

One Red Drop

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One drop.

One small, red, drop.

Only one.

It fell as I watched.

It fell as I sat there and stared at her white knuckles.

I'd been staring, wondering why I was staring,

But that drop, like just the right amount of light to where you can see,
Made it clear.

White knuckles in a brown hand.

It fell as she sat there holding in her brain.

As she sat,

Willing the cracks in her head to close enough to hold her brain inside.

It fell while she sat, motionless.

As I sat in an identical chair, I could feel what the exposed springs in the
seat were doing to her bruised tailbone.

I could almost hear the low moan of her vertebra which

Fought and ground against each other, trying to reestablish order to
Support her sagging frame.

That drop fell on its own, of its own volition.

With neither help nor hindrance from her.

She neither snuffled it back, like a mother hen clinging to her last
chick,

Nor did she quickly wipe it away,

Cleanly erasing it's bright red reminder of pain.

Maybe she didn't see it.

Maybe she didn't care.

Or any number of maybes, trailing into nothing, like the lies in his smile.

But sitting in that identical seat, seeing those white knuckles in that
brown hand,

Staring at the top of that head, face masked by clumped and bloody hair,
I knew.

I knew she sat there and watched the drop.

We, she and I, watched that drop like zombies.

I knew the hands that had done this were the hands of someone loved.

I knew the hands that had done this were the same hands that had once
stroked lightly as a foretaste to passion.

I knew those hands were the hands of a man like me:
Hands I might have, at one time, shaken.
Hands like those of any man.
I knew their knuckles were wide, and covered in dark hair.
I knew their palms were callused to roughness from years of hard work.
I knew the skin between the fingers was almost as soft as her cheek.
I knew those hands,
Had lived with them intimately for all of my life,
But I did not know the man to whom they belonged.