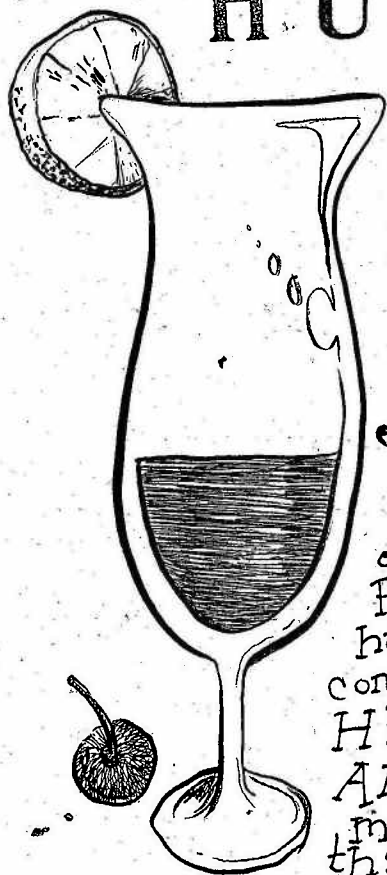


H U R R I C A N E



1 oz. Lemon juice
4 oz. Bacardi 151
4 oz. passion fruit syrup
Slice of Lime - cherry
(for garnish)
(just shake all ingredients
over ice)

"G R O W I N G

up, half the glasses in
our house came from
Pat O'Brien's. You drink
hurricane's when a storm's
coming, to tell it I LIVE
HERE, FUCK YOU, I
AIN'T LEAVIN'. And
maybe to get so drunk
that you believe all that.

I'm riding back to Jackson on the train and in a two-second flash I see her on the side of the road, straddling the rail of the bridge over Pontchartrain. I ain't worried she'll jump or anything like that. I see the box in her hands and I know what she's going to do, just what she always does when anybody leaves. She's throwing me in that old lake, throwing us in there too, mashing on that big old Jesus Nintendo reset button and I can feel that dirty water lick up around my neck, tickling my ears and then twirling up around my scalp. And I sink deep in the waters north of New Orleans.

O N E

I sort of know where she hailed from, but not really, some cracker town north of Birmingham. Her dad worked the strip mines, ripping coal from the ground an acre at a time. I met him once: he told me about drooling explosive pink slurry into eighty-foot deep holes. They fucked it up once and when it blew a big rock landed on his left leg and cracked it open like a chicken in three or four places, making it where he could never walk right again. Or do any kind of work. Or get up out of his chair.

He got his worker's comp, which is no substitute for decent pain pills, and proceeded to sit in front of a brand new RCA television and watch John Wayne movies on TNT and bitch about his wife and his daughters, and how they didn't clean the house the way it should be or something, not that he cared before he was suddenly crippled up and then got with God and then was a deacon or an elder or something, which is probably worse than being crippled.

Tulip hated to talk about any of this but it would come up when she talked about her sister. She talked about her the way you see guys talk about quarterbacks or some shit. *She wore these jeans, with the knees ripped out, like a video,* whatever that meant. She smoked Marlboro Reds because of her sister, who had died when she was real little, and she was

always threatening to go down to Barely Legal or Chris Owens and make some cash on the side, because that's how she said her sister did it when things got tight.

When we met she was living in this hotel on Tchoupitoulas. It wasn't very nice but she liked it, it was supposed to be an ex-coffee warehouse, and the floor had these wooden boards that flowed like waves through the room. The window opened up on a brick wall, which I thought was bullshit, and she thought was hilarious. She thought the weirdest things were funny, always taking jokes too damn far. When *Anchorman* came out she saw it three or four times at the movies, just watched it over and over, even got it on DVD later and tried to rig up a player to the hotel teevee, which didn't work, but she kept the tape anyway. Will Ferrell jokes in it about how his arms are guns, it's not funny but it's kind of gross funny because his shirt is off and he is chubby, and one night she went down to a place on Magazine and got AK-47s tattooed on the insides of her fucking arms.

If you don't know what AK-47s are, they are the types of guns the Russians used in Afghanistan during the 1970's, when they were trying to suppress an uprising by the indigenous peoples. They take 7.62 mm ammunition and they are damn straight deadly. They are automatic weapons in the assault rifle form and so are supposed to be illegal in America, although I have seen them at least four or five times since the storm, once right afterwards by a guy wearing a NOPD t-shirt although he didn't look like a cop at all (he had dreadlocks, which I am pretty damn sure is against the rules for cops to have).

So Tulip got these fucking things inked on her arms, she thought it was hilarious because of that movie and because I know about guns because of my dad, who is a weapons specialist for the National Guard (although he is not mobilized, he is also injured like Tulip's dad, which is sort of how I picked her up one night, but I do have 1 cousin in Iraq

and 2 cousins in Afghanistan, counting a cousin once removed even though Afghanistan isn't on the teevee).

I am not the hottest chick in the room but when I am done up right I can turn any goddamn head, boy or girl, and on the night I met Tulip I was actually trying to snag this boy that was bartending at the Balcony. He had this little bit of fuzz on his chin but was a real big Tom Waits fan, and had real delicate hands. God, but I love a baby college student who wants to be an artist. They are always so excited that you want to fuck them and even though it will not be that good and will end too soon when they drop out you will have a poem or a painting as a souvenir. That is better than you will get from any fucking marriage or shitass ring. You will get the fucking truth and guts of baby love spilled out onto paper about how much they can't live without you, or they have to hold you, or something amazing and making you feel like a goddess. I once had this senior at UNO I was going with write her thesis on my band and how our music was a new style of feminist transgressive. It isn't at all, I know what I'm doing and it's not that special, at least not if you have ever even heard one Ramones record, but to be treated as special is good enough.

So I was trying to impress him with some kind of music shit and talking about Les Pauls, which will more than seriously hypnotize your standard boy, and she walked into the room. And I know I sound like an idiot, like in some shit Jennifer Anniston movie or something terrible on teevee, but I swear the breath was knocked out of me. She was wearing a white button-down dress shirt with "Frustrated Artist" stenciled over the chest, and the little blonde hairs running down the inside of my arms stood straight up on end. She sat down at the end of the bar, and the Balcony, they have this terrible thing where they will throw all the busted mixed drinks and shots into a plastic tub at the end of the night, and they call it Jambalaya, and it's in this tub with a tap on it and a shot is two bucks, like three bucks cheaper than anything real.

