I can’t stand dykes, Marge.
My ma was a god-damned dyke.
Made my old man beg for it.
Are you a fucking dyke, too?
I bet you are.
I see you.
I catch you with those dykes Marge and you’re dead.
And them too.
All of you.
You hear me?

55. MARJORIE

Marjorie stands outside the Club and breathes hard and fast. Wind in and out in beat with her heartbeat. The hills around her are beginning to change from brown to green. Waking up, the brown bones of trees more and more coming alive. Today, there is sun, white-holed sun at the top of the dark blue sky. The day cloudless, windless, the hot sunlight burning into Marjorie’s coatless shoulders. She moves most of her weight from her left leg to her right and wipes the sweat around her ears and above her eyes. The black mounds of snow that were here have melted down and away into dirt, into sand into sidewalk. Spring here. Marjorie down deep in her days of sorry.

I am sorry.

Marjorie says her words out loud to the hills around her. Up into the too-blue sky. Marjorie in a usual day does not want things. The usual Marjorie is fine. Wants macaroni for dinner, maybe, wants the People to feel wanted. The usual, the small wants, is what Marjorie is used to. But the usual is not the usual. Not now. This want that Marjorie feels, now, out here in the hot of the afternoon sun, is a big, important want. This want has weight and it sits heavy on Marjorie’s round shoulders and it digs down into her skin. This want is strong and loud and here and beating.

Marjorie stares at the white in the spaces between the dark blue letters.
The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

Marjorie wants to go inside.
Marjorie wants to say, Sorry
Marjorie wants to sit and talk and drink her Shirley Temple.
Marjorie wants to be back in her usual.
But the People need to want her. Mac and Suzanne.
Marjorie pushes her wind out hard to the warm air and pulls it back in again. She puts her hand on the handle of the glass door and pushes her way into the Club. The bright of the outside for a moment lights up the dark of the inside. Marjorie is here.

The Club smells like the Club. The sweet and sour of spilled beer, the baseball caps of the People sitting and the long, heavy left-behinds of cigarette smoke. Marjorie blinks her eyes fast to make the bright of the outside become the dark of the inside and for a moment she cannot see but she can hear.

Quiet. What is called quiet. The sound of a swallowed drink. A scrape of clothes on clothes. A sigh. The scratch of skin against skin. The sound of air moving around People stopped moving.

The big dark room of the Club comes to Marjorie in pieces. The colorful glow of the signs on the wall and the lines of light they make on the shiny wood of the bar. The People, their dark shapes slumped at tables and on bar stools. And the shadows of Mac and Suzanne, seen last, standing here, there, unspeaking, watching.

Marjorie says, Hello.

Her heart beats hard and fast and very alone under the waves and waves crashing against the sides of the inside of her self. Marjorie smiles and looks at Mac, not smiling, and at Suzanne, not smiling. Quiet.

Cold Out There Today.

Marjorie says what Marjorie says. But what she says is wrong.

Warm, I mean.

Marjorie stands still in her place next to the door. Not her door, this other door, this Club door. Big and glass and handled. People have to push this door open if they want to come in. So many doors out there, how many doors to pass through just to finish a day?

Marjorie wants to step away from the door and closer to her place at the bar but Mac and Suzanne are standing there, quiet, staring. Mouths small and eyebrows down and squeezed and arms crossed tight in front of chests.

Marjorie sees their angry and holds her wind and says what she wants to say.

I am sorry.

Get out, Marjorie.

Beautiful Suzanne with her red hair held up high on her head with her lips not smiling with her mouth made small from all her angry says it. And says it again.

Get out.

Get the fuck out, Marjorie.
A fire starts in Marjorie’s face and she feels her body stop. Her ears shut and
the sound of the outside is lost inside the crash of the blood in her head, the
waves of sorry inside her body, the collapse of her self into her self. The explod-
ing. Marjorie blinks her eyes fast and holds her arms tight around her belly and
when she says what she wants to say her voice is too soft, her voice is a sound
sent from far below the sinking surface of her.

I am sorry.

Go away, Marjorie.

Marjorie holding on to her self and staring at Suzanne’s arms-on-hips wide-
eyed angry. The People turned to look at her, hands held to glasses, to beer
bottles, watching, waiting. Mac walking from behind the bar toward her, Mac
walking up to Marjorie to see Marjorie to talk to Marjorie to touch Marjorie
with his big hand on her arm, holding on, pulling her out and away.

Mac saying, Come on, Marjorie. You can’t come in here anymore.

Mac’s hand is hard on her arm but not angry, not not kind. His fingers sink
into the soft parts of Marjorie. Mac with one hand holds her and with one hand
pulls the glass door open. Pushing to enter is easy, just a hand, the weight of
People wanting to come in, this is enough to enter. But leaving the Club is
not so easy. Leaving the Club means pulling the huge weight of the door away
from the wall. But here is Mac, one arm pulling the weight of Marjorie, one
arm pulling the weight of the door, standing between the inside and the out-
side, pushing Marjorie out into the bright of spring.

Marjorie stands on the sidewalk in the sunlight and Mac stands in the dark
doorway surrounded by all that glass.

What do you want, Marjorie?

I want to come in. And say, Sorry.

Sorry, Marjorie. Sorry’s not good enough. You can’t come in here anymore.

Marjorie tries with her whole self to catch her wind, to blink her eyes into
seeing in the blinding light, to say what she wants to say.

I am sorry.

Well, okay, Marjorie. But still, you can’t come back here.

Mac turns and walks away into the dark inside the Club. The glass door
swings shut behind him and for long, long seconds Marjorie listens to the
beat of the door banging closed. Marjorie covers her eyes with her hands so
that she does not have to see the bright, the day, the spring, the growing, the
place where she cannot be. She cannot look up and out at the holding of the
hills. Marjorie sinks down low into the hot of her dark and breathes, breathes,
breathes as if she is running away.