

My Brown-Eyed Girl

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Even in sleep, his ear is always attuned to the monotonous, electric lullaby of the freezer. At night, the sound seeps from beneath the basement door and laps its silvered water over his eyes, his nose, his mouth. He curls his body into the watery murmur like a foetus nestled in syrupy-warm amniotic fluid. It is the most perfect sleep before death.

In the morning, he makes himself a pot of coffee and stands at the window. It is shaping up to be a Nice Sunny Day. Unseasonable weather for the beginning of November, he notes. He will share this observation with someone in the supermarket today. He smiles as he sips his coffee, his dark secret like honey on his tongue.

He walks out on his porch just as his neighbour from across the street descends his driveway. Their eyes meet, his neighbour's eyes are red-rimmed and hollow. He lifts his coffee in silent, neighbourly sympathy and prods his facial muscles into the appropriate setting for compassion and sadness. The neighbour stares for an uncomfortable second too long before nodding dejectedly in acknowledgement. He drives away, pathetically, the notes of "Brown-Eyed Girl" seeping into the suburban morning air.

He stands on his porch, sipping at his coffee, waiting for his heartbeat to slow. When it does, he goes inside and rinses his mug.

He descends the stairs into the basement. He takes the wet laundry, pink and sequinned, from the washing machine. He lifts it to his nose briefly and throws it in the dryer. He pauses by the freezer, a small smile lingering on his lips. He taps his fingers on the lid, "You, my Brown-eyed Girl". It really is a very catchy tune.