

# *gray's baby*

james  
owens

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Saturday is grave day. I goggled Gray as he washed his matchbox car in the grime caked and fish rotted dish sink and its rotted cockroach water and than Gray floated like a stringless balloon to the graveyard. The matchbox car is a toy for Gray's Baby. The baby popped out as a lumped bloody marshmallow. Gray's sweetie deserted him, said it was his own ailment that deaded her baby. His cum was rotten cos he snaked in other creepy tramp's lairs an so she deserted him. Gray said Blackie Jackie was sorrowed. I pin tagged her Blackie Jackie cos she had hair that mirrored tangles of coal dust that sprinkled her wire knobbed shoulders. It was just a gag that I rare cracked with Gray about. Jackie was a shaded clutter of hollow urn tree umbrellas. I could not scrape away the black with any lanterned sun knives. Gray was knifeless in the withered sun. Jackie was a grave bloodless vamp an rare a grin bloomed her coffin soiled veil. Gray would not have knuckle rapped or snapped a jab at me. Gray wooda sorrowed glum. Jackie mourned for sorrow when she was

only glum and pined for her ash box when she was sorrowed. Jackie's bin mourning for a litter of calendar leaves in the gutter can.

My tag's John though I don't think I was ever baptized. Mama Gray rare as a diamond sky showering jewels infiltrated the cross. I wonder if god is in the cross church or is god in the bitter, salty clouds. I wonder is Gray's baby there?

It's showering like watery needle ribbons stabbing the cracked window glass. The fanlight is like matchsticks and it whirls like a propeller that will kindle spark the saggy ceiling. I examine verse sketched on crinkly, withered leaves. Soggy mash notes I'd weepy pine for Jackie when she was unclaimed. A coal butterfly outta the net of glue trapped pale moths. Jackie frolicked with Gray. I scrawled squiggly rhymes. I heaped it to a clutter of verse stashed in a dust cracked saggy walled shoe box. Rotted apple peels were the paper tenny skin. The shoes were rot printed, withered strings and ruined logo veins. I donated the rot shoes to the cross church. The cross church had a penniless beggar box. I should fetch Gray. Gray is probably doused soggy wilting with the plucked lilacs and lilies he decorates the Baby's grave with. The petals will rot to dust soon, but Gray will decorate with more trimmed stems and petals matted to the stone, I should fetch Gray. I peer at the toppling clouds and a flapping crow which seems to drop from the dingy rag sky like dead ash. The crow is like Jackie's mane and the Jack boots I lace on and the grime that worms into Gray's spidering nails. The grime is oil and grease cos Gray mends oil horses. Gray bandages my cancered horse for charity. I wish I could bandage his own blood pumper or the scythe swooped patches of his mind. The scythe leaves Jackie and the baby, but carts off the fresh roses sun brushed on a gold mantle.

I snug myself in Gray's mechanic jacket and mule rake the horse keys from a butterscotch dish Jackie rummaged from a knick knack flea swap. The rummage dish is plopped near to an urn pot, a weed can of Gray's Daddy.

The horse sputters and gags, but won't grind or kindle snap. Gray's service tips. Drink the fountainless radiator. A water pitcher is slinged by the foggy pea garage and the carousel wheeled horse, The pitcher is a shower catch, a puddle fills it. I dump the puddle and brim the catch with river. The pale tinted horse still sputters and its thumping pump beats a gagged skin torn drum.

The avenue is hollow. The smoke fire hives and lumber nests are bare. I still must fetch Gray. I tap my jack boots to ruin puddles, which mend as I slosh through. Gray's Daddy wore galoshes in the showers and bubble capped with an umbrella. Gray stored the galoshes and umbrella in an

elephant trunk he cracks cos elephants have a litter of snap shots and each flash bulb tape reels a biography for the mind screen.

The graveyard is a mile or so, I don't measure and the ruler is too snippy dwarf. The graveyard is by a Baptismal bible worshipping shrine. A cross stalks the groomed weed lawnlike it's posed to be gassed with a fire can. A flower shop tagged Mary's Garden is a hop or slosh through the drizzled chalk box. A funeral home looms about veiled by tangly shrubs. I visited the funeral home with Gray when his Daddy wilted off. Gray garbed in a sunny blue suit, but the grease still grimed his nail crevices. Gray bobbed off his chestnut pony tail so he mirrored a groomed mare. Gray's daddy was also John and he used to scratch valentines to the barked leaf of a razor needled pine which as the puffy clouds split and the banded crows swirled a telescope moon hovering like a saggy balloon—as the moon settled Gray's daddy swapped the pine into a willow and he mourned. He mourned Mary, not the virgin as she'd birthed Gray. She vanished like firesmoke on a rummaging Saturday. Gray's daddy is a bare marbled tag lumped in the measured row of quiet markers. Mary's tag was coupled and mated with John on the willow pine, but Gray an me torched that to ashes.

I stillwatched at the funeral home. A rusty hearse stationed in the half moon delivery cart route. The billboard fluted the eulogy jingle to Maggie Mardelin or Mary Magdeline. I'd strayed without my prescribed specks an the soupy haze, doctored the pasteboard letters. I'd acquainted no Maggie's and the gloomy, glum street guttering the cemetery was not merry. Jackie had a sister who'd christened me John and she was not Mary. She was a Nag, Nag was a plump shawl cozy on your brittle shoulders. Nag scented holy like church roses when she snuggled in to my bedroom—a couch sack by the laundry room and the apple crates stowing repair manuals, tool parts, shop worn skin rags. Nag tasted like butterscotch. Jackie tasted not like butterscotch, but when she braided her locks the kneaded twined strands mirrored licorice.

The cloud shower claps the chalked pavement not like crashing applause but hissing to shoo me off. Gray and Jackie were fish enjoying the showered water sprinkles on dry sun cracked skin. I shivered in the cloud showers. It was chilled ice beads gutter trailing my gravely spine. I shivered and wood be a butterfly ghost along the planked creaks and haunted Gray and Jackie's sealed and snapped slumber door. I wood snuggle, bare and frost veined, in a cobweb nook creeped near the shower and tub cubby. I was a frail kiddie with a Teddy shawl. Tuning the jarring springs, squeaky mattress and thumping sheet poles. Pumping and

grinding as Gray mashed into Jackie and riddled her to beaten pulp. It always kindled up the ash box of Nag who'd wedded a Chaplain. She mailed us a postal card from Fort Sill, Oklahoma where this Chaplain was an army preacher. Nag one day just hopped into the battered station wagon that to me mirrored a tin can hearse and it was grave black. The old family mobile was this hearse, not Gray's but Jackie and Nag's flock. Nag was s'posed to just be selling it for scrap pennies, but she tacked a mapless course to the Army preacher in Oklahoma. Nag scribbled in the postal that the Oklahoma sky was either gun powder or geese.

I sniff only musty spruce needles or sewer garbage and not the blooming taffy fumed flowers in Mary's Garden, all schakled and cased behind soggy glass. My brittle hands are also soggy as I press them to try and scratch nail holes in the glass and paw at the potted plant which swoons and dips like a willow leaf. A gift for Gray's Baby. I scope for a stone to fling like a robbing Christian burgling sum incense to sweeten the sour aroma of his musty wrinkled home. I find only a brittle pebble which plinks the soggy glass like a water pellet and topples to a puddle. I hood in the awning umbrella for a spell but the shower slashes at me anyway. I can't escape it and now I'm as drenched as Gray probably-huddled by his Baby. Tracing his finger through the chiseled name Baby Gray. Jackie refrained from tagging the baby and Gray was too cracked and splintered to fashion a proper tag so I tole them Baby Gray was proper and so it was ink branded. I conjured what Baby Gray woulda bin like whenever I tramped with Gray to the grave. Always when sunwashed; rare as drizzled jewels when the clouds showered. I captured Baby Gray always sunwashed. Playing with sockets as Gray and me repaired the horse. Toying with ratchets as we tutored him the secret hummings of a whistling engine. Allowing Baby Gray to fix and mend himself. Rooting through the junkyard for a side mirror. Gray wood git drunk sum at Sirens, a bar nested scant paces from the Coppers badge shop. Gray wood whack the horse against sum fresh polished Saturn and scrape paint patches and slice off the mirror and it'd be holy war. The gent always sum factory clan manager trolling for penny catches. Dim girls like rain barrel tramps hoboing for a hubby to hitch for sum shelter. Usually dim shaded and witless, they'd worship the charming raps of these dull rusted creaky doll house managers, who'd offer as a gold rainbow to abandon their snuggly fire palaces for a tramps frosty rain barrel. Gray and me met Jackie at Sirens.

Jackie was wedded to sum bum welder, well not wedded, just bunk roomies. Jackie didn't desert for Gray or me though we both pined as Jackie was a valentine you'd carve into a willow bark. Jackie just got sauced with us and swapped turns dancing. There were other rain barrel tramps, but we

pined for only Jackie, especially when she snatched her braid out and her licorice tangled hair was sprung like May cut Crow flowers released from the shackling soil and bind weeds to perch and settle on her steel wire arm nooks. It was still tangly like half tied licorice whips. We danced and I wood git drunk on her ripe apple shampoo and Sirens hooded shine bulbs wood flicker oily fish mouth stars on her pearled swan neck. I'd brush at the oily fish stars, but it was painted swirls. The apple fragrance was of sum sun cut gem that she rubbed on her skin like perfumed jewels. Jackie was a quiet shining lantern which sparked and glowed in her hollow tomb eyes.

Sirens was always smoke dimmed and the shine bulbs beamed at each mating table were stain wrapped in glass umbrellas to jag scissor the flock. Jackie was rare—she wasn't jag scissored by the smoky dim. I was mad for Jackie. I was angry, spited, spitting nails from my flint teeth wishing to crucifix Gray when he snatched her. They just disappeared from Sirens as I was swapped out. Benched to telescope sum Jingling band that hopped and swayed about a stage by a scattering of pool tables. It was lonely in that crowd. The splintered mass was alone even paired in mating couples or piping in a fractioned chorus.

I dashed from Mary's Garden and soon sloshed to the Crucifix without a victim martyred to its murdering pole. I didn't church after Gray's daddy was urned. Gray only churched to pew knee the cross when the baby was coffined in the ash box and Jackie flappered like the Oklahoma geese shooed by gunpowder shells. Gray was ashed kindling as he flopped to the icy cushioned pew and shivered at the cigar matchsticks pasted into a cross and tacked to the chalked walls. Gray's pennywish was if his daddy would pipe a note telling of his baby. The Bible Teller versed out that god chatters not in words, but like codes. I can't burgle pick such lock boxxes and have no skeleton key. I unioned with Gray's daddy cos he was like bare and hollow and mateless. I banded with him.

I schack in the cellar with gloomy cobwebs. A cricket nested in the laundry room by the rummaged washer and buzzed and chirped me like a lone cadence without a chorus to mass with. A grasshopper trampolined from a weedbank in the church yard which was a collage of soggy lakes. A worm drowned in a puddlecatch. Gray's daddy when he wished to sauce, we all three would dash to Sirens for stilltap guzzles after mass. When he was sauced Gray's Daddy would chatter about the locusts that sprouted like fruit on the pine tree he carved his valentine to Mama Gray on. I have no mama. Gray's daddy was not my daddy. My Daddy was a priest that's what Gray's Daddy said cos orphans daddies are priests. A priest at the cross church. Dead angels were frozen corpses in the rainbow glass. I would invent that my

mama was one those feather brushed angels.

I must fetch Gray. I must fetch him or he'll rot and sour in the cloud showers and his coveralls will be musty and reek stale. Gray always wraps in coveralls even when not mending or repairing. Gray was horseless cos he just liked to mend, not steer. I rummaged a wrecked heap from the scrap yard so Gray could bandage it. Gray kin mend any gear and grease pumper but not his own blood pipes.

A stray carriage slashes by me lounging on the church ladder and its a cloud shower. The steering horse whipper mirrors a prairie farmer whose fashioned a mechanical buggy. Fastened to the hitch is a trailer carting horses—probably race horses or show horses for like the rodeo though this is civilization not ploughed rows, paved roads. The horses are pale and their bugle eyes are like doll's glass. Sum religions gospel that the dead spirit back like a cocoon pops out a butterfly. Maybe Gray's daddy and Gray's baby are horses. Kinna soured to be racing and not just lumbering about sum grassed flattened Dandelion sea. The cross church doesn't gospel if Gray's daddy or Gray's baby are tucked in a clouded bed. The cemetery grazes like a horse wandering paved roads and bricked huts. It's a misfit. Nothing dies, it's just mended and fixed when it sags or rusts or cracks like brittle dust. The markers crack and are worn and sum are mended and sum just rot till I can't decipher the chisel code. One is Gray's daddy. Nun is Jackie though I wished to snap a bullet in her when she jazzed with Gray and I tuned them grinding away at the springs. Gray has twelve gauges. Gray murders ducks and deer. I band along just to mate, but no shooting and murdering. I shoot saggy limbs and they splinter to fractured brittle fragments. Guns are like cloud showers to me, but I'd venture out to shoot blinded ducks just to mate Gray. I'd fetch him from the cemetery where he tends to Gray's baby.

Gun ash littered the clouded scape like sorrow rags. The snap trig scent marks Gray's skin crevices and its sour lilacs not blooming on the shrubs, but scraping like rotted bone twigs ringed into cemetery wreaths. Jackie shivered on guns. Gray once doused on moonshine trigger propped and splintered to brittle shards the ceiling fan an its pale bowl. I rummaged with Jackie for an encore fan to whirl and loop the saggy chalk powder ceiling. We rented one to mend the pop shell roof trench, Jackie quarantined the guns, but Gray still murdered ducks and crows propped on graph gabble wires.

The cemetery grave markers're tilled seed rows and pruned lawns. No crab waltzing dandelions. Some markers're helium chalked chess statues; sum a bundled scatter of pebbles. The cloud shower hollows the cemetery. A warming house map codes which marker is propped along the trimmed rink. The lawn is soggy. I wade and slosh along the puddled grass. Does it

drizzle through the rotted coffins? Does it musty the bone ash?

Ashes of ashed matchsticks coat the rib pocket to Gray's mechanic jacket. The matchsticks are torn to wick his cigs. Gray wicked cigs, I don't wick cigs, Jackie wicked cigs like she stored a pit well of cigs to fag on. Cigs were sweet fumes from Jackie. Cigs were sour skunk puffs from Gray. Jackie stashed ruined cigs in the cracked whiskey bottle she propped on the rummaged, skimpole nickeled lamp tray. The pellets were soggy beads firecracking the shudderless glass.

A cloudshower of ribboned pellets snap my rawface. The cigs were in the cracked whiskey bottle and the cloudy water ribboned pellets dripped stinging the shutter glass. I shivered and Jackie was toying with the lock bind to knit her tangle curls. She hammered out a cig in the lamp tray an goggled at sum tape reeler on the flicker box. Jackie's face is an ashed moon, a pale, brittle glow. I shiver as the drizzle strings sting like ice beads. I shiver at cloud showers. Jackie is binding her locks in a pony bob drabbed in a dingy penny shop robe. Jackie shoo scats at me.

"Why do you stand there if it scares you?"

I just gawk at crows in the smokestack clouds an wagging bone fingers scraping moon dust streaks in the oily cape. Pale, deaded ice beaded fingers shiver my wire knobbed limb nook.

"Where the fuck is Gray u think Johnny?"

Jackie bundled by me, pillows her brittle head to my wiry limb nook. She fetches me from the shutterless glass and claps me to the taped shawl masked cupid sofa.

We just goggled the jingle reels which matchstick flash like a cig junkie on the flicker box. Jackie taps a cig from her ashpack an puffs foggy halos and peers slit bulbs poking me like knives. More scattin', not shooing, just humming.

"Saturday nites always so dead don't u think Johnny?"

A bible—Jackie's though she was a cross truant an never cracked the leather sermon leafs. Jackie stores it on the stained coffee prop by fashion rags and mint catalogs. She print marks gowns an tiffany necklaces, piggy hand bags and such all hexed liked to order, but Jackie never orders. Jackie snaps dead the flicker box and cripples another mashed cig spine. She taps the pack but only taps no pinch rakes of cig rolls.

"U think he's at the shop? I don't think he's at the shop. The waitress at Sirens—what's her name?"

The shower pellets are rapping gun triggers snapped at the shutter glass. I shiver quake the shooting ice beads and Jackie rakes at me to shawl me in her snug, fire knitted threading limbs. A singed marshmallow in a crackling,

pokered smoke chute. Crack shells popped near muffled as I pillow her lap. A foggy halo and I'm creeping up her hitched skirt.

Gray sleuthed us like snatching thieves bare and hollow looting kindling fares on the cupid sofa. He stiffed us to fetch Jackie to the quilted hammock. Gray pin locked an gum muzzled, no shooting razor caws at the capering flapper or the catting burglar. Gray's baby dropped out a parachuteless suicide bundle from the scythe winged stork. The chapel stork magic sewed no feather parachutes just piano stones for Gray's baby. I slosh the showercatches puddling drizzle or weed gowned ash caskets. Plodding penny shoes coin rippling liquid mud rings down the soggy plots. A pop shell shoots in the dead skeleton limbs hanging wasp clouds stinging beads at me. Pellets splash the chiseled stone tags propped in the driple logged turf. A plotted marker though boneless is Gray's daddy. Gray's is ashed in the urn. Gray wanted a grave marker though. I stoop to nailbrush the marbled symbols. The urn is stored by the butterscotch dish. Nag—Jackie's Oklahoma sister tasted like butterscotch and scented like baked cherries. Her flapper tongue drum scatched. I don't mourn her. I mourn Gray's daddy-bark scratching valentines. Tagging me son though I was just a tenant. A bare space filler. None could fill Gray's daddy's hollow trenches. His guts were whiskey and he'd court Siren's waitresses, Hammered for a fucking. The sweet, tasty baked cherries not the moldy gobbled stems. Gray rarely courted the baked cherries. Gray bagged his catcher—Jackie. When Jackie curtained, Gray toyed with a tarted bar hare. This waif jiggled about in a taunting veil. The tender wouldn't tap out any sauce—no license's. Gray an me—no Jackie, Jackie curtained farewell. We liquored the waif and taxi hitched her. Porched by the cupid sofa. A snug cramp for a scissored lilac and a cherry tart. Withered petals wilted on dust stems in ashpots. I pow-wowed the shag rug. Sum clocks we jiggled—shag cutting to shellacs. Gray's daddy's shellacs. Haggard and Gypsy Willie.

Gray did her first. Gray snatched the bottle and barred her from sampling till she hitched up her blouse. She bared her cherry caps an allowed Gray to munchey. The waif whimpered for halts when he snaked and slithered down her scraped, needle jeans. The jeans bundled her knees. Gray clawed her frilled silkies to shreds. Gray hammered at her. The waif showered torrent streams. Gray tear streamed for Jackie. I tuned Haggard's shellac.

I cabbid the waif in the pale horse an cloud showers sloshed the worm puddled pavement. The waif lusted for no badges and pined for no homes. I cabbid her out to the cross church's hollowed carriage lot. I bundled her in shawling limbs an she streamed whimpers into my wire snagged blood

pump. I begged her. I begged into her mouth.

The waif hopped other barstools.

In the cemetery the pellets sting and I stoop to fling the rotted petals off from Gray's baby. Water brushed the muddy code crevices. Gray and Jackie's tags are chiseled in as "Parents Of", its bare thin just the calendar dates. Drizzle bullets pellet me. Gray and Jackie parents of are in the grave too. Skin like chipped stone. Blood like the cloud showers. Jackie is like gunpowder shooed geese. Shooed to her own Oklahoma preacher maybe. No postals, no scribble cards. A church bird flappers behind a cloud veil and it poofs like blow huffed weed ash scattered in a lolling breeze. Gray never cracked a flute about me an her on the cupid sofa. I never pew kneed for devil washing, but I was sinny and Jackie was sinny an we deaded the baby cos I poisoned him with my cum. It wasn't Gray's cum like Jackie raked cherry roses across jagnail glass when she was grieving. It was my cum when I shot off while mashing on the cupid. Gray never chattered such, but it rivered in his cage streamed lash eyes when he was at the whiskey. He even sauced while bandaging horses. He mended like a mechanical surgeon never gravng a lamed, never crippling a race horse just tuning. No surgeries can mend Gray.

A puddled gun as a boiler cap pond harbors in the locust weeds, though pruned trim lawns. The puddle is a rippling mirror jag cutting moon dust flashes so a pearled handle ripples in the puddle. I fling a wick match from Gray's pocket. I fling it in the shower catch where it rafts. I stoop at Gray's baby and wish to paw through the snipped dandelion weeds to gape at him just ashed bones. If I gape at him I'd no he was a blood veined skin mass. I pine to bed with Gray's baby and wrap him in my needled limbs. Gray's baby's just bone ash. I rag bloom up and gape at the locust showercatch. I don't spy a gun there. I telescope for Gray, but he's sloshed off. I gape at the moon—a ghost in the swirling pellet clouds and its draining shower. The watery ribbons're drizzled mist as I Jack boot from Gray's baby's plot. A paper tag is propped on a skimpole scant paces near the baby. I am horse blind, but snatch a slitted peep at the bare turf where the stone will prop. The stinging water pellets are stone beads from marbled crows stilled on a gabble wire swirling like concertina about the cross church. A echo gun shatters like chapel bells, but it could be a moon polished dust reel. I should fetch Gray, but only bare stone tags an skeleton trees wag an bob all deaded. I stoop at the bare turf stoneless tag. A soggy toad shroom stooled on the mush ponded lawn marsh. A rotted shroom bows in a water'd boot print. I stoop an plucked the doused shroom from the boot print ponding on a casket belly. I umbrella the coffin lawn with Gray's mechanic jacket. Gray never coats it cos he duds

in the soiled coveralls. I can't mend oil horses or surgery skin bone ponies. I creep from the casket belly to the paper crowntag. I peel a knife thorned rose, its apple skin petals flushed off as the blood rivering through a gunpowdered fleshed penny crater. I fling the rotted thorn off to sum other marble tag. I stool the shroom at paper crowntag cos Gray retches for sum weed halo's. I propped an uncracked whiskey bottle, but the Grave janitor broomed it off. A shroom is not whiskey. An echo gun shatters firecrackers in stilled chapel bells. It echoes from a caged shellbox.

Gray cradled the cracked whiskey bottle slumped in the shotgun. The duck popper lounged smoke tangled on his apple skin ponded buckle knees, Gray stooped in my oil horse. The oil horse's juke deck tuned a fiddle picker. A whining yokel crooner. A barstool plucker twiddled on sum corn mash an moonseeds. The yokel whined he'd be a bachelor till he was graved. Gray's daddy tuned up such pickers. Gray ralph pails such pickers. A banshee fluted about the grease swabbed crow brushed pea soup garage. A triggered pic of Jackie on a gunstring smoke noose looped to the rearglass tinsel frame. The brittle skin was glass cracked an apple peel rivers streamed and curled cake rotting on the tinsel. The apple peel river mascaras Jackie. I triggered the pic. It was a stash chamber pic. The oil horse won't kindlespark in the cloud showers. It drizzled glass pellets in bullet shards when Gray slumped with the shotgun. I huddled spine propped on the door's hollow skin. Sacked on the grease gravel an I shivered. It was not frosted chills, but I shivered. Cloudshowers at the stone tags. Cloudshowers and I shiver, I shiver as the cracking echo gun crumples the tin sky cloudshower washed. The echoes chant Jackie's gasolined tag. A bloody map Gray sketched to track Jackie is stashed in his mend kit. The map hobo rails to the gun powder an geese. Cloudshowers drizzle glass blood pellets. Cloudshowers on Saturday. Saturday is grave day.