Chopsticks

Jason Arment*

*Iowa State University

Copyright ©2011 by the authors. Sketch is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress).
http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/sketch
Chopsticks
Jason Arment

I was helping haul an upright piano up a set of stairs. Frank was a friend of mine. Maybe friend is too strong a word. He was more of an acquaintance from work. I saw him a lot at the factory, mostly when I was coming off or going on shift. He wore a white lab coat with a pressed collar. I was never sure what he did, exactly.

Sometimes I would see him in the break room. He had talked about the job for his wealthy bedridden father earlier that week. Details of payment had been vague. I didn’t want to seem like I needed the money too desperately, so I didn’t pry. The shit I was snorting to keep me on my feet through overtime shifts wasn’t cheap. Finances were tight; sometimes it seemed like I was sprinting to stay in place.

I was now wondering if my words still bound me as I looked up at the steep rising stairs with memory of the piano’s heft from loading it in the truck. When I had agreed to help him I had no idea of the grandness of the piano or the steepness of the stairs.

We began moving the piano up the stairs, with him pushing as I pulled. Near the top I started to feel my arms and legs burning to the point of giving out.

“Are you ok, are you going to make it?” His words sailed over the piano like arrows with tips made razor sharp by the panic in his voice.

“Remember when I asked you for change at the vending machine yesterday and you pretended not to have any with a jingle coming from your pocket?” I craned my neck so I could just make out his face. It was crimson. He struggled to hold the piano’s weight. “Do you remember?”

Frank’s eyes grew big as I stared into them. He looked like an animal caught in a trap. Beads of sweat rolled down his forehead. The realization that he was shaking made my dick hard.

“Fuck you and your daddies’ money!” I let the piano go. I grinned at the clatter of brass wheels against concrete steps as it raced down to the street and crushed him.