

Steven Ackerman

How to Touch a Woman

For Laurie

When and where she wants;
Nova Scotia is a good place to start.
Wash her hair in the red spruce forest
at age eighteen, if you are fortunate enough
to know her then. Rub vigorously,
while massaging slowly, with the tips of your fingers,
and your slow vigor will produce a pleasurable languor.
Do not neglect the neck, though her hair
is not as lush there; and when you're older,
with refined technique,
and in a haunted, Slavic mood,
trace Cyrillic letters with your tongue
in her geographic center.
Silently spell a lyric or an epic poem.
(Bear in mind the patience of the reader.)
And if you're feeling fanciful, surprise her
with Cyrillic in *italic*.

It helps to have studied cello as a child
and to have practiced scales for hours
and helpful to have found
the right dynamics and fingerings
for Bach's Suite in G Major
and to know how to float
away from low G and
in second position how to proceed
to C natural from D.
It is sweet to her to hear
harmonics played between her thighs.

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If she is drowsy, rouse her slowly.
Say to her: there is a giraffe
escaping rather beautifully
across the savannah
part of your body.
Let your left hand be giraffe,
and let your fingers lope across the veldt
and let your right caress the grass.

Childbirth may change desire.
If there are years of no touching, then
use those years to daydream
of her goosedown quilt
and her passion in unheated rooms.

If you can make her laugh, then
make her laugh. Laughter will relax her
and, with each touch, magnify her pleasure.

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