

KEVIN WU

The Day

A fly buzzes. It has never been this hungry. It dreams of long hot days in the desert, with water and the putrid smell of meat. It wants to shower, to fly through cool rain, sinking deeper and deeper. It doesn't know much, but it is profoundly interested in mud, in the darkness of a beginning. It thinks it began in mud, and would like to return to it. The mud would comfort it, like its mother, which it never knew. It is tired.

I walk outside in the rain, in the storm. I don't see the fly. The sound of its rapidly-beating wings does not reach me. I walk in the garden, oblivious. I dream of the faint beauty of spring, of wild, unquenchable winds and growling thunder. Delicate flowers, and the overt madness of the storm. Somehow, these two things have been on my mind since the beginning, and I was never there. At the beginning, I mean. I was never never, and somehow in it I was ever. I remember right after the beginning, when it was all chaos and light, plentitude and warmth. The feel of a mother's hand and a father's shoulder. A voice so full of strength that it is impossible to lose. So I slept.

My wife, the theoretician, who thinks about things as if they were all possible, or thinking as if it is impossible to think, or know. She looks at me from inside the house and her look says to come in. But I cannot. I am an inconsequential thing of surprise. I cannot move. I am silent like an infant. My startled eyes mean that something is missing. Perhaps a child, or a pet. We have in our marriage

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a very large hole, and it is not shrinking, it is still continuing.

She says don't think about it that much. She is my guiding light, yet lately she has seen distant, and hidden. Her well-worn face is a sign. My heart is no longer beating only for her. My thoughts occasionally reminds me of other distant places, of deserts and mountains. Of insurmountable heights, large, infinite mountains, lands, unscalable depths. Pieces of a star. And none of this is of any use in a home of wood, of brick and paint and dust and fire. I think I would like to become the ant that marches around in the living room. I think that one has a speck of hope hooped around its shoulders. Its legs are straining, but it is not tired yet. It is at the end of an end of an utter end. The shape that it assumes. The color. The shell. I have hidden many times in the course of an hour, but I was always found. I was never deep in the current of the wind, but I have always known what is there. It is similar to the sound of silent trees, in the forest. There is an echo of the quiet of dark hair faces, a part of the pale lips of the whole. The crumbling of bricks and plaster is not the only thing which takes hold of one's self, out there. I have been out past dusk, out there, and it is not welcoming, or understandable. It is like the accumulation of steps, and then being overwhelmed, finally, and on the other side, the other side, is nothing knowable, and though it is profound, it is not warm, or sweet, nor does it have a shape, or color. Or even that. The horror of it is not apparent, but it is real to me. I am like an animal which does not even understand something so simple as your eyes, or the taste of your words. A smile can kill me, as much as the touch of a hand.

The night seems endless to me. It must be unreal to the fly. It flies and flies and flies, and in its flight there is an urgent need to eat and rest and move. There is a need to lay eggs, and a need to watch out for danger. It doesn't know that much, but it is interested in the darkness of a beginning. We are both interested in mud, in the ground, it wants to say, though it cannot say it. It buzzes and in all of its minute heart is a budding desire to feel, even to love. And it goes on buzzing. And the music it makes is loud, but dying. And it burns with the mud of desire, of effort. It doesn't want that

much at all. It is not very complicated, or human. I am the more human of the two, and I am losing, and slowly declining.

At first I didn't see the fly because my heart is without it, and yet it wants to be like me, it wants to remain, and be real. But now the fly lands on my shoulder, and I, being larger, being human, and having no more to attend to, or imagine, I can see the fly, can see how minute it is, how real it is, and that is the only thing I have with me; it, the glances between us, how we tasted, the last remnants of the trees and the garden, and the struggling night. Trying to assert itself again, without fail. Trying again, with all its power. I wonder if it will spread on forever.

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