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Owen Merth

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Imipolex Press
P.O. Box 600548
Dallas, TX 75360-0548

<http://www.slowstudies.net/imipolex-press/>

imipolex.press@gmail.com

GET EXCITED MOTHERFUCKER
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For example, “you haven’t shaved in a week!” and gingham shirts and waxed backs and all of a sudden you’re a man instead of a person. For example, you remember what a burning haystack looks like and how some people are convinced to die via show tune. They almost pulled your number from the show but rules are rules. *Reader’s Digest* of what you think you know, now. Memory and history burnt to a crisp. Midnight cliffside haystack ride. Again and again a concrete spin or else you’re old enough to know a couple of good places for hiding while you live. These are the rules, but before rules come promises, and before promises come surprises, for example: “I will always love you once certain conditions are met.” Or: “I am pretty sure that heat-seeking missile is not my heat-seeking missile. I don’t even know what I’m supposed to know.” Whatever it is, flush it down the toilet. You learn to live with your correspondence course mind-set. Miles and miles of velvet curtains and a few years waiting on a happy death, singing ALL THE JOY IN MY LIFE IS GONE BUT ON THE OTHER HAND SO ARE YOU, subtitled WAIT WAIT WAIT WAIT WAIT, a psychomotor tailspin. Let’s scratch that let’s have today today and heavy metal tomorrow, singing what are you made of, singing plus OH NO I JUST FOUND THE KEY TO YOUR HEART. Testimony, by itself, is not enough. Gospel assists but gets wasted, surplus true

believers wandering into traffic. You saw yourself business casual five days a week “whether by accident or design” but there’s not enough polish, discounts, false lawns, white teeth, and a statement of fact is, by itself, never enough. And what are you going to wake up to tomorrow? SAY IT AIN’T SO. And the rest of your life is an understatement. And love songs are maybe forever. Lifeboats and mash notes plus luxury nonsense engendered by pomp and circumstance. People who need people. People who get squared away in a hurry. People who holler long division on TV and punch themselves in private. A huge dollop of “do this because it’s good for you, and for your family, and for the country, and for God.” Bless this mess you made in the name of God. *Love American Style* in recommended daily doses. A glimpse of the lovers entangled reveals you don’t get smarter when you get older, you only get more crooked and begin to leak. Better to sleep, leave it in the compost as wish fulfillment, better to break sleep into four equal parts, an unfamiliar bed for each. Better than a face you can usually trust. Better than a lick and a promise or a steel wool heart. Pleasure, leisure, pleather and legislative ways to get your kicks. A day on the belts, a paunch brigade, best measures for bears on the benches working inches. Smart enough to have said no once but not twice but yes this is the rest of your life, a nod and a wink and a

hitch in your acceptance speech where you first lived and almost got caught. Sing a song of sixpence and give it your best guess as to the trajectory, a day on the belts, if you remember to say anything sing low speak up and just say yes, say you'll never get caught, say you would if you could. SING A SONG like a caress, like witch hazel proffered, like a stumbledrunk night out on the town. Index of rolodexes of pharmacologists and phenomenologists and fun and games minus the fun and games. The thoughts don't. Tomorrow, clatter with the thunder of can't or won't. Will not never learn. Have never. End of thought. Begin again with public restrooms. Sign off on the instructions and belly up, breathing the last breath of. The world of. You started this by bringing up the future. Village idiot voyages into the interior. The thoughts don't. The present doesn't. Did not ever, never went into the night costly and ghostly minus the actual ghost, the thing itself instead of the metaphor, not can't nor won't nor lazy fun nor endless font of purposeless stuff. Say this: "I just had to get that shit-talk off my chest." Say this: "Sayonara, assholes." Save for later the instead-of-regret. Enforced normalcy or else a smear, a stain, erased. You don't and have not. Lock-step the instead-of-stoic-resignation. Knives out. Sing a song of what makes madness work so well, stop imploring everybody to be tense, stop doing that thing with your face. And

what else. And what else. Is there. Last minute savior, brass ring, guest list. Your best guess. Your uninvited skill set. Left to the wilderness, the wilderness follows you around, the wilderness follows you home. Sing a song of breadcrumbs, of compound verbs and rain delay. It'll all come out in the wash if the wash ever arrives, comes home, stays put. Wilderness governed by rules written by lobbyists. Don't look over either shoulder but face north and bite your tongue against personal early frost. Simple instructions given to the secret society. Get out of bed, get mean again. Get out of your house and wander, think about the sour twist to your face, about how to win and what things mean. What things mean is the wilderness that follows you around. This or that is or isn't anything to get worked up about. Getting worked up is half the point. This thing is our thing, this thing is your thing. Go West and use your face for the forces of good and burn your fingers snuffing the votive candles. Crime scene scenarios hunt you down in the suburbs, use your toothbrush, lose your sleep. Get lost to stay lost to stay aloft. Last shoved pill a mother's little helper, anxiolytic for the rest of what constitutes the best of times, some ghosts on your CV and an expensive pop. Now even the night is black velvet verdant and you still don't know who you really are. You bite your knuckles or your tongue. The dinner party dialogue was explicative but merely local. Let's

take a step back and map things out before we retreat to the 1950s. Let's don't and say we did. Let's have a laugh; you have to laugh, it's all you were left with. The foundation is loose and the windows all face west. You tried your hardest to insinuate yourself into sentences as a plot device but instead you're still a landscape, a backdrop, a harmless forest fire. Means and ways of you sneaking around in the wet black. An heirloom made out of a knife in the back. Cultural criticism of true grit. A gift for something, for fighting, having both loved and lost, now put out to part-time pasture. God-given gift for leaving before the Hollywood ending. For saying semi-permanent goodnight. Pots and pans instead of life-changing revelations. Pots and pans and friends and relatives thrown across the room. The guardrail stays more or less in place. Life lived according to a straw hat thought but on the other hand you should've been there. Say this: "You should've been a contender." It would or wouldn't have been all you were worth, dangling and sparking like a mirror-covered piñata. Your life has multiple centers of attention but you, you just need a pair of pants you can fall asleep in and a mortgaged home where memory gets coated with a fine dust of disbelief. Continuation requires a beginning, and you're still upstairs primping, the whole world is waiting, fingers crossed for you to lip-sync a song, grind out a floor show for your private army,