

李昂：有曲線的娃娃

Curvaceous Dolls

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SHE HAD yearned for a doll—a curvaceous doll—ever since she was a little girl. But because her mother had died and her father, a poor man, hadn't even considered it, she never got one. Back then she had stood behind a wall every day secretly watching a girl who lived in the neighbourhood carrying a doll in her arms. The way the girl left her doll lying around surprised and confused her; if she had a doll of her own, she reasoned dimly, she would treat it lovingly, never letting it out of her sight.

One night as she lay in bed clutching the sheet to her chest, obsessed with the idea of a doll, she figured out a way to get one that she could hug as tightly as she wished. After digging out some old clothes, she twisted them into a bundle, then cinched it up with some string about a quarter of the way down. She now had her very first doll.

The ridicule this first doll brought down upon her was something she would never forget. She recalled it years later as she lay in the warmth and comfort of her husband's embrace. She sobbed until he gently turned her face toward him and said in a relaxed tone of voice that was forced and revealed a hint of impatience: "It's that ragdoll again, isn't it!"

Just when it had become the "ragdoll" she couldn't recall with certainty, but it must have been when she told him about it. One night, not terribly late, he lay beside her after they had finished, still somewhat breathless, while she lay staring at the moon's rays streaming in through the open window and casting a fine net of light at the foot of the bed. She had a sudden impulse to reveal everything, to tell him about her first doll; and so she told him, haltingly, blushing with

embarrassment, how she had made it, how she had embraced it at night in bed, and how, even though her playmates ridiculed her, she had refused to give it up. When she finished, he laughed.

“Your very own ragdoll!”

Maybe that wasn't the first time anyone had called it a “ragdoll”, but he had certainly used the word that night, and his laughter had hurt her deeply. She failed to see the humour in it, and telling him had not been easy. He could be pretty inconsiderate sometimes.

She never mentioned the doll again, probably because of his mocking laughter, and from that night on she began sleeping with her back to him, unable to bear facing his broad, hairy chest. Although it was the same chest that had once brought her solace and warmth, she now found it repulsive. It seemed to be missing something, although she couldn't say just what that something was.

Later on, her nightly dreams were invaded by many peculiar transparent objects floating randomly in a vast greyness, totally divorced from reality yet invested with a powerful life force. She seldom recalled such dreams, and even when she knew she had been dreaming, they vanished when she awoke.

It was a familiar feeling, the realization that she had obtained something without knowing what it was, and it worried her and drove her to tears. She often wept as she lay in her husband's arms, and he invariably blamed the ragdoll. But it's not the ragdoll! she felt like shouting. The ragdoll had disappeared that night, never to return. But she couldn't tell him, maybe to avoid a lot of meaningless explanations.

The dreams continued, troubling her more than ever. She would sit quietly for hours trying to figure out what the floating objects were, but with no success. Occasionally she felt she was getting close, but in the end the answer always eluded her. Her preoccupation took its toll on her husband; after being casually rebuffed in bed a few times, he grew impatient, and when he realized that things were not going to get better, he decided to take her to see a doctor. By now she was fed up with his bossiness and the protector's role in which he prided himself, but her dreams had such a strong grip on her that she finally gave in.

On the way, the oppressive closeness inside the bus made her regret going. She had no desire to open up to a doctor, nor did she think a doctor was the answer. As she looked over at her husband, a single glance from him convinced her that it would be useless to argue. Slowly she turned away.

Someone brushed against her. Glancing up, she saw a pair of full breasts, whose drooping outline she could make out under the woman's blouse. Her interest aroused, she began to paint a series of mental pictures, imagining the breasts as having nipples like overripe strawberries oozing liquid, as though waiting for the greedy mouth of a child. Suddenly she felt a powerful urge to lean up against those full breasts, which were sure to be warm and comforting, and could offer her the sanctuary she needed. She closed her eyes and recalled the time she had seen a child playing with its mother's breasts. If only she could be those hands, enjoying the innocent pleasure of fondling a mother's soft, smooth breasts. Her palms were sweaty, and she wondered what her hands might do if she kept this up much longer.

Feeling a strong arm around her shoulders, she opened her eyes and found herself looking into the anxious face of her husband.

"You're so pale," he said.

She never learned how she had been taken off the bus, recalling only the extraordinary comfort and warmth of her husband's arm. She leaned up against him in the taxi all the way home, gradually reacquainting herself with his muscular chest. But she couldn't stop thinking about those breasts, so soft and smooth, there for her to play with. If only her husband could grow breasts like that on his chest, with drooping nipples for her to suck on! In a flash she realized what was missing from his chest—of course, a pair of breasts to lean on and provide her with sanctuary.

Later on, to her amazement, the objects in her dreams began to coalesce. Those unreal and disorderly, bright yet transparent objects took on concrete form with curves and twists: two oversized, swollen objects like resplendent, drooping breasts; beneath the translucent surface she could see thick flowing milk. It's a woman's body, a curvaceous woman's body! she wanted to shout as the astonishing realization set in.

When she awoke, she experienced an unprecedented warmth that spread slowly from her breasts to the rest of her body, as though she were being baptized by the endless flow of her own milk as it coursed placidly through her body. Overwhelmed by such bountiful pleasure, she began to moan.

When she opened her eyes and glanced around her she saw that her husband was sound asleep. In the still of the night the moon's rays swayed silently on the floor beneath the window like a pool of spilled mother's milk. She began to think of her second doll, the one made of clay. Since her first doll was called the ragdoll, this one ought to be known as the clay doll.

The idea of making a clay doll occurred to her one day when she had felt a sudden desire to hold the neighbour girl's doll. She had approached her, not knowing how to make her desire known, and after they had stared at each other for a few moments, she reached out and tugged at the doll's arm. The other girl yanked it back and pushed her so hard she fell down. Her cries brought the girl's mother out of the house, who picked her up gently and cradled her against her breasts to comfort her.

She had never touched anything so soft and comfortable before. She didn't know what those things were called, but she was instinctively drawn to them and wanted to touch them. After that, she lost interest in her ragdoll, since it lacked those protruding, springy objects on its chest and could no longer afford her any solace. She thought about her mother. It was the first time in years that she had truly missed her mother, who had left no impression on her otherwise, but whose bosom must have offered safety, warmth and a place to rest.

The feeling returned: she longed to tell her husband about her clay doll, but then she recalled how he had laughed before, a humiliating laugh without a trace of sympathy, the sound coming from the depths of his broad chest, ugly and filled with evil. As she turned slightly to look at her sleeping husband, from whom she felt alienated and distant, a vague yet profound loneliness came over her, and

she desperately missed her clay doll.

It had been raining then, and the water was streaming down the sides of a mound of clay near where she lived. She regularly went there with the other children to make clay dolls, but hers were always different from theirs. She moulded small lumps of clay onto their chests, then worked them into mounds that jutted out. Most of the time she rubbed their bodies with water until they took on a silky, bronze sheen, glistening like gold. She fondled them, wishing that someday she could rub real skin as soft and glowing as that.

In fact, her husband's skin, which also had a bronze sheen, was as lustrous as that of her clay dolls. When she reached out to caress his body her hand recoiled slightly when she touched his hairy chest, and she wished fervently that a pair of soft breasts were growing there instead! Moved by a strange impulse, she unbuttoned her pajama top and exposed her breasts, full like a married woman's, and let them rest on her husband's chest, praying with unprecedented devotion that her breasts could be transplanted onto his body.

The weight of her heavy breasts on his chest woke him, and with an apologetic look in his eyes, he embraced her tightly.

Whenever she did something like this she had no desire to explain herself, so he would just look at her apologetically and she would calmly accept what he did. But each time his chest touched her breasts, she felt a strange uneasiness, and a peculiar shudder, tinged with revulsion, welled up from the hidden depths of her body. At times like this she felt that the man on top of her was nothing but an onerous burden, and she was reminded of old cows in her hometown, which stumbled along pulling their heavy carts, swaying helplessly back and forth.

She couldn't imagine that she would ever be like an old cow, wearily and dispiritedly bearing a heavy burden that could never be abandoned. Her husband's body had become a pile of bones and rotting flesh that made a mockery of his robust health, although it was slightly warm and exuded an animal stench. It was an instrument of torture that made her feel like she had been thrown into a wholesale meat market.

She began to experience a mild terror; the concept of "husband" had never seemed so distant and fragmented. Before they were married, she had often stroked his shoulders through his shirt with something approaching reverence. Though powerful, they retained some of the modesty and stiffness characteristic of virgin men. They could be called young man's shoulders, not those of a grown man; yet despite the stiffness, the masculine smoothness of his well-developed muscles intoxicated her. After they were married, whenever she stroked his shoulders she noticed how all the roughness and sharp edges had disappeared; they had become a soft place where all her cares and doubts melted away. She then sank into a new kind of indulgence, a feeling of nearly total security that became purely physical.

Her mild terror helped her renew her love for her husband's body, and although she was partially successful in this regard, she knew that this renewal would not last for long, and that someday a new weariness would set in to make him repulsive again. The only foolproof way to avoid that was for him to grow a pair of breasts to restore the novelty and security she needed so desperately.

The following days were spent in constant prayer and anticipation of the time when breasts would grow on her husband's chest, there to await the hungry mouth of a child.

How she wished she could be that child's mouth, sucking contentedly on her mother's breasts just as she had once rubbed her lips against the breasts of her clay doll, a form of pleasure so satisfying it made her tremble. She still remembered the times she had hidden in an underground air-raid shelter and covered her clay doll's lustrous skin with kisses. She was like a mole wallowing in the pleasure of living in an underground burrow that never sees the light of day. She derived more gratification from this activity than any father, any neighbour girl's doll, or any neighbour girl's mother could ever have provided.

One question remained unanswered: had there been a struggle the first time she kissed the clay doll? She recalled the time she had raised one of her clay dolls to her lips, then flung it to the floor and shattered it, leaving only the two bumps that had been on the chest looking up at her haughtily.

But she never had to worry about being discovered in her underground shelter; she felt safe in that dark, empty space deep underground. Besides, kissing her clay doll like that was perfectly proper; there was nothing to be ashamed of.

How she wished that her home had a cellar, a room unknown to anyone else, or some dark place where she could hide. But there was none—the place was neat, the waxed floors shone, and there were no out-of-the-way corners. She was suddenly gripped by an extraordinary longing for her hometown, where the vast open country and sugarcane patches provided an infinite number of hiding places where no one could ever find her. She missed it so badly and so often that the thought brought tears to her eyes.

She finally decided to tell her husband that she had to go back home. He lay there holding his head in his hands, frowning.

"I can't for the life of me figure out where you get such ideas. Didn't you say you'd never go back to that god-forsaken home of yours, no matter what?" he said contemptuously.

"That was before, things were different then," she said earnestly, ignoring the impatience in his voice. "Now all I want is to go home, really, I just want to go home."

"Why?"

"No reason."

"Do you think you can?"

"I don't know," she answered, suddenly losing interest and feeling that defending herself was both meaningless and futile. It was all so ridiculous that she turned away.

"Are you angry?" He gently put his arm around her.

"Not at all," she said.

She was genuinely not angry. She let him draw her close, but when her back touched his flat chest, the image of those vast sugarcane patches flashed before her, until the bed seemed surrounded by them, as far as the eye could see. "He has to grow a pair of breasts, he just has to!" she thought to herself, in fact, said it very

softly, although he was so intent upon unbuttoning her pajama top that he failed to notice.

As in the past, his hands made her feel unclean. She had always believed, although somewhat vaguely, that the hands fondling her breasts ought to be her own and not his. The weak light in the room barely illuminated the outline of his hands, which she allowed to continue fondling her breasts. It was funny that she was aware of his hands only when they were in bed together.

But it hadn't always been like that. When she first met him, his hands had represented success and achievement; like his chest, they had brought her contentment and security. Then once they were married, his hands had brought her unimaginable pleasure. And now all she could think of was how to escape them. The foolishness of it all made her laugh.

She knew that this was inevitable, that all she could do was pray for him to grow a pair of breasts. For the sake of domestic tranquillity and happiness, she had to pray with increased devotion.

From the beginning she knew that in a unique situation like this simply kneeling in prayer was hopeless. A more primitive kind of supplication was called for, a thoroughly liberating form of prayer. And so, after her husband left for work in the morning, she locked herself in the bedroom and pulled down the shades, stood in front of the full-length mirror and slowly undressed herself. As she looked at her reflection in the slightly clouded mirror she fantasized that she was being undressed by an unknown force. She knelt naked on the cold hardwood floor, which was warmed by no living creature, put her palms together in front of her, and began to pray. Invoking the names of all the gods she had ever heard of, she prayed that a pair of breasts like her own would grow on her husband's chest. She even prayed for her own breasts to be transplanted onto his body. If the gods would only answer her prayers, she was willing to pay any price.

She derived immense pleasure from her prayers, and wherever her limbs touched the icy floor she got a tingling sensation like a mild electric shock. She looked forward to these sensations, for they made her feel more clean and pure than when she lay in bed with her husband, their limbs entwined. She began to pray in different postures, sometimes that of a snake wriggling on the floor, at other times a pregnant spider, but always praying for the same thing.

Her husband remained ignorant of what was going on, so everything proceeded smoothly, except that now a strange creature began to creep into her prayers; at first it was only a pair of eyes, two long ovals, their colour the dense pale green of autumn leaves that have withered and fallen. In the dim light of the room they gazed fixedly at every part of her naked body with absolute composure and familiarity. She took no notice and remained on the floor, where she laid bare her womanly limbs. Those eyes, expressionless and filled with a peculiar incomprehension, watched her, but since the creature's very existence was dubious, it had no effect on the fervour of her performance. She embraced the icy floor and kissed it with the vague sense that she was embracing a lover sculpted out of marble.

The pale-green eyes continued to keep watch, although now they were filled with cruelty and the destructive lust of a wild animal. At some point she discovered

with alarm that she had fallen under the spell of the frightful sexual passion in those eyes, which she now believed belonged to a half-man, half-animal shepherd spirit sent down by the gods in answer to her prayers; moved to the point that she felt compelled to offer up her body in exchange for what she sought, she opened up her limbs to receive that mysterious man-beast. Under the gaze of those eyes, she lay back and exposed herself to their enshrouding vision. She had completed a new rite of baptism.

This may have been the moment she had been waiting for all along, for it surpassed her marble lover and her obsession with the hoped-for breasts on her husband's chest. She was rocked and pounded by the waves of a profound, unfathomable happiness, which also turned the pale-green eyes into a placid lake, on the surface of which they rose and fell in a regular cadence. Her happiness was compressed into a single drop of water, which fell without warning into the pale-green lake and spread out until every atom of her being had taken on a pale-green cast. After that she felt herself re-emerging whole from the bottom of the lake. When she reached the surface she discovered that she was a pale-green mermaid with hair like dried seaweed blown about by the pale-green winds. The water of the pale-green lake suddenly and swiftly receded, as darkness fell over everything and blotted out the pale-green eyes.

When she regained consciousness her first thought was that she had been defiled. Emerging from the chaotic spell of sexual passion, she slowly opened her eyes and was struck by the knowledge that her body, which she had always thought of as incomparably alluring, was in fact just another body; for the first time in a long while she realized that she was merely a woman, no different from any other woman, with neither more nor fewer womanly attributes. She lay on the floor, sobbing heavily and recalling the breasts she had hoped would appear on her husband's chest. An inexplicable sadness made her sob even more pitifully. She was living in a dream, an illusion containing vast, hazy, transparent and mysterious things, with no way to bring them all together. She knew there was no way, even though she had tried before, and even though she once believed she had succeeded; there was no way, she knew that, no way she could ever bring them all together.

She stopped sobbing. Numbly, vacantly and reluctantly she got to her feet and slowly, aimlessly got dressed, as she knew she must.

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She lay there, her arm gently wrapped around her husband's neck as he slept on his side. She felt safe, for the darkness around her was free of all objects; it revealed nothing but its own sweet self—boundless, profound and bottomless. She gazed at her husband's dark, contented eyes and smiled. She had known that sort of happiness before, and was consoled by the knowledge that it would soon be hers again. Feeling like a wandering child returning to its mother's warm embrace, she believed that any child who had come home was entitled to return to its

mother's breast. Gladdened by the thought of the pleasure awaiting her and her husband, she continued to smile.

She couldn't say how long the smile remained on her face, but it must have been a very long time. Since emerging from the vast emptiness of her dream, she had begun to love her husband's flat, manly chest with an uncustomary enthusiasm. She gave herself over to enjoying it and caring for it tenderly, for now she was relieved of her burden of uncleanness and evil. When her husband perceived this change in her attitude, he started to treat her with increased tenderness. And in order to assure her husband of her purity and rebirth, she began to want a child.

Her image of the child was indistinct. She had always avoided thinking of children, for they reminded her of her own childhood and caused her to experience overwhelming waves of pain. But in order to prove her ability as a mother and show that she no longer required a pair of mother's breasts for herself, she needed a child, whose only qualification was that it be a child, with no special talents nor any particular appearance; as long as it had a mouth to suck on her breasts and two tiny hands to fondle them, that was enough for her. Her only requirement for a child was that it be a child.

She told her husband of her decision. As he lay beside her he heard her out, then laughed derisively.

"You sure have some strange ideas!" he said.

His remark amused her. She could—in fact, she should—have a child. Which meant that *he* was the strange one. She realized for the first time that her husband could be unreasonable and think illogically. The idealized vision of her husband, who had always been the epitome of correctness and reason, began to dissolve, and she knew she could now dismiss that rational inferiority she had once felt; all she needed now was to await the birth of her child.

Her husband did not share her enthusiasm and was, in fact, decidedly cool to the idea. But she took no notice, intoxicated with the happy prospect of becoming a mother. She enjoyed standing naked on the icy bathroom floor and playing with her swelling, full breasts, pretending that it was her child's hands fondling the objects that represented absolute security—its mother's breasts. Her pleasure brought her fantasies that the tiny hands of the child were actually her own and that the mother, mysterious yet great, was actually an endless plain whose protruding breasts were a pair of mountains poised there for her to lay her head upon and rest for as long as she wanted.

Oh, how she yearned for rest; she was so weary she felt like lying down and never getting up again. Although the nightmares no longer disturbed her in their many forms, they still made indirect appearances. Late one night her husband shook her awake while she was crying and screaming in her sleep; her cheeks were wet with tears as he took her gently into his arms and comforted her. Deeply touched, she decided to reveal everything to him. More than anything else she wanted peace, complete and unconditional. So in a low voice she began to tell him about her clay doll, how she had made it and how she had played with its symbolic breasts. When she finished, he looked at her for a moment with extraordinary calmness, then reached out and held her icy, sweaty, trembling hands tightly in his warm grip.

A great weariness spread slowly throughout her body, and she closed her eyes from exhaustion. Her husband's attitude took her by surprise, for she had expected the same mocking laughter as before. But all he did was look at her with a strange expression on his face, a mixture of indifference and loathing, as though he were observing a crippled animal. She felt the urge to cry, but knew that the tears would not come; she felt like someone who had done a very foolish thing.

Maybe she had actually been hoping for her husband to react by mocking her again, for she remembered how he had laughed so cruelly when she told him about the ragdoll; the ragdoll had suddenly vanished from her dreams, and for the first time in her life she had known peace of mind. Now she was hoping he would laugh like that again to rid her of the clay doll, like amputating an unwanted limb to regain one's health.

She rolled over on her side, turning her back to the awkward look frozen on her husband's face, then closed her eyes and waited wearily for sleep to come.

In the haziness of her dream she was running on a broad plain, devoid of trees and shrubs, an unbroken stretch of flat grassland. She was running in search of far-off solace when she spotted two mountains rising before her, two full, rounded mounds standing erect in the distance. She ran toward them, for she knew that the solace she sought could be found there. But whenever she felt she had drawn near to them, they faded beyond her reach, even though she kept running.

She awoke and saw the moonlight at the foot of the bed, looking like a pool of mother's milk, and her heart was moved in a peculiar way. She yearned for those mountain-like breasts, and as her eyes began to fill with tears, she clutched a corner of the comforter and cried bitterly.

Suddenly, through her tears she saw something stirring in the surrounding darkness, rocking restlessly in the motion of her tears. Then, slowly it became visible in the form of a flickering thin ray of pale-green light. She sat up in alarm, shutting her eyes tightly and squeezing the tears out and down her cheeks, cold, as though she had just emerged from underwater. Then she opened her eyes again, and there lurking in the darkness were those eyes again, pale-green, cunningly long slits that were laughing with self-assured mockery. Oh, no! she wanted to shout, but she couldn't move. They stared at each other in the two-dimensional darkness, although she was sure that the eyes were slowly drawing closer to her. The pale greenness was growing crueler and becoming an approaching presence of overwhelming power. There was no way she could back off, nowhere for her to turn, and nothing with which she could ward off the attack. And all this time her husband slept soundly beside her.

She had no idea how long the confrontation lasted. The pale-green eyes stood their ground as they kept watch over her, sometimes revolving around her. The milky light of the moon grew denser, slowly creeping farther into the room. During one of the pale-green eyes' circuits around her, something else was revealed in the moonlight—the tail of an animal, covered with long silky black hairs, suspended lightly and noiselessly in the air. She knew what to do: she reached over to the table lamp beside the bed. The pale-green eyes did not stir; they kept watching her, smiling with consummate evil, as though they were looking at her with a slight cock

of the head. She touched the light switch with her finger, but she knew she lacked the courage to press it.

The pale-green eyes knew it too, and wilfully remained where they were, watching her calmly with a mocking viciousness. All she had to do was press the light switch to win the battle, but she knew she couldn't do it, she simply couldn't. The pale-green eyes also sensed that the game was over. They blinked several times, then started to retreat. And as they gazed into her eyes for the last time, there was an unmistakable hint that they would be back, that she could never escape them—for her there would be no escape.

From then on she often awoke from disturbing dreams late at night, only to discover those pale-green eyes keeping watch over her quietly from afar or floating past her; they seemed to be evil incarnate, and every time they appeared, her own past reappeared before her with a stabbing pain. Needing a liberating force, she began to wish even more fervently for a child.

She sought the sucking mouth of a child, for she knew that the only time the pale-green eyes would not appear was when a mouth was vigorously sucking at her breasts. She wanted the consoling feeling of rebirth that comes with a child's greedy mouth chewing on her nipples, knowing that it would be more wonderful than her husband's light, playful nibbling during their lovemaking. She wanted a child, one that could show the pale-green eyes that she had become a mother. In order to achieve her goal, she felt a need to turn to a supernatural power for help, and that was when she thought of her wooden doll.

She no longer derived any stimulation from stroking her husband's body or from the imaginary breasts that had once preoccupied her. The chest that had filled her with such longing was now nothing more than a mass of muscle, flat and completely ordinary. As she recalled the breasts she had once hoped to find on his chest, she was struck by how comical and meaningless it had all been. She knew that no one could help her, that she had to find her own way out.

She had searched, ardently and with an ambition rooted in confidence, for a pair of breasts that belonged to her alone, not distant and unattainable like those on the neighbour girl's mother. Finally, in an abandoned military bunker, she had found a wooden figurine of a naked woman with pointed breasts, two even, curvaceous mounds on the doll's upper torso. This was the first time she had truly appreciated the form of those breasts she loved so dearly. Her clay doll's chest had been adorned only with shapeless bumps. As she fondled the exquisitely proportioned curves of the wooden doll she felt a heightened sense of beauty and a reluctance to stop.

Standing in front of the full-length mirror bare to the waist, she examined her own full breasts, finding them so alluring that she had a sudden yearning for them. Crossing her arms, she fondled them until they ached. She longed for them, she longed for those soft and lovely, yet dark and shadowy lines, she longed to rest her head on them, she longed to chew on those delightful nipples. She bent her head down toward them, only to discover that they were forever beyond her reach.

She would never forget the first time her lips had touched the nipples of the wooden doll and how much pleasure that had brought her. Those tiny nipples

seemed to exist only for her to suck on, and since she could fit an entire breast into her mouth, she could thus possess it completely. She prayed to the wooden doll for a pair of real nipples to suck on or for a tiny child's mouth to replace her own and suck on her breasts.

She wanted a mouth that was devoid of sexual passion, and her husband did not fit the bill. So when the pale-green eyes re-appeared late one night, she climbed gently out of bed and began deftly unbuttoning her pajama top. As they watched her, the pale-green eyes appeared puzzled for the first time. She unfastened her bra and began to fondle her breasts. The pale-green eyes, quickly falling under her spell, moved toward her. Two long, gleaming fangs shone through the darkness. The taste of imminent victory was wonderfully sweet to her.

As the pale-green eyes drew nearer, the gleaming fangs grew brighter. She dropped her hands to her sides, exposing her breasts to the approaching eyes. She imagined those fangs biting on her nipples and bringing her the same pleasure as a child's tiny sucking mouth. Overcome by this exquisite pleasure, she began to moan.

The pale-green eyes were startled out of their trance. They quickly recovered their mocking attitude and retreated nimbly after a long stare that betrayed the remnants of sexual passion.

She believed that the pale-green eyes, with their primitive lust, were capable of bringing her happiness and release. She craved them, and in order to have them she had to do as they dictated. The vast sugarcane fields of her hometown spread out around her in all directions, layer upon layer, dark and unfathomable.

She knew that there would be countless pale-green eyes staring at her in the heart of the sugarcane fields, that there would be countless tails stroking her limbs, that there would be white feathers filling her vagina, and that there would be gleaming white fangs biting down on her nipples. But it was a sweet, dark place, boundless and eternally dark, a place where she could rest peacefully, a place where she could hide. She longed for all of this, she longed to possess it all, and nothing else mattered. She yearned for her hometown and for the sugarcane fields where she could hide. She shook her husband awake.

"I want to go back," she said with uncharacteristic agitation. "I want to go home."

The sleepiness in her husband's eyes was quickly replaced by a totally wakeful coldness. "Why?"

"Just because."

"You have to give me a reason."

"You wouldn't understand."

"Is it because of those damned dolls of yours?" he asked in an intentionally mocking tone.

"Since you already know, yes, that's it."

Her frigid indifference enraged him.

"Haven't you had enough?" he said angrily. "I forbid you from going."

"Do you think I really *want* to go back? I'm telling you, I have no choice, there's nothing I can do. I have to return."

She shut her eyes slowly, wishing she hadn't brought up the subject in the first

place. Dimly she sensed that somewhere in the illusory, distant dreamscape the little girl's mother's breasts had exploded for some unknown reason, and a thick white liquid began to seep slowly out of them like spreading claws, snaking its way toward her. In her bewilderment, her first thought was to run away, but she discovered that she was drawn toward the thick white liquid, which was trying to detach her limbs from her body and suck them up into its cavernous mouth. Her feet were frozen to the spot. The meandering liquid drew closer and closer to her, until it was at her feet. It began to creep up her body, and she could feel the snakelike claminess and springy round objects wriggling on her skin, as though two dead breasts were rubbing up against her. The liquid climbed higher and higher, until it reached her lips, and just as it was about to enter her mouth it suddenly coiled itself tightly around her like a snake. The feelings of suffocation and pain she experienced were eclipsed by an immense sense of joy.

She knew that the stream of white liquid would never enter her mouth, and that she would always be searching and waiting. Yet she wanted to seize it, for she believed that it offered her the only hope of attaining a kind of solace, a truth that would allow her to offer up everything in tribute. In the dim light, she set off on a search, not concerned that her husband might oppose her, for she was convinced that this was her only way out.

When she opened her eyes he was gazing at her, his eyes filled with remorse.

"Work hard at it, no matter how long it takes, and someday it will happen to you."

"Maybe," she thought, "but not if I go about it your way. I have to do it my own way." But that was a long way off. She leaned gently against his chest, recalling a naked mannequin she had once seen in a display window. "I'll possess her someday, and maybe I'll call her my wax doll!" she said to herself softly.