

OVERFLOW OF THE HEART (EXCERPTS)

I think it began a week before my Heart left my body. It must have been gradually coming on for a while, but when I trace back, the symptoms seemed to have been precipitated by the prior week's events. There was an unexpected joy and smiles before the pain blindsided me. Therefore I think I should begin the story a few months further back.

The club became increasing louder as the seats filled. Early didn't appreciate the evasion of his solitude. Not wanting to leave just yet, he opting for a lap dance in a private corner. The Dancer smelled of coconut.

"Is that coconut? That's coconut, right? ARE YOU WEARING COCONUT?"

The Dancer finally answered him, "Shea Butter and Vanilla, Baby."

"Oh, it smells like coconut. You sure it's not coconut?"

"If you say so."

"Bath and Body Works?"

"Love Boutique."

"Love Boutique? Which mall?"

"Mall? It's in the backside of El Cajon, next to the Skating rink and the Giant Pizza place. All the other girls like to go the Discount Sex Mart up the street, the one owned by the Armenians. I like the Love Boutique better. It's classier. See the glitter powder on my ass, Sugar? Never been tested on animals and its gluten free. You know what, I think it has coconut in it." She begins to laugh while continuing her routine.

Early thought, Patricia likes coconut.

I sat in my office trying to sort out work and my life for about an hour before Rae-mon, from Window Number 9, can threw. No knock, just flung open the door. He was in mid sentence about some delivery of registration extension placards when he saw The Heart.

"Whoo, shiiidd!! That thing scared my bran muffin out of me, Man. You ain't supposed to have pets up in here, E. My allergies been taking a beatin'...."

"You can see it?"

“What the heck is that? I have never seen a dog like that. Is it sick? Looks like a Mac Makeup test animal.”

“It’s my Heart.”

“Nigga, what?”

“My Heart. It’s my Heart.”

“Stop playing.”

“Hello. I’m Early’s Heart.”

“Shut the front door! What in the name of Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom is going on here? How’d you get it to do that, Man?”

“Punch me.”

Rae-mon did not want to tear his eyes from the Heart, but the sound of his own name broke his concentration.

“Punch me.”

Rae-mon didn’t miss a beat. He punched me dead in my stomach.

“Was that good enough?”

“Yup, that did the trick. I’m not dreaming.”

“How did your heart leave your body? Did you vomit it out, shit it out,, what the hell happened E?”

“I don’t know. It happened last night. I wasn’t exactly sober but I think it busted out of my chest.”

“Out of your chest?!” Rae-mon examined my chest and lifted up my shirt. “How you know it’s your heart and not your spleen or a lung. Or bad Chinese?”

“It told me.”

“Well, put it back in.”

“I can’t.”

“Why not?”

“It doesn’t want to go back.”

“DAMN! You got to be the Devil or Petey Wheatstraw, if your heart straight stepped out of your body.

I stared at Rae-mon, he stared at the Heart and the Heart flipped through the DMV test answers.

“Why are roundabouts on this test? There ain’t too many roundabouts in this city outside TJ.”