

FLOWER GIRLS

by

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INT. HOSPICE HALLWAY - NIGHT

It resembles a hospital interior, but a bit homier. Peach colored walls, framed landscapes, soft, decorative lighting.

A middle-aged couple stands near the nurses station, talking with a priest. An old woman sits alone in the lounge area, crying softly. A nurse steps out of a patient room and beckons to a doctor. She taps her wrist watch.

The door to a room at the end of the hall is closed.

INT. CODY'S ROOM - CONTINUING

CODY DURSO (75) lies on his back in bed, wearing a hospital gown. He's a shrunken scarecrow, wasted from a long illness.

Nurse's Aid TAMMY DEJARDIN (40) stands near the foot of the bed. She's about to give Cody a sponge bath.

TAMMY

You get a bath when you check in,
Mister Durso. They always bundle you
up too much in that ambulance, you
get all sweaty.

Cody is weak, but still feisty.

CODY

I don't need a bath!

TAMMY

You'll feel much fresher.

CODY

I'm fresh! I'm a goddamn daisy!

Tammy chuckles.

TAMMY

We'll just start with your arm,
okay, Mister Durso?

She begins washing Cody's arm.

CODY

Name's Cody. What do I call you?

TAMMY

I'm Tamiqua, but my friends call me
Tammy.

She prepares to unfasten his hospital gown.

CODY

Ah, jeez... I, I got nothin' on
under this thing.

TAMMY

We'll be finished before you know
it.

CODY

Kind of a private man, is all.
Bachelor.

She pulls his gown down to his knees, continues bathing him.

CODY

Ah, jeeeeez...

TAMMY

Just relax. Let me do the work.
Okay?

Cody closes his eyes.

CODY

Always been a private man.

On a nearby radio, someone begins singing a 1950s pop tune,
in Japanese.

TAMMY

People say I give the best sponge
bath in this unit.

CODY

(sleepy)
Tammy. Tam...

TAMMY

Hmmm?

INT. JAPANESE BROTHEL - NIGHT

A traditional room: delicate wood and paper walls, sliding
doors, tatami mats on the floor. The 1950s pop tune continues
playing on a radio somewhere.

CODY DURSO (20) lies on his back on a sleeping pad. Except for one bandaged leg, he is the picture of youthful vigor. He's naked, but has pulled a robe across his hips.

TAMPOPO (20), a lovely geisha in a traditional kimono, kneels down next to Cody. She puts a bowl of water and a cloth nearby. Cody is awestruck.

CODY

Ah, jeez.

TAMPOPO

Gomen nasai, wakarimasen.

CODY

The fellas said I should come here.
Headin' back to Korea in a few days.
Pu-San. So, ya know. Fellas said I
should come.

She just smiles at him, soaks the cloth, and begins bathing his arm.

CODY

Name's Cody. (taps his chest) Cody.
What do I call you?

She washes his chest, shakes her head.

CODY

Cody. You?

TAMPOPO

Cody! Ah. Watashi no namae wa
Tampopo desu.

Cody shakes his head. She smiles, taps her chest.

TAMPOPO

Tampopo.

She pulls a DANDELION BLOOM from her hair. She points to herself... then to the flower.

TAMPOPO

So? Tampopo... Tampopo. Wakarimasu
ka?

CODY

(nodding)
Well, you're prettier than any
flower on God's green earth. But
it's a fine name. Tampopo.

She grins, places the dandelion on his chest, then pulls the robe away and begins washing his groin.

CODY

Ah, goddamn...

The radio plays. Tampopo works down his legs, washes his feet. Cody is breathing deeply, speechless.

Tampopo stands and lets her kimono drop to the floor. She's naked. Cody is all eyes. She undoes her hair and a black waterfall cascades down her back.

CODY

Tampopo...

She lies down on top of Cody, pressing the dandelion between them. She looks into his eyes, their faces inches apart.

TAMPOPO

Cody.

They smile.

INT. HOSPICE HALLWAY - LATER

Tammy leans against the wall just outside Cody's room, fretting, tears on her face. The door is open, and soft voices speak inside. A DOCTOR emerges, closes the door.

DOCTOR

His sister is going to stay for a while. You okay?

TAMMY

I don't know. I just, I never had anybody die in the middle of a damn sponge bath, is all. Thought I'd seen everything.

DOCTOR

Hey, thanks to you, he probably slipped away feeling pretty good. I mean, all things considered.

TAMMY

He didn't even want a bath. Wanted me to leave him alone.

DOCTOR

You were doing your job, okay? I gotta write this up.

The doctor walks off to the nurses station. Tammy paces down the hall, thinking.

The door to Cody's room opens, and his SISTER (70) emerges. She walks to the elevators. Tammy watches her enter an elevator, then returns to Cody's room.

INT. CODY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tammy walks to Cody's bedside. He looks peaceful, a blanket pulled up to his chin.

TAMMY

Goodbye, Mister Durso. Cody. Was
hoping we'd get to know each other a
little.

With a glance behind her, she kisses his forehead, then steps out of the room.

INT. HOSPICE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Tammy wipes her eyes and heads down the hall. A moment later, she brushes at the side of her head (away from camera) as if shooing away a bug. Again. She stops as her hand finds something...

She pulls a dandelion bloom from her hair.

TAMMY

Sweet Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Other staff members walk by, and two morgue attendants move past with a gurney. Tammy stands motionless in the hall, the dandelion resting on her hand.

THE END