



## "Junior, huddled over her knees..."

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"Junior, huddled over her knees..."

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Junior <sup>and</sup> huddled over her knees, held them together in her arms. Rocking  
 back and forth, <sup>she was</sup> remembering how Romen had raised her foot from the bath  
 water and tasted it as though it were a lollipop. It was when they left the  
 tub, both wet and clean as gristle, that the slipperiness had begun. A kind  
 of inside slide, that made her feel giddy and pretty at the same time. The  
 solid, ~~steady~~ protection she'd felt the first night in the house gave way to a  
 jittery brightness that pleased and frightened her. <sup>Lying on her back,</sup> She had closed her eyes  
 to <sup>study it</sup> ~~pursue its source~~. When finally she turned to look at Romen's face, <sup>over</sup> she  
~~thought~~ she knew its name. ~~Trust~~. Brand new, completely alien, it invaded  
 her, making her feel wide open and whole, already approved and  
 confirmed by the lollipop lick. <sup>that was why later on, when he'd asked a second time,</sup> ~~Under its influence,~~ she told Romen the truth.  
 Clearly, just the facts. His response, "You left them there?", surprised her as  
 did his sudden rush to be gone. Reaching to turn out the lamp, he'd  
 grabbed the car keys instead, and got dressed as fast as a fireman. She  
 called his name, then shouted: "What? What?" He didn't answer. He ran.

Junior left Heed's bed and roamed the house. She didn't want to see  
 the Good Man or sniff out his after shave. He had been missing for days

~~Gazing at~~

~~He was Asleep,~~ his lips parted, his breathing light,

This beautiful boy <sup>ON</sup> whom she had  
as though he were  
~~feasted~~ ~~consumed~~ like <sup>all</sup> the birthday ~~feast~~

he did  
NOT  
stir.

banquets she'd never had. The jitter  
intensified and suddenly



Junior left Heed's bed and roamed the house. She didn't want to see the Good Man or sniff out his after shave. He had been missing for days now, had not appeared in the hotel attic or returned to his room. The ~~His~~ obvious betrayal had ~~been~~ <sup>she</sup> suppressed by lying under his image. But once the lollipop was tasted, he vanished behind <sup>his</sup> a painting (on the wall). Confused ~~and~~ <sup>, fighting bitterness</sup> ~~x~~, she paced <sup>the house,</sup> every room. In the kitchen, she opened the oven and, squatting down, tore pieces of crust from the blackened leg of lamb. Ravenous <sup>by</sup> she jammed them into her mouth. But the jittery brightness, less than an hour old, did not fade. Not then.

Leaving her ~~vulnerable and~~  
alone with ~~Romen~~. But he ran.  
~~fast and~~ (As ~~soon~~ as  
he could.)  
~~As soon as~~