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In the Center of That Red Chaos

I DREAM WE are watching television, a funny show about two people who are in love but won't act on it. You say nobody wants to see a happy couple. You kiss my nipple. I moan. You laugh at the television. I say my heart is breaking. You whisper something in my ear. There is a slight pain in my head that feels like a reversible trench coat. I ask you to read a poem to me, something sad, something with a tinted nuance. You say I shouldn't use words like tinted nuance, that no one will understand what I am trying to say.

I say the whole world will understand what I say if I repeat myself enough. You say the world isn't listening, you say their hearing is superficial and flighty. You kiss my nipple. I moan. Do you know that I am half edible? There is a slight pain in my head that feels like blue summer daylight. I say read me a poem about sex, something written when sensuality was still in everyone's blood. You say you don't understand but you know a poem by Kenneth Koch. You don't know the name but you have a part of it memorized.

I tell you I have no boyfriend. I tell you I went to the beach yesterday. I was wearing a green sweater. I say there were origami birds in the sky. You say you won't ask questions about

the other boys. I say there are no other boys. You say you won't ask questions. There is a slight pain in my head with a silvery tint. I tell you to slap my face. You laugh and pour yourself some juice. Slap me, I say. Bite my nipple. Don't you know I'm half edible? You laugh and drink your juice. I suggest we start a romance, my hand in your back pocket, your hand in my shirt. You say, didn't we do that already? I say no, we were only pretending.

Across the street there is a farm. I say is that cow wearing a pink organdy frock? You laugh. We are animals, I say. Let's have sex in the tall grass and pretend it's the edge of the world. You suggest a shoebox. I bite your nipple. You slap my face. We are swimming from leaf to leaf. We are drawing jerky, zigzagging lines across a blue sky. Nothing I say is really what I want to say. There is a pain in my head that feels like Kenneth Koch. You kiss my neck. I think about sending a handful of sand in the mail, shells and broken bits of coral. I imagine us on a green blanket, your warm hands on my back, your mouth on my neck. I imagine a sweet wind, and a sky of white origami birds.