

## Eating Lunch by Myself

Eating Lunch by Myself is a monster with red eyes. It follows me down hallways, drooling, grinning, licking its lips. Every time I glance backward I catch sight of it in my peripheral vision. It tries to remain behind my head, always just out of my sight with its red eyes rolling. For years it has been coming and going. It has been following me for nearly two weeks now, but it was first born shortly after the deaths of King Louis the XVI and Marie Antoinette. It is standing right behind me as I write—its hot breath on the back of my neck.

It just swallowed a bird. In one gulp down it went, fluttering around in its huge, furnace belly.

Eating Lunch by Myself keeps me caged in nervousness—I can't eat, I can't sleep, I can't read.

Eating Lunch by Myself annoys me—it laughs and rolls its eyes, its blond hair pulled back so tight it's loose, wrinkled skin is pulled flat. It is stupid—it doesn't have enough of a brain to think what it is doing to me.

Eating Lunch by Myself is bumming quarters from me. It is angry at me for writing this—I refuse to stop—it will have to get used to it.

I had to spend the entire weekend with Eating Lunch by Myself. I thought about

killing it several times, but each attempt only made it stronger. It sat on its throne and made me a slave to it. It shoved its pointed breasts in my face. It waved its cock at me.

It makes me drive it around the city and then tells me I'm a bad driver. It steals car keys and drives off when I turn around—leaving me stranded in deserted parking lots.

Every night while I sleep Eating Lunch by Myself comes to me and steals a pint of my blood, which it uses for its bizarre experiments. Last night my mother and grandmother saw it peeking through the living room window, while I slept on the couch in my clothes. I awoke in a cold sweat. Sometimes I wake up soaked in its drool.

While I peered from the third story window I caught Eating Lunch by Myself sneaking up on me. It wanted to push me out—onto the concrete below. I turned around to look at it and tried to pretend it was only joking around with nothing but good intentions.

It is licking my ear as I write this. It is only a matter of time before it swallows me up completely. It will eat me in two big gulps. First it will bite me in half, right down the middle, and swallow my head and arms and torso. Then it will snatch up my legs before they can run off. One toe it will

leave as a memento. Then I will have to write in the dark because there is no light inside Eating Lunch by Myself's monstrous stomach. But that hasn't happened yet, right now it is content with licking me and sniffing me—and bathing me in hot soapy water.

*Teege Braune*

### **At wits' end is calm**

As the day prepares for dusk, sun  
breaks the drear, spreading  
a glow we'd resigned to do without.

*Amy Vaerewyck*