

(DEAD LOVERS)

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writing through
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DEAD LOVERS

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Crumminess
by Gina Prat Lilly



Cookie Mueller
Water skeeter
Two feet of water

*Floating on Confidence Lake, on a
queen sized inflatable rubber pancake kind of thing,
is Molly.*

Brackish
fluid rich in
mucoproteins

I encounter this mass of sweat-
swaddled flesh in the sun, and immediately I suspect
that, like me,

*She's getting
crisp*

Molly most enjoys her toast when it is
totally, clinically and irretrievably burnt.

*A hop, skip and
jump from the
kitchen table*

It is a pleasure she lowers herself into
every morning, buttery. Crispy has always been the
superior texture.

Molly's *skin* appears to *bag her up*
like all human skin appears to do, but that's just the
way it looks.

Squamate
scaled reptile

The sun rolls above, each ray striking
down with the force of a slap and then drawing back
to reveal a new redness. And yet, Molly notices, she
can also feel it settling over her with a slowness that
makes its advance imperceptible, though she knows
it to be true. In wafts, the light reaches her body with
a gentle surprise at the change in density—of course,
for she suspects this light might have uncoupled
itself from the fat ball of plasma in the sky as far
back ago as the *Jurassic epoch*—and then seeps
down through to her *corpuscles*, who keenly gather
in the heat. Something about sunburn inflammation

Crumminess

causing the vasodilation of cutaneous blood vessels, resulting in the tell-tale reddened skin or erythema. Something about particles and waves. Something about opposites being true but not as they sit in those tedious binary dialectics—and here she smiles to herself with great magnanimity—but rather as in specificity being the only adequate proposition.

Blood orange

*Over-cooked ham
steak*

Specificity as in a granularity,

which is to say crumbs,

Thank you,
Sophie Paul, for
lending me your
toast crumbs

for which she decides the proper noun
is Crumminess.

She is finding it difficult to pin down,
partly because it is multiform and partly because it
is always already half decayed, or has bits missing, or
else has scuttled off entirely. She has an inkling that
Crumminess might include

Springtail
termite

loamy mud pitching minute tents
between the toes

a landscape that hasn't *kept in step*

thirst (*urine* or otherwise)

and a cup running over dry.

Molly ruminates. Perhaps
Crumminess is an inept assemblage of parts,
mingling small and smaller, *the smallest thing she
could imagine*. A disreputable slough. Specks and
scraps. Miscellaneous, grubby, dank and fetid.

Molly changes positions and the floater scritch as she settles. A moment passes before her skin's carping rears at its latest arrangement on that big flat flumping thing.

*Encrusted with
barnacles—DH*

The skin rounding over her eyeballs scabs. She works at it with the knuckle of an index finger that is swollen and cinched by a cheap, copper, ladybird mood ring. The green spreads digitally.

*Emerald green
forest*

Iguana

Molly has encountered *topos* before, as suffix, in the intimacy of tinctures, tubes and tubs, in topical corticosteroids for the treatment of atopic dermatitis in her geographical body. Scabs, mountainous, are cleft by rivulets in each stroke of pleasurable delirium called scratch. In the bodyplace, in the scab, in the wound, skin swells with a blistering solar plasma.

*Seething
seeping
weeping*

*Bath tub of
vinegar*

Here again is that seeping, that indistinctness.

Legacy Russell

Skin is a container. It is a peel that contains and cradles wildness. It gives shape to bodies. A break, tear, rupture, or cut in skin opens a portal and passageway. Here, too, is both a world and a wound.

Cookie Mueller

A drop of water beads on Molly's skin. For a *split second* she sees this as very persuasive evidence of the irremediable impermeability of her being. See, it is only natural for her to be sealed like this. It just occurs in nature—naturally. The thought crackles through her, twisting past gristle to sop bone and muscle and fat. Rising to the surface it condenses like air on a cool pane and then seeps through the integument.

Crumminess

And here she beholds it suddenly, this thought.

Molly's skin burns. Molly *has lately been thinking of herself as a joke*. Molly is very sensitive about her joke quality. Molly is a cup of bitter hot tea.

Molly is embarrassed to realise this. She is startled by her most absolute ridiculousness. Nurses a wound. Tries to curb the wildness. Attempts to quash this shameful little secret. Almost shirks her skin from the cuticle inwards. A cauterising sting draws her instantly away from the fringes, butting inward and twining a tiny, aching coil. Guardedness has the styptic impulse to pull the arms and legs up close to the body for fear of feeling, for fear of touching, for fear of being touched, by something in the deep, something like water snakes. *She centers herself in the middle of the big floater so nothing dangles in the water. No toes or ankles to be bitten off by big snapper clamp jaws*. A topical astringency thickens the skin or thins it *like a cracking china cup*, on the very cusp of breaking but not doing so, perpetually accumulating tension on that border without relieving it.

Aquatic
dinosaurs
breeding around
the bottom
Chrysalis or
pupae

Brachiopod
setae

She turns inward, solipsistic,
somatophobic.

Molly's skin itches. She returns her
gaze to it,

and there beholds the thought
again—

that she might be one and waxen,
utterly past hope

—and sees it suddenly for what it is,

Crumminess

which is myth and a sort of
nondescript colour that clashes awfully with her
cinnabar skin.

So, Molly lets it fall through the
cracks. And now the sun chisels a
suggestion—

imperil this ultimate dermal
safeguard and she might just *feel it all: the good and
the bad, the beautiful and the abject.*

Zulfi via
Zadie Smith

These pores just keep getting bigger,
she worries, but she doesn't move. Her charring
and wounded hide emanates a bitter, bitty gunge,
baffling the surface. The crummy halo of pink rubber
percolates around her, blurring and brimming with
body.

Tavi Meraud