

Holding Pattern

Panel, high-low, floor, mix, defrost. Panel, high-low, floor, mix, defrost. Maybe if I keep reading the climate control dials on the dashboard, I won't feel the arm between my legs that isn't your arm. If I stare straight ahead, panel, high-low, floor, mix, defrost, they won't see I'm clenching my teeth and that my eyes are red-rimmed. If I hold still enough, maybe I won't feel the gearshift I'm straddling, squished between these two women, this gearshift that outvibrates my Hitachi magic wand, maybe I won't wince at the arm that hits my breast every time she shifts. In this dyke truck from hell, she says, "I don't sell it because I live in the mission." All dykes have the same excuse for keeping old trucks no matter what neighborhood they live in. Why can't they just admit that paint-peeling, rust-scraping, smog-causing trucks make them feel like shit-kicking bad asses? Maybe if I keep holding it in, my hand braced against the dash because there are no seatbelts and that's the only thing that'll save me in an accident anyway, panel, high-low, floor, mix, defrost, excuse-me accidental touches and jokes about road signs and now beginning the scenic route won't seem so heartbreaking. Because all of this, all of this, makes not having you even harder. And maybe, if I don't say anything, maybe if I keep my mouth shut tight, they won't hear me rage against their half-thawed TV-dinner conversation. They won't hear me mourn beige arrangements and Tang-tinged negotiations, won't hear me scream for anything that bites through my steel, slaps me silly, and sings as hard as I do. And they won't hear me cry out for you. If I hold still enough, the sides of my head a vice to keep the terrifying living things in, really it isn't them at all, panel, high-low, floor, mix, defrost, really it's you who broke my bland, stable platonica, you who stuck your fingers in but only so far, you who wants to be a fly on my wall but not in my bed, you who breaks down all my walls, ving me with the ruins of tough girl when I don't come as you fuck me, saying girl who looks out, saying look at me but don't see me, asking what it felt like when I thought I'd never see you again, you who left a bruise the size of a hoof print on the inside of my thigh. You, fuck you for making my pulse quicken at the scent of cigarette smoke. Fuck you for being a writer. Fuck you for being an amazing writer. Fuck you for being someone everyone knows. Fuck you for being in a screwed-up, non-monogamous relationship that got you this close to me and this far from me. Fuck you for moving the boulder that I didn't even know was holding everything in. Fuck you for showing me I was full to bursting when I thought everything was well contained. And fuck you for sticking your fingers in. Fuck you for sticking your fingers in. Panel, high-low, floor, mix, defrost. Fuck you for sticking your fingers in. And fuck you for pulling them out.