

## **Jesus on the TV (From Wellington Letters, Volume I.)**

By Jonson Kuhn

I saw Jesus on the TV tonight; squeezed in next to young beautiful people living exotic lives in exotic places—dating shows, tits, glamour, bullshit. Sylvester Stallone told Leno a story from when he was poor, but I didn't care so I changed the channel. And then there was Jesus. But the thing of it was, he didn't appear in the form of a body - it was only his presence. There was an ocean, calm waves, beautiful sky—I've never seen sky so blue. And the sand, the sand felt like Home.

Now, an Old Man wants to sell me his Blender for \$9.95, plus tax, shipping and handling not included, and he accepts all major credit cards, but then again who doesn't? And I'm looking for company but I just feel lonely. 75 channels and I just feel lonely.

It snows here in April and I don't understand why you walk outside in the snow - and why it snows here in April - and why they show their bare breasts - and who wants to buy a Blender - and Stallone and Leno make love on the desk and whatever they'll pay to see they'll do - And why do you walk in the snow in April?

Claudine. Claudine - It took me the entire car ride home to remember your name and I wondered if you remembered mine. Every time snow hits the ground in a month when it's not supposed to it's like a thousand reminders of things I should be doing. Reminders of the things I'm doing in the places I shouldn't be doing them. You said you got Babies, I said, We all got Babies. I got a baby - came with 10 fingers - 10 toes - No batteries included. Really shits, really cries, really doesn't know who I am. But I keep telling him don't feel bad, I've known me my whole life and I still don't know who I am. And I keep telling him that I'll be better and things will be better - and I gotta get this car seat to your mother cuz you're too big for your old one but I didn't get to see that. And I keep trying to come and see you but my car doesn't like snow in April and my hands have holes just big enough to lose money and I bought you this stuffed Duck for Easter with your car seat and a Basket—just another thing you won't understand. Colors and sounds and it's more for Me than You. Just so I can tell all the Pointing Fingers that I help. Look at me, I help.

Jesus on the TV made me think of you, Claudine. Made me think you must be cold. Cold from lies, cold from hate, cold from

being let down while being brought up. And I see you on the street and I cry, and I see you on the street and you cry. And I give you money and say take care of those babies. We all gotta take care of those babies. Because somewhere it stops—I don't know where, but there's gotta be a place where I can hide you so you won't hurt anymore. There's gotta be a place where we can say enough is enough, the past is the past, let's think about these babies. Maybe it's with the bare breasts; maybe it's with the Old Man and his Blender; maybe it's on the Tonight Show with the hollow faces, where they don't know us, where they don't care. Maybe it's on the sand under those clouds with that sky that never looked so blue. They can't find you in the places I make up and they've taken them all from you, so why don't you let me hide you?

For once let me do something good - something right so that I can justify tomorrow; so that I'm more than stuffed Ducks and Routine Checks. Why don't you let me do the things you don't think I can do? Why do you walk in the snow? Who watches those babies? Who watches you, Claudine? I want to kill the cowards that plucked your petals and left you bare. I'd kill them for you just to finally do some good in a city that forgot my name, lost my number, misplaced my address. You and I, we could huddle together and forget all the places that did us wrong and we'll lick each other's wounds and we'll take care of those babies and we'll take care of us. You can play the part and I'll pay the fee and we won't feel so lonely in an alley in a car with the heater and I'm shaking and you're laughing and it's snowing and nothing makes sense, but I'm not lonely - we're not lonely.

The touch of your hand feels like memories I've never been apart of and I fall in love with you in the blink of Your eye and you say I'm strange and you say I'm sweet and we kiss in April with the snow that showed up too late and the sky tries on Purple and birds make noise somewhere but we don't see them and your skin feels like the end of a long journey - feels like shady patch of Heaven. And we kiss like neither of us know how and you're so scared and it's all backwards and I don't know how you're so comfortable with everything except holding hands and I just don't know.

And you look at me too proud to look at me and you can't find the words because you can't find what you don't have and the sky changes into something blue and we're so cold out here on Nowhere Avenue next to Somewhere Way on sidewalks working overtime by streets on cigarette break. And we wanna feel it more than say it but you gotta go and you can't stay and your jacket's too small but you can't talk now - you can never talk

now.

You smile a smile that runs the length of this road and you don't like it. You put tired hair in ponytail, roll up sleeves, all in a day's work and you don't like it. And it's a long drive back and I try to get some sleep before the day finds me and you try to stop crying before the day finds you. And I wonder if I can trust you and you say you won't hurt me but I've been hurt before—we've all been hurt before. And you say you're scared and I say that's Life and we're too old to not know how to play Life. I got a head full of confusion slowed down by the optimism in my heart and you whisper my name and it feels like the first time I've ever heard it. And I'm shaking—can't hold still—can't keep my eyes closed, my mouth shut, my hands off. And I wonder how many times you've done this before and you say to hurry, we've always got to hurry.

And where do we go from Here? How did we even get Here? We all started out the same and now we're Here. And the questions get tired and go to sleep while me and the answers stay up trying to catch a cab, trying to be heard. And I wonder if I'm in over my head.

And Clarence and Madge sent my roommate a letter saying, "so glad you came to see us last summer. We love you and want what's best for you." And I went to the mail box to find my letter but it wasn't there and it isn't coming and I miss you. I walk these streets like repeated nightmares where I can't wake up and I know the ending all too well and I never find you, you're never there.

And I get so tired—spinning my wheels in this place when I just want to see my son. And I'm so tired of trying to be all the things people want me to be and trying to find that place for me—that place where I can talk to me and figure this all out. And I'm not a victim, Claudine, I'm not. I don't want pity, no one's sorrow, I just want things to slow down. Let me get off the ride, catch my breath, figure it out. You want to know who I am, I tell you I don't know, and the heater's so hot it's burning my skin, but it's not warming the air around me, and I'm still shaking - and I ask you who you are and you say my money only buys so much. And they say you're dirty and they say you're a waste of time and I say whose time? We're all wasting time. We're all basically the same and if you could just see that—if they could just see that. We're all the same people, just different versions of the same story—and we're all wasting time.

I lay on this couch looking for Jesus—wanting to hold you. And I think of all of your questions and all of my answers that never felt good enough. You want so much but give so little. Inside me, without inside you. And I say I can't feed the mouth without the hands and you say So Long. Who hurt you, Claudine? Who turned you bitter—did you wrong? Painted Black over your Blue? And will it ever be enough? There's a better walk of Life around your concrete corners, I swear it. A place that feels better, tastes sweeter. You just gotta get there—you just gotta want to get there, we all just gotta want to get there.

And so I swear to God, Claudine, you've never seen sky so blue—and that sand must feel like home. I wanted you to see it. I wanted you to feel the presence of Jesus in my TV on my couch in my arms. But instead there's loud knocking downstairs—and it shouldn't be snowing in April—and my neighbor tells a man that he'll call the cops and try across the street and he doesn't know. Then the knocking comes to me and someone's yelling and I'm looking for Jesus and someone buy that poor Old Man's Blender and the knocking keeps knocking and the snow keeps falling—keeps reminding. And he says he knows you and he says he'll hurt you and I tell him to watch those babies, we all gotta watch those babies. And I tell him all I've got is a car seat with a Duck and a Basket and I need this to feel like I helped and I want to help—I need to help. And he won't leave and I hide under the table and want to bring you with me but I don't feel like I fit and I wonder if my son misses the things he doesn't know and I wonder where you are and where I am and if those two places will ever meet —can ever meet—should ever meet.

I wonder if we've got a place, Claudine. A place in the sand that feels like home with calm waves that crash together to make the sounds of everything we've ever wanted under a sky that's never looked so blue. I wonder, do we find that place for us—to take care of those babies and learn to walk again—forgive again—to love again. I wonder, do we find that place, Claudine. Here's hoping so, because we can't hide under our tables forever.

-Irvine W.