

Too Much on My Plate



My plate is full. And I am on hold. I am isolated and have never felt more connected. Nothing is happening. Yet. Well almost nothing. Ha ha. Except accepting, deeply accepting myself as a woman. I still haven't done my taxes. Important to do. Add up all those little receipts. All those Kinko's receipts. Russell, my accountant, is having me re-do them. His way. Not the way I've done them for the past 20 years. It's hard. It's ant-like. It's important. My mother is dying. She's pulling in. She's more child-like than ever. And more manipulative. I'm afraid she's giving up. Mentally if not physically. I'm looking at rentals. I'm being evicted. I'm looking at land. And houses. A place of my own. I'm waiting to hear about two jobs. Hurry up, they say, we can't wait. I hurry. I comply. It's been a week. I'm on hold. I kept thinking things would break loose. I'm not writing. If one thing went through. If I get one job. If my mother died. I'm not writing. My soul is withering. I got a call from my parents' neighbors. A godsend. They love my parents. My sister hasn't been to see them in weeks. She lives in the same town. An alarm has been sounded. They're worried about

Dad. And Mom's pulling in. Mom needs nursing care. A retirement home, maybe. It would be death for Dad. No puttering. No Rube Goldberg projects. Military school. Like when he was a kid, sent away. He sold the farm last week. I helped. The one his father cleared from wilderness. Yuba Farms. Gone. Done. He's selling their house. I'm helping. He's selling to Manfred. The Austrian foreign student who lived with us when my brother was a senior in high school. Everyone went to Tucson a couple of weeks ago. My sister. From across town. Me. From New Mexico. My brother. From South Dakota. And his wife and their two kids. I arranged it. I helped. My dad is going to need surgery. Prostate surgery. He wants to do it while Mom is still in the hospital. He won't ask for more help. He doesn't really want my help. He can't even admit I could be helpful. I wonder if I really have been. Now that Mom has seen everyone, is she letting go?

Someone told me I should stay uninvolved. That I should "not act." That someone else would fill that void. But they don't know my family. That I should realize it's their trip. That I can't fix them. I can't live their lives. But they're cashing in. Cashing in. And I don't know what to do. There's too much on my plate. And I can't stomach it.

I've lost a hubcap. A small one. Probably aluminum. And it says "4x4" on it. If you find it, let me know. Now. My right front tire, the one that had the slow leak, now has bare lug nuts. Grimy and bare. Somehow an invitation to thievery. A sign of things falling apart. A breaking apart.

John Lee Hooker. And Bonnie Rait. On my tape deck. In the mood. In the mood for love. Driving along

the Old Las Vegas Highway. At dusk. The sun sets behind me. Just a hazy bluish twilight with red tinging the mountains. Driving out into the desert. My throat loosens. My eyes water. And I let go. I want it to be just as easy as that. That simple. That soft. That complete. I turn my lights on at the Lamy turn. Debate for a second about stopping at the Legal Tender. But I don't want a drink. I drive on. Into the night. Over the Railroad bridge. Right, onto 41. And follow the long black road in my headlights further into the desert. I can see the green reflections of my dashboard lights in my rolled up windows. Sometimes they startle me. They're so green. I thought I was going to be with friends. People I like. In my moment of letting go. But they're not home. A good thing, really. These are solitary journeys. I turn around in Galisteo. And head back. A dark ride on roads I thought I knew. But I am no longer sure. After all. Space ships land in that basin.

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