

lying game (for Anne Sexton)

I tried too hard to fart last week and gave myself a hernia. Some folks say they don't hurt, they do. Mine hurts like a bitch. I was a bit embarrassed about how I got it so I lied. Said I was in a car wreck, hit the steering wheel real hard.

I lied to Rory, lied to Wren, Maria and Jenn.

I tried too hard to fart 'cause I'm lazy. Didn't wanna get up. Was comfy. Had my headphones on, listening to Mogwai and reading *Choke*. Had the puppy situated in a perfect place under the covers between my legs. Plus, I kinda wanted him to smell it. He enjoys nasty things.

I can't find a job and I drink too much. Everyone I love knows this. They also know I like to hike and swim and watch football. Sam Adams (Boston Lager) and Fat Tire are my favorite beers. I *will* drink a pilsner if it ain't too piss yellow looking or thin, but only if I'm broke. When I'm up in Arkansas I drink Busch from the bootlegger 'cause it's all we can get. He's a she, the bootlegger. It's in a deep-freeze that when open smells like the history of the world. It stays colder so, it tastes better there.

I tried too hard to fart last week cause I'm stupid. Forgot how to get my dick hard so I read and re-read Palahniuk novels. A little flutter lately is as good as it gets. Life bores me. I've taken a vow of silence. My voice bores me, though it never goes entirely away. I need a job so people will take me seriously. But I drink too much to be where I'm needed as much as I'd be needed at a job. Have ties I've never worn. Have a closet full of crisp, creased slacks and brown and black Rockports to match. Hey. When someone decides to take a chance on me I'll be ready.

Standing in line at the grocer I think about things that couldn't possibly matter more than having a good job does right now; and how I chose to spend the time it took to think that thought and chose to think that thought, is really all I'm in control of. I think about being a kid, playing sports with boys from the neighborhood, how good and decent it felt, oh god, how historic mink oil smells on a baseball glove that's been, broke in some.

I drink way too damn much. More even than my hard drinking friends, like Rory. He'd contest this. There's only two of them, friends. Early in the morning (Wren is one) in the check out line at the gas station I'm totting my beer (Maria is another) to the counter and someone makes a comment about the time. I pretend I'm on vacation, going to the beach. Holiday, see. I don't live here year 'round.

I have a part-time gig editing for an ad agency in Indiana. The money's good and I work from home but because I work from home folks don't think I go to work and those that do have to go to work and have to drive through so much damn traffic are terrifically jealous of me and my stay at home job. I feel like a woman who's got it made. People who don't know who Flaubert is have the name Bovary on the tips of their crusty, night of the demon lips. No, no I'm the miserable old bitch who lives *next door* to the pretty young thing who has it made. Envious enough to curse those silly enough to make eye contact with me.

Sometimes my heart is a basket of kittens on fire.

Sometimes I feel normal, would never tell anyone my heart feels like a basket of kittens on fire.

Holy shit, I mean. Come on now.

I rub a half-penny from old England between my fingers for luck. Found it in a gutter along a street downtown. It's black, 'bout the size of a silver dollar. The old patriarch's face rubbed smooth by wishful pricks like myself for a hundred years, and although I've seen no particularly good fortune, I'm still alive. That's something, right.

Sometimes I wish I was dead. Sometimes I wish my dad was *really* dead. First I lied about him being a lawyer who, had gone away *on business*, then I lied about him being dead. His death needed to be somewhat gruesome so, according to me, he hung himself with an extension cord. According to me he did the right thing. This way I'd never have to worry about introducing him to a sweet girl who couldn't fathom a struggle of any kind. He kept snakes, my dad, had all kinds. When he was feeling low he'd take to cleaning his guns, which wasn't a smart thing to do. No one said he was a genius. I never did, anyway.

I read "The Witch's Life" by Anne Sexton over and over many many times and feel at home in her inadequacy. In her love of self hatred, which is gratifying. It begins to feel good, and like a shitty job where our bosses belittle us, we get comfortable being uncomfortable, 'cause that *is* comfortable and he, our dickhead boss, likes belittling us so much he'd never fire us and we really need that \$9 an hour that's already spent goddamn!

Been reading poems by Allen Ginsburg & that character Frank Stanford. They say Frank shot his self twice in the heart. Now that's dedication. Reading poems by these fellows calms me down. Seriously. My friend Jeremy who has graves disease, from Mississippi, but living in Illinois, now, said joining the Marines calmed him down. I have a hernia. It hurts. Can't get in. Need surgery first or I'd be in already, making beds and puttin' guns back together after I just right then took 'em apart while probably feeling like I made a big big mistake.

Got into a fight with my mom, my girl, and my puppy. Now all three hate me.

It's a weird thing to have a dog not trust you. The poem about his mother, Ginsberg's, was fantastic, and all the questions he asks feel at home in my stupid poor trailer-park ears.

Getting a dog to trust you is easy at first because it needs and wants a mommy. The thought of a daddy comes later but he understands that daddy is a smell, and not a deed or action.

Uhm, for me it's Black Suede. The cigarette-smoke-smell trapped in his fleeing fucking beard. Daddy. Yeah, well, to hell with you.

Sometimes being alive hurts too much to be true so we walk off cliffs or jump into rivers 'cause if the pain isn't real then neither is the plunge. And *because* we're human we get to choose what's real and what's not by god, so why choose something not good. Choose something good.

Faulkner said if he could do it all over he'd write better books. Like our fathers before us, we're not geniuses, we don't possess Faulkner's tremendously arrogant but clairvoyant hindsight. Though I concede he was a genius. Drive to a bar, any bar, get drunk and try to get *laid* man. Even if we fail we live to fail again tomorrow and the next day. *Fail* if that's what we're best at. There's so much to be

celebrated in not succeeding.

Sometimes stuff hurts without a choice and we get hung up on the pain thinking a brighter day won't come but it will it will come. We may get cancer today but tomorrow will come. Death'll make us dread it a while before actually showing up. It tastes good too, the pain, the evasive brighter day, in the same way a mouth full of pennies tastes like being born all over again a dumb baby, and boxing. Well, it tastes like being punched in the snout by someone who does know how to fight and swallowing blood, that is. Again with the smell, no the taste, it's for sure a taste, the smell and taste of leather, blood. It proves something, but I drank too many beers today to think about it any more. Plus, I have an application I need to submit.