

A Fate On Your Face

Orange or green!

She lives on welfare; she has never worked. Not even as a whore, not even as a housewife with a whole brood of snout-nosed kids clinging to her apron strings. Syl doesn't know the price of a single heartbeat! In her womb, I mean. She is like a man. Outside her own species. She hasn't had any big-money divorces. Nothing at all! Pure passion, no let-up. The future lies in total destruction—in chipping, and nibbling, chewing away at the cake. Uh-huh. Hooray for her life that is a total wreck! A total wreck!

And so is mine... Oh! Oh! Oh! Does she... Do they... Do we... Does my dealer know? A clutch vehicle. Here is my vein! And Syl is a reliable tow truck for crucial moments. That's exactly what I need! I'm not ashamed of that. None of that—just schemes: signing up for unemployment benefits to get state-funded vocational training for a trade she has absolutely no intention of practicing.

To fake illness using a ruse, to goldbrick. That's what the savvy types and the slobs from the posh neighborhoods taught them: to become a parasite feeding off the system—on the backs of the real working class, of women like me who shoulder the actual hard labor.

She clutches me with her own dildo and give me my fix. Down on the sidewalk. Jizzed on the backs of straight guys. "Fucking patriarchy," she says. Poetry hinders the academic world.

Sometimes, my niece would hurl scathing words at me, just for the fun of it!

Sylvie is my kindest niece, even though she asks to be called Carl! She says she is a descendant of Vikings on her father's side—my sister Ann's late husband. So, with Wikipedia serving as an intellectual crutch, Syl comes across as a bit of a scatterbrain, while an adorable niece nicknamed Karl—with a capital K—insists that Carl means "free man" in Old Norse! And so, with the intellectual crutch known as Wikipedia, she is smart as a fart!

Two farts, three...

§

"Auntie Liz, you're a real lemon bombshell today..." "A what?"

To give herself the air of a street tough, Syl constantly rubs her crotch with her left hand. Also keeps a diary written in verse—lots of slang that goes right over my head.

"Nice car Syl! Do you steal it?"

It was a model equipped with air suspension... So I knew we were going to run into some really serious trouble. Again!

— Nah, you know, I borrowed it." Syl is a born liar; she must have talked her way

out of a tight spot while she was still in my sister's womb!

"Goddess of the night: Lick my dick, fix a Nyx!" It is said that she uttered these words: "Open the maternal womb; is it not my tomb!" She reportedly added: "Eject this stranded embryo from your whipped carcass!..."

Karl is her pen name.

Now, she has written it down in verse...

Every now and then Syl has got a new stolen car, and this one, she claims, is a Valentine's Day gift! "Mother was an unchristened person, and so am I."

Still plunged in grief, she can barely bear her mourning. My back still hurts today—from the nape of my neck all the way down to my tailbone! "Headache, my ass!" she tries to retort... Arguing that my back pain was psychological. In her diary, my first name often sits right next to the word "stinkard."

Skin tart? I am not a first-class idiot! Scrawled hastily my ass! Syl tried to prove to me that those "two words" were poorly written—with hasty strokes—and that they didn't form a single word... Syl is all words on wheels! All words on wheels! An encyclopedia! Geez, what the hell? I can't take it anymore.

After that, I never found her diary again. She must only write on her mobile phone now. One day, I'll get her pass-code!

I told her that, but she called me a "jalopy"—whatever that's supposed to mean or imply—and I don't like it! She told me that it means "clunker", too—and I don't like that either! Cause she was intelligent—truly—and educated too, and I know she knows that I knew I wasn't as much so.

She has mastered the exact verbal ways, and even the perfect art of using words to humiliate me—like that "pile of discarded bones and drying scraps of loose flesh"; or, more simply, the "old heap" blurted out in a choked voice! Aah!

But... Hmm!

Just wait, sweetheart, until you're at least two-thirds my age! Ha-ha-ha! Unless she mentions the cooked spoons, or the spurts of blood flung onto the ceiling.

Let's not get sidetracked: Syl—alias Carl—who steals a car once a year. Finding a solution—whether it is a matter of her status as a city elf, her transgender identity, or anything else—, she sources the wrecks from used-car lots or from elderly people who no longer use them and likely won't notice they're gone for a three or four days.

Those so-called old folks whose heart-engines have reshaped or shift into the artillery of defeat, and whose lungs are arranged like decrepit, obsolete mortars. "Rancid oil—disgusting!" she wrote... Oh boy! What an incredible verse for a twisted song with a rapist vibe!

"How are you feeling?"

"Oh! Forget it—it's this fucking piercing twisting my tongue."

Again and again... She claims that the car is a baptismal font and that she is the pitcher used to fill it with holy water. It's always cause of the tongue!

And if it's not the language itself, then it's due to the dictionary; or from the neighborhood, slang—what else? Syl... Never takes her responsibility into account.

I even once called it "blessed motor oil"—and immediately regretted it!

Bit my tongue until it hurt, but it was too late: words out, damage done. It still hurts! And it isn't my poor remorse that's sizzling away, but Syl soul. Now she gives me hugs and says, teasingly, that I'm her nice "hooptie auntie"... What a kid! Nice niece too, but she does things her own way.

Like nicknamed me her favorite "Tin Lizzie"... "I won't buy a car, and I'll never pay taxes to the state."

"Alright, you win—but pull over there."

§

I got out of the stolen vehicle, feeling a bit ashamed and somewhat complicit—out of weakness and self-interest. I... I had to go pick up my fix, and it was impossible to get there on foot. Too far away. Once a year, for Valentine's Day, she hopes to be able to keep them for two days and three nights. All the cops know about it. But Syl does impersonations. Syl is kind of silly, and an adorable niece nicknamed Carl maintains that Carl means "free man" in Old Norse!

"How" do I ear it wrong! Whatever that *is* what you said. Aim... Wow!

"Old Norse—nothing less!" Does she mean old nostrils... Does she mean that I am an addict... Does she mean I'm hooked? Hooked on what?!...

On philology. On poetry. On what?...

Hooked on what!

On philology. On poetry. On what... Hooked on what!... On philology. On poetry. On what. Hooked on what?

Ooh!! Ooh!! Ooh... Oh!

Cronies from the academic world... A certain O.D. And others besides. Odile talks about overdosing the way smart alecks do. A false comrade, but also a Sartrean virago and a devoted follower of de Beauvoir, a feminist activist: a liber—albeit in the manner of a traitor to our world.

I saw her as a diving beetle, ready to seize whatever came within reach to feed. But let it be with that bitch—forget it all about that one in particular. I had three or four of them on my back when the UP and their accomplices from the academic world arrived and injured us all.

Delivering her own dildo... Hand me my dose. Ooh!! Wow... She's kind of my dealer and also my pimp. She brings it... to give me my fix. She has mastered the art of makeup and deceptive behavior; she alters her skin with latex and tops her transformed face with a wig.

"I don't love your side when you are one of these hoes!" Syl is awfully cranky! On top of that, she calls me "Crispy Sis," even though I'm her aunt! "Don't call me that!"—but she immediately retorts that it makes her look older! "For the cops, I mean." "Accomplice after the fact..." she recalls regarding me—aloud, to intimidate me. "But...

— No 'but' me auntie..." She is intelligent, even witty. In her own way. She even showed them my driver's license once! The nerve... How small I felt. What a daredevil she is!

Even when faced with a Taser, she shouted a clearly audible "Go fuck yourself" at the police officer. Is that fair? I'm trying to get low! Keep a low profile! Out of sight, out of mind... She doesn't care about stopping at the red light. "Doesn't matter, she said; it will soon be green." Ah-ah...

But for me, I'm faking an illness as a ploy; I'm pretending to be sick to avoid working. I need to go check in with the social worker and spin her a sob story. She said I... On philology. On poetry. On what?...

Hooked on what!

On philology. On poetry. On what... Hooked on what!... On philology. On poetry. On what. Hooked on what? Um-um. Um-um-um-um. Um... Um-um-um-um. Hmm. Hmm-hmm. Um-um-um-um. Hmm. Hmm-hmm.

§

Orange or greed...

She lives on welfare; she has never worked. Not even as a whore, not even as a housewife with a whole brood of snout-nosed kids clinging to her apron strings. Syl doesn't know the price of a single heartbeat! In her womb, I mean. She is like a man. Outside her own species. She hasn't had any big-money divorces. Nothing at all! Pure passion, no let-up. The future lies in total destruction—in chipping, and nibbling, chewing away at the cake.

Uh-huh. Hooray for her life that is a total wreck! A total wreck! And so is mine... Oh! Oh! Oh! Does she... Do they... Do we... Does my dealer know? A clutch vehicle. Here is my vein!

And Syl is a reliable tow truck for crucial moments. That's exactly what I need!

I'm not ashamed of that. None of that—just schemes: signing up for unemployment benefits to get state-funded vocational training for a trade she has absolutely no intention of practicing. To fake illness using a ruse, to goldbrick. That's what the savvy types and the slobs from the posh neighborhoods taught them: to become a parasite feeding off the system—on the backs of the real working class, of women like me who shoulder the actual hard labor.

Using a ruse, to goldbrick! That's what the savvy types and the slobs from the posh neighborhoods taught them: to become a parasite feeding off the system—on the backs of the real working class, of women like me who shoulder the actual hard labor. Shoulders! Should I! Should I! Should...

She clutches me with her own dildo and give me my fix. Down on the sidewalk. Jizzed on the backs of straight guys. "Fucking patriarchy," she says. Poetry hinders the academic world. Sometimes, my niece would hurl scathing words at me, just for the fun of it! Sylvie is my kindest niece, even though she asks to be called Carl!

She says she is a descendant of Vikings on her father's side—my sister Ann's late husband. So, with Wikipedia serving as an intellectual crutch, Syl comes across as a bit of a scatterbrain, while an adorable niece nicknamed Karl—with a capital K—insists that Carl means "free man" in Old Norse! And so, with the intellectual crutch known as Wikipedia, she is smart as a fart! Two farts, three...

My poor niece, always in a sorrow; grieving, yet refusing to let go. With her bad-boy air—and a break dance wind of her bowel too—, Syl unzips her jacket halfway before zipping it back up. Countless times I tried to stop her, but she spat out scathing words in return! Fuck to her, I wasn't the saloon spittoon!

I used to read in her diary: "My mother was a piece of filthy sow, and her sister a hook-nosed slut!" Wow! What a poetess! For me she has added: "Hook up with a Nyx. But I like her green eyes!" My dead sister was the so-called "Nyx". To make me angry and get a rise out of me over my left-wing political views, Syl says she is Nixon's grandson!

She is projecting her anger and grief onto me! To me...

Lyrics:

Keith Campbell, Craig Dohring, Enya Mellows.

Loosely adapted from a poem by Lou-Hellen Drought titled "Online Diary".