

THE REAL CRIME OF TRUE CRIME

For as long as I can remember, my mother loves to watch shows about people who disappear. They can be fictitious (TV series, movies) or real (documentaries, news). I catch on because there is nothing like a good mystery. It's amazing all the ways people can disappear and yet there is only one way. They are here, then they're not. I guess it's not much of a mystery after all.

Question: what is the difference between disintegration and disappearance?

Fact: disappearance is when you can't find someone, disintegration is when you find someone and they are already gone.

I'm amazed at how her illness hasn't made her squeamish about death and extinction while I've become so sensitive to (obsessed with?) it.

(sensitively obsessed obsessively sensitive obsession sense obsenitive obsense obscene)

The feeling:

ice cube hitting a cavity

having to recall your most painful memory for entertainment

watching a grown man cry

One day, we start a documentary series on Ted Bundy. "It's as if (sucking sound) he had sucked them (the women) into the earth," one of the female cops says. They were just gone.

Everyone knows how they came to be on the earth but not everyone gets to know how they will disappear.

One mother talks about hoping to see her daughter's yellow raincoat again, even if it's in a ditch. *The not knowing. The fear.* There is nothing more debilitating than loving the girl on the side of a milk carton.

I close my eyes and see my mother's face on one right now.

Note: I was advised to change the word *debilitating* in the vignette you just read but I can't think of any other word.

Debilitating: (of a disease or condition) loving someone who is on the brink of existence, which in turn deforms you, physically and mentally. Like a disease, the love makes you stronger and weaker at the same time.

Extinct: (of a species, family, or other larger group) having no living members.

Fact: in all these shows, it is almost always young women who disappear.

It makes me think about: a woman is a hole from the day she is born. Not a ghost, but a frame. An open wound to be filled, a

flickering wound

an open mouth

thirsty and

dry as dead

skin deepens

and rises like

bread a hot
summer's day
instead of
an oven

Illness is a whole new way to be a woman.

Ted Bundy's girlfriend has a dream. He has a girlfriend? Wonder: which lives matter? Why can he take some lives so easily that they leave no trail of anything within him and others, their disappearance would be devastating?

In this dream, she helps him bury the first body in the woods. She tells him if he never does it again, she'll forgive him.

I dream of burials too. And in these dreams I say to myself: *I'll forgive you, as long as you never do it again.*

She stays with him despite his disappearances and distance. *He wasn't always like this*, and as long as that's there, she's there. And that will always be there because you cannot change what a person used to be.

It's not the behavior that becomes addicting, it's the apology. The moment where she gets to see his true self from a former life shine through for a brief moment. She becomes obsessed with it, the glimmer of hope. And then here is the best part: the small amount of time she has where he is ice cream in her hands. Creamy, sweet, melted. She owns the world. Until it happens again and then she realizes that property can't own anything.

Pothole or unclogged pore. A space to shove themselves into.

Fact: you cannot be incomplete if you don't exist.

Like a child relishing in her parent's praise is those few days she has when he is apologetic (apologetic, not sorry). Nothing is greater. Nothing is greater than feeling loved/accepted/appreciated by the ones who created you.

Sinkhole in the middle of a body of water, constantly empty and filled at the same time. If infinity had an image, this is what it would be.

Another woman in the documentary talks about the void he left in the world, because of all the bright young women he stole. Women who could have possibly cured cancer, landed on Mars, reached the bottom of the ocean. I doubt it, not that these women would have done those things, but I doubt that the world has felt the weight of the loss. When you are already not there how can it? How can the weightless tip the scales at all?

Question: what is the difference between an open vessel and an empty vessel? Is there a difference?

Fact: one vessel is willing. One vessel is not. But they are both deprived of choice.

Ted Bundy's girlfriend turns him into the police twice, and twice they don't believe her. She asks her father for help and he tells her he doesn't want to ruin Ted's career. She falls into a deep depression. Nothing is worse. Nothing is worse than when the ones who created you choose someone else.

Vulnerability means being an entrance means being a revolving door things can never stop entering means being a frame for the world to see itself means an entrance has to lead to somewhere

Bundy meets up with his girlfriend after raping and murdering two girls. They get hamburgers. Years later, when he's in prison, he tells his girlfriend that he remembers that day. He remembers being in the diner with her like nothing had ever happened. He remembers what he did, he makes it clear that he did not black out but it was like NOTHING happened. He might as well could've been eating the flesh of those girls between those hamburger buns. He might as well have digested them and used them for sustenance.

Question: what is it about a woman's body that makes a man want to destroy it?

womb
wound

He uses crutches to lure them in. It makes his job easier, I suppose. Because women are tender in nature, because we can't resist the wounded. We can't resist what we were raised to be.

Try to imagine the moment when the crutches fall and the casts come off. The moment when the women realize that he is capable, more than capable, ferociously strong even, for a man his size. Those beautiful blue eyes almost inhuman become just inhuman. Placid blue lakes into oceans unknown. And a fire beneath. Untapped cisterns of hate.

Picture: blue eyes seeing red.

Question: what do you call a man who can only show his true self for only a few minutes every couple of months?

In the end, it's 30 confirmed women.

Question: what is not there?

Answer: an unmarked grave relishing in its impermanence, a body swaying beneath the earth.

30 bodies. A river made of muscle and bone.

Imagine opening a fruit and finding no seeds
opening a fruit with bare hands
digging through cold flesh
overripe fruit, the scent of sweat vomit
roses turning into bruises
bruises turning into bone

Question: what happens when you plant a seed in a grave?

Eat a grave and find that you have already been full of soil.

Picture: a ripe fruit and then a rotten one.