



HUMBUG

Volume 2018
Issue 1 2018W

Article 15

March 2018

Beef Jerky Cigars (excerpt)

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Recommended Citation

Carithers, Katherine M. (2018) "Beef Jerky Cigars (excerpt)," *HUMBUG*: Vol. 2018 : Iss. 1 , Article 15.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.dartmouth.edu/humbug/vol2018/iss1/15>

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Cover Page Footnote

This piece was written and workshopped in 17F. This piece was presented as a branch to "Not a Sonnet."

Beef Jerky Cigars (excerpt)

The morning is so beautiful it almost hurts to watch; it bursts with glowing ambers of New England fall as the fog just begins to dance away from the ground. Rays of light reveal shocks of blue sky and kissed the hollows awake for the first time.

A sudden jumble sends the ink scribbling across the page. The coffee now splattered across my jeans pulls me into the reality of the fluorescent bus lights bearing down on me. Picking at my sweater and wiping my jeans, I attempt to perform damage control on the spill, thankful I hadn't tested my grace this morning and worn gray instead. The one time creativity strikes me, the one time I can taste the beauty in the words on my lips, feel in my bones how they will arrest my reader, I am unceremoniously reminded of my clumsiness. Staring at the black scars now bleeding across the page, I can almost hear his voice - so clearly, that I begin to grin, knowing how my older brother would laugh at me.

"See, that's the issue with being a writer," he'd say, brandishing his half eaten beef jerky like a cigar. "Nothing forsakes them. They're sitting there, drinking their morning coffee or laying by the grass or by the lake and thinking, really thinking - 'is this gonna be one of those moments I always remember? One of those I'll look back on and see how right then, my life shifted.'" He'd pause to chew again, mulling over his next words.

"And they're thinking, Gina, really thinking of it and of how to describe how those coffee grounds seemed so different that morning and the way the grass smelled sweet of summer sweat. They're already re-living it before they've even lived it. That's where the issue comes in." The jerky is tossed aside in his passion, in his melodrama. "Seeing how the patches fit into the quilt, that's one thing - that's a beautiful thing, to see all of the colors and know they'll come together to warm you one day. But the patch shouldn't be faded while you're sewing it in, it's gotta be vibrant then. It's gotta be fresh and colorful, that it hurts to sew it onto the fabric of life and move on to the next one." He's leaning back against the chair to drink his beer. "Our minds are gonna make it fade," he tells me wisely. "That's where the writer should be searching, dabbling with that imperfect memory. But don't give it any help Gina, you don't need to do that, you've gotta live it all first."