

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/3

Natasha Cabot
Ragdoll

My ear twitched before it fell off. I picked it up, blew off the dirt and put it in my pocket. Like every other one of my body parts, my appendages have a habit of falling off. And, like every time before, I sew them back on with thick, black thread. I am a patchwork. I am a human quilt. Each section of me tells a different story. To most people, I am a mess, but I think I'm beautiful. A unique little rag doll meandering her way through life. So what if a finger or a toe falls off? We've all got our issues.

I remember as a young girl, my mom would sew me up with flesh coloured thread. She didn't want the neighbours to talk or notice. But they did. I still looked a bit off. Out of a sense of rebellion when I hit my teens, I started using darker threads, purple, black, and navy blue just to piss off my mother. Kids will be kids. When I hit 23, I started using black exclusively. Black goes with everything.

When my nose fell off for the fifth time, I couldn't centre it exactly, so it tilts to the left a little. The right nostril whistles a little, but to me it is a soothing tone. My lips are askew, as is my chin. My ears are uneven but I can still hear. The only thing consistent is the thick black thread which lines my skin and body like road maps. Each piece of thread connects all of my body parts. God forbid it start to unravel or snag. It is always a pain in the ass to re-sew. First I have to take out the old string and then begin all over again. With the needles, with the thread. The sewing takes hours, but I've become quite proficient at it.

The other day I went out for a walk. A little girl looked up at me and I stared back down at her. My eye popped out and she screamed and ran to her mother. I picked up my eye and walked on. It wasn't the first time I've made a child scream and I'm sure it won't be the last. My greatest fear is that a dog or a squirrel will get to one of my body parts before I do and take it away, running with my ear, my eye, my finger in its mouth, with me chasing it, yelling at the animal to give me back my body part. I can always sew them back on, you see. But I cannot sew on what I do not have. It is imperative I get to the body part before some scavenger eats a part of me.

What will pop off next? I don't know. But I've got my thread and my needles ready. This little rag doll doesn't give up.