

{Home} Furnishings

{B} has taken up her quarters in a vacant house. Marine blue and with seven bedrooms, empty since a boy fell from an attic window during a frat party the year before. She chooses a room on the second floor with pale yellow walls, a cavernous fireplace, and a discoloration on the wood floor the shape of South America. Her partner {O} remains across the street, in the white three-bedroom saltbox they just finished redecorating in jewel tones.

With some research, {B} learned this was a common occurrence, people falling from windows and roofs and balconies at frat parties. Also rapes. She read an article about a boy down South who was severely burned after inserting a bottle rocket in his rear. His classmate, who was filming the event, had to be extracted by firefighters from between the deck and the air conditioning unit when he wedged himself there in attempted escape.

{O} was the first adult on the scene. She saw the boy in a shrub and conscious still, with arms and legs akimbo, and sucked in her breath. She knew a broken back and a miracle when she saw one. A girl knelt beside the boy, emitting shrieks at five-second intervals. Kids scattered from the house like rats in a flood.

{B} went up to the attic when she first arrived. One long room, with six windows lining the wall that faces her own house. She walked by each one and found them screwed shut. At the window the boy fell from, she thought of {O}'s proposal. Was marriage something to keep you from falling, or the hedge that broke your fall? Was marriage the window?

The fireplace in the yellow room is filled with red plastic cups. {B} touches the discoloration on the floor and finds it isn't a stain but rather the only part of the floor free from grime.

She is ill-prepared for her stay, without a sleeping bag or even a pillow. She thinks of {O} across the street, worrying in their well-equipped bedroom, Ballroom Blue now, with an energizing Ruby Red accent wall. {B} tries to remember the last time she slept alone.

{O} always falls asleep before she does, usually with her arms tight around {B}. {O} doesn't snore, but little efforts of air often escape her lips, especially when she sleeps on her back. Soft, rhythmic poofs, small moments of magic.

{B} tries to think of a reason for wanting to sleep away from this sound.

Several months after the accident, {B} saw the boy who fell from the window and the girl who shrieked over him on the local news. The girl stood behind his wheelchair as he spoke about his new role as president of the University Hazing Prevention Committee, her hand at rest on his shoulder.

On her way downstairs, {B} catches sight of a lamp on the floor in another bedroom, this one with pitch black walls. The base is a Heineken bottle, and the shade a gaudy gold glitter that flakes off. It doesn't belong at all, not even in their bar-lounge area, but she takes it anyway, leaving a trail of gold in her wake as she walks across the overgrown lawn and back home.