

## **3 works of Flash Fiction**

by: Becky Gray

## **the mayfly**

The mayfly sheds the final inch of his nymphal shuck, exposing his wings with a sigh. Today is the day. It is his first day being a mayfly, and he wants to get it right. Before the day is done, he will fly, fuck, and die.

Just past the surrounding greenery is a house. A man inside trods about from room to room. "Quite a large man," The mayfly thinks. He does not speak the words. He has no mouth. The mayfly watches, adjusting his sight to take in the blue of the large man's walls. This makes him smile. This smile is figurative. He has no mouth.

"With walls that blue," the mayfly thinks, "one must be very wealthy." Within the house, the large, wealthy man finally sits, a pencil in one hand and an overly yellow scrap of paper in the other. The man jots down something of great note. Witnessing this, the mayfly suddenly stirs.

"Here I lie, stagnant, while the large, wealthy, notable man completes something of importance!" The thought prompts him to rise abruptly onto his protruding virgin legs. The new sensation has him wiggling about, and for a moment the mayfly wonders if he's had too much liquor. Upon remembering that he is a mayfly and mayflies do not drink liquor and that besides, he has no mouth, the mayfly plants his fishing line legs into the ground, steadies his pulse, and launches!

As is common with many species, the mayfly realizes after hurling himself into the air that he doesn't know where to go. He flies about aimlessly for a moment, and goes over his tasks for the day.

"Fly. Excellent, you've done that already. Fly, fly.. ah, yes, fuck."

It is tradition within the mayfly ancestry that the community gather mid air, having all emerged from their shucks, so that they may each find a mayfly maiden to fuck. As the mayfly nears a forming swarm, the sound of thousands of wings beating together in quick succession magnifies. In determination against the massive buzz, he clenches his fists and charges into the herd! (The fists being figurative. He has no fists. He is a mayfly.)

The mass' anticipatory flit becomes impatient irritation. The mayfly wonders if the large, wealthy, notable man might have some wisdom on the subject of patience. Finally, a murmur arises from the crowd. The girls were approaching!

They fly like comets into the middle of the pack, sending the males into a wild frenzy as they begin their practice of selecting a mate. This is done by catching a flying female and procreating with her mid-air.

Now, the mayfly is a feminist. He happens to find this age-old tradition quite out of date. Suddenly, a gorgeous blur flits through his vision. He frantically flutters about for another hint of her until all at once, there she is. "She's..." the mayfly has no words. This is because he is in love. And also because he is a mayfly. He approaches her, and together they complete the second task of their day.

When the mating is complete, the mayfly turns to his mistress.

"Well that was nice." She flies off with only these words. The words not being words of course, as she has no mouth.

"Wait!" Her mate hurls after her. "That's it?"

"Look...you're very nice, but, I've so much to do today."

"Oh. Like.."

"Like lay these 2,003 eggs, and then die."

"But- "

"Yes?" The very pregnant mayfly rests her hands on her hips.

"Once we mated, I felt an overwhelming sense of fulfillment. My whole body lit up like the moon."

"And why not the sun?"

"Well that would be you."

The lady mayfly paused.

"Well. I suppose I'll feel that way once I release the eggs and rest on the water to die. But, maybe this was a bit like that. Yes, you were a bit like that, yes." She gives the mayfly a soft kiss on the cheek, then turns away to begin her descent to the lake. The mayfly's eyes brim with tears. He imagines that the large, wealthy, notable man has a wife. He imagines that he

loves her very much. He imagines that the man understands this love much better than the mayfly, with his poppy seed brain and his peppercorn heart.

The sun is setting, and the mayfly knows his time is coming. This is the most freedom the mayfly will have, his only duty left being to die. He turns his now feeble head toward the house, summons strength into his wings, and stumbles through the greenery. Many mayflies are gathered around the light just outside the door, but he moves past, stealing into the home, buzzing about until his hair turns gray with the darkening sky. The space being so large and his body so weak, the mayfly nearly surrenders, when he hears heavy footsteps nearing. He follows the sound until the sound becomes the man, in all his largeness, wealthiness, noteworthiness.. the mayfly stares in awe with what's left of his vision, as he follows the man into a room. The man scratches his belly and plops onto a bed of pink linen. If only there were something the man could do to comfort the mayfly in his final moments, to grant him understanding beyond his insectual ability.. The mayfly ponders this last desire when suddenly he recognizes an overly yellow hue. There, at the man's bedside lies the note! The mayfly lifts his head eagerly, gathering the last of his energy into his vision to drink in the contents of the note, when he realizes:

He is a mayfly.

He cannot read.

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The man in the blue wall-ed house wakes, and sheds his linen bedding with a groan. Over the course of his life, he will eat, fuck, and die. Ruminating on what a busy day lies before him, he picks up the overly yellow scrap of paper and reads, "To do: buy fly swatter."

## Brilliant Minds

Following the finding of the corpse... The Cincinnati Times has been granted select permission from the City Police Department to publish the following. Any information on the author of this letter should be mailed directly to the station, or called in at 513-766-726.

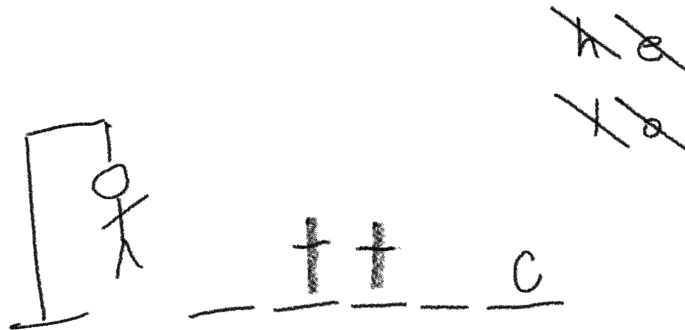
DEER DETECTIVE BRYERS,

HOPE YOU ARE WELL. IF YOU WULD KINDLY PUBLISH THIS LETTR LIKE YOU DID THE LAST ONE, I WULD BE VERY GREATFUL.

MISS SALLY STANFORD'S corpse CAN BE FOUND UNDR THE BLEACHERS, WHER SHE EXECUTED HER "GAME." LEARNED TO SPEAK BACKWERDS JUST TO BULLY THE OTHER CHILDRIN BEHIND THER BACKS.  
CONSIDER ME THEN A ETNALIGIV

TO HER CONSPIRATORS: SHE HAS PAYD FOR YOUR SINS. DENRAW EB.

I SEE YOU'V FOUND THE DAWSON BOY  
HERE IS A HINT FOR WHER TO FIND HIS CUSIN:



SORRY TO SAY THEY WERE NOT NICER THAN MISS SATANFORD. VERY SMART THOUGH. SHOLD USE THEIR GENIUS FER BETTR.  
PARENTS SHOULD GIVE THEM A TALKNG TO.  
TOO MANY GENIUS USE BRAINS FER BULLYING AND VILENCE

AS FOR THE OTHER STUEDENT WHO LIKED MATHEMATICS:

$4 + 4 = \_$   
I  $\_$  HIM.

JUST KIDDING.

MANY READERS OF THIS NOOSELETTER haVE BEEN UPSET BY MY JOKES.  
ShAKE THER FISTS AND HOPE I CHOKES.  
aNGRY I PLAY WHEN I SHOULD HIDE,  
BUT DON'T U LAUGH WHEN YOU SHULD CRY?

THENK YOU DETECTVE, SAY HI TO THE MRS.

YOU'L HEAR FROM ME SOON,  
LUV,  
ETNALIGIV

## Earl Gray

Blue, gold, and burgundy pop up from the drawer, eagerly competing for selection. The girl plucks one blue package from the bunch and reads. *Earl Gray*. This is her choice every morning, but still she scans through her options each day without fail.

Even rituals require some form of uncertainty.

Her grandmother used to make the tea. She would lay out sugar cubes and animal crackers and girl scout cookies, saying

“Eat as much as you want now, someday you won’t get to.”

Then she’d chuckle with a hand on her stomach.

The kettle whistles on the stove, and the girl pours, watching the color seep from the paper bag. Her grandmother was widowed now. The chuckle echoing in the girl’s ears during this morning ritual was the closest she’d get to the sound.

She digs a spoon up from another drawer and looks around for the sugar.

“Eat as much as you want now, someday you won’t get to.”

*I should call her*, she thinks. Someday she won’t get to.

She wonders if love is just fear of deprivation.

She stirs the sugar until it melts and tries to remember if there are animal crackers in the cupboard.