

1979

Intoxication

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Intoxication

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Chris and I just had an argument. We are sitting at the kitchen table drinking beer. My body feels very warm, especially my arms and stomach. I wonder why only those two parts?"

Cover Page Footnote

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The Place of Nature



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Jon Harcharek / photograph

Intoxication

By Pamela Rubens

Chris and I just had an argument. We are sitting at the kitchen table drinking beer. My body feels very warm, especially my arms and stomach. I wonder why only those two parts? I can hear voices next door, little kids. The beer tastes harsh. The table is shaking because Chris is tapping his foot up and down. My stomach feels very warm. I hear the top of the beer can rattling on the table when Chris drops it. I can hear the faint sound of the refrigerator humming. My legs are beginning to feel warm now. My sister Debbie is talking about a program she watched on T.V. She has left now, and it is fairly quiet. The beer mug feels heavy when I lift it. The sound of Debbie's voice on the telephone is filling the air. I hear the sound of screeching brakes outside, then more cars that sound as if they are speeding. The refrigerator is still humming. I can feel Chris' eyes watching me. I hear footsteps on the other side of the wall, and a child's voice. I wonder how long we've been here. The sound of Chris' mug as he twirls it around makes a swishing noise. I feel suddenly lonely as Debbie comes in and puts her arm around Chris. I hear a baby crying next door. My head feels very light. I wonder if Chris and Debbie are bored with me. I need another beer. I see Debbie making a face, eating ice cream. I hear Chris belch. I can taste the foam of my beer. Debbie is telling an old joke. My stomach feels warm. I hear more cars in the street. I can smell the garbage. The empty beer cans are rattling on the table. My teeth click against the mug. I think I hear crickets, but in the city? I feel like I want to get really loaded tonight. I hear a train whistle. My sister is humming. I hear the rattling of a

cheese wrapper Chris is opening. I feel pretty good right now. My back itches. A car honks its horn in the street. I hear a bike outside on the gravel. My sister's spoon is clicking against her teeth. She is opening the refrigerator. The water is running in the sink. I feel a little sick. I hear a motorcycle. I am worried Chris will leave and I don't want him to. I am thinking how nice Chris looks. I hear a plane. When I put the mug on the table it make a clunking noise. I hear the beer being poured into my mug by Chris. I hear the sound of more screeching brakes in the street. Some kids are talking below the window. I wish I was at a party right now. I wonder where Debbie went. She is back again. I feel myself sigh. Debbie pinches me. A baby is crying again. I desperately need a cigarette, but am too lazy to get one. I am glad Chris is getting one for me. I can't believe I have been this way for so long. The cigarette tastes so good. I am wondering if it will go out. I hear Chris yawning. I see matches laying upside down on the table. Debbie's fingers are tapping her beer can. I feel good. I am biting my lip as if I am nervous, but I'm not. I feel like I could sit here forever. I think I have to go to the bathroom. Chris is sniffing and his leg is accidentally brushing against mine. I see a few cigarette ashes flying in the air, and faintly smell the cigarette smoke. I can see the grey smoke in the air. I am thinking my cigarette has lasted a long time. I wish I could sit here forever. My arm is tired. I suddenly realize I have just about blocked Debbie and Chris out of my mind. All I can hear are crickets, and I feel pretty good.