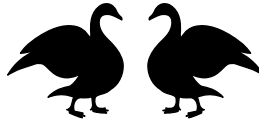


KIM CHINQUEE

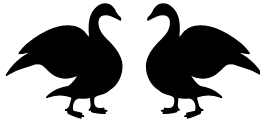
THE WAY I SAW HIM



He shared his plans to travel and then talked about his mother, who said hi by the way. I thought about asking him if he found someone to have kids with, since that's what we'd been wanting until either I wasn't the one anymore or he just quit finding me attractive.

Someone called the name, and he got up to get the order, and I sipped my Diet Pepsi, preferring Coke like he did. We dipped our fries. We ate and he said please, holding his hand out for a napkin.

THEY WOULDN'T HAVE MUCH LONGER



They'd gotten ready like any other evening, curling their hair while listening to Bon Jovi, trying on a dozen different outfits, asking and offering opinions. Rose wore her pink mini and matching short-sleeved sweater, and Dot wore Rose's leggings, her body suit, and a pair of big hoop earrings. They couldn't find a ride tonight, and they didn't know of any parties, so they did what they always did when they didn't have transportation: they went walking, hoping for some action.

Dot pointed to the moon and said it looked like a potato, and Rose looked too and said, "No way," and they opted for a coin flip, but then they both decided that that was too much trouble. Cars zoomed by and they passed manicured lawns, save one that was littered with big plastic toys from Disney, its mailbox painted up with Mickey. They decided on their usual route, first the one-mile stretch on Seventh then heading to the diner, where they usually saw people from their high school or possibly its rival, where they knew guys from softball games and football and their friend Libby used to date a guy named Tucker, though Libby was away now, her mother sending her off to have somebody's baby. Rose and Dot told one another that tonight they'd find something fun, even if that meant sitting at the diner watching children, telling one another that they would never have them.

They played a game reading plates on vehicles that passed and imagining the people who were in them. One plate was from California. Most of the others were from Wisconsin. Dot told Rose her feet hurt, and Rose said they wouldn't have much longer, reminding her of the week before, of Larry, the most popular guy in school, who picked them up and took them to a party. Dot laughed and said, "Oh

yeah,” though she didn’t remember much after he’d offered her a shot of what he’d said was brandy. Now she said, “Look,” and pointed to the California plate again, which they then finally realized had a habit of appearing. It almost stopped, but then it sped up, and they imagined a man driving, maybe someone’s father. It was a brown truck. They held hands and walked faster.