

## @ Planned Parenthood the Week Before the Inauguration

*...grace could not come to the wolf from its own despair, only through some external mediator, so that, sometimes, the beast will look as if he half welcomes the knife that despatches him. - "The Company of Wolves" by Angela Carter*

Plotting an instagramable picture, dodging cabinet and dick pics, you're going on another date with Greg, a Slovenian from Hungary who *first touched himself* when Black girls like you were still a tube and glass plate away, bouncing balls on clay courts.

He's not your type. Bald, but,

there. His *ex-girlfriend* is Kenyan so he pries, kneads his fingers through your hair to ensure *all that curl*, the virtue, really grows *there*, because he needs you to know he *knows* about *these things*

(like the stranger two strangers ago who asked if your father was a light-skinned Puerto Rican which could explain why you're *so pretty*, he grew up in a Black neighborhood and also *knows*.)

Greg says you *think in binaries*. As he kisses he rubs his ring finger over your brows and collapsed boundaries to see how easily they'll smudge. *It's too much*. Thumb presses the pimple on your chin. *So you're not perfect, after all. What? What's wrong? I'm telling you I think you're perfect. You don't need so much makeup.*

(The new president doesn't open the car door, or hold the First Lady's hand. On stage. Even progressives feel badly for Melania this week.

You remember Melania is a birther.)

Cruelty is his sophistication and he *has his needs* and *needs the beauty* he kneads your *flat stomach, so beautiful*, as he grabs the fat of your upper thigh

*...you can lose this quickly, you know*. He grabs and grabs your hand and you keep going, daring and bargaining and begging for grace, trapped in all the muck and fluidity of the in between space.

(You remember Zsa Zsa Gabor died the day you met Greg. And *Greg* isn't his real name, he eventually confesses.)

And it's your life exposed.

He was bored at home, in a rut, and his *girlfriend*, who maybe knows, but would probably only mind if he was sloppy, is back home *in a hut* and, man, now he *feels bad*.

*You should know*, although this was play, you're an *upgrade*. She's an *unsophisticated girl*, you're from *New York*, you're *fancy*. Can he *stay*?

(It's hard to say their names. They're from The City. Your city. Civilization. This new president. The old mayor tells a joke about a firefighter getting *lucky*. After 9/11. At the Inauguration lunch. You can't keep yours down.)

(You let them in. Now you need the results. The papers. Confirmation. The nurse understands. You can't keep lunch down.)

To let that fall asleep next to you, inside of you, what does the touch of it do? Truth is you don't believe in it, you constantly dare it, or are it, if it exists. Truth is, predators are the most reliable people you know

*write about this*, he says.