

Wedding Dress

Problem is, I need to be blotted out— my family’s DNA.
My daddy the gangster; his mother, the moron.
My mother, the daughter pimper; her mother, the monster. When I finally met my mother’s father,
and asked how many kids he had,
He spit, “What kinda dog go diggin around for shit?” (My mother’s mom was his coworker’s wife.)
I asked my daddy if he was sure *sure* I was his firstborn
And he told me emphatically, “I think so. I’m pretty sure you are.” His daddy let him use his house to bring his women.
Even on Christmas—yes, I distinctly remember one
Christmas with young “Auntie Deb” smiling, unwrapping her shit while my stepmom sat on the basement stairs crying in her eggnog. A few of Daddy’s prettiest cousins, he’d fucked, he admitted.
And when I met Uncle Womack’s fresh-out-of-the-halfway-house son, he said, “C’mon cuz, you want somethin to eat?”
He poured us beers and Cheetos on a plastic plate. As we ate, he turned on a porno.
I told him, “No! Take me home! Now!”
I told my uncle and my dad. They asked,
“What were you wearing? Those jeans with the holes in the ass?” This same uncle sold t-shirts at my half-sister’s wedding:
This Ain’t Swag—I’m Sick and Sore. And,
Dog is God Spelled Backwards.
Half the Hendrix have what they call The Sugar—
Long gone kidneys and toes, still making pies and drinking. Uncle Kevin gave my daddy a kidney.
Daddy still drank and smoked in front of him. I chose The Justice of the Peace to wed because I know
my people aren’t worth their \$25 a plate— I’d get \$5 in a card from eight of them.
My Auntie Sally thought I was “marrying rich,” because my fiancé had a business card.
Or as she called it, a bitniss card.

She wears every piece of jewelry she owns every single day. All of it worth about thirteen dollars.
But for some reason, my man decides to marry me. He keeps looking at me and can’t stop smiling.
“Do you solemnly swear you are not brother and sister?” the judge asked that day in January.
Both of us raised our hands. “We solemnly swear.”
My new husband takes me home and while he’s spewing semen inside me,
says, “I want to give you a baby.”
But I’d already gone to my Nawlins aunties, and gotten myself fixed
to not have kids and not told him.
Yes, I knew he’d really wanted to have a family with me. I also knew he didn’t know what he was asking.