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Pearls

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Pearls

Abstract

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

"Pearls are bone marrow; pearls come from oysters. Pearls are the essential component of structure. They are graceful and pure, elegant and rich in color. As a young girl, I stood in front of my mirror and dreamed of owning a pearl necklace with a bracelet and earrings to match. I had my ears pierced when I turned five. Grown up ladies, sophisticated ones wore pearl necklaces. I wanted what they had."

Cover Page Footnote

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JODI ROWLAND

PEARLS

FIRST LINE FROM *THE WOMAN WARRIOR* BY MAXINE HONG KINGSTON

Pearls are bone marrow; pearls come from oysters. Pearls are the essential component of structure. They are graceful and pure, elegant and rich in color. As a young girl, I stood in front of my mirror and dreamed of owning a pearl necklace with a bracelet and earrings to match. I had my ears pierced when I turned five. Grown up ladies, sophisticated ones wore pearl necklaces. I wanted what they had. I didn't dress up often. Instead I imagined what it would be like to be a princess, a queen, or a beautiful woman. I thought pearls came with the job, a sort of initiation to being beautiful. Eventually my pearls changed to other things I desired: make-up, clothes, a tiny waist. These pearls began to possess me and I tried to function with the grief, hurt, and anger they caused. I was standing on a structure of pearls that wobbled and fell. Now I've learned to use my pearls wisely. I no longer imagine I wear them, or stand on them for support. Pearls are my bone marrow; they make up my insides. I come from oysters.

SARA CAVANAUGH

ANOREXIA

Crowded aisles filled with busy shoppers rushing shelves in a local deli.
The glass shines as shoppers glare into the case.
Picking and choosing the flesh they will later devour in their quaint suburban kitchens,
where the foundation of their homes are built.

Pointing to a round rump roast asking, "Half a pound please."
The butcher grabs for the meat, slicing thin yet painful slivers from hips, my thighs and stomach.
Shoppers continue to ask for more.
Staring into the case; wanting more off the bone.
Pointing to the best part, my self-esteem.
Stripping the part that needed the least trimming.
Nodding their heads and smiling at the now pleasing remains of meat properly placed
on the shelf of my life.
As the deli closes, I watch the buffer slide across the black and white checkers of the
tile floor.
The white paneling that once caged flesh now appears gray and empty as the lights dim
and the doors lock.
What once was a body is now a carcass.
Peering from the glass, a sullen face stripped of all flesh.
A body once recognized as a healthy slab of meat is now a single layer of tightly fitted
skin surrounding solid bone.