ABED-NEGO

I can't find her. Morning 8 a.m. Not beside me. Not below. The other little girl asleep. I shake her. "Where is Eva?" She doesn't know. She falls back asleep. I smell my fingers. Twelve years old. She filled my hand with her smell. Miami. Thirty-six hours aboard this train and Miami will be ours. Where is Eva? Why did I agree? Be ashamed! Of what? It's just, I said. It's just what, she said. It's Just-tice, I said. It's just this, she said. I slept above, I swear, your Honor. I kissed them both goodnight. I am asleep. I hear my name, my new name, the name she has given me. "Bobka, I am coming up to you." She is in my compartment. I feel her feet, though I do not touch them. Size five, no more. Her calves strong, hairless. Her thighs, I cannot see. She proffers a book. Medieval. Oriental. Pornography. My career passes before me. It is over. It is after me.

An eye for an eye. My sex for a tooth. I want her teeth. In the book, lances arrows enter women. The women contain them. She pulls up my knee. She strides my knee. She rides. To speak the truth. Voir dire, your Honor. I smell her. She puts her hand to herself and then to my lips. I eat. Aching, I. She takes me in her hands, stops, then gives me back to myself. "Here, you take it." She laughs. Then I force her. Or does she force me?

GO to – 3 C – ANGEL

ABED NEGO

To see, to speak, voir dire, your Honor, I smelled her.

She put her hand to herself and then to my lips. I ate. Aching, I was.

She took me in her hands, stopped, then gave me back to myself.

Here you take it." She laughed.

Then I forced her. Or did she force me.

ABED NEGO

She is in a diner in a booth. She empties her purse of three vials, pink, green and pink. A pink-smocked waitress approaches. She asks the woman to bring her another vial. The waitress refuses and begins a tantrum. She takes my hand and silently asks me to take her away. The waitress shouts. Trucks prevent us from crossing the street. We cross the wrong way. I ask her why she is barefoot. She tells me she could not finds the proper shoes. Her steps are short but quick so that she might catch up with me who holds her hand. Her head is a tomato with a flat side in back which I see in profile. She repeatedly looks to the other side to look at me as I not so gently pull her along. She is frightened. She smiles. We head for an apartment and a canopied bed I do not know. The spread is coarse under her back as I spin around her as she spins her legs around me. She loses consciousness. Her hair is sopping. The shower turns scalding. She is an idiot child. She swims around my tongue. My eyes are open. My skin loses its oil. "Come swimming with me," she says. I forget what the waitress shouted, but it was not relevant at all, your Honor, not at all. The next day we leave Miami. She does not speak to me on the train nor does she come to my bed. I spend two nights thinking I can feel the flat back of her head.

- 50 B and C –

ABED NEGO

The train enters the station. We are home from Miami. The mother greets us. Eva introduces me to the mother whom I've known for years, but not well. "Bobka was very good to us and only naughty once," she says as she moves on with her small companion. The mother does not ask me for an explanation. I act as if none is needed. At lunch the little girl with the flat-backed tomato head is vigorous in her praise of Miami. I remind her we stayed in a motel across the street from a trailer camp filled with retired circus dwarves. She does not laugh. She has heard the line before and now ignores it. After lunch the mother invites me to stay for dinner. Eva hears, but does not respond. She shows her mother snapshots we've taken at Disneyland, Dolphin Park, Sturgeon Square, Pompano Isthmus, God, your Honor, I don't remember all the spots. "Here's a picture of our train and this is the top bunk where Bobka slept." I again act as if no explanation is needed. My 'naughtiness' goes unmentioned. Dinner, then I am asked to stay the night. The mother, claiming headache, retires. Eva's companion is gone. The two of us remain before the fire. She says, "Naughty." We hear pounding on the floor above. I rush to the landing and open the door. The mother is behind it in a sleepwalk. She moves down the hall. I follow her, turn into the room assigned to me, go to my knees and say what I recall from the rosary.

GO to – 51 – and the ANGEL

- 67 A –

DANIELLE

You carried my smell on your fingers from the North to Miami and back.

You spun me around pressing my back against the coarse spread.

You saw my mother in a sleepwalk, breasts bobbing.

Yes, I am an idiot child, my hair is sopping, the back of my head is flat.

Make me lose consciousness, make me, please.

GO TO – 68 -