A Heart Beating Hard

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up and away and out and almost into women, lying together, still, waiting for what would come.
    Dykes, we might have said.
    Do it, we might have said.
    Come on, Margie.
    This is your chance.
    Your moment.
    Who hasn’t done such a thing?
    Let loose, we might have said.
    Touch her, we might have said.
    Feel her.
    Show her.
    Love.
    Love.
    Try.
    It'll be dark soon, Margie, Lucy said.
    We better go home.

57. MARGE

What’s this, Marge?
    Another fucking thing you’re trying to hide from me.
    You think I don’t go into your room, Marge?
    This is my house. I go where I want.
    I like this. Feels soft.
    Smells like you, Marge. Like fat titties.
    Why keep it secret? All the way under your bed.
    This what you touch at night, Marge?
    I bet that’s it.
    I bet this ain’t even yours.
    I bet you stole it from those dykes downstairs.
    You are a dyke, aren’t you, Marge?
    No? It’s yours? I don’t believe you.
    I think you stole it. I think you smell it and you look at it and you touch yourself and you think about those dykes.
    Is that it, Marge? Is that what you do? Why you tried to hide this from me?
    I’d like to take this down there and tie it around their necks.
    Watch those dykes beg for their lives.
You think I wouldn’t do that, Marge?
Disgusting, them.
No? You expect me to believe this is yours?
I don’t believe you, Marge.
Why don’t you wear it, then? Why hide it under your bed like some porno?
Prove it, Marge.
Prove it to me or I’m going down there and I’m going to show those dykes what you did.
Put it on.
Put this on and show me it’s yours or I’m going down there and I am going to teach those dykes a lesson.
Teach them to stay out of our business.
Make them pay for turning you into a dyke, Marge.
Five seconds, you got.
I’m waiting.
Put that on or I’m going down there.
I’ll kill them, Marge.
Think I won’t? Think I can’t do it?
Show me.
Five.
Four.
Three.
Two.
One.

58. MARJORIE

The pains are bad today. So bad that down-day Gram does not want to eat the graham cracker and peanut butter treats Marjorie is making for her. Gram has one thin, shaking hand held against her chest and one against her belly. Her eyes are open and on the Stories and then squeezed shut against the waves of pain when they come.

My heart, Margie, she says.

Marjorie is careful not to break the graham cracker as she spreads more peanut butter across its smooth surface. She wants to help Gram but she does not know how. Marjorie does not know if Gram can be helped, or if this is just what time will do to People. She wants to ask Gram about Lucy, but here are the pains.