

Unsaid

by Meg Tuite

Outside, the rain was a rustling tent of calm. Inside, Sonia smuggled a peripheral peek over at Ezra and suddenly her eyelid was a spasm of truth. Ezra was lying next to her awake with that smug smirk she liked to call his morning-after-sex face. Her mouth of straw twitched around itself into a conversation that would never transpire between them. Their sex was getting more and more like an Ezra-on-top-snorting-hissing-jump-the-bones-get-this-over-with-on-with-the-day kind of thing, while Sonia lay moaning some kind of orchestral background to his movement. Every morning after they'd had sex she castigated herself for the fake orgasms and the growing pile of dead air that was starting to knock the wind out of her.

Ezra got up at some point, smiling and whistling some blithering tune, trotting around the kitchen in his underwear with his ribs, a long row of meatless tragedies that screamed for something other than the meal he was making. He was heating up depressive Campbell's noodle soup with Saltine crackers sprinkled on top. His mouth, a constant moving itch, flapped over famous dead quotes and philosophical jokes that he never waited for a response to. He was his own audience. "Here's one for you," he continued. "Socrates came upon a friend who ran up to him excitedly and said, "Socrates, do you know what I just heard about one of your students?"

"Wait a moment," Socrates replied. "Before you tell me I'd like you to pass a little test called the Triple Filter Test."

"Triple filter?" asked the friend.

"That's right," Socrates continued. "The first filter is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?"

"No," the man said, "Actually I just heard about it."

"All right," said Socrates. "So you don't know if it's true or not. Now let's try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my student something good?"

"No, on the contrary..."

"So," Socrates continued, "You want to tell me something bad about him, even though you're not certain it's true?"

The man shrugged, a little embarrassed. Socrates continued. "You may still pass the test though, because there is a third filter—the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my student going to be useful to me?"

"No, not really..."

"Well," concluded Socrates, "if what you want to tell me is neither True nor Good nor ever Useful, why tell it to me at all?"

The man was defeated and ashamed. This is the reason Socrates was a great philosopher and held in such high esteem.

It also explains why he never found out that Plato was shagging his wife."

Ezra started laughing and sat down at the table to eat his flat, dead soup.

Sonia smiled at Ezra's joke while staring at him from the bed. She finally got up and started to make herself an espresso and thought later that she'd finally get one of those cinnamon rolls slathered with icing from the bakery down the street. Ezra would always be thinner than her and whenever she was really hungry she went out to eat. She couldn't take his judging your-not-actually-going-to-eat-all-that-in-one-sitting kind of sneer. Just because he had an eating disorder didn't mean she had to be a fanatic as well. She sat down across from him and tried to keep up with his giggling pathos.

"Here's one I heard from one of the guys at school. Ready? He saw it up on a wall in a bathroom stall in the department.

'God is dead.' Nietzsche
'Nietzsche is dead.' God.'"

"Now, that's some good stuff." Ezra kept muttering to himself, laughing and slurping up the remains of his bowl, putting it up to his

mouth.

Sonia followed his flooding mouth like she always did, by dubbing over his endless banter with her own unspoken tirade.

"Listen," she'd screech, crushing his babble into a nonsensical mosaic of sound. "Listen to me, you migraine-mouthed sack of bones! You want to hear a good one? Our relationship is dead."

Sonia

"What did you say?" Ezra

"I'm trading you in for a vibrator, how's that for a good one?" Sonia

And Sonia would make sure to roar with laughter after that one.

"Get it?" she'd add.

She changed the order of what she'd say every morning, but always ended up with the echo of her silence buried under the suffocating avalanche of all the unsaid. She got her coat and headed out the door for the bakery. On the way she sang-song her own quote of the day: "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow...."

