

Dining with a Cursed Bloodline: The Fourth of Divorce

written by Andrea Lambert | July 27, 2020



July 2020. Before dawn. I start a pot of hot black coffee. Wait for my divorce from Jasper to go through. Spill coffee on the tiny black tile of the coffee table. Grandpa Guido Garaventa was a tile setter by trade. Made this artifact that sat in my grandma's bedroom for decades.

"My father was in the masons union, but not a Freemason. Not that kind. I don't think," said my aunt. Still, a girl can dream. So can a worn out Snow Leopard.

I dream of divorce papers. Signed. Filed. Over and done. Jasper was not the one. Her name no longer spoken. Her shouts no longer echo between these walls. If love was ever more than a dream? The one I loved died long ago. I release her spirit. I no longer need looking after. Grown. Content alone.

"Some of us don't pull well in double harness," Jacquelyn Susann writes in *Valley of the Dolls*.

I clean the refrigerator of my ex wife's old food. Ham. Cheese. Hummus. Rotten eggs. Spoiled milk. Refried beans in a Tupperware. Chunks of mold on them like blue cheese dressing. We ate such different foods. Had such different lives. The irreconcilable differences of a no fault Reno divorce.

With a few days of Roomba scrub, the House of the Rising Sun returns to museum silence. Honey colored hardwood floors stretch long. Under the taupe Persian rug. Nevada the cat lounges. A domestic blot of white and grey. Like a teapot.

The first tinkles of The Velvet Underground's "Sunday Morning," break the four am silence. Never enough caffeine. I sip silver cans of Monster Zero Ultra from the glass topped bedside table.

Now that Jasper is gone? I am almost alone in the world. Yet, strangely, free. I have no local friends. Haven't seen my beloved extended family since before my marriage. With the generational life passages thus entailed? It

seems natural for family tree branches to drift apart. Focus on their own.

Reno never felt safe during the Trump administration. Now is the height of the pandemic. Convalescing from perhaps COVID? I withdraw inside. Despite hot sun. Lush green grass. Beckoning from the backyard. That fresh air seems toxic as nuclear winter. I remember prior summers sunbathing in a lemon print bikini. My body is rounder. Softer. More somnolent now.

I'm depressed. I snack relentlessly. Wait for the divorce to go through. Get cartons of Raley's Deli Fresh Oatmeal Raisin cookies. Refuse to share them with the cat. White paws listlessly toy with the empty plastic carton once I am done.

I sit on the green velvet couch. Turn on *American Horror Story: Apocalypse*. Munch on a bag of sliced Deli Swiss. Picking up each slice. Removing the white paper dividers. Devouring them two at a time. I pile the last four slices together. Stuff a handful of tortilla chips into my mouth.

Stomach heavy with food. I lie down on the couch. I feel too weak to get up. This post COVID fatigue is real. While I'm glad I survived March's bout? I am now even more disabled than I already was. Always tired. I feel like I'm bleeding out. To no wound. If that was COVID? It only continued my disability's isolation. Interiority. My world shrank. From the property line. To the house. To the bed.

If only. If only Jasper didn't lie about her age on that dating app. Or I never made the decision to take a lover two years ago. I would not be waiting for a divorce now. Every day. Before dawn I anxiously wait for her to sign the papers. I can't do anything but hope.

Somehow, I sit up. Watch television. Leslie Grossman as Coco St Pierre Vanderbilt magically detects gluten. Joins the Coven at Mrs. Robichaux Academy for Exceptional Young Ladies.

My wife and I were a mini coven for a time. Both witches. Interested in powers of talismans and crystals. Her Southern Pentecostal background was useful to our combined workings. I've never read the Bible. My ex wife could recite Psalms. In turn, I guided her on which of my witchcraft books to read. Hungry to learn. Jasper took pages of notes. I tutored her on spellcraft. Painting. Once our relationship became much more than that of mentor figure and teen.

"I have so much to give, I have so much to teach," I said to Jasper. Quoting *AHS: Coven's* Supreme Fiona Goode. She says this at an al fresco brunch spot. Over waffles and mimosas. To her blond protege. Before slitting her throat.

I did not kill my first domestic partner. It's appalling that I even need to say that, but I know how people are. I was an unstable, mentally ill alcoholic. My heedless addiction contributed to her death drive to take her own life. A suicide I will never get over.

The second time around? My do over? I try so hard to make it right. I rush marry this butch I meet on a dating site. We have so much fun together. It just isn't enough. When the COVID comes? With it the troubles? Our clashing

of cultures? The final dealbreaker: My home fried ex wife owns Confederate flag T shirts. That was the last conversation we ever had.

I am sober now. Eight years after my domestic partner's suicide. Two weeks after my wife moved out for the last time. I try with utmost kid gloves to release this ex wife kindly and cleanly. I tried to make this work. We both did. Now that she is out of my residence? The House of the Rising Sun smells clean. Sounds quiet. Feels like my sanctuary again.

"Well hon?" I think, speaking to her in my mind. "We tried. I wish you the best. I hope the painting and magic I taught you, help you. In your future life. Away from me. One day you may understand all this better. Why I did what I had to do."

It's a hot night. I see on the thermostat it's eighty two degrees. Turn on the a/c. Leonard Cohen's "So Long, Marianne," plays in bittersweet melancholy from the Echo Dot.

By daybreak, I am nauseous from anxiety. I coax myself to throw up. I can't tell if it's coffee or blood.