

NIGHT SHIFT AT THE COUNTY JAIL

inspired by true events

I

Psych row

Behind the crisscross glass
they are book-less (contraband)

Each jumpsuited woman behind a steel door
little flap like a mail drop for dinner below

Possession-less (contraband)

The clock in a wire bra on the wall nearing nearly 1 A.M.

Apparently sane-less (contraband?)

6"x6" wire glass windows, the guard, and a bare steel desk.

II

She asks how the cells here are different

There's no lights out—never

He's slouched so low, big black boots with bits of pea gravel
stuck in the soles, his hands on his belly

Turns the woman a-urnal, opposite
of diurnal, opposite of nocturnal

"Well here." He points to a cell, knock-off watch round his wrist
"You've got ugly bitches— (new cell) And ugly bitches—
(new cell) And even *more* ugly bitches."

An impossible situation

They're higher up than his head, his feet.

III

Night Nurse approaches carrying a tray full of empty
shot glasses her hard laughter echoes off the cement

The only reason she came here was to watch her

Behind the steel doors all down the corridor
nobody says a thing

To see how the pills get distributed to the patients

Night Nurse throws her purple scrub thigh high up
upon the desk the other follows

That's what she wants to do someday, give
things to people that'll help them feel better

The grin bears nicotine teeth. "We should
put her in padded." Her head snaps over. "Wanna see what it's like?"

IV

When her back's turned they close the door

Just sheets of tough, washable rubber

When they let her out five minutes later they're still
laughing about it

Nothing like it seems in the movies

"The look on your face!"

Like you were one of them

Eventually the guard hits his
shock collar limit and Night Nurse conducts the rest of the tour.

V

Each desk becomes a stop, two big-booted men
waxing in the blue light of a laptop that's moaning

Night Nurse explains away her trailing
presence in a fragment

"What are you boys watching?"

Incomplete to the D-cups leaning over the
desk at their eye level

Both grin, one turns the screen to a woman with
achondroplasia as she gives head to an
insanely sized, anonymous dick

She is see-thru while Night Nurse tells
the joke the first guard made

When they all die down she tugs at
the sleeve of one he erects himself and follows her out of sight.

VI

"They aren't all ugly bitches though."

It's the cell across from the guard desk

He pauses the porn and offers her a seat
mocking tears in his red eyes

No one is at the window

"There's actually some pretty fuckin' hot ones in here."

He shouts now for her to materialize

"Huh baby? Come on now, give us a look! A
great ass on her, don't be shy now!"

VII

He types in a bunch of asterisks and
captures her on the screen

She's some blonde smile-less woman
printing out

Each line of ink creates her

Her transient eyes

"See, hot! There's plenty more where
that came from!"

He holds the paper by the neck

She excuses herself abandoning
the woman on the desk for the hallway down the way.

VIII

Around the corner Night Nurse and the Guard's mouths
claw at one another his big paws gripping hold

In a breezeway security camera-less
(liability)

She jerks away anyway to pretend, Night Nurse
pops out and joins her

She's seen having seen them
(liability)

Only the fluorescent buzz now, and they act like nothing
she says nothing they say nothing

Like you were one of them
(liability?)

2 A.M., the silence is the strangest thing.