

Nirvana Playing Twister With the Smashing Pumpkins

Right hand on blue, D'arcy tells Krist. He's naked, save his black underwear with the white elastic band, and slippery with Crisco smeared across his chest and belly. Kurt, in jeans and a long coat, volunteers to go second, arm raised like a schoolboy. Right hand yellow, she tells him. Dave wants clarification. There are two plastic diagrams stretched across the bar floor. Are we allowed to swap on other mats? and James Iha stands abashedly behind him. It sounds like a dream, nostalgic and surreal, but it's there: Jesus, I spend a lot of time on the internet watching useless shit. (And, yes, this is a prayer, whether Jesus knows it or not, is familiar with the internet or not, whether He knows when I speak of Nirvana I mean, not paradise, but a rock band from America.)

But does He know what I mean by America? I've never understood how we, and by we, I mean, Americans (see how fucked up that is?), use *America* to mean us, the U.S. (capital Us, right?) and not Canada or Mexico or all those other countries with an equal right to be called America. And Twister, it's a game, not a tornado, not like the one that swept Dorothy from Kansas or routinely decimates rural America (there I go again) but the game on the plastic mat with the colored dots—yellow, red, blue, green—a road map to awkward yoga & sexual embarrassment. What are you doing? the woman with the mic—maybe she's from MTV— asks Krist. The rules are simple, he says. You need a can of Twister and some, ah, Crisco.

What are the surprises here? Billy Corgan with long hair. D'arcy, healthy and Veronica Lake-ish, in a black t-shirt (*Blue Velvet*) as she spins the needle and calls out, so politely, the moves. I've wanted to write about Kurt for so long, but could never get it right, never say the right thing, whatever it was that needed to be said, added to the million words already said, the funeral pyre of eulogies and record reviews. But here it is, and it's about this stupid game. Hey, what turns your life upside down? Fame. Junk. Money. Something unnamed burning inside. Oh, it's so much simpler to blame the woman at the board. (Fans call her Courtney.) But it's more than that. Where do any of us end up? Ass-over-teakettle, my mother used to say, but who used teakettles in 1991, let alone 2015.

Maybe it is nostalgia, to watch it, maybe the most pointless three minutes and nineteen seconds of Youtube ever, more pointless than cute cats or adorable children or countless idiot hordes winning Darwin Awards, but I've watched a lot of bad footage: housewives on acid, actual gangs fights, tutorials on broken dryers. Maybe it's therapy to watch someone I never knew but seem to mourn now even more than I did then. This is so boring, Krist laments from the ground, his face to the floor, you guys are no fun. Then everyone tumbles, and the flimsy sheets, pulled out like a bungled attempt at a magician's tablecloth trick, end up on Krist, the sound of the crowd crying Oooh, and the slap of wet plastic what I'm left with, all these boys & girls so fucking young and Jesus, us, still twisted, trying to figure it all out.