

SIX-MONTH SKID

By C.A. Munn

I came here tonight with a purpose, but it's forgotten as soon as I feel the brand of your mouth on my throat. My neck will be red in the morning from the rub of your day-old stubble. I like that, the concreteness of it. Proof it wasn't just a dream.

We're on your bed and the lights are off, like always. You draw a hot sharp line with your tongue down over my collarbone, stop short at the nylon of my binder. I won't take it off, even when the rest of our clothes are tossed to the floor.

Your ex would let her nipples show through her shirt like incipient rosebuds, just waiting to be thumbbed. I wonder if you miss her.

I'm not used to this, having to guess at what you're thinking. You used to tell me. Late nights spent on the phone, or sharing cigarettes on your porch. Sharing space, just for the sake of it. That all changed when you pulled me into your bed six months ago, whiskey-drunk and wounded from your breakup. I don't know whether you felt the same momentum I did, if you'd been anticipating it for most of a decade, too. I don't know if it was inevitable, or just convenient.

Your fingers scrabble at the tight edges of the binder, trying to worm their way underneath. It reminds me of my purpose.

"Wait," I say.

You draw back.

This isn't working. It's on the tip of my tongue. But I can't see your eyes in the dark. I need to know you're looking at me.

I flick on the bedside lamp. Its harsh light makes our bare skin look sallow.

"Something wrong?" you ask.

There your eyes are, tender and familiar. Like on the night we first got drunk on stolen bourbon from your parents' basement. Your brother griped, something about bro-code and sharing the goods with a girl, but you looked him in the eye and said, "She's one of the guys." You gave me a smile, a private, small thing, and from that moment I loved you.

The words die in my throat. If you can still look at me like that, then maybe we don't have to stop.

"Nothing," I say. "Just don't mess with my binder."

You blink, and the look is gone. "Yeah. I know."

You switch off the lamp and lean down to kiss me. "You're so beautiful," you whisper against my mouth.

I don't say anything.

I saw this car crash when I was a kid. A silver sedan took a sharp turn too fast and went skidding, no chance of course correction. It didn't stop till it flipped into a ditch twenty yards off the road.

I kiss you back, and don't think about the ditch.