



REDDOG



Reddog

On Christmas Day my second year in prison for murder, my mother stopped coming to visit. She doesn't call and I can't get in touch with her. In August, she missed my twenty-fifth birthday. A couple months later, my sister came and said, "Mother doesn't want to think about it anymore. Try to understand." I did try.

Eventually my sister quit coming; she had a lot on her mind with her van full of kids – and no husband. So I go a year with no visitors, and when I get dragged to administration to face an assistant to the warden, I'm half-crazy.

"A graduate student working in criminal justice wants to include you in her experiments," he said. "Your choice. Two or three times a month. Goes on your record as good behavior."

Sessions would be out of maximum security . . . like a mini-vacation.

"Hey. What's with the experiments," I said. "She stick you with drugs, stuff like that?"

"Just talk."

"Hey, Captain. She a looker?"

"Don't get your fantasies revved up. She's a pro."

"You be there?"

"Just you and her. And high security."

“Maybe I get out of max sooner?” I asked. You get a cell in the main building and you could talk to guys, set things up.

“Can’t promise.” He walked around the table, stuck a ballpoint pen in my cuffed hand, and showed me where to sign. “Consent papers.”

You need a magnifying glass to read the print on the last two pages. “I don’t know about signing anything,” I said.

“It’s permission to talk, record, use information,” he said.

“I thought this was research,” I said. I hated do-gooders and I didn’t need rehabilitation. I needed parole, miraculous DNA evidence, a new trial.

“I don’t give a shit what you do. I’m here because the warden says to cover our ass legally. It’s routine. No one’s trying to screw you. No one cares.”

“She ain’t a lawyer, is she? She ain’t trying to retry the case or something.”

“She’s a student. We checked. She was a paralegal before she went back to grad school. She’s demonstrated against the death penalty. Arrested once, but never charged. She won’t violate your rights, if that’s what you’re thinking. You don’t have rights.”

I signed her papers with a bump and a line so no one could ever read my name.

The researcher, a Ms. Pearlstein, shows up the next day for our first session; she wants to see how things might go. I’m cool, out of maximum security in the south extension, but still with two guards, one inside and one outside the door, and me chained hand and foot.

She was maybe five feet two, wore these thick glasses made the dark of her eyes look like raisins, and her voice had this whine like an echo of metal cut with a circular saw. She was sitting on a folding chair with her skinny legs crossed, her head tilted down. She asked me a few questions, like how I felt about prison, and if I was guilty. I told her prison was like heaven and I wasn't guilty.

"What you studying?" I asked.

She wanted to talk about *the* crime and *my* punishment. What did I care? I was feeling like an eagle soaring. And I'd tell her anything to keep this going, get out of max.

"Accidents happen," I said.

"It was no accident," she said.

"You're good looking," I said, smiling.

She didn't smile back. "I'm not here to talk about me," she said.

"You got a boy friend?"

She sighed. "I have essential questions to ask."

"You the boss, babe."

She frowned, then glared at me like she could see in my brain. "I want to know everything that happened that day. How you felt. What you were thinking," she said.

"It's in the trial stuff, baby."

"You may call me Ms. Pearlstein. I know the trial transcripts well. Trials deal with evasions of the truth." She still gave me her hard look.

I waited. Then I said, "Hey, little lady. You think I lied? That what's scratching your ass?"

"I am not the 'little lady'."

I laughed. "You Ms. Pearlstein," I said.

"I don't know if you lied. I want to know what you and Hershel Cracken were thinking moment by moment."

"Talk to Reddog. He's the guy give you the story."

Everyone called Hershel Cracken "Reddog," and he was waiting on a lethal at Huntsville; I was in this place for life.

"I've been talking to Hershel, too," Ms. Pearlstein said.

"He ain't called Hershel!"

"How do you feel about him?"

"We're buddies," I said.

"No! His execution."

"Hey. You reap just what you sow."

She glared again. "Are you religious?"

She was writing again, and I was staring at her when a thought came to me like being run over by an eighteen-wheeler.

"You working for the 'Dog? Appeal stuff? That what you here for?"

"I am not working for Hershel. I work for justice. And I will try to find out any detail that might help in an appeal. Something that might contradict testimony and raise a reasonable doubt."

"That ain't research," I said.

“It is very much a part of my research. It’s about criminal justice.” She looked in her stack of papers and pulled out a sheet. “What you say is used for science. How prisoners think. I’ll analyze our sessions for response quality.” She talked loudly and slowly, as if I didn’t speak English. “Part of our work is truth in meaning. Our sessions are analyzed by independent graders. You can see it in this representation.” She adjusted the sheet of paper with colored bars on it so I could see better. “The red bars represent silence, green bars are for meaningful talk, and black bars, for diversions from the truth. Everyone’s graph is different. My work relates responses to personalities and various crimes. I specialize in murder.”

That was real rat shit. And that’s what I told her. I raised my hand to her, my chains rattling.

“Sean brought it on himself,” I said. “We didn’t do nothing.”

“I don’t believe that at all,” she said. “Sean was murdered. It’s clear from the transcripts, from the autopsy, and the witnesses, before and after.”

I looked right at her. “You do guys?” I asked.

She jerked back like I might have slapped her.

“Let’s review the rules,” she said coldly, “I’m a professional. I won’t respond to personal questions.”

“Hey. You my woman,” I said. She must have done guys; if she was a dyke, she’d probably need to come out with it. But she was shaking, not looking at me. She was deciding whether to pack up her stuff. Her shoulders slumped.

“Can’t you be human?” she said.

“I’m swelled up human for you, baby,” I said, looking to see if she got my meaning.

“Just answer the questions!” Then, from her folder, she took out a loose sheet of paper with lines and boxes on it, and she put it down on the table.

“What are you in for?” she asked.

“B and E.”

“Your record says murder two.”

“People get confused. Screw up the truth,” I laughed.

“It’s a lie. An outright lie.”

“Why ask?”

She paused. “It’s routine. Demographics. I want to hear it from you.”

“I stole a bicycle,” I said.

She stood up. She wasn’t higher than my armpit if I’d been standing unchained.

“I expected you to cooperate!” she said. “You’re nothing but lies.”

“You only been here twenty minutes,” I said, but she was hurrying to get out.

“You coming back?”

“Why should I?” she said over her shoulder.

“You the chief,” I said. “Me the Indian.”

She had her stuff together and she turned to me. Her face was red. “You are one miserable human being. If I come back, I expect you to treat me with respect. I am an educated woman and a researcher. You are a murderer. I don’t want you talking down to me again.”

“I ain’t no murderer,” I said.

Back in my cell, I had this anger, like I wanted to put my fist through the wall. I did fifty push-ups and a hundred squats. Then I was sitting on the bed laughing, thinking to myself, and I figured I’d put her crooked little face right up there on the wall, head high, where I could see her while standing over the toilet for a piss. I had a marking pen. I drew pictures on the wall I copied from magazines – of airplanes, tattoos I’d like, guns, motorcycles, cars. So I draw her face with a small circle about half the real size of her. I point the chin a little. Her nose is almost nothing, so I put two dots for her nose holes. Then I scratch in hair that looks almost like a wig, step back, and laugh at how close I have come to the real Pearlstein. Then I draw in circles and curves for her eyes – close together, looking off to one side like she did most of the time in the session – and after two eyebrow arches, I put thick glasses on. For her mouth, I use a thin line, mean looking. She looked fragile next to my big drawing of a Harley Fatboy, copied straight out of *Motorcycle Cruiser*, like a child who wasn’t telling it like it was.

As it turned out, my next session with Pearlstein was only two days later; she looked different, less dry and peely than I remembered, more like some guy’s ugly baby sister. I guessed she was twenty-five, but her hair looked a lot older, gray like cobwebs and tight old-lady curls. At least she’d combed her hair, so it didn’t look as if she were in a tornado.

Her picture was still on my wall and it didn’t need changing; I had her eyes right – close together and small, like she was peeking out of her skull through half-

inch drill holes. I'd been laughing at my picture. Cocky little bitch. I wasn't angry no more, but I was surprised she showed up, like she was hot for our sessions more than she let on.

The guards always chained me to the same iron ring sunk in one of the concrete floor blocks, but she was farther away from me today. She must of asked for the new spot – the guards didn't give a damn about where she sat as long as I couldn't reach her. The dented metal table between us was about as long as she was tall, with its legs bolted to the floor. She was looking at her papers, so I rattled my chains. The inside guard looked over at me. I was feeling good, so good. Here in all this space, and there was sunlight coming between the iron bars in the window that laid out long boxes of yellowed light on the gray-white linoleum floor. Sweet, sweet! Ain't no sunshine in maximum.

She wrote on her pad for a while.

"You a real doc?" I asked her.

"Does it make a difference?" She still stared at her pad. Her voice was a little squeaky.

"You ain't one, or you would have said so."

She shifted in her chair. "Please try to keep to the subject."

"You my subject, sweetie pie."

"Ms. Pearlstein," she said angrily.

"You got a first name. Like Virginity?"

"Where were you when you first saw Sean McGarity?"

"Maybe you called Chastity. Chastity Pearlstein!"

“Answer my question.”

“I love the way your lips wiggle,” I said.

She slammed her folder on the table. “I don’t like smartasses,” she said. “I’ve got too much to do.” She nodded to the guard and she picked up her papers and her tape recorder. She’d spent less than five minutes with me. That was no session!

“Up yours,” I said, but she was already out the door. The guard pointed at me, his first finger straight out like the barrel of a gun. The bastard. The guard closed the door and called for transfer. In a few seconds, I’d be on my way back to maximum.

The room got silent except for the A/C fan. I rested my chained hands on the table. There was a tap on the door. Soft, like a woman. The inside guard turned the key in the lock, and Pearlstein came back in and stared at me as if I was dog shit on her shoe. She whispered to the guard, her jaw clenched. She came back to the table.

“I’ll forget your antics,” she said.

“Why you pissed?” I asked.

She paused. “I care too much about what I do sometimes.”

“Lighten up,” I said.

“I *don’t* need *your* advice. When did you first see Sean?”

I kept my mouth shut.

Her lips were in a hard line. “Are you refusing to talk?” she asked. “Why can’t you answer simple questions?”

“You think I’m going to change my story. Well, I ain’t changing my story.”

“Damn it. I want to find out what the real story is . . . the story beneath what’s been told.”

“Reddog’s guilty. I ain’t guilty,” I said. “That’s the truth.”

“You were both convicted.”

“He got what was coming.”

“He got murder one because you plea bargained.”

“That ain’t research talk,” I said.

“You have given me so many black bars for my research. You can’t tell the truth about anything!”

We sat in silence while she stared at her notes.

“I’ll tell you the truth. You my honey.”

“I am not your honey!”

She uncrossed her legs and put both feet solid on the floor.

“You’ll never get Reddog off,” I said.

“Think what you want,” she said. She was straightening her papers by holding the edges and tapping the stack-bottom on the table. Her index finger twitched.

“You can’t blow his conviction,” I said.

“How could you possibly know?”

“You can ask more questions.”

“I’m wasting my time.”

“For Reddog, or research?” I asked, but she didn’t answer. Her mind was locked on Reddog like a fly on cow shit. The research gig might be legit, but it wasn’t

what she'd give her virginity for. She wanted the "Dog" alive. The guard unlocked the door for her, sliding the dead bolt. She walked out. Within minutes the transfer guys were taking me back to max.

In my cell, I took my marking pen and changed my drawing of her head. I added a stick drawing of her body with arms and legs, and then I put a line between where her thighs might be, a line like a stick jammed up her twat. It was crude, but I felt better.

Each day, I wondered if I would get out for a session. Security guys had scrotal squeeze about advanced notice giving cons the edge for escape attempts. For guys in max with no outside contacts, it didn't seem to make no difference.

After five days, I was moved back to the session room about two hours before lunch. Pearlstein sat straight in her chair with both feet on the floor. She looked more like a girl now; I mean she had her little tits poking up under a red sweater. Her glasses were bent, sitting a little crooked on her face, and she kept taking hold of the corner of the frame and sliding them up her nose.

She started right in with questions.

"I see your mother hasn't been coming to visit."

"Ain't you the little detective," I said.

"You don't care about your mother?" she asked.

"She's a fat slob. I didn't choose her. No one would have chosen her."

"What's she do?"

“She goes out of the house once a month to pick up her welfare and ADC checks.”

Pearlstein did a lot of busy writing.

“You ain’t making bars,” I said.

“My associates do the graphs on a computer at school.”

“Well, my mother ain’t worth a shit. Put that on a graph.”

“Did you feel that way when she was still visiting?”

“She wasn’t no good then, either.”

She waited before she spoke again. When she looked up, she had wrinkles on her brow and she squinted at me.

“Hey. You giving conjugals to the 'Dog?” I asked.

“You’re crude.”

“But I ain’t stupid,” I said. “The research is like a decoy in a bank robbery.”

“I never said you were stupid,” she said, swallowing hard.

“But that’s what you think!” My heart pounded and I strained at my wrist-cuffs.

“You’ll never know what I’m thinking. Never in a thousand years.”

“I don’t have to take shit from no student trainee,” I said. “You ain’t even a real doc!”

She shoved her chair back and looked up. “Okay,” she said. “Calm down. It was not the right thing to say.” She went back to her pad, writing fast. I tried making my mind blank, squeezing her out. It was a prison thing to do, to be sure nothing ever got to you. But I was still breathing hard and fast. I stared at her, the

way she was hunched over, her hair over her ears hiding most of her face. Her pencil stuck up between her first finger and her bird-finger, and it made these little circles as she wrote. I hadn't seen anything like that since grade school. There was a lot about Ms. Pearlstein that came out slow, and only if you looked hard.

After a few minutes, she began picking up her stuff but stayed seated. "Think about it Billie," she said. "Talking about it doesn't make any difference now. There will never be a retrial for you. But you could save a man from dying."

"You ain't leaving?" I said.

"I want justice, Billie. It's so easy." She looked small but solid. She wasn't backing down on anything.

"I understand what you're saying," I said.

"Do you, Billie? Do you know what justice is? The difference between right and wrong?"

"I been to school."

"It's more than that, Billie. It's what's inside."

"What you really needing, baby?"

"You were driving the truck when Sean went down. I know that. The world knows that. But if you said it, we might have an appeal."

"The kid asked for it," I said.

"You know what the world believes? It was gay bashing. You'll never change that. But you could keep a man alive."

“Reddog tied the kid to the truck. He hugged the kid to make him feel good.”
She looked more interested than I had ever seen. “He grabbed the kid’s crotch and stroked him, until the kid laughed and said “That’s all me.””

“But you were driving!”

I shut up.

“Think about it Billie. The truth won’t hurt you now.”

“Sean wasn’t my kind of guy,” I said. He’d been out of the closet since the day he was born. He wore tan slacks with that slick-soft cloth that never wrinkles, and a white girly shirt unbuttoned at the top so the no-hair skin on his chest showed halfway down to his belly button. He ran his fingers through his hair to keep it sticking up for that I-just-got-out-of-bed look. He stroked this little, light mustache, with hairs that looked like he stole them from a caterpillar and pasted them on one by one. The kid drank screwdrivers!

“But you were the one who accelerated the truck to more than sixty miles an hour, dragging the helpless boy until his clothes and skin were gone, his face smashed! Say it!”

“Reddog’s guilty.”

“You were driving!”

“Fuck off.”

She held her breath, her hands clenched in bloodless fists. She turned slowly, all of her belongings cradled in her arms.

“You coming back?” I called to her.

Alone in my cell with my black marker, I covered her body with a dress so that line in her twat was blotted out. She looked better with a dress on. And I hadn't been feeling good about hurting her with a stick like that. But I drew shackles around her foot, with chains hanging down, every link showing as if it might drag her off the wall.

It was three days later when Pearlstein came back, two hours earlier than she ever did before, just after breakfast. I'd cooled down a bit, and I'd been thinking about our last session. She was doing what she had to do. I was determined not to take it to heart. Especially the truth part; she didn't tell the whole truth either.

She was already in the room when the guards brought me in.

"Hi," I said.

She didn't say nothing, just sat, her chair pushed back from the table. Her skinny legs were crossed and her knobby kneecaps stuck up like baby turtle shells on a log when you're out shooting squirrels. She doodled on her pad.

"You want to talk?" she finally asked.

"Don't make no difference to me," I said. I stared. Her dress was green, the shade of summer grass, and it made her hair look the color of rain clouds. Her skin was as white as a shower-stall wall, and she had a few pimple-crater scars on her cheeks. One was still reddish and big enough to hurt when she touched it. She had holes in her ears for earrings. I wondered what Pearlstein wore on the outside. Studs? Those long dangling earrings that might shimmy when she moved her head?

Pussy counselors took off their jewelry for sessions, so I'd never know what she wore.

"It really wasn't me," I finally said. "If that's what you want to know."

"Even your mother doesn't believe that." She crossed her legs and pulled her dress down, covering her knee.

"What did my mother say?"

"She said you worshiped Reddog. Couldn't sit still when he was away. That you were a good boy until you met him."

"We were just buddies."

"Reddog said you were the one."

"Look," I said. "Reddog set the kid up! I didn't set the kid up!"

"Why did you do that?"

I thought out what she wanted to hear. "We didn't find no babes in Jolly's bar, but Sean comes in, light on his feet, looking for guys. The 'Dog' thought he'd have some laughs."

"So Reddog approached Sean?"

I was about to say the kid was grinning at Reddog and he waved the kid over to him, but before I could get the words out, Pearlstein called the guard over from where he stood near the door. Her skin was even paler now than usual, and sweat glinted on her brow.

"You want to hear about it?" I asked. But Ms. Pearlstein stood up. She had to go to the bathroom. God, how I wished I had a cigarette . . . but tobacco was banned.

She was gone a long time before she came back and sat down, and I waited, thinking she'd ask a question. Nothing. Like she'd forgotten what we were talking about. The time was ticking on, the hour getting shorter.

"I'm not feeling good," she said.

"You look like a ghost," I said.

"It's probably some flu."

She shut off the recorder and put a rubber band around her rolled up sheets of scribbles. She wasn't allowed to bring a brief case into secure rooms.

"Don't go," I said.

"Maybe tomorrow."

It was funny, but I hoped she felt better.

"A glass of water," I said to guard. He didn't move.

"She's sick," I said. "Grab her some water?"

He signaled to the outside guard who brought water in a paper cup.

"She's wasting her time with you," the inside guard said, soft and mean, to me.

She drank the water, looking down. Within minutes, she was back looking at me.

"You better?" I asked.

She didn't answer. She turned on the recorder. She shuffled some papers and looked at the electric clock on the wall.

"I can't understand why Sean went with you," Pearlstein said in a raspy voice, like she might have been vomiting.

“You really okay?”

“I’m better. I thought you were the sweet talking guy,” she said. “Reddog was the strong silent type.”

“You got that right,” I said with pride.

“But it was Reddog, then, that talked Sean into going with you?”

“That’s right.”

Reddog might not have been a big talker, but he had a molasses-sweet voice that turned heads. And he was the best looking man in five states. People took to him, remembered him like a good chunk of hot pecan pie with ice cream. And this kid Sean fell for Reddog after one look.

“He was in love with the ‘Dog.’ Couldn’t keep his eyes off him.”

I waited. For the first time, she wasn’t doodling or squiggling. Her right hand was pressed flat on her stomach.

“Reddog drove when you left the bar?” she asked.

“The kid in the middle between me and the ‘Dog.’ I remembered the kid’s knee was shoved against my thigh because of the gearshift on the floor, but the kid’s hand was on the “Dog’s” thigh.

“Cool wheels,’ the kid said.

“Where you get shitty talk like that,’ Reddog said. ‘Cool wheels? You queer or something?’ Then the kid laughed.”

“How did you get Sean behind the truck?”

“Reddog smooth talking,” I said. “Reddog made it sound like weight training, you had to push yourself to get better, keep tight and fit.”

Pearlstein raised her pencil to me, holding it like a cop's nightstick. "When Sean got behind the truck, didn't you drive Reddog's truck?"

"You keep asking that. This ain't cross examination."

"I can understand it started out as a game. But it wasn't a game when the driver jammed that accelerator to the floor."

The kid was exactly what Reddog said he hated: wimpy look, whiney voice, sissy shoes, pale lips, pukey mustache. But Reddog enjoyed setting the kid up for showing him what a queer he was. And he liked touching him. Teasing him.

"How did Sean fall down?"

Pearlstein's tape had stopped spinning. It needed a turning but I said nothing. Pearlstein was quiet, the smooth top of her ballpoint pen clenched between her teeth.

"I think you were jealous, Billie."

I laughed. "Of Sean? You got your head up your ass."

"Did you try to save Sean?"

"Sure," I said thinking hard. "I did everything." I looked right at Pearlstein. "He was gasping. His right eye was puffy and almost shut; the other eyelid was half-open, his eyeball rolled up so it showed only white. I pushed on the kid's chest, CPR stuff from the Army. Blood all over me."

"I never heard this. Did Reddog do anything?" Pearlstein asked.

"Nothing!"

"Who said bury him," Pearlstein asked.

"We've got to get rid of him," Reddog said."

“Not you?”

“Not me!”

I looked at Pearlstein to see if she believed me, but she had her eyes down looking at her paper. Her pencil wiggled a little, then went still.

“You know about Reddog’s trial?” she asked.

“I heard.” We were caught before the kid settled in his grave. Four people saw us leave Jolly’s.

“It took the jury two hours to convict him,” she said.

The cops hated Reddog, and they wanted the world to think the Texas justice system was lubed to smooth running with I’ll-fix-your-ass grease. The prosecutors ate up my plea bargain.

“You think the jury was wrong about Reddog?” Pearlstein asked.

“They got off on giving him the max,” I said.

Her eyelids drooped. Her pen was still now.

“What story he tell you?” I asked.

Pearlstein looked at me. “Not that.”

“Would I lie to you?”

“You weren’t driving when Sean went down?”

“What’d I tell you?” I said. I must have shouted or something close to it, because she squinted. And the truth was, I was driving when Sean went down. Reddog was leaning his head out the window, calling to the little fucker from the passenger side, telling him he was doing great. The little shit. I shoved the

accelerator, the engine straining to do the hundred and twenty it had done for me plenty of times.

“You think I’d lie?” I asked.

She shuffled her papers into a pile. I was strangely calm.

“You’re the one who should be waiting for execution,” she said.

Pearlstein gathered up her tape recorder and paper stack without a word.

“Time’s not up,” I said. The way she was grabbing things up looked like she wasn’t thinking about coming back.

She didn’t look to me.

“Okay . . . I was driving . . . but it didn’t make any difference. Reddog *was* guilty.” She was looking around, and then she found her pencil.

“He tied the knot. Put the kid behind the truck,” I said.

Anger blazed in her eyes. I thought she was going to spit at me.

“I was driving when the kid went down! You can tell them that.”

She was writing on the outside of a folder without putting her stuff down.

“And you sped up. Faster than any human could run.”

“Yeah. You can tell them that too.”

She was breathing hard.

“What more do you want?” I asked.

“I don’t know,” she said. “The Governor has refused a stay. But I’ll try. It may be too late.”

“You coming back?”

She reached the door. She turned her steady gaze to me. In the shadows, her eyes were the size of bore holes in a pistol.

Back in my cell, the evil hard lines of her drawing bugged me. I wet a few squares of toilet paper and tried to wash her off the wall, but the swipes just blurred the lines, and the terrible shape of her still would not fade. I took off the two inch metal handle from the toilet flusher, and I hacked at the wall, at the drawing, crumbling the painted cement block inch by inch until she was gone, just a pile of crumbled wall dust at my feet.

I sat on my bunk. I looked at the pile of dust and trash as if she were still there. I could never draw her again, and for a crazy moment I wondered if I could put her back together – glue, or tape, or something. But she was destroyed. Hell, it was just a drawing. And I had every right to be pissed at her. She was the one who'd lied to me about experiments. All that talk about truth. Truth don't mean nothing!

I had to sweep out the cell at cleanup the next morning. Damn if the guard didn't deny workout sessions in the exercise yard for a week for destroying the wall. Christ, it was only the top part of the concrete, not a hole or anything.

The "Dog" was put down with appeal denied. Word spread through the prison, even in maximum security, as if there were no walls. And I waited, thinking maybe the research might start up again. But the days went by for more than three months. The patch of destroyed wall never changed until some maintenance guy slapped some plaster on it when I was getting eye care in the infirmary. Pearlstein

didn't show, and the lost picture I'd drawn on the wall stayed with me only in mind, trapped in its own cell.

A few weeks later, my mind started playing tricks on me. It happens to cons. One night, I heard the "Dog." He was behind a closed door at the end of the hall. His voice was soft, and I couldn't make out the words. Then it was gone. Days later, in the middle of the night, the lights on low, I heard him taking a piss. I knew I couldn't see him, and I didn't try. The next night, he came standing in the shadows, just outside the bars, maybe five feet back near the opposite wall. Just an outline, but I knew he was wearing a tank top, tight jeans. I knew, too, the shape of his lats, the curve of his delts and biceps. He stood there, motionless, silent, and then he was gone before I could think to call out to him.