Transitory: State 1

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I met a girl on vacation whose name was the same as mine. Not many people have that name anymore. Just women who are retired and grumpy and smell like Marlboro Reds. This girl was twelve and blonde and bold as hell. A bunch of us were in the campground’s pool, and when the lifeguard whistled at her to stop skipping around the edge, she held both arms out in front of her and flipped him off with the one middle finger she had. The other hand was missing. Like it’d been hacked off with a saw right above the wrist. She still held it up though. I think the lifeguard shit his pants when he saw it. He’d been flipped off by an invisible hand.

I laughed so hard my body got tight. She saw me laughing and decided to attach herself to me for the remainder of the trip. She was devastatingly open about her life. She told me about how she’d been to Juvie last year for shoplifting. She’d wrecked her mother’s car. She justified this with her age though. She told me about all the high-school parties she’d been to, the boys she’d kissed, and the plans she had for the rest of the summer. I only listened and interjected an occasional “yeah” with wide eyes to show my interest in her enthralling life-story.

I left that trip very content with my luck in finding one of the most interesting people I’d ever met. She only flippantly mentioned her missing hand during one of our days together, and I didn’t bring it up any after that. I suppose she’s had to explain its absence a few too many times.

She caught me staring at it one day and laughed. “I bet you’re wondering where this guy is?” she asked. She held her arm up and the skin moved. Like some little creatures were swimming around in her bloodstream. I must have greened because she laughed even harder.