

Mrs. Orangebud

for F.

Vomit is suppressed tears, she thought. And so she vomited – day in and day out, every drop of her insides gushing out in torrents. She found self-analysis tiresome and she knew it wasn't one of her better qualities. She did, however, find it essential. Mrs. Orangebud, her married name, attempted to explain how tears turn into vomit. Tears, she speculated, her jaw hanging loose, were somehow convinced that escaping through the eye sockets was not an option. First they swam through the lacrimal canal (or so she read in a medical book) and into the nasal cavity where they mixed with mucus. Then they were swallowed involuntarily and, being highly poisonous, induced vomit. The medical book didn't mention any of this. Mrs. Orangebud shrugged it off as a way-too-obvious process to merit mention and left it at that. She thought: Who wouldn't know tears are poisonous? What else could they be? She was right of course.

But still, there was one question gnawing on her brainbones. From what trauma or downright phobia did her tears suffer, preventing them to waterslide down her cheekbones? She thought: Yes people do cry all the time, for the world is an awful place. And their tears are indeed poisonous, but nobody licks them with lapping tongues, swallowing them whole. So it is quite alright for them to cry, vomit-free. Was there foul play? Did someone brainwash her tears while she wasn't looking? While asleep perhaps? Perhaps.

On realizing her self-analysis' derailing tendencies, Mrs Orangebud unscrewed her head gently, rested it on her new alabaster headtable and descended towards her hot kitchen for a quick snack. After all, who needs a head complicating things whilst making a sandwich? She would've answered: Nobody, that's who, but her head was already off, so she didn't. Instead a gargle emitted from her neck hole. Khrrrr!

A meticulous housewife, Mrs. Orangebud ran a clean operation. The washcloths were washed regularly, the stove was spotless and the π -shaped counter along the three walls had never seen pie crumbs. Yes, she found it ironic too. As a young girl she had proclaimed herself as The Great Lover of Pies and vowed "to always eat pie all the time", her mother's scolding be damned. Life hits youth the hardest, she thought once. So she married young, gave birth soon after and never ate another apple pie again.

A white baguette sat on a porcelain dish. She sliced it open, spread whole-fat cream-cheese on both sides and arranged large slices of smoked salmon in luxurious folds, padding it with dark-green lettuce. The salmon's sliminess repulsed her, firing her gag reflexes. She found lettuce bitter and she was on a

perpetual diet. Yet, on screwing her head back she found the sandwich ordeal unsurprising. It was her son's favorite sandwich and her body must have made it for him. She missed her son terribly and eating his favorite foods consoled her. She thought: Other people talk like their missed loved ones, borrowing their mannerisms and their special words; I eat like them. As she brought the salmon up to her mouth its stench invaded her nasal cavity. She gagged. She tried again. Gagged again. Clasped her nostrils shut and bit into the salmon's orangeness. It was all very strange and dualistic. She vomited uncertainty. Was it the tears, the salmon or both causing the internal evacuation?

Mrs. Orangebud spent her days eating other people's favorite food, hoping to become them; to be near them. At nights she would strike up lively conversations between herself and all the friends and relatives she 'ate' during the day. This took place in her head but every so often, a word will be spelled out loud, tearing down the fantasy like a fluffy microphone hovering over a movie scene. Then a huge cloud of melancholy would settle over her red head and she'd type in her mobile phone: "Hey you. I'm writing this sms to say I LUV U... I really have no one to send this to though. How pathetic am I?" and she would scroll down her contacts list, past the Adamses and the Alexes and land on her self-given nickname and send it to herself. And when her phone would vibrate thrice on the glass table and read the text sent by one Apples Orangebud, she would cry actual tears. But this was rare.