

# It's Raining Men

*Before they were ever together, he wanted her so badly it hurt. Not that she knew anything about it. He memorized every little detail there was, down to the way she wiped her bangs off her forehead, then did this absent-minded toss of the head. Her name was Julie. She was seventeen.*

*He took her out for breakfast, watched as she used a fork to stir what was left of her eggs, moving them across the plate, then back.*

*The city was full of them, almost women, the fashion that summer was micro minis with tube tops, and high-heeled slip on sandals. Girls wore dark raccoon rings round their eyes. Julie didn't bother, when she had on clothes, they were cut off jean shorts, and on top a man's undershirt, no bra ever.*

*Heat in the city whipped off the pavement, curling up to your nostrils. He had the T bird that summer, and he took her out for a ride, onto the Southern State, glancing over, he saw she didn't notice him, she had her head tipped back, her eyes narrowed to slits, the radio played hits, Madonna. She sang along.*

*When he thought back, he told himself it was her fault, all of it. Julie next to him, laughing, while the sea salt smell rose up, the cattails purred.*

*Later, in the hotel room, her hair was a mess, witches' knots. Stepping out of the shower, he caught her, pushed her back against the wall, thought this was perfect, holding her up, tight, white tile behind her, her eyes shut, like she was inventing something. Someone.*

*In the mirror he saw the two of them, saw what he had, what he held, saw her spirit sliding away.*

*Grabbing her face, he forced her to watch.*

*The rain came in spurts, gathering power. He pulled the blanket up, turning on his side. It had been raining that other night too. He'd walked up the road, and all that long walk, he turned over the things he was going to say that would convince her.*

*He was good at that, wasn't he?*

*But when she opened the door to him, he knew it was all bullshit. She was never going to listen to one word he had to tell her.*

*Julie stretched like a cat.*

*"You're late," she told him, walking to the fridge, taking out a beer, and unscrewing the cap, tanking it down; then giving him that wicked, knowing smile.*

*Later on, when he turned it over in his mind, he realized there was nothing he could have done. It was inevitable, and if she'd been less willful and more intelligent, she would have known. After all, he was a reasonable man, but even a reasonable man has limits. As the years passed, his conviction hardened. At first, he changed little things, the way she'd looked at him, the tone of her voice, so that, eventually, he rewrote the script, diagrammed out the entire scene differently, Julie taunting him, laughing meanly, so that really, there was nothing else he could have been expected to do.*

*Was there?*

*It was her fault, everything that happened.*