Bathroom Songs: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick as a Poet

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The Palimpsest (1974)

You must have dropped off on top of the covers after only a couple of brief throes, for when I found you in the morning you were just treading up toward consciousness — still in the costume of your obsession. Under a latex body suit — rubber corsets. Then chalk and crayon hieroglyphs to the flesh.

These showed, on the front of the thigh, marks of claws and bits of leopard fur; at the back, uneven horizontal stripes in red.

How different if I had found you in a whipping orgy for real. How different if some biography had told as a true fact how puckered, long-healed, horizontal scars were seen in that place by the impassive coroner; the biographer mentioning, what were really unpublishable, some corresponding documents: your life in the family, your school.

In fact the scars don’t answer to the wounds. You surface, hence, in the narrow warmth of meaning, being peeled and washed on the coverlet where found.