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Black Wings

I want to know what it is like to be asexual. I read an article about the asexual movement and asexual rights and though I feel like a sexual person, I crave something else. In the mornings I sit down to think, but there is something that gets in the way, and I think it might be everybody else's sexualities. I have met someone and asked him if we can just read books together. To my surprise, he has agreed.

It is hot and humid tonight and we are reading *Lolita*. After we read for a while we take a bike ride, and when we are tired we get off our bikes and sit against a concrete wall. From where we sit I can see a small part of the ocean. This is what I think about the whole time we are sitting against the wall—not other people's sexualities, not *Lolita*, but about this small piece of the ocean.

Against the concrete wall we begin to read again and though I don't still think only of the ocean, it begins to enter the story of *Lolita*. I become aroused at certain points in the book. I hold his hand when this happens, and I think he can feel me through my hand.

A pair of black wings are left on the sidewalk in front of my house. At first I like seeing them there, as if someone has tried to communicate something to me; later they are ominous and I wonder what this person is trying to say. They are the size a woman would have if she had wings. Maybe a woman who was at a party

was wearing them, and when she got tired of carrying them on her back she left them here.

Then I see someone I used to know, and she tells me she is sorry she was ambivalent when we were having a relationship. "Why are you telling me this now?" I ask. She says she doesn't know. We are standing next to a pilot who is talking on his cell phone. Afterwards, he walks with me along the hot streets. No one is outside, except in one yard, where a group of people are playing badminton.

"Don't worry. Everyone is ambivalent," the pilot tells me. "I was ambivalent towards my wife."

"I'm not worried."

"She'll regret it."

The plants here are filled with water. The pilot touches one.

"I know."

My boyfriend and I kiss for the first time. Sometimes I feel like a piece of grass that is so weak it falls forward, or a computer someone has just dropped on the ground.

One night the pilot calls me and says he is walking next to the ocean. He will fly to China early in the morning.

"Where are you?" he asks.

"I'm also near the ocean." The waves break over a concrete wall.

"Are you still sad?"

When I get home, my boyfriend is leaning against my gate waiting for me. He tells me a story about his day.

"I saw a woman drop her child," he says.

"Did you do anything?"

"No."

"Do you want to?"

We stand against the gate, and then go inside the house to read. I sit on the couch listening to his voice.

It is difficult for me to concentrate, even though he is at a good passage. He reads one sentence and then I hear it again and again. *Last night we sat on the piazza, the Haze woman, Lolita and I.* I get up out of my body and walk around every part of the room.

I asked the woman who was ambivalent towards me if she would ever want to own a horse and she said no, but in my mind I had seen her riding a horse in a field. I never told her I saw her like this.

"How do you see me?" I asked her.

"What do you mean?"

"When you think about me."

"I just think that you're you."

"But what is that?"

"A person. A woman."

It's dark. I close the shutters and lie down on my bed on top of the sheets. My boyfriend is still reading, and now I hear very clearly what he says.

"Should I keep going?"

"Just a little while longer."

Every move I make is bigger than it really is. If I move my leg, there is something strange about it and everyone is able to see it. He lies down next to me on the bed, and when he moves he looks strange. His arm falls away from his shoulder.

I think about my boyfriend while I am in the bathtub, or when I am lying on my couch. I am always surprised at how long I can think about him. It doesn't seem healthy to think about him for a whole afternoon, especially since I see him everyday.

Once, when I was in China, I lay on a bed all day thinking about someone. Mostly when I was there I swam in a river, but on that day I lay around in bed. That night I got up and walked around the town. It was hot, and I didn't know anyone, and though it was a small town it was very crowded. I walked through those crowds, sometimes stepping into a small shop,