

Somewhere Nearby Connecticut, There's a Clan of Vampires and a Woman He May Never Know

In this period of his life, he slept on an inflatable mattress patched together with duct tape because his toenails had poked through the rubber. He has been unable or unwilling to clip them himself. He was telling this to his girlfriend while at his niece's birthday party. His girlfriend texted him back and told him she used to pick her toenails until she couldn't walk and so she missed work and so she was fired. His niece showed him a caterpillar that had climbed on her finger. He said it was very good and she flicked it into the pool where he assumed it would drown. His sister scolded her daughter and that was when he said he had to go.

On his drive home, he looked out the car window and saw cows and chickens. What an odd combination, he thought. He wondered if the chickens would ever sleep underneath the cows. I think that would be funny, he thought to himself, but he didn't laugh. When he got home, he asked his girlfriend what she would think if she saw those cows and chickens in the field. She asked if he meant that the cows and chickens were in the field together or separate. Together, he replied. His girlfriend did not think that cows and chickens could live together. He insisted that he saw them in the field on the way home from his niece's birthday party. The cows probably step on the chickens all the time, she said. Probably tons of dead chickens in that field and you didn't see them. He thought she was accusing him of something. It was so hard to tell over text.

Maybe the chickens lay eggs in their coop? A cow's too big to fit in a coop, and if chickens are dying, I think a farmer would have moved them by now, he said. She didn't respond for a few minutes, which made him think he said something wrong. How many chickens were out there? She finally asked. I don't know, he replied. Hundreds, maybe?

That's a lot of dead chickens, she said. You know, I used to have a chicken coop, and I'd go out there and get the eggs from it, and one morning I went out there, and there's just dead

chickens everywhere. In the coop, outside the coop, all in the woods, and then I see this pack of wolves and they're kind off to the side. They'd killed all the chickens I guess, but I don't really know what they were still there for.

There are wolves in Connecticut? He said while sitting down on his mattress and feeling it deflate under him. There must be a hole in it somewhere. Nearby there, she replied, I'm not really from Connecticut. So where are you from? He asked. Just nearby. Her answer confused him, a common trend in their relationship. Thinking about Connecticut made him tired, and so he thought of wolves again, which made him think of werewolves and then vampires. He fantasized for a moment that Connecticut was all trees and no cities and there was a clan of vampires sleeping in a cave nearby the farm he imagined his girlfriend lived on. There would be a day when his phone would light up with a text saying she was in danger after being taken by the leader of the vampire clan (who was madly in love with her after watching her grow up) and it would be up to only him to save her. He would get over his fear of airplanes and fly out to Connecticut and he'd kill the leader with a wooden stake and the rest of the clan would run off with their vampire speed, and he'd be alone with his girlfriend in the cave where he would take off her blindfold and they would lock eyes for the first time and—

Are you still there? She'd texted him. Yeah, he replied. The conversation about Connecticut and the wolves had died. Have I told you that I drew a picture of you? He asked. No, you haven't, she replied. He grabbed the frame off of his desk, took a photo of the drawing inside, and sent it to his girlfriend. Did you just draw what you thought I looked like? She asked. Kind of, he said. It's the girl who bags groceries right by my house, and she's the most beautiful girl I've ever seen, so I just imagine that's what you look like.

Oh, she said. I think I should come to Connecticut, he said, though after he sent the text, he remembered how she was only nearby Connecticut. I want to meet you one day, he continued anyway. You don't seem like the Connecticut type, she replied. What is the Connecticut type? He asked. Well, you know that one Billy Joel song about New York? It's kind of like that, she said, though he thought that didn't explain much for him.

Are you the Connecticut type? He asked. Well, depends on who you ask. You just said I'm the girl who bags your groceries. That's not how I meant it, he said. I just think she's very beautiful. The girl in the grocery store or the girl you drew? She asked.

No, he said, I'm talking about you.