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"8X11" by Jordan Gass-Poore

Posted By [Flash Fiction](#) on Fri, Feb 18, 2011 at 9:29 am

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Introduction Who among us hasn't snuck some of our college roommate's food. I remember my brother telling me about drinking his friend's last beer (and one you can't even get in Texas) and then pretending to sleep while he listened to the guy rummage about in the fridge more and more frantically. That's funny. "8X11" takes a similar subject and tells it lyrically. It clearly conjures such loss, but of what is slightly trickier. And that's O.K. That's the point. Because we all steal things from our roommates. We all understand malaise. We're all human. And Jordan Gass-Poore does a wonderful job of capturing it here in this very short story. Send in your sniffers, your laughers, your adventure stories. Flashfiction@sacurrent.com.

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—Lyle Rosdahl

“8X11” by Jordan Gass-Poore I lick the chocolate off my thumb and index finger and can smell the cigarette smoke, putting me off the second stolen cookie sitting on my laptop keys. I fidget in the straight-backed chair that doesn’t belong in my dorm room, the chair my roommate stole from the study room down the hall when she had someone over and didn’t think it was polite for them to sit in my original desk chair without asking me first. She’s dating a non-practicing Jewish guy whose family celebrates Christmas and Chanukah. My original desk chair sits in the middle of the room, my suitcase and bag lounge on top evoking Michelangelo’s Pieta. I turn my head to make sure the door is still locked and my roommate isn’t trying to break in. I always lock the door before I steal her food. I keep the door locked until I’m done eating, the evidence disposed of either in my stomach or in my small plastic trashcan. I turn back to the screen on my laptop. The empty Word document with its flashing cursor taunts me like my old piano teacher’s metronome- tick, tick. Faster, you’re not keeping up. It’s a C-flat. C minus. The cookie is still lying on the keys, on top of e, r, f, c, x, z, a, w, s, d. It’s some cryptic crossword, a premonition of things to come: klepto, fatty, prisoner, dumb, lung cancer, death. The chocolate chips look like tar balls washed up on a sandy Southern beach. Bounce, bounce, bounce. I think I’ll steal it back. My roommates metal desk drawer is filled with sugary cereal, cake, and cookies. There’s plastic dishware and a mangled bag of half-eaten potato chips. I place the cookie in its plastic divider, at the head of the line. The doorknob is shaking. The cookie crumbles in my hand. I jerk my hand out of the bag, breathe, and silently shut the drawer. Someone knocks on the door. My roommate calls my name. I answer, licking my teeth and inspecting my nails for chocolate. She asks me to please unlock the door, she forgot her key. I wipe the cookie crumbs off my sweater, grab my bag, and unlock the door. I smile and tell her I’ll be right back, I’m going outside to make a phone call. The door shuts behind me as I walk down the hall. I have two cigarettes left.



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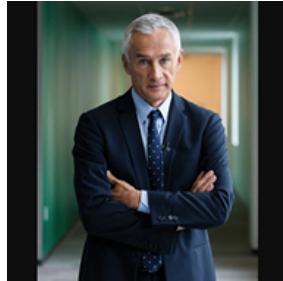
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