

Tad Beck and Jennifer Locke at LACE

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Sadness, my friends, is what I feel tonight, for I lacked a camera when the well-formed young man took his high seat and, naked, was doused with glue.

I came upon him at first in the floor, downward I looked as though from a ceiling. I watched. He was in a glass-walled chamber, it was painted white, in a black corridor. Looking was I what I did – I did not even think to use my phone (which I do on occasion) and instead I made notes.

Our well-formed man was displayed, I would say that he shone like the whitest marble, only wet. He was still though, like stone. Beauty inhabited the place, like a sacrifice to other gods. He shone. Indeed my friends, mine eyes have seen the glory, but unless you were at LACE last night, you missed it. And now the well-formed young men (for there were many) have retreated to their homes, and the particular man, the one I saw, he is also gone, with his master and his mistress and their white coats... poof. You should have been at LACE.

I recognize a black inflated raft, it is filling with white, viscous matter and in that moment the black and the raft make me think of athletics and of energy and of oil. Jugs of white glue are poured, our young man is covered in white liquid, his head is down, his hair, shoulders and down his back it runs, and much of it sticks. A woman, a pulley, a sling – these are the tools of the white glue that wants to drip. On him.

Our new Saint Simeon Stylites has a tripod and a small seat for his perch, and his audience of pilgrims, we are hungry for... what? He his white, a pale man, now white on white. More is the glue, a second and a third jug is handed over to the occasionally lowered white-coated sergeant, she who serves our martyr, our slave. (The ears of the slave regain a slight tan hue, rosy almost. He lives.)

There is white rope, not coiled neatly, and it pulls the sling and holds it in place. ("Aah, porcelain, he is porcelain," a voice in the crowd states – with truth on her side. For our man could be the finest Meissen figure, perfect in every way, just waiting for his Pygmalion to give him rise and make him supple. This very Pygmalion who now entraps him – not like Medusa, with a stare – but like a man, with white cream, with unpreventable hardness, with love.

An hour goes by, perhaps more. My glances sated, I lose interest. The glass, the glue, the ritual – I admire those whose attention can withstand frustrations of desire. For me now? Conversation beckons. But a shift in the room's gravity draws me back. Forgetting even to glance on the floor, I join the few who stand sentry,

watching, certain that where one transformation has been witnessed another must be waited upon. (I hate to do this, but now I think of the cave and the time between, and the rising that did come. Good Lord, where I might find sporting metaphors, instead I am laden with Christ. Save me.)

The glue has hardened and formed a helmet, like an elegant Italian one from the days when Mantegna painted such men at their sport. I remember dogs in those paintings. The thick, cream liquid travels down our man's sideburns and the drips arc gracefully toward his mouth, his lips. There is a tiny bead at each end here, it catches my eye, as it must. (For I am as trapped now as our slave.) A row of drips on his leg, on each leg, is like ice on the eaves, it hangs in space, it depends, it is frozen in mid-air. The bearded man pulls now at the coating of matter around his eyes, it pulls clean upward, and clears his head, translucent and beautiful. Is it a caul? The bearded man unzips his chest, in both directions, from inside out. Across his chest and over his nipples, they rise a little with the pull. (Is this his amnion, his placenta, and now he is reborn? A cocoon with its soon to be butterfly?)

What is the pain like, I wonder? Partly nice? I suspect so. And the being watched? Is that another pain? Another frisson of pleasure? Tad Beck and Jennifer Locke are unveiling... what?

His skin is white underneath, as it was before. Pulling down his back now (a lovely, stark white is this skin, and with a mole or two) it now looks like a shawl, haha like a hoodie. (And this thought transforms him into a curious runway model in a through the looking glass S/M world.) Controlling is happening, and has been. It is beautiful when done right. The skin adheres, it pulls up, it rises to meet its master's fingers as they grasp and pinch and pull. And then the skin regains its memory and slips back into place, quiet now, and flushed.

An entire sheet is pulled up his spine from his ass and it hangs like a cape, Batman or Wonder Woman. The drips that remain to be plucked are solid. His lids are closed but his eyes they move like in sleep, or in trance. The trance of steady pain and Master's attention.

Peeling down his thigh now – where his hand rests – and he moves, only as he must and not from any inner need. And what brought him here, I wonder, this man to this place? Part of me would like to feel similar caresses – so much love, so much attention, the master gives his slave.

It's just like Belgian lace! And he is as a bride! About to be new, shown to the community and soon free, or wed, or both. The little tatting nuns thought also of a shroud, an evidence of glory, a remnant of trials, of an exchange really.

The clinicians in their white coats, particularly pious they are, and tidy. Sins are peeled away in this place, not shed. The suffering is necessary (I think) clean now, in a complicated set of movements, he, our well-formed young man, steps down. Momentarily frail, Locke steady's him, holds him, as in the Pietà. My heart breaks just then.

They clean his ground, before he steps away out of sight, and continue cleaning in his absence. A light is shut, there is a flash, he is gone and peering happens among us gathered pilgrims. Breath is held, a kiss is

blown, the door opens, and he leaves, dressed in simple black. Like Valentino gone from film, our man slips out the door. Applause.

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