

The Inflating Uterus

I walk on the sidewalk, my left leg dragging behind me. Every day it seems to be something, today it is my left leg. With each step I reach back and pull my leg forward to make another step. It isn't useless entirely, my leg, it is just difficult to walk. It takes me many minutes to walk one block, two or three or even four times as long as someone who doesn't have a problem with their leg. My leg isn't the problem though, it is, but it also isn't. I can manage my left leg, it is one long object that extends from my body, it isn't really a part of my body so it isn't a problem, I can manage it.

I have just crossed a street when I see a stone on the sidewalk and want to have it, but because of my leg cannot reach down to get it. I stop walking, reach back to bring my left leg next to the right, look at the stone and want it. The stone is matte black and sits in contrast against the grey concrete of the sidewalk. You would think that I could lean forward, standing on my right leg, and use my left leg as a counter weight to reach down and pick up the stone, but I don't feel comfortable doing that. I fell one time, doing something similar, and don't want to fall again.

I would like to have that stone, I say out loud.

Why?, a man asks as he walks by.

Because, I would like to have it in my hand, I would like touch it.

Well, you should pick it up, another man says as he walks by.

I can't, I say looking at the stone.

Why not? asks another man as he walks by.

There are many men today, walking on the sidewalk.

I wake up the next morning and the first thing I say after I am standing, having pulled my left leg next to my right, is: *Today, I will listen to my back.* I bend over to touch my toes, but do not reach all the way. Balancing on my right leg, I hold my right shin. *Don't do that,* my back says. This is the first time my back has spoken. The first time I have said: *I will listen to my back.* I want to do this because I am tired of listening to my leg, it never makes sense, it is never clear; the messages always came out muddy, or the connection is not strong.

Why? I ask, *Why can I not touch my toes? It feels good.*

No, it doesn't, my back says.

I sit down and don't say anything. I look out the window and see a man walking by in shorts and shoes and a t-shirt. He looks happy. The forecast said it was going to be over 30 degrees today. The man passes the window and I lose sight of him.

I want to be blown up, my back says.

Well what is my leg going to think of that, I respond. *How will I walk?*

My leg will be fine, and I will be able to move just fine, my back says.

Backs don't walk, they don't have legs, I say.

I do, says my back.

What do you mean blown up? Do you mean blown up with dynamite? I ask, *I don't have any dynamite.*

No, not blown up with dynamite, I mean inflated, like a bike tire, or ball.

Oh. I pause, then: But how do I do that, how do I inflate you? There is nowhere to stick the needle.

Yes there is, my back says.

No there isn't, bodies don't have holes that can be used like that.

Bodies do have holes that can be used like that.

What kind of needle would I have to use?

You just use the same needle you would use if you were going to pump up a ball.

I think about this for a minute, and then another minute.

Where do I stick the needle? Do I stick it in my mouth?

No.

In my nose? Ear?

No.

Well, where else?

Think.

I don't want to.

Do it.

...in my vagina? Is that where?

Yes.

...

You have to stick the needle up pretty far though, it has to be long, you have to puncture the cervix. That is the only way it works. I want to feel like I have an inflated balloon inside me, my back continues, I want to feel like I am floating.

I want to feel like I am floating. That sounds nice, I want to feel like that too, I say.

Ok, my back says.

Ok, I say in return.

I stand up and take my eyes away from the window and bring them back inside. It takes a moment for them to adjust, at first everything just looks black, then the walls appear before me again, doors.

I go down to the basement to find the bike pump my dad gave my brother. He used to have a bike when he still lived here, and my dad really encouraged him to take care of it — grease the chain, pump up the tires, tighten the brakes, all the stuff you have to do to keep something in good condition. I find the pump and the needle and find some grease too, and go back upstairs.

Good, my back says.

The needle is a bit dirty so I wash it. It is quite long so I think it will work. Then I get the grease and cover my fingers in it and stick them inside me to make sure that everywhere is greased so that the needle will be able to fit. Then I take the needle and start to push it up my vagina and everything is fine, it goes in really well. There is only a little pinch and a drop of blood when it punctures the cervix. I had to bend over to get it in and now I stand up.

I'm ready, I say.

No, you have to attach the pump, my back says.

Oh, sorry, I forgot.

A drop of blood hits the floor and I look down between my legs.

It's fine, my back says.

I look at it a moment longer, not sure, and then start connecting the pump to the needle, I

get it connected really quickly.

I'm ready, I say again.

Yes, you are. Good job, my back says.

Thanks.

Ok, now start to pump, my back says.

How much? My brother always used to do his bike tires to about 80 or 90 pounds, does that sound good?

Yes, that seems about right, get started.

I do. I start to feel a slight pressure inside me.

I don't feel like I am floating, I say.

Just keep going, my back says.

But...

Pump.

I continue, the pressure increases. I don't feel like I will burst or explode, and it isn't entirely uncomfortable. I just feel stretched. I look down and see a light trickle of blood dripping down the hose of the pump. My back sees where I am looking and says: *It's ok*, so I keep going. At fifty pounds my torso is bent forward at a 45-degree angle. I thought I would bend backwards, if at all, but for some reason I am bent forward. *This is good*, my back says, *keep going*.

And so I do. At 90 pounds I am bent forward at a 90-degree angle.

I think I need to stop, I say, *I can't bend anymore, and I have a problem with my leg. I can't stand on it*.

Just two more pumps, my back says.

I pump twice more.

Perfect, my back says as I begin to float to the ceiling, ass up, *perfect*, my back says again. I quickly disconnect the pump so that I don't drag it up to the ceiling with me, or pull out the needle. I keep floating up and stop just short of the ceiling, float for a few minutes and then start to sink back down to the floor.

Good, my back says.

*

I can no longer walk now that my back is blown up. My leg isn't a problem anymore either, my leg was never the problem, it was, but it also wasn't. Now it really isn't the problem because I never have to use it. I move around by pushing off the ground with my right foot. I push a little bit and float for some feet and then softly come down and push off again. My torso is bent forward at 90 degrees and I keep it that way by pumping just a few pumps every day when I wake up. My vagina is rusted shut around the needle. I forgot to use grease for a few days and didn't take it out, and then when I did try to take it out it wouldn't budge. It is easier though because putting it in and taking it out every day was getting to be tiresome.

My back is proud of me, and tells me so every day. I picked up the rock the other day too, the black one that I wanted. Now that I am bent over and float all the time it was easy. I just floated above it for a while and when I floated down I just bent my right leg really deep before pushing off again and reached down and scooped it up.

My back said *I want to feel full, I want to feel really full* when I came back with the rock in my

palm. It was as black as I remembered and filled most of my palm. *Yes*, my back said, *I want to be full.*

I have been thinking about what my back said and I think I have figured it out, I can't wait to surprise my back the next time we see each other.