

Eavesdroppers Never Hear Their Own Rumors

What secrets are you keeping from me this evening? What have you not told me that I cannot already smell on my own? The defeating stench of infidelity and the unchanging sunny weather in California. I stumbled under the mellow trees, approached the side streets with a boiling headache, glaring at the half-moon and feeling self-conscious.

In my fragile fatigue and shopping for accompaniment, I traveled with raspberry stains on my collar, dreaming of your company.

Aisles full of abandoned teenagers under the moon and the smells of you in darkened classrooms while security shined a light in the white chariot I drove you in.

What liars and what deceptions! Entire families in the middle of the night! Bedrooms silenced! Wives bent over, husbands from behind! Such a lonely place I frequented often to chip your orange makeup—and you, Salvador Dali, what were you doing near *The Basket of Bread*?

I saw you, my horrible former love, my blonde mannequin, childless, a chased virgin, faking your own teenage innocence in front of a group of comedic believers. A false persona, you trampled the evenings of my greatest moments of you undressed, under the rain, on your stained knees, and gave false modesty to your own nightly death and heard your various attractions: the shame of dishonesty, a liar's story, the uncontrollable instinct to spread your personality.

I wandered through those naked nights following you and followed in my shadows by our parental detectives.

We folded ourselves between waterways and lakes and found ourselves in the middle of lust-filled evenings. Pants unbuttoned, laced shirts far above the mid-drift, and underwear that only made a temporary appearance.

We walked down open corridors in our religious euphoria tasting Africa, Italy, and made sure America was isolated.

Where are we going, love of my regretful, regretful life? Their doors have been closed for hours. Where does your vanilla skin point this evening? (Onlookers see my crying in public, arguing with myself and I feel absurd.)

Will we walk for part of the early evening through desolate and naked streets? The trees dance above our dance, lights out in every home, my loneliness as an accompaniment.

Will you lead me on a short (lack of confidence) leash though the filthy Mexican ghettos of Los Angeles, dreaming of the lost United States of love near silver automobiles in parking lots, home to our imaginary and nonexistent cottage?

Dearest mother, old and gray, missing your nights of thrusting to the sounds of coarse music and defining language that sucked you dry, what regrets of me did you have when free will became oppression and you walked out in the middle of the night naked and full of desperation as your boat drifted away over the black waters of the White Nile?

By Samuel Brock