1. Summer 4

Quince walks up to Erik's little sanctuary house, music blaring from the inside. The front door is flung open, and Erik staggers back, a garbage bag in his hand.

"Geez, you scared me." He rights himself. "You're early. Let me turn the music off."

"Leave it. Go take your garbage out."

She walks into the tiny living room, and she's surrounded by driving guitars and a screaming singer. The sound pulses against her body. It's a full-on massage. As the song nears its climax, the singer yells in an ascending octave, and the lead guitar responds. He screams higher, and the guitar follows him up. It's a duel. The singer shrieks again, and this time the guitar takes it all the way up, the orgasm achieved and falling away in post-coital satisfaction.

Erik comes back into the house, turns the music off, and the silence is profound.

"My god," she says. "I want a cigarette."

He laughs, but it resonates slightly embarrassed.

"Who was that?" she asks, almost panting.

"Led Astray. Old school heavy metal band."

"Well, fuckin' A," she says, surprised. She feels energized, clear-

headed, right with the world. Led Astray. The name sounds familiar, and then it clicks. “I saw them in concert.”

“Led Astray?”

“Yeah, when I was fifteen. I talked my sister into taking me to Lollapalooza,” she says, the memory washing over her. “It was a great concert.” A flood of warm feelings accompanies the memory. Thisby was having a good day.



Erik motions to her to follow him into the kitchen. “I got to thinking about my heavy metal phase. I wanted to see if I still liked it.”

“And do you?”

“It does get the body pumped up. Or maybe angry,” he amends.

They hear an audible moan of relief and turn to see Zareen in the doorway, her mouth twisted in a pout. “Thanks for turning that off. I thought I listened to loud music.”

“No appreciation for the finer tunes,” Erik says.