

MY SONG¹

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My Song

He was getting nervous. They could play his song anytime now. Karaoke night was always such a thrill for him. He'd been waiting for over an hour at this point. The alcohol started buzzing in his head, tickling his senses. A warmth like that of the back of a hand seemed to caress his cheek without really touching him. It comforted him. He had a hard time admitting he craved physical affection. He liked being touched: roughly, softly; desperately, more often than not—however he managed to secure it.

Under the intermittent light emitted by the misspelled lyrics on the karaoke screen, he couldn't help but notice two things. First, the restlessness of his right leg, jerking. The clanking of his metal-covered aglets against the rusty foot rail banged a loud alliteration that only played to his ears' detriment and which hindered him from enjoying all the fun. Second, the fact that some people couldn't sing for the life of them. It was obvious that they were confident in what they did, and he envied that. How could someone be so blatantly ignorant of his weaknesses and still go out in the world? What show-offs.

Something else began to nag him. A random guy came over to the bar more frequently than he would have wanted. He seemed to hide his gaze behind his long hair. He would playfully let it slip from his ear's grip. Every time he approached the bar, he looked. Shily. But he looked. He was definitely interested. It was clear he didn't know how to flirt with an older man.

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Though his shiny cheeks denoted youth, that wasn't something that would interest the rustling aglets. But the dark eyes of the foreign visitor summoned the sitting loner in. Both dared to look. Their pulses racing. As customary, they pretended to be looking at their phones so as to avoid showing any burning desire to rip each other's pants off in public.

"I want to beat him. He's so god damn hot." He murmured while he took one sip of his beer as he watched the tight pair of washed denim shorts prance back to his group of friends away from the bar.

One more sip.

The visitor seemed to be coming back again. He touched the shoulder of the loner. In the midst of the musical chaos, he confidently told his interlocutor that his song was next. He hopped in the air like a soccer player ready to start his match. He grabbed his knees and pulled them up to his chest and stretched as if this were to help his singing voice. A gold chain cuddled around his neck. It rested upon his ivory shirt but made a tempting contrast against his tan skin.

"I wonder what the metal in your throat tastes like," he mouthed when he saw the golden chain touch the owner's lips by accident.

"I'm next!" The visitor said after taking a shot of Anisette in the loner's face. Their faces were so close, anyone could have believed they had taken the shot together. The liquorish lingering smell burned the loner's eyes, making them blink and miss the last sight of the slithering chain. He could see himself pulling it, bursting it, with his bare hands, freeing it from the immaculate shirt and the tempting skin wearing it. The visitor must have been ready to sing. He took a final look around and got on stage.

The jerking leg started to behave uncontrollably at the sight of the tan skin on stage. He reminded him of someone else. He started to feel aroused. He could sense that being hard wasn't timely, especially if he were to go next. He looked down. He was so hard it hurt him. But he noticed something else. He licked his thumb and bent over to reach his leather boot. He then rubbed his finger against a red speckle on his shoe. Then he cleaned his thumb again. He put it back in his mouth, pressing down under his tongue. The smell made him think of the guy he'd just left outside the bar. The thought of this man's girthy neck was enough to make him stain his pants with clear fluids.

He'd been paying attention to the next song to be played below the singer's screen. He lost focus when he saw that his turn had come. He couldn't be more nervous now. His heart was pounding at the sight of the stage. He was aroused and his crotch area blemished, yet his biggest worry was not to embarrass himself. He knew he could sing. He just needed a little encouragement from the audience.

Luckily for him, the crowd went crazy when his song came up, and the screams of the excited bargoers overshadowed the panicked cries of two homeless people when they spotted a severed neck peeking out a metal trash bin outside the bar.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

JOSE FABIÁN ELIZONDO es autor de las novelas *Hacia ningún lugar* (2021), *Cuando los cuerpos recuerdan* (2024) y *Flesh (Un)Bound* (2024), así como de múltiples poemas y cuentos cortos publicados en España, Colombia, México, Venezuela, Brasil y Costa Rica. Sus historias mayoritariamente navegan temas queer y distópicos dentro de contextos latinoamericanos. Estudió el Grado de Inglés en la Escuela de Lenguas Modernas de la Universidad de Costa Rica. Actualmente se encuentra realizando un doctorado en Psicología Educativa en la Universidad de Kansas, EE. UU.

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