

Back and forth.

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Recline prostrate. Submission. There's no room to walk, even. Amble, yes. It's night. Everyone's gone to sleep but me. I'm up and I better not make a loud noise, or else everyone will start griping and everyone else will start griping and then nobody will ever get sleep.

In my sleep, I saw my father and mother. Then I was at that house and a countless horde came running out and swallowed me. These are the memories flickering while I eat. So what was it, and does it mean something? As if I'm truly capable of interpreting anything. It's still early, though I feel I've risen late. And in this day-to-day I don't do anything, really. I look pretty. I taught myself new things, once. But only for the visitors.

In this place with these companions or fellows caged, we don't converse and only the lucky ones get a roommate. To stay together until . . .

But when the visitors came, oh! I bounded. And I jumped and stood on my two legs, leaning against the bars, smiling. I learned not to be too loud. And I impressed them with new tricks; though, they barely glanced and most of the time didn't notice at all. I've given this causality: my tricks are old and unimpressive, my coat isn't shiny, my breed is inferior, I'm too old or too young, my snout is too long, my muscles have atrophied. I diligently studied what tricks they like and recreated them, but there's something about ME. What is it? What happens to the ones who've been here too long?

I gave up. The tricks are useless; some don't even do tricks, chosen and freed. So, back and forth amble. Too tired for that even, now. But that's how I learned that they value the tricks. They crave attention as I do, but for ostensible conceit (not to be rude). They prod my exhausted body with rods. I bark, and oh! they relish it. "Hey, whelp. What're you barking at? Come on, whelp, show us your tricks. You're tough enough. Just a little poke."

What to do in this case? Resignation sure sounds ideal. Feral tantrums sometimes scare them away or arouse bouncing elation; they stab harder in repeat.

Not only have I grown accustomed, I delight in the stabbing. Yes.

My jaws open wide and my tongue stretches out, yawning, ingratiating/instigating you for more. Please, please. Harder, rougher. Not rough enough, weakling. Do it, coward. How

much is my pain worth to you? Just one bruise? More. More! MORE! MORE!

MOREMOREMORE MORE! MORE! MORE! MORE!

This is my body, given for you. Blood is honey. Blood is heady. Blood is wine. I lap up my blood – mm, mmm! Delicious! This is my blood, drink it up! Drink it up!

My penis hardened and I licked myself to orgasm, discharging my filmy muck onto their shoes.

I'm a martyr. I'm a saint. Pummel me, no bother. Oh God Jesus Christ Hiesos Kristos I'm holy. Drink up my blood, baby. We're all holy. I love you: you love me. What's violence and what's empathy? And what is really studying? Have I learned something? As if I'm capable of interpreting anything. What's up with this talk of mothers? Oedipus, fuck yourself. *We* focus on our *fathers*. Matrilineal, matriarchal societies are inferior in every respect. We justify genocide and slavery in this sense: Kill 'em all!

I know all the tricks. I've studied and I know what you like. What happens to the ones here too long?