

Wilderness House Literary Review 16/1

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You Don't Have a Fan

THE SOFT ROCK MUSIC STAR CAME INTO THE COFFEE SHOP where I worked and I made him a cappuccino twelve years ago. The young woman I was working with that night was thrilled.

"I can't believe it's him," she said. "This is so cool!"

I wasn't impressed; I'm not a fan, and I don't like his music. Actually, I hated his music. I didn't understand how anyone could like anything so bland. His music was like watching paint dry, but boring paint, like beige on a painful wall.

"I'm so excited!" she said.

I said nothing. I made him the cappuccino, and he left.

I don't want to be impressed by people who are not worthy. I want to be amazed by the greater world and beautiful things. Just because people are famous, it doesn't mean they deserve my attention. Most mainstream art: music, movies, books, etc. are popular because the uneducated, uninformed masses consume them and they don't mind swallowing garbage because there's nothing else they know how to do.

Twelve years later I worked at a doctor's office at a hospital. I didn't think a lot of the soft rock star, but now and then I told the story of how I made him a cappuccino, and some people were impressed. I didn't like to tell the story because I didn't want people to think I was a fan. I wasn't a fan. He still disgusted me.

Now and then, I would scan the names of patients who had appointments to see if there was anyone I knew. I saw the soft rock star's name on the list. He has a common name, so I Googled him to see if he had the same birthday as the patient. He did.

I didn't want to be excited, but at the same time I was curious. Was he sick? What was wrong with him? I waited for him to come in.

Two of us sat at the front desk that day, a young African American man and me. The soft rock star strolled into the office, looked at both of us, and went straight to my coworker. I thought he didn't want to come to me because I was a white, almost middle age-looking woman who might be a fan. I hoped he knew I wasn't. I was a former punk rocker who had to pretend not to be, who would kick his ass if he thought I liked his disgusting music. I like weird and dark things; I like loud, intricate music that understands the pain of my life. I don't like soft rock seventies music that makes me want to pity the people who devour these pathetic songs.

I felt sorry for the soft rock star that he thought I might want to talk to him, harass him, and fawn over him, and the young African American man wouldn't. He probably thinks he's so wonderful that everyone who looks like me loves him. I wanted to tell him that he was boring and always would be, but he was a patient at the hospital. That would be inappropriate.

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The coffee shop and the hospital were two vortexes in my life. People came and went, and sometimes the same ones. The two places were right down the street from each other. I left the coffee shop to work at the hospital, but I did almost the same thing: I saw people, I served them, not coffee, but doctor's appointments, and life went on and on, still drinking coffee, going to work at the hospital, doing the same activities the masses performed over and over until the day they disappear from the Earth.