

Margo Berdeshevsky

For Flame And Irresistible

A boy with a cart is giving away cut branches, their exciting adolescent eruptions of unopened blossom pink, oh, I desire one. & I desire me. & I want to know that woman, Annie.

Annie was is was is giving away her flaming copper locks, all her opened blossom pink, always did, always will, but no one's buying. Into the tender erotic saleable defended shine of passed-by-now like second-round marked-down maybe scuffed spike heels & fading eye-bright, her tight pants stand. High, or ugly, or don't-get-fat-now, do-it-drums, perfumed, in all her creases.

No one's buying. The powder breath & push-ups mirror-punched to hot & out-there scary baby – isn't working.

Singing? Her shoulders stiffen elegance into an alto lyric blue hour star, before she wanders. Keep me company? she says. Are my pants wrinkled? she says. You're gorgeous, she says. *Sing with me?*

Well I want to tell her some about my own pink. A woman like her who knows some every-thing. A woman of the tempting kind, round heeled, old soul woman, you must-have-been-has-been-used-&-sperm-sheathed-silk-for-skin – high-cheeked & freckle-feisty low-growl mama-woman – all jaguar bitch, smiling, & me a wannabe movie star, out cruising, hey! She says come 'on over.

Then I let me entertain Annie in her own kitchen where – we're waiting for her son she's taught to please women, she says – the way only a mother who was astro-paid & dazzle-gorgeous can, she says. She's headed in her mirror like a bath. A diver for scars. & lines. & lips. To pass the waiting, I'll tell her all my Hollywood career, all my kindergarten sins. She does not love her wrinkled echo. You're beautiful, relax, she says. Be careful, she says. My son's gonna love you, she says. She likes me. Her son might like – enjoy me. Annie and her smooth skinned stud, we're so Venice Beach, see.

When I was twelve & had just grown tits, I tell her – it's my story of a summer on a shining hill, how I humped a boy my age on a bus & no one knew, & not my mother. I want to make the once upon a gorgeous whore laugh. Like me. Teach me what Hollywood can't, I'm a seeker of, a vagrant of, a woman trying to figure it out – how to be a wild woman. How to be a woman.

How, wide-hipped under my new breasts then, knife-waist, then, I was the blonde on a bus-crowd of black-eyed Croats. Bodies packed like plumped fowl for the block. How our necks strained over a little air & the nipples the mountains, how at road-curve speed, my own breasts nested, the boy & I noticed, adjusted by millimeters, nowhere to go. How he wore cotton shorts & I, a yellow dress, & the two of us studied him, swelled; near-wings; how somewhere on that bus was my mother.

This, I love, she says, her unlaced drug done like other women's diamond pins, all spread. Talk about *me*, she says, powdering, for cover. Then we cry.

I vamp until her son comes home & I can / will have him dimpled in the red room, in the seashell iridescence, in the moon's hot silent thighs, I'm thinking.

Patience, darlin'. *Patience is a virtue, possess it if you can, it's seldom inna woman, & never inna man.* I've dared – I tell her – I've swum in oceans that could kill me, I tell her, climbed that black-eyed Serbian boy on a bus, once, is she impressed? She's stirring coffee with a feather.

The window has its dealer & his shadow. It smells all California night-sage. In their house, it smells of woman. Her kimono's open dragons bare the same shiny as her flame-long waves – but they streak down strands of sadder grey. Her legs hang easy- dangling, freckled ankles, high-heel-smear. Know how many teeth have circled her strutting?

– Am I tired? Annie who has done it all, could scream. JFK and Sammy Davis had her red hair in their fingers. She's peeling grape skins. How high a tag her

daughter gets, how *chic* you have to – how muscled *chic* & how goddamn street-treat dazzling! Well what if I'm not? *I'm not*. But I'll get whales tonight, watch & see, sweetie. Whales! So maybe they rather have, but lookit' how they always tongue her flaming, how they always say, you're the only, only Annie & she twitch-shine-shows her teeth that – she struts her thin tall hips that – her sharp pink knees that – wiggle until they love her. Only sad she isn't quite, so maybe not as – maybe more like – But Annie! No one's screaming. Only Annie. Jesus.

She coulda-been a would-be movie star like me, no, lookit', this was way more joy. Un-pitiful. Did she say how she kidnapped the real Beatles once, to get them on an isle in Fiji? Start a race of new humans cause lookit' us! Instead they gave her tickets & cold cash – instead she went to Amsterdam & Monaco & played for a queen & she promised her kids they'd be a sit-com hit & be stars, & she's back in Venice Beach, a once upon a Southern gal on welfare has a way to cut the mustard, darlin'. Yes, she's low on, yes! This perfect-ten-red-queen is categorically cashed-out, lookit', the tender saleable erotic & defended stare, dares saints. Scared?

Passed by like second-round mark-down so maybe scuff spike heels, the fade to grim's some sad stuff – sweetie. No one's screaming. Once the only, only, only Annie was bedded in Monaco! See this sizzle-smart stare and sunset hair? You just do it like you love it to death, see, that works, my sweetie.

Who will mother Annie? – If I never get to toy with her golden fleshed son –

But now, in the slow screen door, stands a torso who has learned how number one stands, from his mama. You're irresistible, darlin'. Come on in. She's ready.

He ignores her. Kneels to me. In the slow black glaze of California star-gate, the red-haired boy can have my soul, my skin, my money. Kiss me 'til she turns out a bulb, like a movie. He's learned everything a woman can teach a boy like him, I can tell. Or must I teach him how to love his mother?

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