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Maddie De Pree

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Woke White Boys
Nonfiction • Maddie De Pree

I once had sex in a boy’s room with multicolored Christmas lights on the walls and shelves full of vinyls, and while I should have found this cozy, instead I found it depressing, and the boy put on a Connie Francis record, and there was a baggie of cocaine in the corner, and it was not my baggie of cocaine. He turned me onto my side and we fucked, and I looked at the record player and watched the needle skimming over the grooves of the vinyl as it played Who’s Sorry Now.

By the time he was finished, the record had begun to make that dull knocking noise, the sound of no more sound; and as I lay in his dirty bed, it occurred to me that I had made a poor decision. But I had gotten what I wanted; I had only gone home with him to make someone else mad.

Later that year I had sex with a different boy in a different place, and he wanted me to tie him up with black cord, which I did not want to do but did anyway; and when I waved him away the following morning, I thought, Thank God, I never have to hear from this person again! Before he left, he mashed his mouth against mine and whipped his tongue around like a dog’s, and I stood there with my eyes open and wondered, Why do people do this, why do we do anything at all.

I heard from him often the following summer, and though I didn’t answer his calls, he kept calling, mostly to ask if I would ever peg him, and why didn’t he receive more Tinder matches, and what are women so scared of when the world is full of nice men like him.

Before these boys was another boy, one who wanted me to explain things to him, like the word queer and the differences between gender and sexuality and sex; and when he saw my body, he said You’re so beautiful, you’re so hot, in a voice that sounded more dismayed than anything else. Afterward, he said that I was not dateable, for reasons that he did not fully understand; and as I walked home, I thought, I should have stolen something from his apartment on my way out.

When I flirted with women in front of this boy, he would become irate and then miserable; he would trudge away, and I wouldn’t go after him. But for some reason I loved him, would have tied him up with black cord if he’d wanted me to; but he never asked; he never asks.