

ADELAIDE MONOLOGUE, 1
From *Taking Up Serpents*
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ADELAIDE

(a moment)

When I was little, we had a milkman. Every Tuesday he'd come and put two gallons in the box--we had a box, out on the porch, see--and take away the empties. So when you were done with a gallon, you'd wash it out for him; that was a job I had to do, mostly because I liked it. I'd take the gallon and put it under the sink, fill it all the way up to the brim, and then turn it over. It made this big glug-glug-glug noise as it poured out.

You could feel it, pushing up and pressing down.

That's how I felt, the minute he was done. Turned over, all the hot water draining out of me; just an empty for the box. Any part of me that had... I didn't want it. I felt... hurt. Cut. Bitten. He sat back in the driver's seat, and I stayed, there next to him. And the wet cold seat. He didn't even look at me. Not a once. Just drove me back to my apartment, looking straight out. Not so much as a goodbye. There was something in him. Something like hate. I could feel it. And I just got out, walked up to my walk-up, fumbled with the keys.

Inside, I closed the door, fell against it and cried. I just cried and cried. You know, it's like, I went that night for God. But I went for company, too. To not feel alone. And right then--in that car, against my door, in my bed; for days--I was more alone than ever I'd even heard anyone talk about.