

Creature Feature

By Leah Mueller

While other girls are applying makeup
and giggling until dawn about boys
whose testicles have not yet descended
I am chewing the wax coverings from tubes
of Halloween candy, and sucking
the sugary water into my intestines.
Upstairs, my three younger siblings sleep,
their brains cooling off like
freshly extinguished light bulbs.
The television is tuned to reveal
the faces of monsters, reassuring
because of their predictability.
It is their function to behave like monsters.
The movies are from my parents' childhood,
black and white, They remind me of postcards,
grainy photographs of historic figures
like Boris Karloff, and Bela Lugosi.
These men are my fantasies,
though I am never sure
what I ought to be imagining.
They are bland and civilized on the outside,
sinister and corrupt under pale skin.
I am never able to convince myself
that men aren't supposed to remind me of vampires,
or lumbering monsters with horrible complexions,
or inscrutable mummies, their filthy bandages
continually unraveling, How I love
to cover my eyes, and watch at the same time.
When the volume of the television suddenly increases
I know it's time for the commercials-
phone numbers for used car lots and plumbers
blaring with a sing-song urgency,
commercials at increasing velocity,
and then even more as it gets later,
and only a handful of people in Chicago are watching.
I'm too young to imagine them spooning food
into their mouths from plastic plates

Writing Raw

All work appearing below is copyrighted by the author.

while fantasizing about ways to exterminate their bosses
or planning to call ex-lovers, who are having sex
with other people, at that very moment.
It is still exciting to be awake after midnight,
and I don't want to take my eyes off the television
for even a second. My toes curl,
and my face is reflected in the screen-
the imaginary world of mist
that will never be interrupted by insipid sunshine.
With daylight comes responsibilities-
breakfasts of Pop-Tarts
and French toast made from Wonder bread,
my parents hung over and snarling.
Yes, I'll take an honest monster any day-
the scars and the rage are more visible.

Leah Mueller bio: Leah Mueller is a writer who resides in western Washington. In addition to Writing Raw, her work has been featured in Cultured Vultures, Bop Dead City, Quail Bell, Typoetic, Talking Soup, Silver Birch Press, Semaphore, MaDCap, The Rain, Party, and Disaster Society, and many others. Leah's chapbook, "Queen of Dorksville" was published in 2012 by Crisis Chronicles Press. Leah's new book of poetry and prose, entitled "Allergic to Everything" is forthcoming from Writing Knights Press in the fall. Leah was a featured reader and poet in July 2015 at the New York Poetry Festival, and a 2012 winner in the Wergle Flomp humor poetry contest, sponsored annually by Winning Writers. She enjoys sunflowers, lucid dreaming, and anything water-related.