

## Metanoia: A Short Collection

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# Metanoia: A short collection

Liddy Elizabeth Franco

(n) a Change of Heart

He stands in front of the seminar, a collar pressed pristine with pride in front of the sparsely filled seating. His talk: 'Humility: Seeing others as Jesus saw them.'

The preacher clears his throat, getting the room's reverent silence out of his throat, and addresses his flock.

"What did Jesus do when he met a prostitute?"

A man in front raises his hand.

"Yes brother, speak."

"Excuse me, but Jesus never met a prostitute."

He is taken aback, but he knows, he understands that he must be new to the faith. He corrects him, stern but gently,

"I promise you, Jesus met many prostitutes in his lifetime."

This young man shakes his head vigorously.

"No, he didn't."

"He did indeed boy," he said, now just sternly. "I have memorized this book," picking up his Baptist bible, waving it high for him to see.

The man stands up now, not angry, but determined as he says "No, Jesus never met a prostitute."

To dare suggest he remembers his lifeline wrong, spittle mixes in with his fire and brimstone as he shouts, "Luke 7:37-50! Do you hear me? 'And behold a woman of the city, who was a sinner—'"

But the young man is undeterred, walking himself up to the pop-up table, face to face with this angry man of God, and gently closes the book.

"No, Jesus never met a prostitute, he met a woman who needed love."

~

"What dress did you wear to prom?" She asked, fingers running over the tulle of a light blue

gown, before running them over the price tag and letting go with a cringe.

“Hm, give me a moment, I can show you.” She fumbled for her phone, scrolling for a moment before pausing “which one?”

“Which prom?”

“Mhmm”

“Doesn’t matter”

She scrolled a minute longer, while she kept scrolling through the formal dresses, hopes draining that one would be at least adequate for the formal.

“I think I’ve shown you this photo before—“

“Probably”

“But here,” she said, turning the phone screen.

She sucked in her breath. She had, in fact, not shown her that photo before. It was her in the dressing room, probably the day she bought it right? Definitely. Definitely stunning. She stood; face cut off to show more of the navy fabric. A floor length navy dress, with a jeweled choker that forced her eyes to follow it as it bled over her right shoulder into a long sleeve with a matching beaded cuff. Her other arm was sleeveless, pale in the fitting room lighting, hiking the phone right above her breasts. She pulled her eyes away, huffing out a “wow” as she tried not to dwell on how tight that dress was around her chest; something she’d never been privy to seeing under the flannels over t-shirts. How the waistline fit perfectly, showing off those hips, and that slit up the leg. She feels warm, hot even.

“Yea, I know, I dress up really well,” she laughs softly, nostalgia thick in her voice. “I liked that dress too. I still have it.” She’s speaking with that little breathiness that comes out when she’s starting to just talk to herself, and oh damn.

Oh. Damn.

She shakes her thoughts off and nods in response. “You do.”

Oh god you do.

~

I went home for break a couple weeks ago, and met up with some family members I hadn’t seen in a while. One afternoon my aunt came into my room while I was banging my head

against the keyboard over a history paper I'd never mentally signed up for.

"You know, I remember back in Highschool when you never swore or drank coffee, what happened to you?"

I pour the last of the cup down my throat before getting up to refill.

"Well, I ran out of fucks to give."

~

"So, you don't have to decide now, but you're going to have to think about it." The doctor had just finished explaining their father's options, as he lay in an ICU bed, tubes in his nose and throat and hole in his side for a feeding tube, making no noise. Two siblings are left standing, facing each other as the doctor leaves to the next bed. Do you keep fighting for your father's long and slow recovery? It will require a tracheostomy, he may be bed-ridden for the rest of his life, he may never be able to feed himself. Is that the life worth living? He said he never wanted to be in a nursing home, never wanted to live his life tied up to tubes and cables unable to move about. They could instead place him in hospice. They'd make him comfortable while he starves over the next couple weeks and dies. The sister turns to her father in the bed, and praying he's awake, takes his hand. He gives it a soft squeeze back, and she asks him, "did you hear all that? Do you want to keep fighting?"

His frail hand grips hers tightly, and he opens his eyes for a moment and looks into hers, he's aware, and does not let go until she nods back to him. The next morning they would have a trache put in.