

When I was Thirteen I Ate My City

Trent Jamieson

When I was thirteen I ate my city. I was extremely tall for my age. I had a serious face and a much more dreadfully serious hunger. Brisbane was a tasty city. A bit dry, even with its coils of river, but there hadn't been much rain for a while. So a wet meal was out of the question.

I'd had my first wet dream the night before, like my dick was some sort of coughing nocturnal creature, that only did anything interesting when I was asleep, like a possum.

Nocturnal emission. I prefer that term, because, for one, it sounds like Nocturnal Mission.

If this story were to have a mission statement, which it wouldn't because I don't like the idea of mission statements: missions should be secret, but if it did, it would be to explain why I ate the city of Brisbane.

Now the easy answer would be that I was hungry and extremely tall for my age, but that would only be the easy answer. It wouldn't include the hills, the undulations if you will, that make up my city. And it wouldn't include my bike, which fell apart the day before the night I had my wet dream, nor would it include my secret love.

The bike fell apart because it had been dismantled, cleverly, by the brother of girl that I loved, the one whom I could never tell, because, it was never going to work,

because her brother hated me.

There is no love like a thirteen year old boy's love. It is a potent thing. It is a pure thing, it is a groping thing. And it bullies you. Don't believe for a minute that it doesn't.

I was bullied at school. I had a nose that dripped. Dad calls it the Jamieson nose. My grandfather had it, and he never ate a city, nor was he bullied at school, but he is long dead.

By the time I finished eating the city there were at least 1 million dead. I'm sorry about that.

I'm not sorry that my wet dream involved her. Her name was College Markman. She wasn't tall, but she had dark hair, that she had streaked red. She was a goddess. She was College.

I never attended college, but I did eat four university campuses, and digested thirty-seven libraries. By the last one I was feeling remarkably full, or unremarkably full considering, and I sat looking over the bare hills and wondering what I might have read, if only I had been able to control my hungers.

Hunger is a remarkable thing. I had a hunger for College. I admired the smooth flesh of her calves, the suggestive curvature of her neck, the ripe swelling of her chest, which led to an equally remarkable swelling on my part. My dream involved a montage of limbs, her limbs, her flesh wrapped around mine. We kissed and kissed, and I woke to stickiness.

Shame is a sticky emotion. And my knees were raw, on account of my fallen apart bike, which had fallen apart with me on it. And I was wet and I was sore, and I didn't sleep well, after that. So I wasn't in a good mood the following day. You could say I was keyed up.

My mood improved when I saw her at school. I even said her name. And she walked straight past me. And I felt that hunger. I felt that hunger, and I felt it rise within me, and she pointed and laughed at that rising.

"How's your bike?" she asked, and I knew, with more than a rising suspicion, I knew that it had never been her brother who dismantled my bike.

And then, all I was was hunger. Because a door had been opened. Somewhere inside me. And it led to a room, a hungry room: an exponentially hungry room.

I opened my mouth and bit down, on the nearest thing at hand, and swallowed, and then I opened my mouth again. With every bite I found a little more room for the next. With every bite my jaw widened, and widened. Exponential widening, so in the end it was pretty quick.

By the time I was done, so quick from first nibble to last crunch, the city was gone. I had eaten all the buildings. I had eaten all the people. All the puppy dogs and possums and all the infrastructure that brings one bit of the city to the other, and I had eaten College.

We'd never kiss.

We'd never flirt.

We'd just never.

"Well, fuck," I said, at all that never.

It was a mistake. I regret it now. But I was thirteen.

When I was thirteen I ate a city, because when I was thirteen I didn't know any better.

Trent Jamieson lives with his wife, Diana. When he was thirteen he ate a city, except he didn't, though he wishes he had, even if it was only to regret having done it - it's complicated.