

## Lords of Sorrow

“...the womb of Chaos. There is an intense lurking passion to create, but its children are monsters... Secrecy is here, and perversion.”

Once maybe bragging she admitted that sometimes when she has fallen out of touch with an old friend she will contact them pretending to have had a dream about them. When we meet in a bar coincidentally she looks the same as always only scrawnier dirtier a little sunken. Her hands covered in black grease flit around her body like scared birds. I mention a problem with my bike she fixes it quickly laying flat against the pavement outside she doesn't seem to care that her once white button down shirt keeps catching under the chain. It seems she speaks about the people she's with loud enough for them to hear. She says we should meet and means it which makes me think that things are going poorly. It's been awhile she says long enough for cringing nostalgia. She says she'd like to speak to someone but figures she'll never find a professional intelligent enough to understand her problems. It is somebody's birthday. She reaches across the table and plucks a card from the cake it says nuts on one side she writes her email and phone number on the other and crushes it into my pocket. I move the card onto my desk and then shift it around my room for several months. The night before I move away I think about writing to tell her about a dream I'd had in which she'd cut her hair very short. I'd write that it looked really good and that she'd been happy but I don't. Maybe two years later I receive a message from another friend asking if I'd heard about her and though I hadn't heard a thing I knew then that she was dead. For whatever reason it'd always seemed impending. I'd indirectly inherited a deck of Thoth Tarot cards that'd once been hers of which I'd always had my suspicions and I'd warned others on various occasions that reading them didn't so much tell the future as determine it. It was the only tarot deck I knew of for which card interpretations are almost exclusively negative of course that comes down to perspective. Though he hadn't wanted to our mutual acquaintance described to me the gory scene of her death and we both agreed that she might have been happy about it because it had reminded us of her art which I remembered featuring a petrified cat she found abandoned in a factory. Though nobody had specifically wanted me to I repeated the description of her sun-blackened corpse scalped by the weight of her hair to as many people as I could as if by compulsion. Though I've never experienced any phenomena that couldn't be explained away I worried that all my retelling might keep her around and I felt vaguely haunted by the tarot cards even though I had borrowed them to a friend saying that I didn't like them anyway more or less giving them away which I later regretted. When I asked to borrow them back having begun to feel sentimental I received not the same deck but a different smaller deck inside a plastic folia which I never broke. I always intended on taking back the originals but when I call to ask about it we end up imagining a contemporary epic based on Bible stories only tangentially the arc arriving on earth from outer space amongst casual depictions of ancient egalitarian cities in which elected representatives are periodically whipped to remind them who is really in charge and some versions of annual non hierarchy dispersal patterns off in the background with diaper-less infants peed from birth and trivial appearances of Jesus sometimes referred to in conversation by Judah's concerned friends. She asks about the baby and I say well the birth and everything before it and of course the nursing but I've never fallen so deeply in love as when I hold her tiny infant body to squat over a bush and pee. The primal authority of bodily functions and all the wordless communication that lead us there

being that she is still preverbal. To me the child's fountain is clear as filtered water made her think the acrid sting of piss reminded her of a line she'd once read. Unable to recall it precisely she talks around it for a while interrupting her attempts to remember with expressions of self-derision. Such as how taking several minutes to explain the perfection of a five word phrase is a certain way to beat the magic out of literature. Defeated she resorts to paraphrasing something about love being a thin skin between desire and viscera. Trailing off she sat silently a gloominess taking over her face or so I imagine since I cannot actually see her being that we've been conversing over the telephone. Me in the kitchen with the infant on the floor in self-fashioned chaps of crotchless tights where I've given her the whites of a boiled egg that lay smashed on the linoleum in a puddle of pee reflecting the golden afternoon sunlight shining elliptical like a smiling eye. I wanted to make a photograph but hadn't because I didn't have the skill which was a shame because I would have liked to have shown it to Q who I told that the story of the eye had informed my sexuality though on recent rereading it hadn't touched me at all except for the death and rape scenes which had only turned me off. Tuning out and then back in she was complaining about the party in her absence she passed the stragglers in the driveway on their way out. It must have been important to her that she hadn't brought up the pulls on her wool rug or the orange grease stains on the leather sofa because she mentioned this repeatedly as well as having pretended not to notice where someone had gouged the kitchen counter having mistaken the wood for a cutting board. She kept trying to bring the conversation back to his guests and one who she spied leaving giving her a look in particular. She asked over and over did you make out with Bobby but he couldn't remember and about that she insists she hardly cared but whether he used the toilet while he was there became a morbid obsession but he hadn't noticed and why should she care but she just kept on saying well did he and he just kept saying what? What? Did he? Well did he? Did who do what?