

Punk House

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Wendy said I wasn't allowed, that I had to miss what was everything, so much more than. These words she could say as rules because of her name on the lease, it was. And also the chore-chart, largely ignored but still. And she spit in my coffee, so it seems. So I had to be smuggled, my eyes ahead and ahead only and shut behind a door she kicked and said I know I know I know she's there. And the boy smuggler had to, he said I pay rent here, too, and slipped like paper through the kicked door he slept behind and held her boot, held her fist, and said I pay rent here, too. I hid in the boy's room for many, many weeks, peeking down the hall at the toilet—running, locking behind me, imagining Wendy as shower steam only. And after many, many weeks of eating Pop-Tarts that were cold on the boy's mattress that had no blankets exactly, and making pillows absorb my voice, I carried myself into the living room where dogs and girls with kitchen-table haircuts and a clawed sheet cake and aluminum pyramids and fly clusters clustered. So I claw some sheet cake, too, why not, I hisscrack beer and sit next to Wendy regardless.

And the foot of space between us, crisscross on the carpet, is dense and cold. So I hear my heartbeat in my eye, where I imagine her boot or her nail, and I hear my breath behind my eyes—failing to fall into my lungs. Wendy’s hand has a smeary stamp from some show, has greasy frosting under her nails, has coffee grounds under her bit-down nails, which she could very well poke my eye with, out with, but she hisscracks another, thigh-warmed and handed over to me, for me, and so I leave the boy, my smuggler, for her.

