

They<sup>∞</sup> (*a translation*)

Why wouldn't they take awful chances with chemicals? They lived in cul-de-sacs and beat their spouses and fucked their neighbors. They owned Warhol prints, Brown Bess muskets, and chess sets carved from camel bone. They were collectors of fat. Bored and ugly, they snorted lines of beautiful off the backs of barroom toilet seats and found salvation.

Tolerances grew, new fixes sought. Some were found in ice cold baths, wet and clothed, arms skimming day old water smeared red with the residue of themselves, while others found beauty by raping the robbed or lynching their Saints, et cetera madness. Those who didn't inject sold stamp bags of beautiful to the next generation of ugly. New mothers now had three options: formula, breast, or beautiful milk. Babies were stumbling out of strollers and sucking down post-dose cigarettes. Everyone was fucked.

A new race of beauty chasers would later theorize the second extinction, which they called *The Fat Abortion*.

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<sup>∞</sup> *inspired by Kurt Vonnegut's Breakfast of Champions*

People took such awful chances with chemicals and their bodies because they wanted the quality of their lives to improve. They lived in ugly places where there were only ugly things to do. They didn't own doodley-squat, so they couldn't improve their surroundings. So they did their best to make their insides beautiful instead.

The results had been catastrophic so far – suicide, theft, murder, and insanity and so on. But new chemicals were coming onto the market all the time. Twenty feet away from Trout there on Forty-second Street, a fourteen-year-old white boy lay unconscious in the doorway of a pornography store. He had swallowed a half pint of a new type of paint remover which had gone on sale for the first time only the day before. He had also swallowed two pills which were intended to prevent contagious abortion in cattle, which was called *Bang's disease*.