital. He sat there and held my hand the whole time I did the nebulizer, I had to laugh at him because it was the first time since grade school anyone had held my hand



while I was having an asthma attack. He was more scared than I was. He was always like that, caring more about me than I could ever care about myself.

I swear he would have even stood up to my father if I had let him. But talking back to my father was usually the end to all my boyfriends, that's why I always introduced them to him. But the first time I took Austin home I warned him about my father, I guess in my mind I married Austin that night. Austin sat there at the dinner table holding it in as my father called me every name he could think of.

I pull into the hospital already feeling the sickness I am surrounded by, and run out of my car all the way to the third floor.

"Can you tell me which room Austin Green is in?" I ask the woman behind the desk.

"Are you family?" it is the voice I hate.

"Yes, I'm his wife. Can you take me to see him please?"

"I just want to warn you-"

"Just take me to him. I'll be fine," I say and grab her arm.

She leads me into the room to see him, wrapped in bandages, not breathing, lifeless, surrounded by strangers working on him. His brown skin now is a shade lighter than mine.

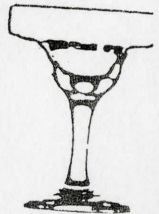
"He's still alive," a voice startles me.

I hadn't even noticed the doctor in the corner.

"A jeep hit his car and he swerved off the highway and-"

"Please, just stop. I don't want to know how it happened. Just tell me, is he going to be alright?" I say moving closer towards his bed.

"I wish I knew. Fifty fifty chance. If he is he probably won't be able to walk again, but I don't want to make any promises. He is still losing blood. Do you want to be alone with him," he



asks now in a softer tone, trying to remind me he is also human.

"Yeah, please," I say still staring at Austin.

All I can look at are his sleeping eyes; everything else is torn apart, covered or burnt. I can almost feel his green eyes trying to break through his unconsciousness as if to tell me everything will be okay. Well at least that is what I am pretending. I am holding his hand, and shaking so hard the bed is moving.

"I love you," I whisper into his bandaged ears.

Favorite Drinks...

author's personal favorite: Girl Scout Cookie

½ oz. Baileys

½ oz. Kahlua

½ oz. Peppermint Schnapps
shake and strain

author's dirty bartending teacher's

personal favorite: Blow Job

¾ oz. Baileys

¼ oz. Amaretto

Whipped cream

Favorite of Paul Pierce, Lawyer Milloy, and Nomar:

Boston Iced Tea

½ oz. vodka

½ oz. gin

½ oz. tequila

½ oz. triple sec

½ oz. light rum

1 ½ oz. sweet and sour

fill with cranberry juice

splash of 7up and garnish with cherry

EXCELLENT SHOTS!!!!

SCOOPY SNACK

½ OZ. MALIBU RUM

½ OZ. CRÈME DE BANANA

½ OZ. MIDORI

½ OZ. PINEAPPLE JUICE

TOP WITH WHIPPED CREAM

SHAKE AND STRAIN

COSMOPOLITAN

½ OZ. VODKA

¼ OZ. TRIPLE SEC

¼ OZ. CRANBERRY JUICE

SHAKE AND STRAIN

WATERMELON

½ OZ. VODKA

½ OZ. WATERMELON PUCKER

SHOT ONLY TO BE MADE IF YOU

INTESNLY DISKLIKE SOMEONE

GORILLA FART

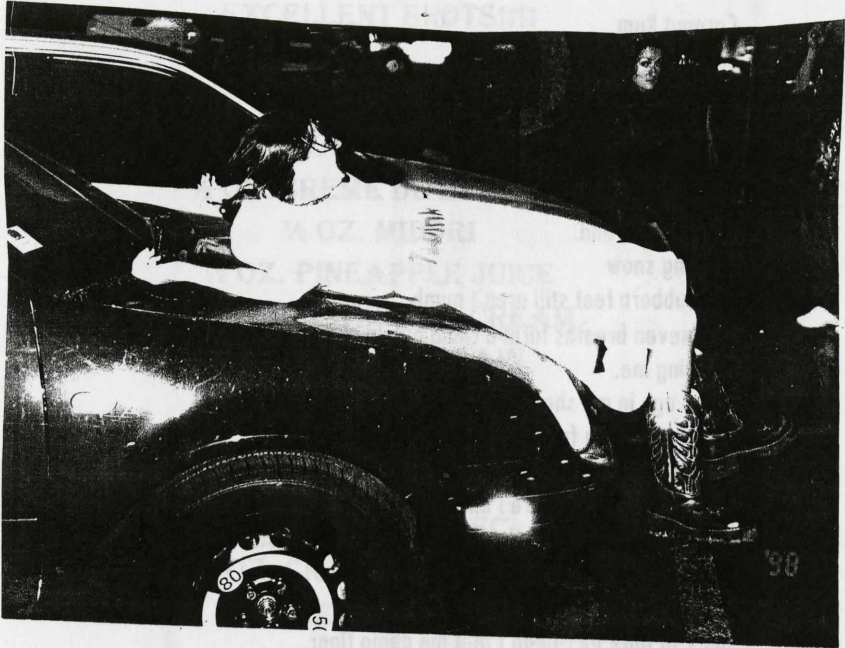
½ OZ. WILD TURKEY

½ OZ. BACRADI 151

Coconut Rum

Foolishly, hopefully, shoes in my bag,
Naked tan toes freezing in this snow,
I'll begin to forget.
This is it.
The last, the end.
Stinging snow
My stubborn feet still aren't numb.
My uneven breaths form a cloud outside,
Taunting me.
Hours ago in my short skirt,
Wading, waiting for the ferry
The minnows crowd along the gasoline stained water,
Reminding me of where I am going.
Sweet rum on my breath and the absence of sunscreen,
Momentarily I mistake myself for a local.
Barefoot, in the bar he danced around me,
Soles so thick he couldn't feel the damp floor.
As he reached for my hand,
I reached for my shot of coconut rum.
One arm occupied, the other one danced,
He had me.
They want to know my story,
The reason I stayed.
Storyless,
I sink my bare feet in the snow.
Storyless,
I leave.

ABOUT AUTHOR



The author Carolyn Kimpel, also known as 'Twinkie Girl', was Boston born and raised. Many of her influences are from Boston as well, Lawyer Milloy, Paul Pierce and Nomar. She now resides in Redlands, CA where she attends two schools, University of Redlands, and National Bartender's School of Riverside. She is working on a book of short stories, poetry, and black and white photos. In five years she plans to own a bar in St. John and somehow one day get published. But until then it is a life of writing and Twinkieing.