

Plasma and Poultry

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One Saturday afternoon in February, Maddy and I were doing a remarkable job of *not* going shopping in the Haight. We'd been planning to go all week long, but the closer the day got, the less appealing the trip sounded. After all, it would involve going into the Haight on a Saturday, something we like to avoid if possible

Besides, Danielle Willis was back in town and had expressed interest in going with us. By the time she called, however--"Violet wants to know if you'll babysit me"--it was late enough in the afternoon that we happily dropped the idea altogether. We picked her up and brought her back to our apartment.

After a few hours, we started talking about blood. Frankly, I'm amazed it took so long; Danielle hadn't had any since drinking Maddy's the previous July and she was thirsty. (Maddy's story about it appeared in *Morbid Curiosity #8*.) Actually, I think "ravenous" was the word Danielle used.

The only syringe available was the one used to draw Maddy's blood seven months before. Living in the Outer Sunset, we don't have quite the same access to fresh needles as in other parts of town.

Danielle's engaged in some well-documented reckless behavior, so the syringe underwent a rather extensive sterilization process. That the risk was greater to Maddy only increased Danielle's concern. There was much boiling and bleaching.

Danielle also had Maddy stick her arm under warm water and then do jumping jacks, saying they were both "old junkie tricks" to make the veins easier to find. God, no wonder junkies are so skinny. It isn't malnutrition. It's all the exercise.

When all the necessary precautions had been made, they sat on the kitchen floor. As Danielle started tying Maddy off, I joined them. Might as well have a front row seat.

The needle was inserted, the vein was found, and the desanguination began. Danielle put me to work pulling the plunger while she attended to something else. This made both Maddy and me a little nervous. In addition to being one more set of fingers involved, by virtue of my angle I couldn't quite tell when to stop, and I had no idea if it would hurt Maddy if I kept pulling the plunger after the syringe was full.

Danielle could see, though, and it all went off without a hitch. After taking the first hit for herself, Danielle asked Maddy if she wanted some. Maddy eagerly accepted. Sometimes Rome is your own kitchen floor, so I raised my hand and said, "May I?"

I had a brief flash of anxiety as Danielle moved the syringe toward my mouth, since it was a long pointy thing coming straight at my lips and gums. But Danielle's an old pro, and she shot the blood in well before there was any needlestick danger.

Feeling Maddy's blood hitting the back of my mouth and pooling on my tongue was an odd sensation. I suspected this method of delivery, this sort of open-air injection, was much better for the first time, say, drinking from a glass. There was less opportunity for doubt or second thoughts this way, even if it wasn't as ceremonious.

Just as well, really. The act of drinking blood should be as straightforward and matter-of-fact as possible, without delusions of depth and meaning. As a sex worker, Danielle often works the vampire angle for her tricks. She said it was a

relief to draw blood without having to prattle on about "eternal damnation" an the like.

Of course, that doesn't mean the concept doesn't take a bit of getting used to. That's probably why Maddy insisted I had an odd look on my face for a while afterward, like I thought it was gross. It wasn't gross and I knew right away that I'd do it again. It's just that, since I'm not a lifelong blood fetishist like Maddy or Danielle, it was a lot to think about. Typical, really. Drinking blood makes Danielle high and Maddy horny, but it makes me process. I'm such a fucking dyke.

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Danielle had decided to stay the night with us, but she needed a few things from Violet's apartment. It was almost nine in the evening and none of us had eaten actual food since that afternoon. Our preferred local organic market was long since closed, so we went to Safeway.

Walking into the harsh light of mass consumer culture, I got a strong sense of transgression, like when I'm in public for the first time after coming down from acid. It was the feeling of having broken a major societal taboo. *I've just become even more different from you people: not better, not superior, just **different**.* The irony, if that's the word, is that we look like vampires anyway. Danielle's certainly gotten a lot of mileage out of it over the years. She is not a vampire. I am not a vampire. Vampires don't exist. But, by gum, you willingly drink blood and your weirdness factor can't help but shoot through the roof.

After giving the Safeway employees a topic of conversation for the rest of the evening, we went to Violet's apartment. While there, I got a hankering for fried rice from the Panda Express down the street. We were on a block of Fillmore

with more than one Asian restaurant -- all of which were open -- and I was craving mall food. Sometimes I'm not as alt as I'd like to think.

Unfortunately, the person behind the counter didn't understand that I only wanted rice and my intended *à la carte* order transmogrified into a full meal. When she asked me what I wanted with it, I didn't argue. It wasn't exactly the munchies, but I was hungry nonetheless.

One of the reasons we don't go to these places anymore is the lack of a vegetarian menu. I was contemplating a brown mass which allegedly contained eggplant and tofu when Maddy suggested a favorite from the old days: orange chicken. Surprising myself a great deal, I dove off the wagon and ordered it.

Danielle is convinced the blood turned me back into a carnivore. A romantic notion--she gets those a lot more than she'd ever care to admit--but I'm not buying it. Especially since the stuff wasn't very good. I certainly didn't like it as much as the blood. Eating the chicken didn't gross me out like I might have once expected, though it probably helped that between the breading and the sauce, there wasn't much actual fowl flesh.

It's not like I was craving a rare steak or anything. Even if I made like Elizabeth Bathory and bathed in the blood of virgins, I just don't see following it up with a trip to Black Angus. In fact, when there were samples of a similar orange chicken at a market a few days later, I wasn't tempted. Of course, the taste of Maddy's blood *had* long since left my mouth.



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