

ROCK THE BOAT

(c.2019)

I hated Loretta Carlucci. I can't remember what she did to me or how it came to that, but I hated her, and I wanted to get back at her for whatever it was, and to make her feel ashamed, like I did. So as retribution, all I could visualize was a musical number --- a sure psychic attack, judging from history, (that is, prior family audience response).

Loretta Carlucci was half Catholic Italian and half Jewish, and I composed and choreographed a little production in my mind, just for her. I imagined a girl would go skipping up to her from one side and stop short in front of her to deliver the scathing indictment, in Broadway sing-song style: "You're a disgrace to the bla bla religion", and go skipping off whence she came. Before long another girl would skip up to her from another direction to deliver her version of that line, cheerfully but emphatically, coming to bear witness with that poignant condemnation, "You're a disgrace to the da da da da da da, time after time, disgrace after disgrace. I guess I just couldn't think of anything else to say (with "My True Brain"). I was never too convincing with fighting words or quick comebacks, and never too fluent on the battlefield. I wanted to be. I wanted just once to be able to hold my own and hurt someone back who hurt me, but I was at a loss. I just didn't know how to do it. Except "da da da da da da da da da da da."

I can't remember why I was so mad at her anyway. I mean I used to go up and play with her pretty much when we were younger. We'd play dress-up in her basement.

One time I was the pink poodle all day, in the Halloween costume my mother made for

my sister, that won her first prize the year before. Or Loretta and I would put on the record player and lip sync and act out the words and moves to 'Fernando's Hide-away' - "Ole". Or we'd play different characters. I liked to be Jim. In fact I was the character Jim a lot, even when I was by myself --- that is, when I wasn't being Doobie. Doobie was actually my older cousin Judy Paradise's imaginary friend, who she told me about and then I borrowed, (as if I needed encouragement in the imaginary realm). But poor Doobie had to deal with Curley, who was actually my imaginary friend, now that I'd gotten the hang of imaginary friends. Oh, Curley. I'm telling you, Curley was so stupid, so stupid, she couldn't even play checkers --- can you imagine? She couldn't do anything. Not anything. I could relate. We'd try to teach her, but oh she was just so slow. It took so much patience to deal with Curley.

But for a period of time I played Jim a lot. You know, Jim the martyr. And what he had to endure! For instance, long after my older brother and sister were fast asleep, all my stuffed animals and my 2 Chinese dolls would be laid out all over my bed, so there'd be no place for me, (rather, Jim) to sleep. I'd (or he'd) be curled up in a little ball at the tip of the bed. And just when he was finally getting relaxed and approaching sleep, one of the stuffed animals, (all of whom he had to care for), would get thirsty and disturb him and ask him for a glass of water. And Jim would have to be so patient and get up to get the water. Oh Jim, what a good and patient guy. And then there were those mean awful terrible people out there who would do all kinds of horrible things to

Jim, like they'd put bumble bees up his asshole to torture him. But he could take it because he was Jim. You know, Jim the martyr.

Loretta never knew that side of my character Jim, who she played light, innocent, innocuous dress-up games with. No one knew. My imagination was truly a wonder, and somehow I just knew never to share the details with anyone.

I still can't remember why I came to hate Loretta Carlucci as time went on.

Could it have been the egg-salad sandwiches she ate every day at school, chewing them with her mouth open, massaging egg-salad with her tongue and teeth, full open mouth for everyone's maximum viewing pleasure? It was truly a disgusting sight, which further atrophied my puny appetite with each vicarious bite.

No, that's not why I was mad at her. Nor could it have been her grandfather, could it?

Certainly not. She must have done something bad to me because it wasn't her fault that he came to visit the summer before, when we were about 4 years old. I used to walk up the street to her house in my black leotard, hoping to be invited to swim in the big rubber swimming pool they set up in the backyard. I would never ask to swim.

That wouldn't be polite. I'd wait to be invited and pretend it was just a coincidence that I had on a leotard that I could swim in.

One day when her grandfather was visiting, he was laying on the patio chaise lounge. Everyone else had gone inside, probably to eat egg salad sandwiches. Her grandfather beckoned me over to sit next to him and he told me what nice thighs I had as he stuck his fat old wrinkly finger up my twat. Do you have a twat at age 4, or does become

one later? Mine must have prematurely because what would an old man like that want with a 4 year old vagina? Whatever mine was, he wanted entry, to touch it and feel it inside. I was confused.

I walked down to tell Gail O'Donalin, who lived across the street from us, what had happened. I knew she'd be particularly interested. In fact, that was her special domain. She used to sharpen popsicle sticks and go behind the evergreen trees and stick them in her vagina and encourage me to do the same. I tried once. It was kind of like playing doctor. I'd try almost anything once --- Well anything except eating dog doo, which she'd been known to do. She sucked pebbles when she was thirsty too and told me to do the same. I tried. And she peed outside and wiped herself with leaves.

I don't think I did that. And once she bit me really bad and deep on the back.

Her brother Danny O'Donalin used to throw stones at other kids and his mother would help him. Then she'd call the cops if they did anything back to Danny. Their mother always called the police for everything. In fact their pet parrot could only say three things: "I'm Captain Kid", "God damn it", and "Call the cops."

So I told Gail what happened and we both walked up to the Carlucci's in our leotards.

Loretta's grandfather stuck his fingers up both of us, telling us what nice thighs we had.

Then we each went home. Gail told her mother, who of course "called the cops".

They came in a squad car and after talking to the O'Donalins, came to my house to talk to my mother, who was quite mortified by the whole unpleasant thing -- a police car at our house and the embarrassment or whatever. Gail and I had to go in the police car to

the Carlucci's to talk to the grandfather, who denied it and was given a verbal warning, and I was delivered home. My mother looked extremely disturbed by it all, and as soon as the police left, she disconcertingly asked me why I didn't just tell her. I felt her real message was clear and I knew better the next time not to say anything to her or anyone — Later that year, when Paul Philip, the man who lived behind us, started playing "Rock the Boat" with me, getting on top of me and humping me — "Rock the Boat". That was his game. And once he took me into the garage, pulled down my panties and kept licking my pussy. Do you have a pussy at age 4 or does it transform later when the time is right? Mine must have early because what would a grown man like that want with a tender innocent 4 year old vagina anyway? Whatever it was, he wanted on it, in it.

I was confused. I knew I had to keep his bad secret.

I was his bad, very bad secret.