

Trader Joe's, on a Sunday

by Jennifer Donnell

He was in the produce aisle and I was picking out a cucumber,
(the biggest one, of course).

He had brown hair and muscles, the things I used to look for.

And,

I could have stood there like product placement and hoped
we'd bump carts, then bond over a love
of organic berries and fancy trail mix.

Maybe I'd consent to an impromptu romp
and he'd drive me away in the grown-up blue sports car
(azure?) I saw him drive in on,
then I'd do him in the front seat
overlooking the Pacific,
free.

But, no.

Instead, I hightailed it over to the frozen food aisle
to fish out our dinner, tacos with tartar sauce and shredded
cabbage.

I came home, cooked and did the dishes, while you napped
then woke, ate, and read our sons a classic about a wolf
dressed up in someone else's clothing.

Sometimes you're that wolf,
such big eyes.

When you think I'm not looking, I always am.
Do you ever stop to contemplate how they feel
as someone's mother, sister, daughter?

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Do they see you with the kids and I
and wonder why you don't love us enough to look away.
Do they use it as a cautionary tale about the kind of guy they don't
want,
the type who fantasizes about fucking them as I hold his hand.

You say it's like nicotine, your best analogy as a non-smoker.
The kind of hit that is hard to live without and isn't it human nature,
you ponder.

I ponder our lives.

Will you check out the bridesmaid at our wedding?

(No, gross.)

What about the waitress at the cake table?

What about other women in bikinis on our honeymoon?

What about our son's girlfriends?

What about your next sexy coworker?

What about when I'm 45 and they're 25.

What about nurses in our eventual nursing home?

What about yourself in the mirror?

He was in the produce aisle and I ignored him.

He went home to his wife and held and kissed her, grateful.

I went home and cried about all the woman you look at
during the three second rule.

