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Gumihos

Eunsong Kim

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## Gumihos

She never appeared that way in front me she was always young and classifiably breedable. Black hair, that kind of skin, and and

In picture books they drew her in twos. Her and the soul she wanted kept in jars, lockets, hearts yes. Yes. In picture books my mother read, Read: stay away from her. Too beautiful to be trusted but too beautiful to forget, She takes your soul and keeps them in jars and things. Stories to teach you to stay close to your mother. Stories to teach you to marry even earlier than you desired.

Animals that work all their goddamn lives to be human. Mostly failing because human stories want them to. Animals baring, laboring, harboring this disguise for a life defined by transitional disguises. Animals desiring to be human

...

To spare you the details, the ingredients to become a human are as follows:

1. Nine souls of unmarried men—We do not discriminate nor is there a preference. We're open to all shapes and sizes. Honestly.
2. One large and sturdy enough container to hold them all—

Once the ingredients are secured She is allowed to trade. Trade them in for a permanent position. A permanent body to sleep in.

...

Have I skipped too many details. Do you need more. I'm trying to paraphrase the stories about the wolves that wanted to become female. And of all the humans in between that have broken the rules.

Of course we met when she had all 8. And the 8, I'm assuming, were relatively easy to find. She joked once that number 6 was so desperate to see more of her skin that he gave his up voluntarily. She traded fairly, her mirage for the possession of their unused souls—but after seeing number 6 disappear so quickly and collapse pathetically on the hotel floor she wondered if she was preying a bit. Preying on the

weak, the ignorant, and confused. Preying on those who watched too much television and had a difficult time speaking. To anyone. Preying on those who never liked girls at all so never made the effort and then She comes along—simplifying the steps. Truly, sincerely, preying.

When she told me all of this she was pretty out of breath and angry at the situation—so most of this is what I think she was trying to say in between breaths. You could never understand, she said, wanting what I want. You already have it, she repeated. So how could you want it?

I told her that I'm sure number 6 died happily, with the image of her two ripe bosoms and the thought of sex with someone like Her. How could he have died sadly? I would be just as willing! It is an exit. The exit is for us. You didn't take anything from anyone. They, we gave them to you. But everything I said just reminded her of number 6's thump and of childhood sacrifices and how much she hated anything to do with a sacrifice. Well that's just insane, I told her. What did you think a trade was?

...

All of the difficulties involved in killing me number 9 and the recent epiphany about sacrifices drove her into a shopping frenzy. Four days into her transformation deadline she found herself at various shopping centers, an hour into their final hour, craving "mature pineapple farm" nail polish, socks with various dessert images, and pastel stationeries. All the items listed and more and then four multicolored mini-binoculars later, she realized that none of these products were going to make sense in her wolf pack community, hunting and hiding and all—and whether or not her decision to shop was her decision. Anonymous pastel thank-you letters to family members, notifying of helping a "person" solidify their existence. Yes, it would be cryptic, but it would be one way to confess. Thank you for helping me, I'm sad to see number 4 never finish college, but in return, I will get my Masters! It could say. It could say.

The shopping  
 The missing  
 The taking  
 The lying in bed  
 The waiting the waiting  
 The blue smoke  
 She's sick already

But she couldn't. No matter how hard I tried. She wasn't sure if she could live that way.

...

The fable of the wolf wanting to be a human  
Has the possibilities of an anticapitalist tale  
Return to the forest  
Don't take what is not yours  
Even when they say yes  
It also has the possibilities of Middle-Class Buddhist Teachings  
Ignore the violence &  
Concentrate on frogs

...

But in the end  
Even though I can.  
And you've agreed  
It is not worth it  
To take it from you

Turn me into a water ghost instead  
A departed soul in water  
Instead