Rice with “Peanut Sauce”

Ingredients:
Some Rice
Ketchup (equal to the Peanut Butter)
Peanut Butter (equal to the Ketchup)

Boil rice in salted water. While boiling, add ketchup and peanut butter. Briefly stir before covering. Follow rice cooking times and instructions. Eat immediately.

While eating, don’t think of how easy it would be to go to your room, flip open your computer, and scan the Craigslist M4W casual encounters page for men to sleep with for money. Then you could afford beans, meat, vegetables—you could afford a restaurant meal. Instead, let the hot rice slide down your throat, the cheap sweetness of the ketchup fusing nicely with the peanut butter’s earthiness.

Praise your resourcefulness and refuse to fantasize about a steaming shower: water burning against your scalp, strawberry shampoo sudsing in your greasy hair. Don’t clean yourself, wash the days of dirt off your pale skin, drag a brush through your snarled curls. You would be tempted. After your shower, you might think you’d put on your khakis, neatly folded on your milk-carton shelves. But you can’t handle it: the cleanliness, the shininess of your locks, so clean it almost squeaks as you pull your fingers through your hair. You won’t take your wrinkle-free pants and unsoiled hair and drop resumes off at restaurants, smile with your white teeth, speak with your tooth-paste breath. You won’t ask for job openings at the local coffee shop.

You’d take that soapy freshness and you would meet some man in a hotel, take him in your mouth, and let him climb on top of you, like you’d done too many times before. You’d revel in the stubble of his cheeks as he lipped your sanitized ear and whispered Honey you smell so damn good. So stay home; stay dirty. Leave your computer alone. Scrape the last bite of rice, white bits swimming in sauce like red mud, into your mouth. Drop the oily pot in the sink to wash sometime later, sometime when you can handle soap bubbling in your hands, the fragrance clinging to your skin.