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I'm Going to Free Myself from the Shackles of Other People's Expectations of Me

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I'm Going To Free Myself from the Shackles of Other People's Expectations of Me

I write in the dark after all night dancing at the disco. It's with friends, really, that I don't want to bash my head against the constant rotating mill of needed income and adulthood and nice pleated trousers.

I rip the adhesive bra from Amazon off of my nipples and think, Thank god.

It leaves a crust and a feeling of inadequacy—they've always been too far apart, and it takes the strength of an industrial ropes course carabiner to bring them together in any sort of way that screams *Sex* or *money*.

I'm writing now because Jared was high (off half an edible) at a bar in the absolute gayborhood of Philadelphia and said grace, of anyone else—I believe the most in you. It made me sweat in the kindness sort of way, when I somehow can't believe someone would be genuine to me and not just out of convenience or marijuana or transactional flattery. We went out to smoke a

cigarette and I laughed when Jared crawled all the way up the stairs. Later we found a black Bic lighter on the sidewalk after ours ran out of juice and he said, You know it might be hard at first but then it will be just fine.

It's the shirts with preset boobs that really bother me because I have enough awareness about roles I can and cannot fill.

I've had about twenty job interviews that haven't gone anywhere and a lot of nodding that makes me embarrassed about who I really am as a person. Dancing takes about thirteen minutes to get into and in those thirteen minutes I feel as if I'm slowly choking and everyone else can drink water except for me.

I bought the Bug at twenty-one right after the worst day of my life which was college graduation.

I had just left an abusive situation (with a woman, no less, so more difficult to explain to family) lost all our mutual friends and spent about twenty-four hours in the psych ward that made me familiar with every local homeless person in Rochester NY and there are quite a few.

My father took me to the dealership in a crude attempt at bonding.

We looked at cars he liked and I hated everything but the rogue gray Bug and he said are you sure ok you're an adult I guess it's your money.

It had 10,000 miles and was previously owned by a woman with Alzheimer's who lived in rural New York.

When she forgot how to drive her husband would back it in and out of the driveway for five years until she finally forgot how to live.

They told me this as I signed the extended warranty paper not knowing what extended warranty meant and neither did my father. My first time alone in the car, I found a Peter Paul and Mary CD still left in the disc player.

Now at the end of an era the engine keeps coming up busted and I'm already mourning the time I've had freedom, peter paul mary, and a loan from the Key Bank.

It's an anointed prison, ownership, and you just don't know when you get to keep anything and when it'll all just end.

It comes with no surprise that the thing I learned the most from my father is to pretend I know something when I don't.

Sitting in the dealership he pretended to know cars. He wore a big trench coat and tried to match the sleazy newsboy tone of the dealer who saw right through him and I didn't have the chops to critique his acting.

Instead I daisy-chained a list of things I'd accomplished rattling it all off to my father.

It was one of those things where I *hated* every word I said as I said it and the fluorescence of it all didn't help. We stirred our Styrofoam cup black coffees with black stirrers that were the world's most ineffective straws and it was silent except for the cars lights and expectation which all bothered me.

I'm proud of you, he said awkwardly, couldn't be prouder, and I felt embarrassed that I'd seen him about three times in all of college and he felt the need to reassure me and I felt the need to need it.

And so after years of trying not to disappoint your family it's in a boyfriend's parents' basement where you feel you have to confront yourself against a quilt that isn't yours.

Laying dizzy tits out in a room with nothing fwamiliar after passing twelve billboards that scream When you die you WILL meet god it gets hard to distinguish the carpet and family photos and stuffed bunnies from the guts inside your body.

Without the added distinction of expectation and disappointment you sip your water quietly and feel like nothing at all and a credit score thinking alas.

There is a Reformation dress and a dream for all of us.

Where is the outline of this person you keep trying to fill?