

Dear Scarlet

by Lavinia Ludlow

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It's me walking in on you shooting up in the diner's cesspool of a shitter, and you trying to conceal the evidence while you're telling me it's straight up your first time. It's the way I'm ready to blow chunks because I'm forced to understand what I've put Mom and Dad through all these years. It's my twenty-three-year-old sister now old enough to glare out at the world with the "fuck you, I'm righteous and deserving of this shit. You owe me World so I'm gorging on self-indulgence and destruction. Why? Fuck you, that's why." And I'm twenty-seven with "I'm not mad; just unbelievably disappointed and the respect I have left for you is questionable" radiating off my face the way the artificial light reflects off your spider vein-ridden factory girl legs.

What really gets me is the way you say, "I'm sorry." The way you follow it with, "you're such a hypocrite." Don't turn this shit around on me. I was different from you, and I had things under complete control so fuck you too.

Tonight, I'll go home and shower off the industrial concealer sheathing the track scars on my arms and the superfluous tattoos on my shoulders. I'll chase four Twinkies and a fistful of narcotics with four Guinness, and as the buzz settles in, I'll fuck my living-in-sin boyfriend skin-to-skin till his dick deflates back into the nest of his crotch and I'm slung over the edge of our mattress like a withered

water balloon leaking out the last bits of his cum. I'll have his abortion and never once regret or think back about it.

Because afflictions like those have nothing on the waltz between needles, veins, and blood. They've conventional, they're common.

Or maybe I've just been clean for too long.

