2012

It's Better That Way

Casey Kerns
Concordia University-Portland

Follow this and additional works at: http://commons.cu-portland.edu/promethean
Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://commons.cu-portland.edu/promethean/vol20/iss1/7
It's Better That Way

Casey Kerns

My brother somersaults around the house rolling to where he wants to go, he says it's better that way.

He dips raisins in ketchup dunks hot-dogs in milk, he says it tastes better that way.

On the couch, he nests under cushions barricading himself in, protecting himself from the sun, he says it's more comfortable.

When we play twenty questions he creates mythical creatures, he says it's more fun.

He tumbles around in shorts and mismatched cowboy boots carrying a toy gun with his hands hidden in bulky winter gloves, he says it makes him cool.

He reads with his arms wrapped around knobby knees gently rocking, like Smeagol in Lord of the Rings, he says it helps him focus.

My brother lives in his own unique world to him nothing is normal, he says it's better that way.

The Perfection of Ten

Jacquelyn Anderson

Pluck, grab, pull, pluck, tear, pull, tear up. The glowing orb reveals every craterous imperfection in her illuminated face. These magnifying mirrors are every girl’s worst enemy; the tiniest flaw is amplified to horrifying proportions. Still dripping on the linoleum in her towel, she has spent the last half hour plucking in sets of 10. Caught up in the two caterpillars above her eyes, she stares into the mirror-of-terror and pulls out every stray hair until her eyebrows are a masterpiece worthy of a frame in the Guggenheim.

After the eyebrow maintenance comes the moisturizing. First, she applies five even dots of skin cream and massages it into her face in small circles. Next, her body, which she lathers with the care of a nurse in the burn unit. If there was one thing besides meses that terrifies her, it is dry skin. In her nightmares old men with saggy hides threaten her with their dandruff flakes and red, irritated elbows. Just in case, she applies an extra coat of lotion.

She locks eyes with herself, admiring the circles of tiny lights reflected in her emerald green irises. Getting ready to go anywhere is a feat of epic proportions, so she listens to her therapist’s advice and takes ten slow deep breaths. An obsession with perfection and order cripples her, despite the effort of four therapists over the last ten years. When she was twelve, her parents decided that they had had enough of her compulsions. Despite being a brilliant student, her teachers had complained that she wasn’t turning in any assignments on time. She stayed up late into the night, writing and erasing her tidy handwriting until it was perfect. It took her three hours to get ready every day, and the water bill was getting enormous. Her parents had tried grounding her, but it only taught her how to keep a secret. In a last ditch effort to “normalize” her, she had been sent to see a psychiatrist.

“So, tell me a little bit about why you are here today.”

“I don’t know. My parents sent me.”

“But it’s you that is here right?”

“Well yeah but I can’t drive, so obviously you know that my