

10/10/17  
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I'll admit it, I haven't gotten over the stuff.

Even now, just thinking about it, *my stuff*, sends a burning electricity up and down my stomach to my heart.

I can't get over it. It's gotten less intense, but I can't get over it.

He stole from me. He held my precious possessions hostage with the help of his bullying family. They threatened me with an uglier divorce if I didn't do what they wanted. A divorce that included the court mandating that I pay half of his \$130,000 of accrued student loans. The loans his parents had already paid off. So I bought his beat-up car from him for the new-car value. I took what he gave me. I silently presented the list of my things I wanted back to the mediator, who said soft apologetic words to me. "I just don't know what to say, he threw away a lot of it..."

I took the list back and threw it away. But the image of that sheet of paper burned into my brain would point at me and say, "You didn't fight hard enough! Don't let it go! Keep turning the events that made you a victim over and over again in your brain!" It feels like this incessant need to be prepared to see him, be prepared to fight him. Because I was too weak, too scared to fight him before. So now I live my life fighting him. Obsessively.

And then the Santa Rosa fire took place. I was distracted, thinking about my grandma who was in emergency surgery. Was she dead? Was she alive? So as people whispered about the fire I didn't pay much attention. "All the vineyards burned up" Hmm. Wonder if my dad's company is going to be okay. I knew they would be...or at least that his job was secure. Gallo Winery is big enough...

I was face-timing William later that night, and then suddenly gasped...

"Eddy!"

"What about him?"

"He lives in Santa Rosa! Do you think his place is on fire?"

"I thought he moved out — moved back to Turlock."

"Nooo...? I think he's moving out in November.."

I laughed. "I wonder if all the stuff he stole from me burned up. That's what happens when you steal from me — if I don't get it nobody gets it! A real Solomon's baby situation." A poetic justice I couldn't have dreamed up. "Actually I started that fire" I joked. "I burned all of Napa valley just to get revenge on an ex." We laughed.

A random fire that happened to wipe out the wrongdoings of an ex-husband? That would be too good to be true. Life doesn't work that way.

My mom texted me the next morning:

"Eddy's home he was living in in Santa Rosa burned to the ground, he escaped with the clothes on his back. (sad face)"

I read it in class and gasped out loud. I didn't want to think of *him* in danger in this fantasy scenario. That takes away the revenge of it all...If he was in danger and if all *his* stuff was stolen from him in a fire...I just wanted an eye for an eye...or I thought I did. I thought about his computer. His clothes. His bikes. Surely he grabbed some of it? I thought about my precious cups, my giftcards, my books. All burned to the ground.

I don't want to meet him on the street anymore. The fire wiped the slate I had been hoarding in my mind clean...A little too clean. I didn't want him to actually suffer. When people reassured me with promises of Karma and consequences before, I didn't believe them. Part of me felt like the bullies all too often just get away with shit...after all, it's not like he was walking around reveling in his success of abusing me...he was walking around reveling in his victimhood. Replaying all the times I had hurt *him*. Replaying all the times others had hurt him when he was small. Not big enough to defend himself...Are there any true bullies? Do events mean anything? Say the fire was vindication for me...a direct punishment for his actions. Is that the world I really want to live in?

What fire is coming for me?