

Rickie Lee Jones

"More at the striped table"

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downtown i walk for about a mile in squares. there were short and thick men behind bars.

They are never clean, these men. And their dirtiness makes them objects of lust.

I think its religion that makes that possible. Or sex is simply dog eat dog,

and when we set our teeth into the submissive we are aroused.

And when we have the opportunity to role on our backs, with consciousness, willing, out of costume, well,

who would throw that ticket away. I would not. I sat in the cool shadows of these men,

and my brain is a pimple train, of secret running out of the left side of my eye

the more comes out the better i feel but where does this stuff go? i watch the governmentworkers eating.

i watch all the mexican people in their pretty dresses with their children.

i think they think this is downtown in mexico. they think this is just a city. don't they know what this is down here?

so i run threads through the secret community of them, and i am one of them now and no longer on my knees.

there's somebody named ivan and i saw him at a party he's the guy people said to stay away from.

he put an armful of crank into me and before the needle was out i was on the floor.

it wasn't his fault really, he was just trying to be a nice guy. everybody likes a big shot.

I had no clothes at all, no shoes. I like parading , i liked walking around the empty city after everyone was in their drugless beds. Every inch of concrete was mine. I could

sit on any step. and all angry clouds were made by me. i had been kicked out of hippy houses all over seattle.

the house on john street. 6th and john. they had me sleeping on the roof out there. Those guys in their thirties who listened to jazz all the time. The one was really nice. He argued with his room mate to let me stay. I had no

where to go. The other guy said he didn't care. I'd find

somewhere. Jesus, she'll end up back at ivans.

So the other room mate, he got in a hippy van with all kinds of nicely dressed hippies. Flowers painted on the v.w., velvet, boots, the whole thing. I wished i could be a girl like that. I was only fourteen, and no matter how many people i fucked or shots i took or cars i got into i just could not seem to have that power of older. All i got was more used. not more big. I wished they'd invite me with them. I wished i had friends, and nice clothes, and a place to go. care free, but rooted. When i ran away my family left the motel where we had lived in seal beach. I could not find them now if i wanted to.

there had been ballet lessons, drama lessons. a.a.u. swim team. i had taken modeling and i had a guitar. i had percussion instruments. I never had to do housework. i had to babysit every night but my mom worked and my dad was hardly around. i could go walking around and go to peoples houses as i liked. but i was not liked at home. no one liked any one there.

under the freeway.
there are no signs of life.
the factories loom about her and in every shadow are eyes.
and i n every eye is a strangers car.
now she cowers beneath the freeway , a dragon, and she counts the seconds
in long hand, on her fingers, until there are so many of them that she cannot move them any more.
time is about to stand still, as still as living can stand,
and it is stopping
here beneath the belly of the dragon. But the dragon is not stopping. He breathes
furiously traffic above, steel and dangerous fire,
murderous, demeaning, a traffic to aspire to.
poncho comes in with a black eye and a hair cut. He's ready to dig up the floor

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