

Diverse
speculations
descending



therefrom

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A lot of people go to places no one can go to. For example, the woman yells at her dog, “you fucking crazy bastard!” The dog is drunk and she knows it. She arrived before we did. She knows that a starlet is short and her bodyguard is always mafia gone legit.

“I always sided with the Zulus,” he said. Me too.
Not that they would have had me.

We love to bounce our babies in front of mirrors
and say “that’s you that’s you” until they laugh
and then we tell them to kiss the pretty baby.

I don't want to be a parody of me interrupting myself, at least not exclusively.

“A confident young woman just doesn’t interest me,” she said.

The woman yelling at her dog yelled: “you fucking crazy drunk dog, you’re lucky you have me as your mama!”

You'd broken up with him, but you wanted to do more damage.

Your friend was in love with you—this is why you hung around her. In most ways she was crazy and unbearable. This was also part of what you liked.

In most ways she was crazy. “That football player almost raped me in Barcelona,” she said, and you winced. They’d met at a club and her travelling companions had tried to hook them up. They’d spread rose petals all over the bed in a room with a balcony overlooking Plaza George Orwell, then locked them in.

“But I didn’t like him, anyway.”

You drank your coffee and stared at the sidewalk.
You thought about how your friend is always in
violent situations, but never seems aware of it.

When you're feeling kind you suppose that her
indignant reactions are a kind of awareness.

It was spring, and you were eating almond
croissants.

I went to the beach with a man I didn't know. I was finishing my tea and chatting with a sunburned English boy at a *kedai kopi* by the ocean. Our conversation was faltering. A man swaggered up to the table and said. "I will take you to a good beach." I rewrapped my sarong and left.

The man was a fisherman, and his red motorcycle was in bad repair. But we got to the beach and it was a very nice beach. Small and undeveloped, with clear turquoise water and white soft sand, a few large rocks to climb on at low tide that were mini islands when the tide came in. The fisherman stripped to his underwear and we swam in the ocean and held hands in the water while waves broke over us.

“What is biting me?”

“A fish.”

He cupped his palms together in the water and then held up something pinched in his fingers for me to see. “When it is big it will have hard skin, and it is good to eat.”

The shrimp was not as big as his pinky nail, which was long.

After three hours, we rode back to the cafe. I kissed him before he asked me to and then he left. The sunburned British boy was still there, drinking tea. So I sat with him and ordered more tea.

“Can you pour the tea and make it fizz?” I asked the child who was minding the tables. I gestured with my hands to try and communicate. I looked in my dictionary. She waited. “Uh, *terbang?*”

She nodded and left and came back with two jugs, one full of malty Assam tea and condensed milk, the other empty. She poured the tea back and forth between the two jugs until the tea became frothy. Then she poured it into two cups, even though the British boy was not finished. The girl waited until we had tasted the tea to leave.

“It’s very good,” I said. “Thank you.”

Later that day I went swimming with several Bhutanese economists. “We are old Bhutanese bureaucrats,” one told me, “but we like to have fun.”

* a dust/e-chap
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