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Thursday, 31 October 2013 22:44 - Last Updated Thursday, 31 October 2013 23:10

Sadistic Intentions / Masochistic Longings, Poster Girl, and iMemories (Revisited)

by Vesperae

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The good news is that I am on the verge of returning to something resembling a "normal" life. (Or at least, a life less thoroughly overwhelmed by distractions.)

The bad news is that I'm not *quite* there yet. But I have every reason to expect that I will be soon. And with any luck at all, my creative juices will again be flowing sufficiently to breathe life back into "Kayla" for the new installment that I know many of you have been patiently waiting for, and that I have been impatiently wanting to bring you.

Again, many thanks for your continued patience and understanding, and again, especially for all of your kind emails and well wishes. Better days seem much closer now than they have been in awhile. I'm O.K. :)

Since you have all been so gracious to me during my extended absence, I wanted to offer you three of my favorite installments of Darker Desires from the last five years, all presented here for the first time outside of the Smoke Signals Online membership area.

"Sadistic Intentions / Masochistic Longings"

December 2007

Note: The original published version of this stream of consciousness prose poem featured all of the Sadistic meditations grouped together first, and then the complementary Masochistic meditations grouped together second. But I always wanted to try presenting this in its original

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juxtaposed "call and response" format, since this is how I first composed it.

Sadist: I will indulge my every curiosity, my every whim, my every fleeting penchant, not because any of them are in any way important or significant in and of themselves, but because the exercise of demanding and receiving that which I desire makes me stronger, and more powerful, and greater than I was before.

Masochist: I am weary of the superficial trappings of safety and security in my life, and of all of the things that I have come to surround myself with; please take from me this burden of responsibility that I feel to maintain these things that I have so invested myself in.

S: I will inflict my appetites and my commitment to myself without regard to cost, or consequences, or restraint.

M: Teach me the cost and consequences of my appetites, so that I may realize the value of them and find them to be more rewarding.

S: Moderation does not in any way serve to increase my strength, my power, or my greatness.

M: Limitations serve to contain my restlessness, and to comfort me.

S: Excess without limit is the only measure of my strength, my power, and my greatness.

M: Hunger that awaits satisfaction heightens satisfaction once the waiting reaches an end.

S: The only thing that really matters to me is the endless pursuit of indulgence for its own sake.

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M: Make me less than the person that I believe that I should be, so that I may appreciate and understand the simpler realities of who and what I am.

S: I celebrate the vastness of my Ego that dwells within the opulence and pampered comfort that I create for it within my mind.

M: Sacrifice is a scale upon which I can measure my worth. Sacrifice is validation. Sacrifice is Romance. Sacrifice is Love.

S: I will gleefully lay waste to anything that stands between me, and the fullest expression of my Will.

M: Hurt me in ways that I can anticipate, so that I may look forward to the release of all of the hidden pain that I carry deep within me, but have never been able to release on my own.

S: I inspire outrage and envy. I intimidate and befuddle. I relish shocking the timid with the sheer scale of my narcissism and my utterly unapologetic self-centeredness.

M: I choose to relinquish choice in exchange for the cathartic freedom of behaving irresponsibly.

S: I will manipulate fire in all of its primal destructiveness and transform that which is contained and innocuous into menacing clouds of danger.

M: I will play with fire in all of its primal destructiveness and release that which is contained and innocuous into menacing clouds of danger.

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S: I will routinely create and trail a smoldering stick that I will make my constant companion and familiar, and will transform my body into an instrument with which to repeatedly spew a concentrated vapor of poisons and carcinogens.

M: I will find companionship and comfort in the deadly kisses of my own personal Demon Lover as I take her injurious caresses into the depths of my body again and again.

S: I will threaten those around me with the closeness of burning.

M: I will threaten myself repeatedly with the closeness of her burning.

S: I will taint the world around me with tar stains and butts and ashes.

M: I will taint the Holiness of my body with her sweet poisons.

S: I will force you to breathe my toxicity. I will force you to deal with it. I will force you to suffer my indulgence.

M: I will invite her willingly. I will invite her knowingly. I will indulge the release of my suffering with her.

S: I will smoke. Oh yes, I will smoke.

M: I will smoke. Oh yes, I will smoke.

S: I will inflict this slow strangulation on those who dare to be close enough to share the same

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air with me, and I will savor their discomfort.

M: I will welcome this slow strangulation into my life. I will take great pleasure in subjecting myself to the painful disapproval of those around me.

S: I will revel endlessly in the domination of my Will over my flesh, and in your pathetic disapproval and complaints, just as I reveled in conquering the pathetic disapproval and complaints of my own body when I first inflicted smoke upon its core.

M: I will find sweet release in the submission of my flesh to this self-made addiction, and comfort in the separating stigma placed upon me by non-smokers, just as I found sweet release in the discomfort of deliberately abusing my body when I first drew smoke into its core.

S: My flesh is but my servant, and I will delight in abusing this servant to glorify myself as I would any other.

M: To feel the weakness spreading through my chest with every drag I inhale is to realize the vitality of my flesh in the counterpoint of slowly strangling it.

S: Corruption. Control. Conceit. Cigarettes.

M: Corruption. Control. Conceit. Cigarettes.

S: No other single artifact can convey all of these so eloquently and immediately to anyone who seeks the power of the Sadistic in themselves, or in others.

M: No other single artifact can convey all of these so eloquently and immediately to anyone who seeks the release of the Masochistic in themselves, or in others.

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"Poster Girl"

January–February 2008

Would she remember me?

Would she think about me later?

Would she wonder how I could do that?

Would she wonder why I would want to do that?

Would her mother dismiss me as some stupid mindless junkie if she ever asked about what I was doing?

"Look! She's smoking!"

As I stood on the sidewalk waiting for a friend to pick me up, I turned to see a little blonde girl of no more than five staring back at me with wide-eyed shock and fascination. Her mother hastened her away by her tiny little hand and simply ignored me, but the little girl continued to keep her eyes locked on me until they turned the next corner and went out of sight.

I gave her a reassuring smile despite being slightly startled by her outburst, and as I stood there with Virginia Slims smoke cascading from my nostrils, I reflexively felt an equal measure of guilt and amusement over having a child react to me publicly smoking a cigarette in this way.

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The social climate of smoking has certainly changed dramatically since I was her age, but I tend to believe that the only thing that has really changed is that the awareness of the fundamentally detrimental nature of smoking has been forced from the shadows of isolated and individual personal understanding into the light of public awareness. When I was her age, I had an equally strong reaction to seeing someone smoke a cigarette, but simply never said anything, probably because I was very shy, but also because there was little in my social experience at that time to legitimize my reaction. Both of my parents smoked, and most of the adults that I knew smoked, and the last vestiges of the Golden Age of Smoking continued to cast a spell of denial far and wide across the world that I was growing up in.

While we as a Community clearly span several generations, recent impromptu polls on various online discussion groups would seem to suggest that there is an especially large cohort of 40-somethings among our ranks, or at least among those who actively participate in the online SF scene. This might have to do with generational issues of comfort with using the net as a social interaction tool to discuss and entertain this particular sexual interest, but there is one remarkable and easily identifiable historical social influence that I tend to believe could easily explain why we see this phenomenon.

The first *US Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health* was released on January 11, 1964. This month marks the 44th Anniversary, and I will turn 44 this year, so the awareness of the dangers of smoking and the subsequent evolution of the public reaction to this awareness entirely coincides with the span my life and my own personal experience. One of my favorite private jokes is the thought that I am something of a DS SF Poster Girl as a result of the coincidence of this particular happenstance of timing. I just happened to come along at the right time and just happened to grow up in the right environment to end up with these particular Unusual Desires.

But it would seem that I'm clearly not alone with respect to these generational influences, and one theory that seems reasonable to me is that my 40-Something brothers and sisters in the SF Community, and very probably even those who are a bit older and younger, likely share in the significance of this contextual developmental influence of growing up during the Age of the Surgeon Generals' Reports on Smoking and Health. The fallout of the Surgeon Generals' Reports, including the institution of Federal Trade Commission testing and publishing of the tar and nicotine content of various brands of cigarettes, the mandated addition of explicit health warnings to cigarette advertising and packaging, and all of the subsequent mass media Public Health Anti-Smoking Campaigns, did more to establish and promote the notion of smoking as a strong Taboo than any other social influence in history. Even if you do not actively and consciously entertain the Darker aspects of the attraction to smoking, all of the drama, the

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controversy, and the "big deal" of smoking as the direct result of the Surgeon Generals' Reports has forever charged and colored our social and individual reactions to smoking - among smokers, non-smokers, anti-smokers, and those with a SF - unlike anything else.

While I obviously believe that any child of even below average intelligence inherently understands that smoking can't possibly be good for you, the formalization and recognition of this reality via the tools of science, combined with the enormous impact of mass media in broadcasting the message, shaped the collective social consciousness surrounding smoking profoundly, especially because the message came at a time when science and mass media were at the core of our collective belief system and vision of the future.

But we always knew that the cat was in the bag, even if few ever dared to speak of it publicly. The Surgeon Generals' Reports just let her out. And vaporized the bag once and for all.

Which brings me back to my little friend on the street, and the difference between her world and mine when I was her age. The world that she lives in now is populated by adults my age, who grew up with the forced emergence of the social awareness of the dangers of smoking, and there is now a greater divide than ever between those who choose to smoke, and those who were forever (and quite reasonably) scared off from smoking.

And among both of these groups of contemporary adults on either side of the current divide there are memories of The Golden Age of Smoking, many of whom found their years of exposure to secondhand smoke so unpleasant that they grew up to become not only non-smokers, but virulent anti-smokers. And yet for many, whether they ever smoke a single cigarette during their lifetimes or not, the Sublime fascination with smoking is obviously deeper and more acute than ever, or no one would ever start smoking and keep smoking, given all that we know about the health consequences of doing it.

I would even go so far as to suggest that within the most zealous anti-smoking activists among us lies a deeply repressed attraction to smoking that fuels their extreme and often neurotically phobic reactions to it. To me, the subtext of their actions seems to be saying, *"If I can just make smoking go away, it won't tempt me anymore, and I'll finally be at peace..."*

Which entirely parallels the experience of having a Smoking Fetish and wishing that you didn't,

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and which is also just the sort of extreme behavior that tends to eventually make smokers out of some curious, frightened little girls.

"iMemories"

January–February 2009

Note: Obviously written when Steve Jobs was very much alive. Beneath my stab at playful snarkiness here lies a wealth of respect for him, for his vision, and for his accomplishments. R.I.P. Steve, and thank you.

Steve Jobs is an evil Effing genius. iTunes has to be one of the most brilliant cash generating ideas ever conceived, because it is so very easy to use, so very affordable on a unit cost basis, and so very addictive. The product sells itself with virtually no effort at all, and offers an instantaneous and deep psychological pleasure hit that engages the user on a very intimate and habituating level. The Pusher Man's got a big fat stash of Digital Crack, he's got your Visa number, and he knows that you are not that far evolved beyond a laboratory animal craving whatever goodies are in that water that you keep lapping up off the ball bearing tip of the giant bottle attached to the side of your cage.

When it comes to anything pre-contemporary, iTunes essentially functions as "iMemories," as in, *"Hey Kid, wouldn't you like to hear that song that reminds you of that person, or those people, or that time, or that place that you haven't thought about in years? Maybe it was Happier or Simpler then? It only costs \$0.99; you'll hardly even miss that..."*

Brilliant. The parallels to the reasons for the historic profitability of cigarettes would seem self-evident.

It also explains why virtually anyone who has iTunes has such an eclectic collection of music, and often, the auditory and music video equivalent of a whole dairy case of *fromage* that most of us keep the ownership of to ourselves.

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Once I went through the initial round of loading all of the essential CDs in my vast dusty collection of discs into my iTunes, I laughed at myself when I realized that I had assembled a collection of artists and releases that any left of the dial progressive hipster music snob would entirely approve of, including most or all of the catalogues of, among others, The Pixies, PJ Harvey, Mazzy Star, Hope Sandoval, Massive Attack, Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds, Radiohead, Death Cab for Cutie, as well as a whole bunch of ethereal jazz, like Patricia Barber, Julee Cruise, and Angelo Badalamenti.

But once I started strolling through the virtual isles of "iMemories" in my virtual black leather stiletto boots, and once I spontaneously started loading up my virtual cart with tracks that beckoned to me from the distant recesses of my childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, it dawned on me that I had acquired and pared down my CD collection over the years based on a restriction that I wasn't entirely consciously aware of. I realized that I only owned CDs that I wouldn't be entirely embarrassed to have someone know that I owned. It wasn't a hard and fast rule, by any stretch of the imagination, but it certainly was significant in that it effectively relegated certain artists and songs to the attic of my psyche. To say nothing of the implications of the divide between the vinyl / cassette years and the CD years, and all of the things that I was ready to set aside and not replace on CD.

And *voila*...now a song or an album that I haven't heard for many years evokes a startlingly clear psychological snapshot of the way that I used to see the world, and who I used to be, because it got buried in the sands of time when I left it behind, and hearing it again takes me back to that part of my journey when it accompanied me.

When I was six, my grandparents gave me a real "grownup" record player for Christmas. It had an automatic tone arm and would shut off by itself when a record side finished playing, so every night when I went to bed, I was able to put on a record and listen to it as I fell asleep. My mom still had some of her records from when she was a teenager, and love songs by clean cut romantic crooners like Andy Williams were her favorite. And I fell in love with the warm syrupy feeling that they gave me. I didn't understand a thing about sex, or about what it meant to be a lesbian, but I completely got the appeal of aching to be with someone else, and I would often lie awake in bed in the dark listening to these warm syrupy songs over and over, imagining myself dancing with and kissing a beautiful girl who was soft and warm and who loved me. A six year old born Romantic, that was me.

While my musical tastes have certainly evolved over the years, as ours all do, there can be no

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denying the primal appeal of even the cheesiest of pop songs, if for no other reason than because the radio made sure that I would hear it again and again until I knew the lyrics by heart without ever even trying. And since I've always been a complete sucker for a slow dance downbeat and a yearning voice anyway, these are the songs that stuck with me.

I had a very unexpected reaction to a particular song that I recently acquired from The Pusher Man, a truly gooey and stinky blob of *fromage* that I'm O.K. with admitting to you that I own and thoroughly enjoy: *"Lost In Love"* by Air Supply.

Oh my God...when I listened to this song again for the first time after so many years, it really, really, really, really got me going sexually and psychologically and emotionally! And the reason became quickly obvious - now when I listen to it, the teenager that still lives inside of me remembers the first girl that she kissed, and all of the smoking girls that she used to visually caress in furtive longing glances, believing that it was absolutely forbidden for her to be with them, to be one of them. (Sadly, my first kiss was with a non-smoker, by the way.)

But suddenly feeling the contrast between who I used to be and who I am now gave me a thrill that I certainly wasn't expecting in response to the stimulus of permed and lobotomized Aussie Pop. It's all about context, and the Romantic in me adores context and the process of coming together and being together. And the motif of a pop song can weave a thread through that process that inexorably links it to all of the feelings and thoughts that you had while experiencing them.

My reaction to this, as well as to other rediscovered songs, reminded me just how much Romance is a cornerstone of my sexuality, and especially, just how important it has been to shaping my Fetish. Romance is Life. Romance is Tenderness. Romance is Light. And it is from this swirling bright dream of Utopia that the Shadows eventually are cast. Smoking is Death. Smoking is Lust. Smoking is Darkness. Without the Innocence, there can be no Identity shifting loss of it. Without the Romance, there is little to lose to the Shadows, but with the Romance, there is much to lose to the Shadows, and the Thrill of the Risk inflames the libido to hungry urgency.

Even in fantasy.

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What would it be like to be with that girl that I've admired from afar for so long? Let's say we met and hit it off. I'm completely taken with her intellect, her sense of humor, her smile, her sparkling eyes, her sexy, exciting body, her sense of style, her lovely hair. We sit together in the moonlight, and she looks into my eyes as she lifts a long, slim cigarette to her beautiful, full lips, lights it, takes a long drag, and snaps the toxic smoke deep into her lungs. My eyes drift down to her chest, and I watch her breasts slowly fall as she exhales directly into my face. I could have real feelings for this beautiful woman. This beautiful woman who deliberately hurts her body by filling it with cigarette smoke. I want to dance with her slowly in the moonlight, and put my hands on the back of her chest, and feel her breathe, and look deeply into her eyes as I taste the carcinogens that she's put deep inside of her fragile body when I softly lick the moist bottom of her upper lip.

*"So lift your eyes if you feel you can
Reach for a star and I'll show you a plan
I figured it out, what I needed was someone to show me..."*

And we will dance here together in the moonlight discovering the pleasures of cigarette smoke deep in our lungs, and discovering each other, and discovering love...for as long as the song plays on in my memory.

"It started so easy... You want to carry on..."

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