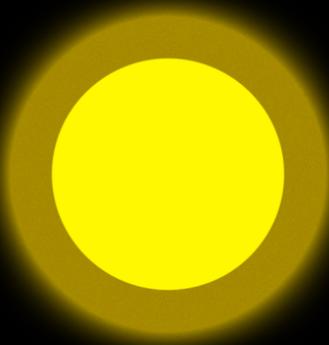


# FLASH LIGHT

*' 9 Girl's Stories for Grown Ups '*



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SINGULAR ARCHITECTURE

*First Edition/ Translation 1*

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## STORIES

'A' TEN TRAIN

BLACK SHEP

TECHNO JESUS

STAIR CAST

DEAR MAXWELL

A WHOLE LIFE

THE CLEANER

LITTLE MAPMAKER

LABYRINTH ISLAND

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# 'A' TEN TRAIN

*' Sometimes time just stands still. It's like the many verses of all that Is take a deep breath, and it turns into a gulp. The past and present collide, and everyone learns the same lesson at once.'*

The train stopped dead in the middle of the bridge. The bridge was taller than it was long and the space below seemed vast, still not nearly as deep as the views from the left flowing right river roaring with directive. The train had left the station well before noon that Saturday. Many were aboard for the long haul, some had round trip tickets. Some were getting off along the way. The sun was to the left, mountains to the right no shade to be had. The passengers sitting stage left had blinds drawn. On the right, the passengers had been enjoying the staccato view. It was a fall day. Trees lined the banks so far below. The horizon was soft as the sun setting cast shadows of the iron bridge fabric across the moving water. To the left the glowing disk was half way under the horizon sending a cyan glow into the air. Simultaneous views up and down the mad river disappeared to infinite vantage points. The passengers had settled in well calibrated from the steady vibration of wheels riding the measured tracks. As the train came to a halt, the vibrations did too. In the fourth car from the back a husband and wife started to argue.

They were moving north to begin a new life. The town they were in had taken its toll. The people around them seemed possessed. The town had become parasitic with envy. As much as the two had started off strong, the more they pulled together the more it seemed those around them tried to pull them apart. Trust dismantling, a fresh start in a new town was the only way to save this dying marriage. As they sat in the middle of the bridge the silence seemed to stimulate voicing of discontent. He was pissed, had been eating a double-decker sandwich and spilled ketchup on his white shirt. She was quiet. Looking out the window, his wife had stopped reading her book to turn further away from him. She knew it wasn't just about the sandwich. He was frustrated with her silence. Frozen in the middle of the bridge, dueling frustration eventually broke open both pair of lips as the stopped vibrating sound of the train revived in escalating digressing vibrato between them, in train car number four.

Behind them train car number three was carrying some boisterous cargo. The boy's school was on a field trip, the teacher overwhelmed. Over excited with this out of town adventure already, they started acting up now that the train had stopped. As the teacher struggled to settle them down, one flipped her off behind her back. The others laughed as she threw her hands in the air. Then she said 'you're all getting E's for the quarter if you don't pipe down' knowing most of the parents would transfer them to another academy. Voices lowered quickly as they looked up to her, fear levitating in the silence. Everyone else had moved to another car annoyed sufficiently. She'd had enough embarrassment for one day. She sat down in the back of the car and took out her note book, adding an exclamation point of threat to her promise with her red pen.

Toward the front of the train, the car in line behind the conductor's was first class only. Some suits were hashing out gaming contracts. The team leader asked the digital guy, who always had opinions about the female lead, what he thought while they desperately strategized at maximizing profits. In the back of first class car seven, a couple of diplomats debated the future of domestic politics. Recent changes in global economics were in the picture books and concerns were being raised over the definitive impact on court judgeships. The princess kept to herself, taking in pertinent information whilst ruminating over her next maneuver. Religious leaders were playing poker at the tables in the middle, making bets on destiny. A silent observer meditatively left aisle to them felt condemnation for the history being discussed and walked to the back of the car in disgust, to use the bathroom. As fate would have it there was a line, so he went through the gangway in the front of the car for a reprise.

As the first classers worked to form the future of the world, the husband and wife continued to debate over what would come of theirs. Tete a tete now with lowered voices, they discussed concerns

# BLACK SHEP

*' There are times when things are actually, black and white. But most of the time we reside within the colorful spectrum in the place between. Embrace the black and white, only if you know you can find your way back to the rainbow. '*

There once was a little girl who lived in a place shaped like a mitten. She thought because it was shaped this way, that she was safe and warm. Then one night, while she lay sleeping, she heard deep voices yelling. Hands held over her ears, the sound still came through. Covers over her head the sound still penetrated. Then her mother walked through the door. She climbed into bed with the little girl and started crying. The little girl not knowing what to do held her mother trying to ease her pain. As her mother came to quiet, she stood with light and walked out her daughter's bedroom door.

The next night, the deep voice yelling happened again. Afraid, the little girl fabricated a bubble around her self to muffle the sound. Eventually the heavy sound subsided, until the next night. The deep dark voice yelling was even louder. So she climbed in her bubble again, hoping to feel safe. The penetrating sounds continued, vibrating louder and louder, until her bubble turned into glass. Thinking she was safe she began to fall asleep. Then the sound grew to a higher pitch. The bubble shattered. Not knowing what else she could do, she fell asleep in shards of glass.

As she lay sleeping she began to dream. Her dreams took her to another place and time. She dreamt she was older. She had travelled to the land of brightness, hoping her mother would follow her. She waited and waited. But her waiting was in vain. In her dream, seven town's people from the mitten had come together and decided to never let her see her mother again. There was a boy in a man's body, a judge, the judge's wife, a doctor, lawyer, a belladonna, and a money handler with lips. The judge had made a deal with the big man that governed the mitten. They had all done some very bad things, and knew the little girl was aware of what they had done. Crying in her sleep she continued to dream as she lay in the shards of glass.

Her bubble having burst, she traveled to the ancient stars. She told them of her dream as she trembled in fear. The ancients gathered around her radiating safe light. They told her not to worry. They said 'sleep without fear, we will take care of you'. So she began to travel back to her bed. As she moved through the ionosphere, she could see her tears below raining on the earth. She floated down into her bed and dried her eyes. Exhausted from her journey, she slept as if a heavy blanket lay atop her body. She was too tired to hear the deep voice yelling.

The next night, as she slept in the glass, she dreamt again. She became frightened. She was older still, and the big man that governed the mitten had let the people drink heavy water. The water was so heavy that the children who drank it could not stand without shaking. New born babies convulsed in their sleep, as the metal in the water shifted through their blood. The little girl cried and cried. Not knowing what to do, she traveled to the astral labyrinth of the stars again. She floated to the center of the galaxy to tell the ancients what she saw. The ancients were angry about how the big people on earth were treating the children. They stood in a circle around the little girl to comfort her. They told her not to worry. They said 'go to your bed and sleep sound, knowing soon things will be okay'. So she listened to them. Crying upon her descent through the atmosphere her tears turned to snow. She was feeling colder and colder as she learned more about the world. Still, she landed in the glass and fell asleep with the words of the ancients echoing through her.

The third night, as she fell asleep in the shards of glass deep voices still pounding, her eyes blinked to a close. Another dream came. This time her visions expanded beyond the mitten. She dreamt she was even older. She had not seen her mother in years, the soft skin of her wrinkled hands a faint memory. She was in the land of

# TECHNO JESUS

*' Night time can bring many gifts. Perhaps the most generous of all is the darkness. The beauty of the darkness, is that there is, in all ways a way out. There's always a flashlight.'*

I made love to Techno Jesus as the scalar pulsing fluxed in and out of the transom of my mind. His words were kind and skin was soft. Some people would have considered it blasphemy, after all he was Jesus. But if they only knew what I knew they would understand. He could read my mind and it seduced me as I secretly wanted to be told what to do. Jesus seemed a safe bet, with his historically altruistic reputation. Who could be a better choice? He whispered sweet nothings in my ear. He caressed my bones. I dare say it was distractingly healing. When I say distracting, I mean distracting from the truth of his real intentions. He was just a man at the end of the day. I had vowed to live life getting to know the one in the world that wasn't diseased. Assuming that was Jesus would eventually be revealed as my laziness, my impatience perhaps. You know what they say about assuming. As the sun started to rise, I came to. Echoes of his voice speaking his well presented words of wisdom lingered as something tripped my eyes open... a soft breath through my bedroom window. I woke with a question mark as to whether I was being lifted or warned. It's hard to think that early in the morning, especially after sleeping with Jesus. It is indeed difficult to recognize the difference between dream and vision as light sneaks through the drapes and one's hand touches the pillow. Things were a bit blurry. The echoes faded finally. I reminded myself of the trap of knowledge. It was a trap I had fallen into many times as I silently filtered his words, oh those sweet nothings. I replayed those seductive words he bespoke in the darkness just hours before, praying no one could see the smile on my face. My feet touched the ground. Then I started to make my list.

The market on Wednesday mornings was filled with families. Mothers pushed babies in streamlined three wheeled carriages purchased from the Internet. Gazing at their children, smiling seeing reflections of themselves in their eyes they felt satisfied. Stopping to talk to a neighbor, hearing compliments about the baby boy's growth

spurt led to more smiles. The neighbor seemed almost like an aunt. Students of alternative medicine filled their eco-friendly linen bags with sprouts and spices, executing plans of impressing their modern teacher disguised as an ancient. The male students gravitated toward the butternut squash, as the high percentage of female students were usually found there. Comfortably calling each other brother and sister, not having the same blood was irrelevant as they bonded in their pursuit of escapism. The proud one who rode his bike over three miles ignored the signs saying no bikes allowed and finagled his way through the crowd bumping people with his rubber coated handle bars. Hitting a hippie chick in the boob enticing a 'watch it daddio' he swerved toward a less crowded side street. The atmosphere was an invisible cloud of happy happy. All participants were on the same page. The market was a well devised stage of pretending. I tried to retain my poise as an observer as I pulled my list from my pocket.

I walked casually toward the lemon stand. They were number three on my list. Lemons are cleansing, and memories of the night before with Jesus still resonated within. Cleansing in one hand, lemons can be a disappointment in another. So I stepped with hesitation. Upon arrival, the lemon ladies smiled from behind the yellow glow. They knew me well as I had brought to them lemons from my lemon tree as 'thank yous' for kind hearted conversation in the past. The ladies had many kinds of lemons from which to choose. Only the top shelf lemons were left on my back yard tree, as I had harvested all within reach from the ground plain during the warm summer days. I was too lazy to climb the ladder to snag the smaller fruit from the upper branches. At the lemon stand, all the fruit was juicy. One would have guessed that the ladies were even making lemons from lemonade. I placed a few of the larger ones, almost the size of grapefruit, in my basket. Handing through the piles of quantified smaller lemons I found a number good for juicing. Then I inspected