

She arrived with the rain

Yinnie Yip

SHE ARRIVED WITH THE RAIN, dancing outside his window and landing clumsily on the concrete, losing her footing every so often on the gaps. She reminded him of lost days when splashes of rich Milo melted onto dusty pages of old library books, and his greatest enemies were the beasts that plagued them. The more he thought of her the more she irritated him. She consumed him like the militant ticking of the crocodile that cornered Hook to his ruin; she prodded and gnawed inside him like he was nothing more than the living corpse — swallowed but still alive. An aggravating mess of an unresolved history of human emotion was her cause; she held nothing closer to her heart than to rob the man in him.

She arrived with the rain, one night at dinner, ripping through hunks of bread and cheese and fish, 'til the room smelt of nothing but bread and cheese and fish for five consecutive days or more. She left behind half-empty bowls, left dazed by their guests and stained with the juices of yesterday's festivities. She infuriated her host: the fact that she would not leave him alone made him even more annoyed and frustrated. It was why he had lashed out with his tongue, and with his arms and legs, now he came to think about it. Splats of starch and legumes were flung at him, drowning him in a factory of mass-produced humiliation and contempt. His legs and arms were constricted in medieval instruments, the world staring at him trapped in wooden confinements: on show for all the more educated, all the more fancy.

It wasn't always like this though.

He hadn't always been stuck like this, stuck to the thin sheets of cold sweat and its sticky material. But nothing was as it always had been since she came. In fact, everything wasn't as it had been. She was like that. Always the opposite of what you thought, what you wanted. She never got it quite right. She was within his reach, but every so often she'd slip away until the next time they met.

She arrived with the rain, after drought, after days of cracked hands and lips. Spilt cordial and dust. Spilt cordial and dust that mixed to form cocktails free of her ingredients. What had caused her to come back he'll never know, he never imagined her to. It was almost a miracle, they said. But she came back. He was uncontrollable now, and she wouldn't stop. He could not tell her he found her insufferable: it would only make her worse. She never seemed to listen to him anyway.

She arrived with the rain, in a dream state, coloured by transparent shapes of pink and oranges, sighing like sirens, their hearts providing a rhythm. But they beat in argument, rebounding off one other. Sometimes in unison, but mostly in discord. They beat like music, crescendo with every expansion and decrescendo with every contraction of their lungs, playing a strange, uneven kind of waltz. They listen to the odd waltz. Imagining ballrooms, filled with ladies who still wear tight bodice dresses and petticoats, and men who had learned to tip their hat at women. They imagine graceful and elegant dancers, adorned with bundles of beads and jewels as they twirled and weaved between guests. It isn't hard ... to imagine. Not for them.

She arrived with the rain, scared and frightened. Lines of worry and ruin painted on his face. He hadn't seen this side of her before. Vulnerable. She did not have a sense of purpose this time. She was sporadic, in that every so often the whites of her eyes flashed through his eyelids; sporadic, in that now and then

voices that seemed to be calling her name called his. They said words that were incomprehensible. Gibberish. If you can call it that. She was uncontrollable now, and he would not stop. Together they lolled in their fears, paranoia of the outside creeping up their sheets thread by thread. Wanting and waiting to kill them in their vulnerability.

You can't force me to leave. You can't keep coming here.

She arrived with the rain, lying there with him, pale and drained, their skin painted in artificial blues and whites, glowing with fluorescent energy. Their garments, the same colour as their bodies, plastered and bandaged onto their skin with what was once sweat but was now a crusty mass of salt and time. They were reminded of the days when their empty basins once housed fancies and passion. When they did not know each other. When he was young, no more than seven, reading dusty pages of old library books. And she, she hadn't even started as a single squidge, easily crushed. Vulnerable.

But their energy has been swapped, with the more rich and with the less rich, with the more sane and with the less sane. There isn't much left off them but hollowed shells.

They left with the rain.



Yinnie Yip wrote this in 2013 when he was in Year 11 at The Illawarra Grammar School in New South Wales.