

The woman slid the note under the small, drawn curtain of the confessional booth: “If I can't kill him, I will kill myself.” She'd confided her long story to me by means of index cards lined with perfect penmanship, having written each one out in advance. Her husband, she wrote, had murdered their child, disfigured her face, and removed her tongue to ensure she didn't tell on him. Another note appears: “Which is the lesser sin, father?” And I replied, “God will forgive neither.” The curtain drew slowly aside. The woman's cheeks had been ripped away. Tears streamed over the hot pink scars and into her skeleton grin. Another note: “Ask Him again?”