

THOUGHTS FROM THE TRUNK OF A CAR by Ramces Ha

The size of this particular one is small, as trunks tend to be, and dark — also how trunks tend to be. My hands are tied behind my back, seemingly with zip ties as it feels like sharp plastic digging into my wrists, and my eyesight has been further blackened behind a black hood. And it smells. Like rubber, old tools, dirty laundry, which makes me think this is a man's car. I didn't get a good look at the fucker who chunked me back here, but the hands were meaty and sweaty and strong as hell, so I can only assume. And I'm not sure where we're going, but we're moving. Fast. The tires are whirring underneath me, melodically, humming along, and hiccup every time we hit a bump, which tickles my spine. Oddly enough — or maybe not oddly enough at this point — I'm not scared. Not even nervous. Or anxious. Because I know who's behind this. I just don't know why. My father has done a lot of things to "straighten me out" over the years, but having me kidnapped is a new one. A new low. Is this because of my drinking habit? My promiscuousness (mostly with men)? My desire to be an artist? Are we headed to another conversion therapy session? Because those are fun. Especially the ones with the chanting and hypnosis, sessions led by some crooked ass priest who probably diddles little boys and swears and drinks and is only at his current location because he got caught being a dirty birdy at his last spot and instead of being prosecuted was merely transferred to another church — as tends to happen: perpetual circulation over brute consequence. And if this is another conversion session, I can't help but wonder: will it be one where they swing a timepiece in front of my face and chant dumb shit like, "Have no fear, you are not queer," or will it just be another pray the gay away sesh? I don't guess it matters, they're all equally terrible. I do try to have fun with them, though. Take the last one, for example — the time I played along. For a minute, I even had them going. Basically, I acted like their tactics were working. About halfway in, just as the priest was getting

into his spiel, I acted like the devil had possessed my hands. I started throwing them around, wildly, slinging them around like one of those blow-up advertisement dolls — I even snuck in some jazz hands for the hell of it — then went all-in on them. I put my hands in front of my face, curled them into tight little fists, then paused, went tombstone still. The priest sat there, totally silent, eyes wide as boulders, and waited with bated breath. After a few minutes, I started acting like I was ripping long tubular “objects” out of my mouth, the way a magician would with that never-ending handkerchief trick, then side-eyed the priest with a can-you-believe-this-is-actually-working expression on my face. The priest, visibly excited, getting that little twinkle in his eye — probably because he had never seen any of his tactics actually work before — leaned in, even started to lift his arms in premature victory. But as soon as he got close enough, right as the stench of his teakwood cologne and the smell of dusty church pews flirted with my nostrils, I brought it all back, flipped the script. I started acting like the “objects,” inexplicably, en masse, were headed back into my mouth. I feigned shock, like I couldn’t believe I was being betrayed by my own body — by God! — and began double-fisting them, shoving them back in one after another, even going so far as to choke on a few of them (for dramatic effect). I then started bouncing up and down and laughing and having a gay ol’ time (no pun intended). Of course, this was when the priest caught on. His shit-eating grin disappeared from his face faster than he could chant GAY IS NOT THE WAY! and was immediately replaced with utter despair, a sort of frown/upside-down rainbow that took over the lower half of his face. Needless to say, he wasn’t impressed. He called my father, immediately, and told him to come to pick me up. Which he did, immediately. Now that was a bad ride. Extremely awkward. But not quite as bad as that night. Because that was the night the old bastard sunk an entire bottle of Maker’s, put his rings on, and put dents into my forehead. When he was finished, the top of my head looked like the top of his Maker’s bottle, blood dripping down like melted wax. The time

before that wasn't much fun, either. That was the rodeo belt, his favorite one, the one big as a dinner plate, along with a couple of cigarette burns and some light tossing down the stairs. The coward! So yeah, whatever this is, whatever trick my father has up his sleeve, will be child's play compared to that. I close my eyes and wait it out. The driver hits another bump. Again, it drums on my spine. I still don't know where we're going, I just hope we get this shit over with soon so I can make it to happy hour in time for Mai Tai Monday.