

His Man's Congruence

Blumquist, sore cowboy, scoots his tongue around the inside of his mouth, applying it against the back of his gums and teeth, an increasingly sensitive area for him.

"Can you feel that?"

"What?"

"That," he says. He presses his tongue firmly behind one of his incisors, keeping his lips in a wide, strained grin in hopes that his man might see where the action is.

"That?" His man contorts his mouth through similar strain, contemplates a moment, and replies: "I can feel that."

"What about this?"

Again, his man strains his own mouth and then contemplates. "I can't feel that."

"No — this." His man continues his search. The weediness of Blumquist's breathing is heavy, but given the circumstances, the general strain placed upon his lower face, it is hard to read frustration. Before his man can give thought to new arrangements, Blumquist grabs at his left hand and guides a pair of fingers straight up to where his own tongue had been.

"That?"

Blumquist, unable to speak, flicks his head to the side, coaching.

"Aha!" his man cries: "This?"

Blumquist nods and lifts his eyes expecting some subsequent revelation, then, growing impatient with his man's prolonged fascination, removes the hand from his mouth. The two, neither knowing what to build upon the knowledge now at one between them, spit and resume breakfast.

Blumquist smacks his lips, darts his eyes across the lower parts of the wide Utah valley: "Are you tasting that?"

His man is occupied, wiping his hand along the thigh of his trousers, but hearing Blumquist he ceases. He nods with his eyes to the pair of fingers now held, clearly significant, out from the palm. Blumquist nods, disappointed with the ease of his man's solution and with the way, hand raised mid-chest, he appeared to be offering a benediction. His man wipes his hand once more on his pantleg. Blumquist turns his thoughts back to the valley.

"I remember once," he says, "when it was raining, clouds were coming in like so, the sunlight all wooly mammoth. You could see the rain, you could hear it, but it was minutes, listen, minutes before any of us felt a drop on our skin. I'm not saying, but — that was where the action was."

His man nods, agreeably, imagining not the scene described but that it might be raining just so right now and he not feeling it.

"That must have been where the action must have been. I don't know—"

He shrugged it off, "I know. I know."