

The Shut-in for Antioch

The Shut-in

(with apologies to Wayne Kostenbaum)

There was a man who had a kind of personality that kept him away from most of the rest of society. The reasons for this were partly a secret, even to himself. He had a menial job that never really excited him. He stayed in his apartment every night and listened to music. He had never had a lover. Except the opera.

He started going to the opera when he was fifteen. There was much he loved about it but he was obsessed with sopranos, especially a very significant diva named Madelaine. He never missed her performances and only traveled when he knew she would be singing somewhere.

Eventually the ushers and back stage people at the opera house became familiar with him. He was able to travel freely about the house and even slip backstage. Sometime in his twenties he began to leave Madelaine ----- at her dressing room door after every performance. Always the same thing. Always the same thing. Sometimes she would catch him standing about or walking away but in deference to his character she never approached him, never confronted him.

He never knew what she thought of the repeated gift. They never spoke.

After very many years it was announced that the opera star was going to retire and her final performance would be Madama Butterfly. At the last curtain call there were many, many roses being thrown on the stage. There were many people screaming and crying. In the midst of the applause, Madelaine reached inside her kimono and pulled out -----, exactly like that which he had been giving her all these years and carefully stepped down off the stage and put ----- in his hands.

Assignment: produce the object.