

## Girl of the World

Anthony Ramirez

I was the sacrificial lamb, the first girl Andrew would ever have over at his house, let alone the first ever to be in his room, or even sit on his bed. He prepped me before I ever set foot in the door. "Make sure you take off your shoes."

Taking off my shoes, I quickly realized must be a Bridgeport thing.

When you're fourteen going on fifteen there is this expectation not to be surprised by whatever posters are on a guy's wall, such as half-nude models brought by his dad or some older brothers at Spencer Gifts to make him a man.

I'm sure he must have felt awkward when his father gave him those posters. Saying, "Here son," as he grabbed him by the shoulder. "Happy birthday." The posters were typical beer posters, women in wet white tank tops too small for their giant breasts. I knew in a million years I could never compete with them. I'm as flat as a ruler. And they were tan, slim, pouty lips, and amazing curves.

There was, however, one poster on his wall I noticed above his bed. It was the yellow-framed cover of National Geographic. Of all the boys I know, of all the half nude, and nude girly girls I've seen in my brothers rooms, and in other older guys rooms, all those I could deal with. Those I could accept. They were fake, not real, but this boy, he had to pick someone too real.

"Oh, I see you noticed Ms. June 1985." He said half jokingly. Sarcasm never suited him well.

He had to pick her. The poster was of that Afghan girl, with her maroon colored shawl, and those amazing green eyes.

"Don't you just love her eyes?"

I said nothing. I was floored. Now I wasn't ever in love with Andrew, I never liked him like that. More like a brother maybe, but right then and there, I never felt a compulsion to kiss a boy as much as I

did right then. Maybe to show him how special he was, kissing him was the only way I knew how, or could think to do at that moment.

“I could spend hours just staring at them.”

And I know he did. Though he wouldn't readily admit it. I couldn't say anything cause I did love her eyes. I could imagine him, standing up on his bed, barefoot or with just socks on and kissing her. Balancing himself on the rusty old springs of the mattress, holding the wall, holding her picture by the yellow rimmed frame on all National Geographic front covers. He'd lean in, brushing that strand of hair out of her eye, and kissed her nose and then her lips. He'd want to kiss with his eyes open, telling her not to close her eyes either because he wanted to see them as they embraced for his first kiss.

Nothing happened that day I went over his house. I don't know if he expected anything to happen. We didn't kiss, or make out. We just sat there on his bed. He showed me his room and video games I didn't really have any interest for. I really didn't have any interest in him either. He loved her, not me. I could tell. He didn't even look at me as he talked about her, she kept his gaze. I was upset at first, but then she caught my gaze too. Those eyes were like limes cut in half. That poster, there was no airbrushing, she wasn't the half naked ideal male fantasy. She was real, living in some war-torn town, dirt poor probably, and by then she might even have been dead. And here she was half way across the world in a fourteen-year-old's room as his ideal girl. If that isn't love then I don't know what is.