

Mouse story

The colors of the room are muted and degraded to the static level of an early morning television. One of the five people opens his mouth and a little orange light comes out. He closes and opens it again. A human sized mouse in the middle of the room shifts uncomfortably, creaking the wooden floor. The intermittent orange light shines on him. An overweight human body with exceptionally skinny arms and legs. A red and black striped shirt. Himself. Big round ears. Grey furry face and a pointed nose. Two little black expressionless dots for eyes. A little zigzag tongue shows in his mouth while he mumbles to himself and shakes his head. What he says... "I painted a big Z on the wall, I used black paint... I painted another Z on top of it, in the reverse direction, in the shape of an hourglass... I didn't know the symbol was illegal... I want my mommy, it's not fair... People would be nicer to me if I was blonde... I lived in the grass, life was simple... I ate huge strawberries, I found a strawberry once, so big I used all my strength to carry it:: each slice could feed every family in my neighborhood for a week. I thought about burying it. There was a worm living inside of it, a pink worm with an old man's face. It slithered out of the strawberry, smiling like someone who has just won the lottery. I guess I didn't know what to do. He said to me, 'hey, I just want to let you know. This is where my band practices. How to I have a band if i'm only a worm? Why not find out. We have many members in our band. Our band is going on tour inside of every fruit in the garden'. I said to the worm, i'm supposed to be going home, i'm supposed to be getting food, bringing food home. The worm laughed. It had red inside of its mouth. When I went with the worm inside of the strawberry, I expected to find a recording studio. But in fact all of the space was filled with the rest of the worm's body, and also a lot of pus. I stood neck deep in this fluid as the worm wrapped around my body and constricted it. I felt like a seed on the inside of a mouth full of a thick tongue. The worm didn't mind me being there, and I liked talking to the worm. I think I stayed there for two weeks. I said to the worm many things, told it about colors it could not see. The worm could only see green everywhere. We talked about music. We agree that the quality of the music does not matter so much when you're with good company. And when you're with your friends, provided they are true friends of yours, all you need to do is be honest with them about how you feel, and you can just open your mouth, and that is music. It is music whenever you feel comfortable with your friends.

After I was talking about music with the worm, I went home. My father and my mother, and all of the little kids in my neighborhood wanted to know, what happened to you? Oh my god? You look like you've been drained to the bone? You are so skinny, your face has been pulled back from your teeth? Your arms and legs are so skinny? I didn't really understand what they were

talking about. I'd gone to look for some food to eat because I was hungry, but it turns out that my food had been looking for me, and that it was hungrier than me. So we got along. We had a shared interest. A pair of hungers. Some parts of the pair are louder than other parts. Some are quieter. I went to bed. I pulled my green and red plaid blanket up over my head. From that point on I dream about walking around the city of mice, bending down on the street and spitting little eggs into the cracks of the sidewalk. I dream of walking to the post office, buying a lot of envelopes, and spitting eggs into the envelopes and mailing them to all the people I went to mouse high school with. I dream about the waves of the ocean sometimes. But then I start to become anxious that I am enjoying the ocean too much. I have to go back to spitting little eggs onto parts of the town. I am very surprised that I am not being arrested. Kissing webby eggs onto public property like stop signs and parked cars. I guess everybody is just sitting inside, eating at a restaurant. Not really paying attention to me. I wake up from my dream now and then to be examined by mouse doctors in my bedroom who scream at me in my face and shake me by the shoulders. To show that I like them, and that I respect them and mean them no harm, I make my face into the flattest, softest mouse face triangle that I possibly can, and I make my eyes as soft as two pieces of gum. And I can choose to go back to sleep. And that's what I choose to do."