

Wilderness House Literary Review 11/2

Tommy Dean
You Said

YOU LIKED MY SHIRT, but I overheard you talking to your girlfriends. I hated myself for thinking that you looked beautiful when your lips curled up and your nose crinkled like a soggy French fry left at the bottom of a fast food bag.

You said you loved to read and that you'd help pick out the reading laps for the end tables next to our bed. The bulb on your lamp has been out for weeks and the dust I noticed has even settled onto the switch.

Then there was the time that you told me that you didn't mind that I had gained a little weight, that if anyone asked, you'd boldly tell them that you loved the rounding of my belly and that you thought turtle shells were cute.

So you have to wear glasses, you said, holding out a pair with rimless lenses. I left with bold frames and you said I'd better become a writer or an account, as if those were the same thing.

No fruits and no vegetables at dinner and you said we'd be anti-vegan, a new type of people. We'd find other ways to get along. You'd learn to like meat, you said, laughing as if I wasn't serious.

Then came the children. No actual bodies, but rather the blood of the conversation, which though you refused to surrender, pooled into the dimples in your cheeks, a black hole finally swallowing up my desire. Think, you said, of all the money we'll save. Think, too, of all the time we'll have together.

Time, I agreed, could save us, but soon our time was spent on projects: mine the yard and yours the law firm. This was followed by separate beds. Rationalized by our different schedules. I was early and you were late. I smelled like the Earth and you smelled like toner.

Even when quizzed daily, you said you were happy. But your lips no longer curled and I could no longer remember if they were smooth or flaky.

Sign here, you said. Sign here.