

The Search For All Things Experiential

By: Kosta Grammatis

I am a part of the 405 South. Man's largest parking lot, slowly inches forward in the midday Sunday traffic. Stopping. Waiting. Inching. My fingers tap tap tap on the steering wheel, my eyes they peer into the nearby vehicles. An old black woman in a white Mercedes rolling her head slowly from side to side-- perhaps slowly dancing, perhaps stretching, perhaps trying to snap her own neck. We sit alone in our cars and wait for the brake lights to desist.

I'm reminded of the night before. Wildcat-- the club in Santa Barbara where the bass rattles already overworked kidneys, the young adults raise their hands, bodies slippery with sweat. The movement, of two hundred people packed shoulder to shoulder, front to back-- grinding. Packed so tight but still able to move, a liquid form of movement. A knee interlocking with the back of a thigh, the curve of a spine perfectly fit to the belly of another. Stacked like chairs, writhing like snakes.

And I'm back in traffic, there is no moving. Just waiting. So the black woman tries to dance alone in her car but glass, steel, and chrome--they only stack. They do not snake. She dances alone. To the left a twenty something angel of a woman sighs a long sigh. She drives something old, very old. Rust and chrome. She glows, her car sags on its wheels, she closes her eyes.

I'm reminded once again of the night before. The girl who danced without opening her eyes. Navigating by touch, by taste, by smell. Illuminated by the frantic lights she moves and I just can't help but smile and close my eyes-- pretending I'm dancing with her.

We lurch forward and the traffic quickens its pace, I drive on.

I'm on my way to the city. Los Angeles, a place that I will soon call home in a few short weeks. As soon as the freeway ends the traffic lights begin. Street after street after street. I've got a big job now, and I'm no one in a big city full of everyone. I'm looking for an apartment. I drive through Compton-- just to see where I don't want to live. I decide Compton would be a great place to take a girl with an adventurous spirit for a date.

I go to richer places. Socioeconomic lines have been drawn across the pavement here with bulldozers. East to West--the poor are afraid of water and the rich own boats. I settle on Playa Del Ray and choke to death on the rich cake that is the cost of rent. A stones throw from the beach and what a beautiful view of the Los Angeles Airport. I'm still looking.

I can't see why you'd want to live here.

I'm reminded of the night before. Waiting in line, the bouncer fingering my ID and looking

me in the eye with an accusatory stare. Walking through the front entrance only to be blown back out by decibel upon decibel of chest pounding music. Stinking of alcohol the writhing snake of people are stacked with precision, no room for me-- not an inch to even breath.

And I can't see why you'd want to dance here.

But then both the bar and the dance floor open up and I find myself invited in to writhe among the masses. So I do, and its different, but I enjoy it. I close my eyes and dance with the girl who has closed hers. Our bodies intertwined on the dance floor, moving, breathing, touching, feeling. Loving. We ebb and flow with the tide of bodies. The beat of the music reverberates through our skin and we lose ourselves entirely in the moment.

LA. I will lose myself in you, to emerge a new found man.