

Novel Graduation Film

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The tender drum of the collision between the racket and the shuttle rub my skin. The stretch of grass is overshadowed by sunlight. My parents sit in the back, I can't focus on them, they are somehow blurred, but present enough to guard over me. I fall in a deep trance, the only thing I see is the shuttle coming closer and bouncing back again. It can't decide who he prefers, me or my brother and we both keep rejecting him. Tump, dump, tump, dump, nothing around me matters except for the shuttle flying back and forth.

'Hi, Mom.'

'Hey, close the door will you.'

'But it's bloody hot.'

'Well, I think it's cold ok.'

'Ok, I'll close it.'

I grab a large glass of cold water and sit down. My mother looks at me and I know she wants me to talk about myself again.

'You look a bit tired, did you go out last night?' My mother asks me. Here we go again, well I'll tell her.

'Yeah, I did actually, oh it was a great night, went to some bars, met some interesting people.'

'So you're finally settling in then?'

'Yeah, it's a quite a nice city actually, you have to get to know the right places, meet the right people, it is not as bad as I pictured.'

The cold purified water extinguishes the flaming lies in my body.

My pumped body up walks through the long hallway of the subway station. My last place of order in this night. It's simple, bright and clear, it stands in deep contrast with my mind; full of passion, of horniness, of voices who scream for alcohol and sympathy. I smell every woman that passes me as if I can suck her body warmth in through my nose. Rotterdam, Jesus what a shithole. All these tall buildings that stare at me. They don't welcome me, they don't embrace me with a smile, all they do is stare, whisper to each other that an intruder entered their town.

Well fuck them, I don't need them. The streets are sober and empty. With all its power the city tries to keep people as far away from each others as possible. The shining lampposts are the only reminder that people actually live here, without them it looks like a desolated city that is left by its ashamed inhabitants; who couldn't take the ugliness anymore, all they could do was to show Rotterdam their back.

I walk towards Eendrachtsplein, groups of bees without a queen fly past each other in different directions, nobody knows the right way. They look like kids a day before their birthday searching for the presents their parents forgot to buy. No wonder there's no bar called Paradiso here. I take a seat at Rottown, the bar is half empty, people talk, laugh and drink. What brightens their day? I don't know, I don't see it. I can't share their joy, I can't find the relief they find here. I find nothing but shallowness and emptiness. I feel like I'm floating through the carcass of a gigantic whale, I slide towards his stomach and can't stop myself. The people who pulled themselves on the side of the whale his insides, act as lethargic animals, silently they watch me sliding to the end. Before I'm properly seated I hear the bartender shouting: 'Last round!' Christ it's not even midnight and they're closing the joint already. Half of the bar is still full, with people wanting to party on, yet the bar policy is determined; no fun tonight. I see a friend which I used to play football with in my hometown. He's an art history student, who doesn't like Dali and thinks art should become more accessible to the public. We spot each other, let him come to me. He walks over and with a smile he asks me: 'Hey man, what's up, you still like Dali?'

'Yeah, actually I still think he's fucking great! Still studying others peoples work?'

'Uh yeah...'

'Well fuck it, to which shithole do we go next?'

'You don't like this place?'

'Or the next.'

'You're not a fan of the city's night life then?'

'Night life? I can't seem to get past night. This bar is

already closing, even in our town we could go to several better bars than the options we are left here with.'

A girl calls his name, his friends want to move on. We walk through the dark streets of Rotterdam, the alcohol is slowly crawling in my head like a small green monster spitting pure craziness through all the nerves of my brains. I see groups walking in other directions, apparently they know where they're going. Maybe there is something I've missed in this town, maybe there are warm, muggy places. We enter art street where some bars are still open. The galleries are black, I can't see inside, I only see my own reflection. I wish somebody would stop me, right here right now and just hold me. Two warm arms around me, who whisper in my ear: 'everything will be all right' and who hold me till I don't know which day it is.

'Why did you come home?' My mother asks me.

'Why? I don't know, because it's fun. Why do you ask?'

'Well, since you moved out, you haven't spent a week over there without coming back. Don't get me wrong, it is fun, but shouldn't you stay there for a couple of weeks to get settled?'

'I am settled! ... I am just bored there, almost everyone still lives here, you know?!'

'Ok, true, but how are you ever going to build a life up there...'

'Is there still some bread left?'

When I enter the bar, the eyes avoid me as if I'm here to tell them bad news they're not ready to hear. I order a beer from the uninterested bartender. I look around, see only backs of groups talking to each other, what is this, first grade all over again? Finally a pair of eyes find me. The person to who they belong make me glow inside.

'Hi, are you from around?' I ask her with pain in my stomach.

'Yes, actually I am.'

'Is there any place that isn't as stiff as here, where there aren't well fed thirty plus men, who live to brag?'

'No, for a Wednesday this is it and I like it.'

'Hmmm, ok, did you ever see a naked clown riding his

tricycle with a pregnant hamster tied down on his head?'

'Uhh, no.'

'You haven't? That's a shame, it's an experience in itself, you really should see it before the chiwawa cries Polizei! Polizei!'

Her first so smiling eyes change in a swimming pool by night. She remains silent. I start again:

'Are all Rotterdammers that boring?'

'What? If you don't like it, what are you doing here?'

'To find best friends forever of course.'

'Ah forget it, leave me alone will you.'

'No, no, please, I'm just fooling around. What if I tell you my body rose a 20 degrees when our eyes met.'

'Then I would say, I might listen.'

'Common, be honest. This city is like the white stripes on a highway, unconnected, unaware of each other's existence, lying motionless on the ground waiting for the next tires to leave their dirt on them. It is not your fault, somebody just forgot to fill in the black parts.'

'Why don't you just drop death!'

She turns around and leaves me standing alone in a spinning bar. It feels like all their eyes are kicking me in the stomach, my chewed up food makes it way to my throat. I run outside and barf all over the street. I walk away from the eyes in this rolling land. Everyone spits their bottled up vomit on me. The street, the buildings, the eyes, they all want me to fuck off. Why I am such an asshole, why can't I enjoy a night out, I always have to be so fucking annoying, I always have to fuck with people's heads, I'm sucking my own energy out of my body, somebody just pull the plug please.

Slowly I shrink, my mother is here. 'Hi Mom' I yell, but she doesn't hear me all she does is sucking air. Wait it's not just air she is sucking me in. In a trance I slide back in her mouth, I pass her teeth and make my way for a long slide down her gullet. I'm in no control of my body, I am weightless, motionless as if an elevator insides my body goes all the way down, it will not stop until it reaches the basement. As I fall down in eternal darkness I start to see a small glittering pool underneath me, every second

becomes bigger and bigger until I drop in this pool of motherliness like a small rock thrown into the sea. It sucks me down to the bottom, I can't breathe in this thick mucus, my eyelids slowly close, all becomes black.