



To the woman who wonders if she could be happier

annie marhefka

You said you thought moving would be an adventure that would bring you closer together, a joyride cross country, that maybe he'd reach over during a long stretch of road and place his hand on yours, the way he used to. That he would give your hand a gentle squeeze that let you know you weren't alone in this. I imagined your hand, cold and nervously tapping atop the console, waiting.

You smiled, a little sheepishly, when you told me you were moving, tried to pitch it as this thing to be envious of, how carefree you were about packing up and going. The way you shrugged your shoulders as if you hadn't planned it. But you knew I could tell. That you thought the move would save you. That you were scared of staying put.

Do you remember that day at the coffee shop, when you picked at your kale salad and let your latte go cold, and told me you were afraid to tell him that you weren't happy? That you felt wrong to even say that out loud, because what even is happy? It's not like you were miserable or he was an abuser or a cheater or a liar or anything but a regular husband, but that you just wondered sometimes—was there supposed to be more?

I wanted to tell you that that wasn't how it was supposed to be, how it was supposed to feel, that there was supposed to be more, but we'd had this conversation before. I knew you wanted me to tell you that was normal, that all wives felt that way after a while. I saw your fingertips nervously brushing the formica tabletop, awaiting my answer. So, I reached across the table and found your hand, rested my own on top of it, gave it a gentle squeeze, and held on.

Author Bio

Annie Marhefka is a writer in Baltimore, Maryland whose writing has been published by Lunch Ticket, Pithead Chapel, Literary Mama, and others, and her work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. Annie is the Executive Director at Yellow Arrow Publishing, a Baltimore-based nonprofit supporting and empowering women-identifying writers.

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