

Mercy River

"The Sweater"

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Girls,
I know you will understand this
and feel the intrinsic incredible emotion
You have just pulled over your head the worn,
warm sweater belonging to a boy

Now, you haven't had a passionate kissing session or
anything,
but you got to go on a camping trip with him
and eight other people from school
And you practically slept together,
your sleeping bag right next to his

And you woke in the night to watch him as he slept
but you couldn't see anything 'cause it was dark
so you just laid there and listened to his breathing
and wondered if your heart might burst

The sweater has that slightly goat-like smell
which all teenage boys possess,
and that smell will lovingly transfer
to all your other clothes

If you get to keep it for a few days you can sleep with it
but don't let your mom see, 'cause she'll say,
"what is that filthy thing, and who does it belong to
besides the trash man?"

So you have to keep it under the covers with you
You can kind of lie it beside you,
or wrap it around your waist,
or touch it on your legs, or whatever
That's your business

Now if the sweater has, like, reindeer on it
or is a funny color like yellow... I'm sorry,
you can't get away with a sweater like that
Look for brown, or grey, or blue
Anything other than that, and you know you're dealing
with
someone who's different

And different is NOT what you're looking for
You're looking for those Alpine ski-chiseled features
and that sort of blank look which passes for deep
thought
or at least the notion that someone's home
You're looking for the boy of your dreams
who is the same boy in the dreams of all your friends

Now the sweater isn't going to fit you of course,
you have to kinda roll up the sleeves in a jaunty way
Saying "this is the sweater belonging to a boy and
the boy is a genuine hunka-hunka burning love and
is not just some hand-me-down from your
brother or father"

Monday, wear the sweater to school
Be calm, look cute
Don't tell him about the dream you had
about the place the two of you would share
when you get older
Just be yourself
The best, cutest, quietest version of yourself
Definitely wear lip gloss

He looks at you, and then he looks away
And then he walks away
and the smell of the sweater hits you again suddenly
like ape-scent gloriola
and you get a note passed to you
by a girl in History that says
"He needs that sweater back.
He forgot you put it on in the tent on Saturday
and he's been looking for it."

And you don't have to die of humiliation, you know
You are a strong person
and this is a learning experience
You can still hold your head up high as you run from
the classroom
tearing the stinking sweater from your body.
You look at that sweater
carefully
and you realize that love made you temporarily blind.
You've got a secret now, honey,
and though you'd never sink as low as him,
you could blab it all over the school if you wanted

The label in that sweater
said "100% Acrylic"

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