Wandering Eyes

As much as I try to avoid it, I find myself in a Catholic Church at least once a year. Occasionally, my grandma, using good old Christian manipulation, draws me unwittingly into the pew next to her, but usually my vow to never return to the crucifixes and thorns is broken by a wedding invitation. The latter was the case last weekend when I coaxed myself into the brimstone and fire with a quick screwdriver from Beef’s Corner Bar and few soothing drags of T-Bone’s Marlboro Red. Maybe it’s the devil’s doing, but I cannot seem to enter the place unsullied.

After popping an Altoid to mask our homage to the underworld, T-Bone, my childhood friend, and I selected a place not so close that we might catch the attention of the hanging Jesus’s all-seeing eyes that haunted us as children, but not so far away that our friend, the bride would wonder whether we showed only for the free chicken dinner and luke warm Bud Light offered by the reception. According to Nancy, who suddenly converted from exploiter of wedding-sanctioned drinking binges to one of those imposters who claim that the church ceremony is the most important part, the least we could do was come watch her do what millions had done before her and pretend as if it were special.

As the people around us settled into the well-known routines of the Catholic Church, the words “Our Father” rolling off their tongues, I resisted my knee-jerk reaction to slip into prayer. Incessantly, I reminded myself that I no longer believed in religion and possibly not in god either. Still, the chanting of these old familiar phrases soothed and lulled me into resignation, and I found myself resentfully sign of the crossing myself and even uttering a few irritated amens. T-Bone sensed my agitation and tried to lighten the mood by poking fun of the magical transformation of bread into body and wine into blood. I played along noting that cannibalism is a federal offence except when in the Catholic Church—but then again, so are many behaviors. However, the sarcastic banter that normally made my shoulders violently shake provided little comfort to me now.

As the congregation stood with their right hands extended forward to bless the couple, I was actually disappointed with myself for pondering how the “Hail Hitler” salute was so appropriate in a religion that requires blind faith. In the past, such a thought would have tickled me with delight but now I wondered why I had to be so cynical. Why could I not just go along with the charade? Why could I not at least recognize something positive in this ritual? Up to that moment, I thought myself so much more enlightened than churchgoers, but here I was the odd woman out. Everyone around me, with the exception of T-Bone, seemed to find solace and strength in the redundant recitation and the monotonous patterns: standing, singing, sitting, praying, kneeling, bowing. Could all of these people be fools? Or was I?

The applause officially recognizing the couple ripped me from my reverie. I pulled a smile across my face and clapped for the new couple who were now “man and wife.” This phrase reminded me of my list of irreconcilable differences with the Catholic Church. I despised the Church’s cloaked subordination of women, its colonization disguised as charity, and its outright exclusion of gays, divorcees, and abortion. I reluctantly resigned myself to the fact that finding comfort in such a hostile environment would forever be impossible for me.
As I was ushered down the aisle, I caught the crucified Jesus’s wandering eyes despite my very best effort not to look up. There they were, judging my thoughts and actions. I shuddered recognizing at once the chastisement that drove me from the Catholic Church as well as the hypocrisy of my own wandering eyes that had taken pleasure in ridiculing and mocking those from whom I ran.
Sports:

1st

Chicken Dance and Other Choreographed dances

Saturday in all churches of all dominations is the day of the wedding particularly those few Saturdays that pepper the summer calendar. The marriage witnessed last Saturday happened to be of the Catholic persuasion. Nothing too over the top, aside from the whole turning bread into a body and wine into blood thing. Also, there was the short moment that was reminiscent of a Hitler Youth video.

2nd

As much as I try to avoid it, I find myself in a Catholic Church at least once a year. Sometimes, my grandma uses her secret sorceress powers and zaps me into the pew next to her, but usually my vow never to step foot in another Catholic place of worship is broken by a wedding invitation. That was the case last weekend when I finally dragged myself into the monument to brimstone and fire after relaxing with a screwdriver and few drags of my friend’s Marlboro Red. There is just something about the place that will not allow me to enter unsullied. We took our place in a location not so distant that our friend wouldn’t know we were there. After all, the whole point of showing up was to build some credit with her. The ceremony began with the usual grand entrance and opening prayer.

3rd

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After popping an Altoid to mask our homage to the underworld, T-Bone and I selected a place not so close that we might catch the attention of the hanging Jesus’s all-seeing eyes that haunted us as children, but not so far away that, our friend, the bride would wonder whether we showed only for the fried chicken dinner and luke warm Bud Light offered by the reception. According to Kristy, who suddenly converted from exploiter of wedding-sanctioned drinking binges to one of those imposters who claim that the church ceremony is the most important part, the least we could do was come watch her do what millions had done before her and pretend as if it was special.
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As the people around us settled into the well-known routines of the Catholic Church, the words “Our Father” rolling off their tongues, it occurred to me that much of the congregation probably had never memorized another piece of poetry since they graduated from chastising CCD classes. I recalled painstakingly committing each of the words to my memory as a 1st grader. I

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As the people around us settled into the well-known routines of the Catholic Church, the words “Our Father” rolling off their tongues, I resisted my knee-jerk reaction to slip into prayer. Incessantly, I reminded myself that I no longer believed in religion and possibly not god either. But the chanting of these old familiar phrases soothed and lulled me into resignation, and I found myself resentfully bowing and even uttering a few irritating amens. T-Bone sensed my agitation and tried to lighten the mood by
poking fun of the magical transformation of bread into body and wine into blood. I played along mentioning that cannibalism is a federal offence except when in the Catholic Church—but then again, so are many behaviors. The sarcastic banter that normally made my shoulders shake in an attempt to mask my laughter provided little comfort for me now.

I was actually disappointed when I held my right hand up to bless the couple and all I could think was: “We are posed in the Nazi salute.” Why did I have to be so cynical? Why could I not just go along with the charade? Or at least recognize something positive in this ritual? Up to that moment, I thought myself so much more enlightened than churchgoers and here I was the odd woman out. Everyone around me, with the exception of T-Bone, seemed to find comfort and peace even if only through the constant recitation and the monotonous patterns: standing, sitting, and kneeling. Could all of these people be fools? Or was I?

The applause officially recognizing the couple ripped me from my reverie. I pulled a smile across my face and clapped for the new couple who were now “man and wife.” This phrase reminded me of my list of irreconcilable differences with the Catholic Church. I despised the Church’s cloaked subordination of women, its colonization disguised as charity work, and its outright exclusion of gays, divorcees, and abortion. Finding comfort in such a hostile environment was impossible for me.

As we were ushered down the aisle, I caught Jesus’s wandering eye despite my very best effort not to look up. There it was judging my thoughts and actions marked with an undetermined sadness. Perhaps it was my

6th-

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As I was ushered down the aisle, I caught Jesus’s wandering eyes despite my very best effort not to look up. There they were judging my thoughts and actions with the same undetermined sadness I felt in no longer being sheep in his fold.