



“Glassed”
an excerpt from

And Ampersand
Short Stories of Endings and Beginnings (of a Sort)

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Glassed

My glass came on as if suddenly.

“Do you see it?” I asked.

“Stop fidgeting and ask him how he’s doing.”

With my arm extended, I stepped forward, backward, forward. There, still there. Always at arm’s reach.

“You’re doing it again.”

So I ignored the glass, asked how he was doing, hugged when I was supposed to hug, which was not, it turned out, all of the time, even though *hugs, hugs, we’re supposed to give hugs.*

Later, I walked. There had to be a corner, some confirmation of inside or out, but the glass proved without beginning or end. It proved impossibly high.

At times, others passed through it, unknowing. An arm around a shoulder, a pat on the back.

“You don’t like it when people touch you.”

I’m supposed to like it when people touch me. This is the same as hugs and not fidgeting and, as you tell me now, eye contact, but you’re there, still there, whether I look or not.

And I’d rather not.

When I look, I see the glass. It’s between us, always, even when part of you passes through, even when you insist it isn’t there, are indifferent to that which *defines me.*

But one day, I wonder.

One day, I clean the glass.

I do this not because it has mildewed—no, it’s as pristine as the day it first appeared, pretentious in its perfection. I clean the glass because if it’s to define me, I must make it truly, unflinchingly mine.

So I clean the glass, and, at long last, recognize the glass is me, that I am glassed and not *with glass*.

I clean the glass knowing I’ll see her, someday, a niece or second cousin or child of my own, tensing while wrapped in a hug, unable to hold one’s gaze, to keep her fingers still.

I’ll ask her then, if she sees it—the glass. Her glass. Our glass.

“You see it, too?” she’ll ask.

And “Yes,” I’ll tell her. “Yes.”

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