

# doll hospital

ISSUE 4



## FOLLICLE: THOUGHTS ON RACIALISED HAIR PULLING

"For breakfast I ordered a poached egg on a piece of toast. When the dish arrived – and I tell you, it makes my stomach curdle just to write about it – there was a gleaming, curly, jet-black human hair, three inches long, lying diagonally across the yolk of my poached egg.

Whose hair was it that had lain embedded in the slimy yolk of my egg at breakfast? Undoubtedly it was the cook's hair. And when, pray, had the cook last washed his head? He had probably never washed his head. Very well, then. He was almost certainly verminous. But that in itself would not cause a hair to fall out. What did cause the cook's hair, then, to fall out on to my poached egg this morning as he transferred the egg from the pan to the plate. There is a reason for all things, and in this case the reason was obvious. The cook's scalp was infested with purulent seborrhoeic impetigo. And the hair itself, the long black hair that I might so easily have swallowed had I been less alert, was therefore swarming with millions and millions of loving pathogenic cocci whose exact scientific name I have, happily, forgotten."

-The Visitor, Roald Dahl

A ball of black hair down a silver shower drain in a white bath. Dark hair is disgust, nothing is nastier than pulling out a medium sized mammal from the shower drain, a space of cleanliness turned dirty by the passing presence of a racialized body. It is the embodiment of filth. It is pubic and obscene. It is coarsely crawling around on its snake-y belly with an afterlife of its own.

I starved myself, to de-sex, because I was molested and I was swarthy, because the two felt connected somehow, because I was molested, I was not blonde, and I was not a child, was never a child, could never be a child, no one would do that to a child so I was not a child. I starved myself to torch myself, my hair fell out, my hair fell out.

My thoughts are weeds each hair is a weed, I pull out the intrusive thoughts that pop out of my parting. All my thoughts are bad because I am bad. I am so bad and so ugly. I am out of control and so is my hair.

On the internet it says Arab girls are so ugly (read-so hairy) that they cover themselves not out of devotion but out of shame.

I started cutting when I started shaving.

Dark hair absorbs warmth, it heats my head, makes it glow like a halo. This is good as England is cold and cruel in both temperature and temperament.

When I was 15, I stood in front of the classroom projector and my dark curls projected on the whiteboard and the GHD girls laughed with their blue eyes and stable homes and said 'thank god that's not me'.

When I was 10, I was told I could not have a Jennifer Anniston hair cut because it did not work on 'ethnic hair', when I was 19, I was told I could not have a fringe because it did not work on 'ethnic' hair.

When I was 19, I stopped going to the hairdressers as no one wanted to cut my 'ethnic' hair. My black hair split from salon neglect. I pulled out the split ends, twisted off the breakages to keep it neat. I pulled high to the heaven until I pulled it out at the root. Pulling out my hair in public as a form of public apology for the space I occupy.

A failed apology though. Each hair I pull I am shedding more of myself though I am also sharing more of myself. Who wants to find long black hair on their seat. That's gross. That's dirty. I'm gross. I'm dirty.

I shave my back. I shave my hands. I shave my arms. I shave my face because there is too much to pluck.

'You can shave your back now Jason' says Regina George in Mean Girls! I am Jason! I am a monster!

I want to die but my hair is dead already. A dead thing, a foul thing.

My boyfriend finds a skull shaped box filled with my hair, he asks me what it means but it doesn't mean anything, I'm not that deep, I'm not deep at all.