

Too Beautiful For Words

for Nicole

In the peak of her life
he had to possess her
wanted to own her
She resisted control

She was just
too necessary a treasure
not to belong to him

He needed to have her
Had to own her
the way he owned designer socks
that embellished his feet
Owned the wide-body mini-van
power symbol of his manhood
Proof of his ability
to control
His driving need for ownership
Insisting she comply
conform to standards of possession
Fit into formulations of acquisition
Offering evidence
he had it all
owned everything
could show the world
the measure of the man he was

Without question she belonged to him
Bought and paid for
like the deed to his house
like the jeweled watch and fancy glove wear
he owned
like the shined shoes and tailored European suits
he owned
like the extensive selection of silk ties
all declaring "*He owns us!*"

She was just too gorgeous a specimen
too fine a thoroughbred for him not to own

Especially when she insisted
I belong to no one! I belong to myself!

Especially when she resisted
though bought and paid for
like some market slave

She had to be punished for her sins
Had to pay for every insistence
against ownership of her spirit
She had to pay for her resistance
He had to make her pay
to prove his power
his claim to possession
his nine-tenths of the law
that owned all of her
-the whole of her

No discussion or arbitration
no negotiation
Just unconditionally his
Each strand of her feminine head
each pore of her well-pampered skin
each corpuscle of pulsing cells belonged to him
Not only the diamond ring and gold band
he owned the finger as well
the hand it was on
the muscles and tendons that moved it

How dare she deny his right to possess
against her right to resist
His need to control
against her need to self-determine
the path she would follow

She was much too exquisite
a flawless facet
an asset to the package that defined him
according to his definitions

She had to pay for her sins

He had to prove he owned every part

Her words. Her thoughts
She could not—should not think for herself

He owned her mind
Her time was all his
Whenever he demanded—needed
to stroke his ego again
to remind himself
he was still—and always
a man who owned

She was not worthy to command herself
Did not deserve to be master of her being
She belonged to him
like his bank accounts belonged
his c.d.s and i.r.a.s belonged
his state-of-the-art entertainment technology belonged
his media channels and running trophies belonged
claiming and proclaiming he was the fastest and the best

He owned her totally
the way some women are owned by men who claim them
who own every bone that breaks
every tuft of hair that is yanked
every bruise and cut
every anxious churning and wrenching

He owned her, body and soul
He owned her mouth and her tongue
her breasts and her clit
her vagina and her womb
he owned her sex and her hormones
her monthly juices and physical functions

Like the clothes she wore
he also owned
her orgasms and fantasies
her swollen belly and her children
Every breath was his
every inhaling and exhaling
every moving of her diaphragm
every heart pulse and rush of blood

He owned her voice
every prayer she invoked
every tear that surfaced
was his to taste and savor
to absorb and consume
to digest
to throw away
and discard-at will

. . .to eliminate. . .

However it pleased him
whenever it moved him

She was not supposed to
resist
Possessions are not supposed to
talk back
or fight for their autonomy
Not supposed to return an insult
or throw back a punch
in self-defense
or pick up a gun

Things that are owned have no rights
other than being owned
other than belonging to their owners
obediently-and silently
No rights that fit into his rule book
of acceptable plays
that don't conform
that step out of boundaries and cross lines
that would be laughed at by the fellas
criticized by his peers
No place for original thinking
or innovative ideas

No space for sharing or dialogue
No room for equality or discovery

*(Like being scared of your own shadow
or afraid to feel your own warmth.)*

It wasn't enough to bask in her light
He had to possess it too
as if he had no light of his own
As if possessing hers
automatically guaranteed his
As if he never learned to find his light
or cultivate the greater possibilities
within himself

She had to pay for her sins

She paid
every time she spoke out expressing an opinion
She paid for all women who ever spoke out and disagreed
She paid cumulatively
for every challenge that ever confronted him
For his inability to love himself
and accept his ordinary human qualities
She paid for his unfaithfulness
(Of course, that was her fault too)
She paid for all the terrible things he did
because... she made him do it
Even though she never twisted his arm
or inflicted a black eye
It was clear she cast a spell over him
which was the root and cause of his miserable life
She paid for his loudness and lustfulness
his restless impatience and loneliness
his ambivalence and indifference
She paid for every unfulfilled desire that ever frustrated him
Every unreachable ambition that overstepped his potential
Every bad dream and negative omen
She paid for his misplaced things and mistrust
His confusion and drug use
She paid for the abuse he gave
and for the abuse she received
She paid for his extensive lack of respect for all that he was
His lack of respect for all that she was
His blindness in appreciating her worth
His incomprehension of the wholeness of her being
She paid for her refusal to indulge his faults
or wallow in his mud

He owned the inner being and essence of her
--lock, stock and... barrel

She had to pay for each day and night of suffering
he endured in having to live with himself
for the color of his skin and the hostile environment that hated him
that held him back for being all that he was
that did not allow him to struggle or strive for holistic values
or find peace within being himself

She had to pay for everything

She belonged to him
She refused to be owned
She had to be punished for her sins
She had to pay

...with her life. . .

And not only that—
Her friends paid with their sorrow
Her family paid with their grief
And her children are still paying
and will be paying for a long time to come

And every other person who will ever become a victim is going to pay
Maybe even some of you sitting in this room
hearing or reading these words
unless you get up and leave
unless you rescue yourself

Every six minutes.
Every three-hundred-and-sixty seconds
whether they deserve it or not
another life will pay for her sins.

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