

Jewess Reflects on Lost Aryan Princess

By: Rebecca N. Frankel

Last night we rode a train in an ugly dream.
We were ugly people.
You could feel the hate radiate like
the coronas of twin suns,
like bone bonfires.
We sat on a slat-board train and
I called you a needy s***.
And you called me a c***.
And I said b****. And you replied d***.
And I think you called me the old slur for
Jew. Funny, I haven't been called that one since high school.
K***, I mean.
You always hated that word too.

I might have said that you were a broken person who would never be loved...
Untrue. I felt those things
even dreaming, that disprove.
When I told you never to speak to me again, that was overkill.
Years have passed without a word.
Still, sometimes I wonder what you'd say if I told you
about that eating disorder I used to have.
Well, "used to" might be wishful.
Would you thin(k) of your mother?

And what would you say about this new novel I've written which you haven't read?
When I was young and heartless, I thought I'd be dead
before a shred of regret.
I wonder if you think that I loved you then
That would be so like you. You always did equate queerness with wanting to f*** your friends.
But I never loved you like that.
I loved you like a sister, like a second head,
like a paper bag in a clenched fist and tears in a tent.
I loved you as far as a Jew can love a Germanophile.
I loved you like an orphaned squirrel, like shattered glass.
I loved you like
a suicide risk.
All this to say:
I loved how you ought when you've shared the latter half of pubescence.

When I was sixteen I missed you like a pound of taken flesh. I coveted like a Shylock,

wanted like *La belle juive*.

I molded myself from that love, a golem out of clay.

When I was sixteen, I missed you in the way

you're supposed to when your best friend is a dishwater blonde and straight.

Once, I loved you enough not to write about you.

You should see it as an honor,

All the great loves of my life have been put on paper.

Ask the the first face I met in college on registration day

Or the woman who crashed into me on the ivy tower, who I've always likened
to a piece of

Jagged jade.

But I loved you enough not to be cruel.

Though it's possible that I was just afraid.

Long ago we rode a train

in the land where my people were gassed in droves. I didn't pay the fare a single time:

A crime for a crime.

And you taught me how to say "*Ich habe meinen pass vergessen*" just in case I got caught.

I had a German boyfriend, you'd never been kissed. Time is linear, not static.

And our particular

hatred has been learned, not taught.

When I left for France, you told me

you'd missed *us*

I said "I can't wait until you come home",

And we called each other b**** without meaning it.

I loved you like the silent refugee tracing the lines of the unknown.