

## *Your Famous Sister Walking Through a Plate-Glass Door at the Gehry Museum If It Existed*

Forrest Roth

I distrust people, everyone in this city, those who speak in the anecdotal.

Yes I know you did something. We all did. And we all know each other. We know your famous sister, and you and her were, like,

aberrant: seeming to cause willful self-injury and thus a seething insult. A building in any city.

When we went to collect your sister in Los Angeles, I knew you were mentally distancing yourself along with me from the facility we entered, a nondescript medical building shaped in the way medical buildings today are shaped as a means to avoid the accident of trying to walk through it unscathed, like your sister deliberately walking through a plate-glass door trying to imitate Gary Oldman as Sid Vicious from *Sid and Nancy*. This had been coming for a few years, and you had been a part of it. Women don't walk through plate-glass doors, she had told me, only men like Gary Oldman—and then she finally does it, though not very well at all, and while putting down the phone you were, like, hey. I already knew your sister wasn't good for the full ride; she only put some of her arm through, barely brushing the handle on the other side until jerking herself back and the security men stepping in. We spent some time sitting on the sidewalk thinking about it and her. But not anecdotally.

Another event soon becoming just another toxicology—residual peeling mirth of your sister's stare, one eyebrow raised, and the next. Indistinguishable from yours. A while back we traveled to your parents' home upstate and your parents didn't want to recognize me but you were, like, here he is, and I am, now. An aberration. An instruction. Attempting conversation I ask your mother about movies, which both avoids and doesn't avoid conversation about your sister. Mothers, I find, don't usually know of *Sid and Nancy*. Mothers don't know your famous sister, which include yours. Another event, like, your parents are a building I keep walking into. I spent some time barely on the handle on the other side, your sister said, don't walk through it—run. Your sister thought she was always too good for your civil servant parents, and upstate in general.

A while back you recognized me again. I had moved back into our place, waiting for you, your discharge, not your sister as you had said. One eyebrow raised. Falling through. You wanted me to do impersonations to celebrate. Men do not fall through. Men do not imitate Gary Oldman as Sid Vicious from *Sid and Nancy*. Yet your sister says Gary Oldman is a building I must keep walking through. The plate-glass of his face is meant to cause an accident, which I should do, aberrant, instructively, but not anecdotally. Your parents were, like, security on the other side. I like your parents as long as I can put my arm through them. I distrust men and your famous sister. I distrust the Gehry Museum in Los Angeles. Gary Oldman has been to Los Angeles countless times, but your sister only twice, and neither have been to the Gehry Museum. No one has ever been to the Gehry Museum. It is a willful self-injury and thus a seething insult to your civil service parents who know better. I think they're charming. I want to put my arm through them, step in, and brush the familial mirth of you and your sister. I want to understand them and her and you as an event, as, like, an aberration but not an anecdote,

so you were, like,

how could I be an imitation of Gary Oldman, which all men would hate me for. Gary Oldman could kill me with his face, but I say you can't with yours. Your face is, like, an event. An endless toxicology. An endless building Maurice Blanchot made for Gary Oldman, but Gary Oldman does not read, like, because he is too busy going to the Los Angeles in his mind where the Gehry Museum only exists, according to your sister. The Gehry Museum of Gary Oldman's mind, she says, is only made of plate-glass doors which Sid Vicious continually walks through, thinking he is Gary Oldman before Gary Oldman met her. The peeling mirth of you returning home. A while back you started recognizing my eyebrow with your finger, which also met with the women who don't know your sister. I know I'm thinking about it. Thinking about your parents who gave me exactly three lukewarm dinners of canned ham, canned peas, and reconstituted mashed potatoes on paper plates, as though they were trying to prevent an accident. Before that they were too good for me. Before that you moved back into our place and were meant to brush my eyebrow while I slept, and then we travelled everywhere that was not Los Angeles, forgetting your famous sister and speaking as though only you and I recognized each other.

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There is nothing beautiful about your famous sister's signature, we both admit. Even ten thousand eyebrows couldn't make her signature beautiful, but she thinks walking through a plate-glass door could.

During the 1980's when your sister talked about walking through a plate-glass door you had to sign her out of discharge but she couldn't sign herself out. A signature in America can be the means to self-release, the familial name the virtual key which turns the lock, though your sister changed her familial name to something better suiting her surname with the two O's in it. The pseudonym also has two O's in it, a catchy assonance not unlike my name, which was not intentional, instructive, or anecdotal, but a name that was interesting because my non-civil servant parents found it interesting. Your sister was often ashamed of her signature as a child because yours was much better she told me and in self-conscious shame practiced her handwriting to no end, the beating pulse of her wrist across the paper working her pen over and over until she lost her name under a pile of scribbles, effectively driving the pen through the paper. Punishing the paper, punishing herself, whatever. Your famous sister doesn't like to write. If you're an actor in Los Angeles, then it is not so important to write. Speaking, of course, is everything. But the only writing you need is an intelligent-looking signature. Perhaps this is why Los Angeles does not allow famous actors to write in the cement at Mann's Chinese Theater anymore since writing in wet cement is childish, and childish-looking. The greatest American actors of the 1980's could not afford to look childish. Gary Oldman, at any point in his life, was never childish. Gary Oldman had to be raised by a violent alcoholic father, something which requires less and less childish behavior as one becomes more of a child to counteract the violent alcoholic tendencies, until, at some point, Gary Oldman takes on roles that require a violent alcoholic personality like Sid Vicious in *Sid and Nancy*. Your sister, studying the large O of Gary Oldman's signature, believes this is his best performance of his career but didn't tell him so when she met him in Los Angeles because she was bleeding and the security men prevented her from reaching out and touching him with blood on her hand. Sid Vicious was the apotheosis of Gary Oldman's storied career and, like, he hasn't been better since, your sister says, he's been shit in everything else except maybe *The Professional* but oh my god he was Sid Vicious even when he said

pizza was his favorite food, always Sid Vicious at every conceivable instant especially since Gary Oldman can't play bass guitar but had a violent alcoholic father who surely Sid Vicious's father would've been had Sid Vicious's father actually been in Sid Vicious's life, which he wasn't, and Sid Vicious never saw the signature of his father and probably couldn't even write his real name or his stage name or the name of his mother or the names of his bandmates or the name of that which only Sid Vicious could bring into existence by walking through a plate-glass door, the attribute of Sid Vicious as seen by Gary Oldman raised by a violent alcoholic father by the name of Sid Vicious.

While you're sleeping I tell your sister Gary Oldman is not a beautiful man but he has a beautiful signature. Your sister yells at me. In this moment, she is a beautiful woman whose signature was the ugliness of trying to walk through a plate-glass door at the Gehry Museum in Los Angeles while Gary Oldman watched and was reminded of himself as the Sid Vicious who could not sign his own name.

I see Gary Oldman is not as beautiful as your sister who could sign her name in wet cement while sleeping if she ever had to.

Your sister is, like, so angry at me. Doesn't believe it. No.

We shouldn't be surprised that you and I can't impersonate Gary Oldman forever. Maybe she can.

When we will read her note to ourselves, scrawled in that childish handwriting, we will then remember she had wanted to sign the ugliness of Mann's Chinese Theater before you and I got her out of Los Angeles and be reminded of all the famous actors she knew and would be casted as in the film adaptation of their semi-autobiographical lives. She can do both female and male roles effortlessly, walk through them with the impunity of the Gehry Museum walking through the Los Angeles cityscape if it were ever to exist outside of Gary Oldman's mind the way Mann's Chinese Theater does. In every city and town there is a Mann's Chinese Theater to compensate for the lack of a Gehry Museum. Mann's Chinese Theater is the most unfortunate aspect of American existence, causing willful injury and seething insult, of insisting all innocent bystanders to kneel upon the concrete and press their palms into the indentations of those who came before. You find the residual nature of this activity to be unhealthy and, like, gross but we have no choice. Your sister makes us press our palms into the indentations and hold them there waiting for the conceivable instant to reach us as it reaches your famous sister who believes she is commiserating with Audrey Hepburn even though she finds Audrey Hepburn too petite. She would sooner play Gary Oldman than Audrey Hepburn. She alone understands Gary Oldman who did not sign his name into the wet cement of Mann's Chinese Theater, who never left his imprint there, because no one may access the residue of Gary Oldman superficially, instinctively, anecdotally. They must take that chance of being Sid Vicious being Gary Oldman and try walking through the plate-glass door. Only then may they walk through the building unharmed,

I say to you sleeping as if I would know.

