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First Fuck Poems and Dead Nana Stories

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Cover Page Footnote

This piece is continued on the Inklings blog (<http://web.colby.edu/inklingsmagazine>)

First Fuck Poems and Dead Nana Stories

by Elise Ozarowski

You've heard it. The i-just-fucked-this-guy-and-he-doesn't-remember-but-this-will-remain-one-of-the-most-significant-experiences-of-my-college-career poems. The he-filled-me-with-desire-as-his-skin-brushed-against-mine-and-i-lost-my-breath poems. Hell, you've written it. I've written it. And I will again. Soon. Very soon. Within a matter of a few pages actually. Those and the first-encounter-with-grief poems. I mean, let's be serious. When you look at old poets, you know, the ones they bore you with before you're actually able to appreciate them for how fucking beautiful their sounds are, they write about sex and death, too. It's kind of a natural human thing. Sex enchants us, even after we've had it. Why else would erotica be so popular? I used to tell him that I didn't need to read about someone else's sex life because I had my own. Have. Different guy. But have.

Have you ever had those creative writing classes where—even if it's fiction—you're reading a piece about sex and you're like and now you've made it perfectly clear exactly what your sex life with your boyfriend is like. It's a tad bit awkward. Or, on the opposite spectrum, you write something that is complete fiction and then a guy from your class messages you and says hey, i just want you to know that i'm here if you ever wanna talk about what happened with that guy since i know you said you feel like he's the only one who will ever love you and i want you to know that that's not true and you're not sure if he read the same piece that you wrote or if you should be proud that your work was convincing or if you should be insulted that someone thought you wrote that "he's the only one who will ever love me" because that's the sort of thing you wrote in your journal in sixth grade before you even knew what the roof of someone's mouth tastes like. Idiot.

Those are also the classes where the death stories come up. I wrote waaaay too many of those. Especially after Nana died. I read it back the other day for shits and wasn't as repulsed by myself as I had first assumed I would be. I was kind of impressed how fucked up I made my family. That was the one that my parents

read because of course they had to read something that their sweet daughter had written about her dead Nana so of course mom felt odd reading about her own alcoholism and dad didn't like the fact that I highlighted his nasty temper and the fact that Uncle was never able to get over that girl who dumped him twenty years ago—all of these things earned me a phone call and stern don't-you-think-you-should-write-about-how-resilient-we-are? Perfection is overrated. Writers crave imperfection. Because that's where reality is hiding. You think Toni Morrison would have become popular if Pecola's father baked her cookies and told her bedtime stories then went and made love to his wife?

That said, Toni Morrison writes about death and sex. We're kind of hardwired to care about them since we're all gonna die and college students have lots of hormones and lots of stress that needs relieving. Also, they're both real. As in if you're going to write about stuff you care about, you're probably not going to write about Natty Light. Although I must admit, I did read a hilarious "ode to natty light" poem once. Some of the love poems you've read have actually made you feel something. Like the one about the girl walking home holding her heels in one hand as the earliest golden hour caresses her shoulders. It was from the point of view of the guy who couldn't sleep and saw her from the bench he was sitting on and you prayed oh god please don't turn this into a cliché and have these two get together and they don't and you're internally cheering the writer he.could.go.all.the.way as the guy watches the girl but doesn't go after her and the fact the he is a human noticing another human presence is enough for you because even though you can't quite figure out why that moment is so significant, the way the writer told you about this non-interaction-interaction makes you feel like you've just witnessed something important. Because you have. [IM]

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