

Sucker

When she was twelve-years-old, Connie Harper stole a Blow Pop from the candy aisle at the IGA. She remembered it tasting sour against her freshly brushed tongue. Her best and only friend, Maryanne, had dared her to take two, but she knew better than to chance things by greediness.

When she had given it a few licks, she replaced the crinkled wrapper around the outside, its plastic taking hold to the sticky-sweet spit she had left behind. It never retained its original shape.

She wasn't allowed to have candy, and so she kept it hidden in her top dresser drawer. Her mother made her dress in church clothes whenever company would come and each time, Connie would sneak a taste. It became her silent sacrament.

One day, she came home from school to find her mother cleaning out her room. In perfectly sorted piles, Connie gazed at stacks of clothing she had long outgrown. She started to call out, but it was then that she noticed the crinkled wrapper lying open to the air.

When the interrogation had started, Connie had disputed the sucker's existence. She said it might have been the dog who had brought it in. Connie had no explanation for its careful hiding place, until her mind fell upon Maryanne. Her mother was clear. There would be no more Maryanne. Connie would have been more affected by the severed friendship, if she had not been so deeply depressed by the loss of her one true secret.

She thought of this now as she tasted the sticky-sweet sweat of the boy's lips. His hand pressed against her breast and then quickly rushed for the buttons on her sweater, but Connie Harper knew better than to chance things by greediness.