

## Three Shades of White: An Essay in Three Parts

1. This morning I showered in my windowless, white bathroom, lit by a light whose brightness is calmed by a crimped paper lantern. Our bathroom light went out last night, and out of fear of showering in the dark, I dragged our living room lamp and used it to prop open the bathroom door. While the lamp's angled glow fluttered against the white tile, the water beat down on me and I thought to myself how baptismal showering has come to be. A cleansing of bodily residue, of my thoughts and my sins. My morning ritual to start the day feeling fresh. "Save me from myself," I think as I turn the faucet off and grab my white towel, permanently stained by only-God-knows-what, the impurities of the laundromat.
2. I hung out with one of my oldest friends today. We went to Middle School and High School together at a small all-girls' Catholic school in Los Angeles called Immaculate Heart. Our motto was, "Women of great heart and right conscience." I sometimes find myself wondering if I've fulfilled this motto (does Cassidy think she has?), or if I ever will. What does it even *mean*: "great" heart, "right" conscience? I wonder if all the other girls feel that they currently embody the motto that was so heavily instilled in us? The last time I saw the rest of my classmates was on graduation day. We wore stark white dresses that looked like 80's wedding dresses; the kind you put on only for the picture when you get hitched in Las Vegas-- costumes of false purity.
3. I accidentally stumbled upon our old messages on my computer in the midst of searching for something completely different. His responses were always half-hearted and uninterested.  
He said that all my friends and I wear white socks. I think about this sometimes. His parents' apartment was a sterilized white. And so was his bed, his room cold in an expensive way-- air conditioned to arctic temperatures. The whiteness of his bedroom made the room more uncomfortable than it already was and always while in there, a certain shame would come over me. I came to learn that it wasn't just the room that was bleak and uncomfortable. Maybe we were never really friends.  
My boyfriend now wears white socks. His room is blue, his bed is warm, and maybe I'm too comfortable.