

No weather is more gentle and absurd than the drunk southern winds in France when you are surrounded by people of immense wealth and fame and the rain is soft and the people beautiful. The chatter was sprinkled throughout the domain amongst the torches, the rings of lips announcing mergers and occasions for more orgies, more orgies and more life. Here parties were not a vulgar tornado one might see on a loft in Manhattan those parties were maelstroms where the currents and eddies were largely swirling beneath the surface or around the edges of things.

The idea of a place I've never been to

The old supermodel was named Anna and had perfectly wrinkled skin; she had always refused to undertake plastic surgery unless completely necessary. She had long blond hair parted in the middle, waving down her shoulders. Her shoes were of a tame gold as a call back to her fair freckled skin. The walls were stark and grey, with old paint that had been through two wars.

She was standing on one foot the other resting on the arm of the chair facing her and she was contemplating the lean muscles emanating from her. She seemed amused at a situation, not the present one but a distant blur from days of fame and exuberance.

Not that she wasn't famous anymore, but she had lost control on her image in the eyes of the camera. The photographer was softly handsome and young. He was wearing a white wife beater and beige chinos. He was making those motions of the camera one expects a fashion photographer to make, leaning and tilting and passing rapid comments. The house was both aristocratic and falling in demise. The mouldings were preserved and were reminiscent of another age of decadence. The room was long and roughly narrow, lit by large candles on the walls. They were light bulbs too, dispersed and hanging from rusty wires which seemed like a fire hazard but the photographer didn't care as it contributed to the atmosphere and the rustiness which is something he was chasing through his work, rusty buildings rusty personalities, oxidised faces searching for their glasses. The old super model was walking slowly on the persian carpet in a way reminiscent of her professional days, stopping here and there to look in an abyss she created with piercing and detached eyes, slightly asiatic eyes with colors that made you guess each time you met her and proceed to stare to finally make your mind. I did not care that much for the scene except for the old supermodel who always put me in a trance when she seemed to be travelling to her own twenties, drunk on champagne and candelabres and velvet curtains which were slowly moving to the rhythm of a breeze.

The room didn't seem to have a purpose other than drinking champagne and practicing cat walks for a photographer. At the end of the carpet the old supermodel bent down, mostly using her back and not her knees and is usually recommended, arching her buttocks to the candlelight and picked up a ginger cat while parting her lips in a very unhappy sensuous smile. Despite the numerous light sources the room was dark which made the room look even more aristocratic, smelling of old money before light fixtures were mass produced and you could analyze the not so smooth skin of the teenager making you pay for your medication at the pharmacy when you had a small breakdown and needed just a couple of xanax. The old supermodel picked up the cat and kept on walking towards the end of the room where the bar was. It was made of solid rock and had bottles of champagne, bourbon and scotch and no mixers because the liquor was good enough and mixing demanded a butler who was not there but driving back the son of some admiral of the British army who had drank too much champagne and was looking for a less anachronistic decadence with techno music and beautiful trans people in dark rooms. The house was close to the sea, one only needed to walk for some minutes on cobbled stairs and arched passage ways to get to an old dock of polished stones where small boats could unload more champagne and bourbon and liquors. The old supermodel had gotten here by car, an aston martin of the 60's, of a dark green which had commended the admiration of the admirals son who was very much into old cars, not for speeding down alleys but for cruising the costa del sol and the costa del brava and the cote d'azures and any sunny coast which had a latinate name. The bar was much bigger room than the one used for the improptu photo shoot as the party was more important than the art. The party was the whole reason for the art in the first place. The young photographer had always enjoyed greek mythology and and wanted to be a classissists when he was even younger but he soon realized that it was better to climb to olympus than read old poets telling its tales and after obtaining his degree from a very prestigious liberal arts college he had decided to find where the party was, even though there wasn't really a party. Even though he intriscally knew that the conversations were not more interesting or fulfilling at the party one still needed to be at the party. For if you didn't get to be at the party you were somewhere whose whole raison d'être was to feed the gushing streams that would scale the mountains and reach it and rinse the mouths of singers with whistle registers and breasts like the sweetest raspberries known to primitive rousseans savages. The bar was in a large room with more carpetting and french royal furniture with big armrests which could be dated to some Louis king but nobody dared give a roman number to them as it would have seemed out of touch with the atmosphere. The windows behind the purple curtains were large with large windowpanes and white paint on the old wood. The large room was in the shape of a large circle with no center because the point was that the bar was the center irrespective of the geometry. Two men were sitting on two sofas discussing their poetry and a voluptuous woman with curly red hair was extravagantly sitting on the edge of one of the sofas peering dreamly at the windowpanes as melancholy was important. The laughter emanating was noth wide and brittle. When the old model got to the bar she asked if anybody "fancied some more champagne" to which the coronel's son who didn't like to be confused to the admiral's son due to some ancestral animosity between them "reckoned it was a grand idea" and "wasn't

it a grand night, the rain being just soft and moody enough". A jazz band played in the corner adjacent to the two sofas and the red haired woman playing cole porter's song very softly with a trumpet a double bass and a piano and no drums because the rain on the shingles provided the whispery rythm that was needed. There had been swing songs and dancing earlier but it seemed out of touch at this point and it seemed obvious that dancing was out of the question at this hour. The photographer laid down his camera on the bar without removing the lense as it would be needed later after more champagne had been poured. He observed a distant smile from himself in the mirror behind the bar and noticed the model's dress was undulating to the rythm of a metaphorical wind. It was a black dress with a deep décolleté and an open leg from a soft fabric which made a rustling sound as it discovered the tan creases of her skin. She was still holding the cat in her right arm as the colonel's son was pouring champagne in her flute and they drank the first sip together to a charming evening and she walked towards the exit where the path to the water started. The colonel's son was named eric and was gracious in his conversation with the photographer who was an intruder in the party, as a participant at least instead of a background character, by all standards. It was only two months before the party that the photographer had made the decision to leave NYC for France after his last gig for Vogue magazine. The editor of the internet outlet for the company had been madly in love with him, for his soft voice and effeminate posture which revealed a masculinity which was long gone in the industry where a very macho form of femininity had established itself as the personalita franca. He wasn't a genius in any sense of the profession, everybody agreed on that. He hadn't developped what could be called a vision and although he off course knew the ins and outs and various proceedings he hadn't elevated himself. What he had was an uncanny psychological instinct into the workings of the mind of an anxious model, a capricious art director and a quite simply crazy sponsor. He approached all parties involved with a candor which seemed to put all parties involved at ease at an instant, both elevating and grounding the process of developping a new campaign. Everybody refered to him as Jimmy eventhough his real name was probably a good old strong anglo-Norman regal syllable composition such as Richard or Henry. Jimmy did not show his surprise when the colonel's son mentioned he had a boat, for he expected it to be the privilege of the admiral's son to own one. Navy and traditions and what not. It was very naive of him and he knew it. Off course both of them owned boats, one was expected to go sailing to corsica in the spring. It was just the right and obvious thing to do. I followed their conversations from my chair next to the curvy women with curly red hair, in a drunken absent stare probably. I was not used to this level of decadence, now I could moderate myself in front of an open bar of cheap liquor and house wine but what was served here was 50's years old champagne and obscure islay scotches from private reserves. I could not abstain myself from these pleasures in an orderly fashion. The woman with red hair was holding my right hand to her cheek and was doing what we might call in a haste palm reading but she seemed to be pulling my life from thin air unpreoccupied by the skin creeks, it was performed as in a sensual ritual designed to magnify the cognitive experience. She was singer and had great success at it. She had started within the confines of the pop song industry restraining her prestige for the money but had slowly matured and blossomed into a

multi faceted technical prodigy with a great taste for new song writers and colorful adaptations, sometimes showing virtuosity in jazz scatting on complex progressions or simply perfectly capturing a nirvana song into a an actualized impressionistic take on contemporary society. Or at least that's how I think I answered her when she asked me what I thought of her singing. She had very nice breasts and life affirming cheekbones. She was not interested in the end, she considered me as an old child. Not by age, she just told I will ever be a man child, no matter how much wisdom I would accumulated eventually. It was the kind of rejection that made sense in this environment, a "sorry, I have a boyfriend" or a thing of the sort would have seemed gauche or rather brutish. A coherent set of aesthetic attitudes had to be taken into account. It was what distinguished aritstocracy from merely rich.

That was before I was too drunk to elaborate on nothing as was my only means of conversation at that point in my life. She

1 midway

-Remember that time Toby asked the prince of Luxembourg for a double old-fashioned

-You see the thing about modern theater, is that absurdity has become normalized

-YES, like he was some waiter, and then when the prince said what in a condescending tone (chuckles) when he said 'what did you just say'

-Toby just repeated louder: I SAID A GIN TONIC PLEASE SIR

-So tell me Jimmy what made you leave the bustling of NYC for this antiquated place -I guess that I am trying to “fuir l’ennuie” -What is that French? You know son, it is not because you’re in France that you have to speak French, quite the opposite I reckon actually. But it rhymes, so I guess that’s the principal. I’ve found that saying something does not matter as much as long as it sounds nice -Yes rhyming is most important aspect, I don’t think I’ve said anything interesting that didn’t rhyme since I was fifteen -Do you consider yourself an interesting person then -I guess it depends on the context -Well I for one consider you a very interesting chap old sport, I’m glad you could come here and inject some young blood in this little community. You know those circles tend to ossify. It was Marie that took you along wasn’t it. -Yes I was working at this gallery in Cannes, she was there on the latest opening night, she was the model for most of the pictures. It was actually an installation-performance you could call it. She was there as herself next to her representations, something about the image presented to the eye through the lens as opposed to the full bodied presence -This gallery, it is the fontaine-pied right? Yes I have been there a couple time, we have a yacht, 52 footer docked at the marina and my wife and I—seperated mind you—we used to go there after a stroll, have a drink with Monsieur Rougeau. Was this a connection from NYC? -Well to tell you the truth my van broke down in front of the place, I was planning on going to Italy but then Réjean offered me his help. I took him for a local mechanic at the time, very nice man. After I mentioned my work and you know so on and so forth how conversation goes he told me their latest assistant had gone on a sort of spiritual journey if I understood him correctly, no sign of coming back and they needed a hand from somebody that “had a keen eye for aesthetic necessities” was how he put it. I am going back next week, this is a company vacation. In america they would call it team building but French people seem to just call it life down here -Oh well don’t generalize here, you’ve fell by chance on the most idiosyncratic elements of the French aristocracy, I know some people in Paris, they would have sneered at you until you can produce evidence of notable social connections.