

Loraine Shields – February 14, 2009
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BORDERLINE
1983 – West Hollywood – Sports Connection Gym

What was I thinking? You get away with nothing. You take nothing with you. All that matters is that nothing matters. I was thinking – what the fuck – I want to be blinded by you.

I am at the Sports Connection – a very classy gym in a very gay area of LA. I'm still young, enough. I'm about twenty pounds overweight, with thick curly hair and a brilliant, irregular smile. Whenever I see pictures of myself, I think, "Boy, was I pretty then." But never satisfied, now.

Our Viking aerobics teacher is just setting up. Her body is so firm and taut that she seems molded from a Barbie doll form with arms of cheap, brittle plastic.

The music starts. She's clapping her hands and stomping her feet to get our attention. A throbbing headache beat. All the perfect plastic bodies jerk. White headbands, fanny packs, leg warmers, anonymous flesh.

I am bending from side to side in front of a mirror, that I share with no one. I can flap around and be a fool. I honestly come here to get in shape. All the other girls in my acting class workout and their bodies are neat and trim. Vibrations from the throbbing music are coming up through the nasty sweat smelling carpet. Bodies around me are sweating and twirling and jutting. They all look exactly the same, hard-muscled and frenetic.

I keep up. If it kills me. I keep up. I just will myself up into the air and land with all my wobbling weight and thrust myself into the next gyration. My jaw thrusts forward and my ass squats back and bounces up and down, "Like a stinky bug!" Viking Barbie shouts. I claw the carpet.

It's only five minutes in. I'm really weaving and heaving now.

Jumping Jacks! My breasts fly out of my 38 DD bra. The skinny bra straps are rubber banding my elbows. My chest is waving and cresting like a paranoid sea. I can't stop to push them into their cups because I'll lose my balance and fall. I've got to keep my arms waving around like on a tightrope for balance. The beat is hard and fast and I'm moaning out loud – but who the fuck cares? I'm all alone. Nobody is watching.

Five minutes more. My feet are disobeying me. I'm staring at myself and tripping and dragging and jutting and my breasts are lunging and swollen and my eyes are bugging out. I strain to dance in this extinct Dodo Bird flight pattern.

Suddenly, I'm sharing this mirror with a blond boy all dressed in black leather with a black leather cap. Very dainty S&M.

I'm not sure if I'll ever figure out the difference between love and a crush.

Love usually crushes me: so I stay clear. Like I say, all that matters is that nothing matters. The youth in my mirror swipes off his cap and tosses it to the ground. Blinding blond silk cascades down and she looks right into my eyes and laughs at me.

I'm faced with Madonna.

Seamlessly, the music fades into The Beatles' – 'I Should Have Known Better.'

"I should have known better with a girl like you."

Honestly, I wish I were dead. Madonna laughs again and I look straight into her emerald green eyes and I can't help myself – I laugh back.

"That I would love everything that you do; and I do, hey, hey, hey and I do."

Viking Barbie spins us us. Madonna and I are no longer looking in the mirror but facing each other. Madonna is gorgeous – Balanchine inspires her movements. This is a nightmare. My breasts have gone completely wild and are hitting my raised knees. I peek out and Madonna is roaring with laughter.

"Whoa, oh, I never realized that a kiss could be, this could only happen to me; can't you see,"

I'm blushing up my thighs. Madonna looks straight up at the ceiling to keep from laughing harder. Her neck- moonlight on marble.

I'm a sensual, writhing, leaping, throbbing and exquisitely alive woman transforming all of my extinct movements into a loony love sick-mating dance. My body is dancing for Madonna.

"That when I tell you that I love you, oh, you're gonna say you love me too, hoo, hoo, hoo, oh,"

I've closed my eyes to feel the thrill of being alive in a mannequin room and I suddenly become inflamed with hot breath near my ear, "You're a scream." I open my eyes and turn my head and we almost touch. In a flash, Madonna's gone. She exits as quietly as she entered.

For me it was love.

"And when I ask you to be mine, you're gonna say you love me too."

And for her? Some unexpected laughter in the afternoon?

"You love me too, you love me too."

What was I thinking? I wasn't thinking at all.

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