

Wing Shadows

Once upon a time, I had an idea that we were one soul in two bodies, but I don't know how true that was. I'm pretty sure that some serious mistakes were made, that perhaps something was separated that should never have been touched, that perhaps something was warped and wronged somehow. I still remember clawing my way up from the deep, through gouts of heaving mud and poison, hauling myself through the cracked fault lines where the dark bled through – because even now, after so many years, it still feels like my tainted soul is mocking me, so I hide in this tiny niche that pain has carved behind the world's many judgements.

We loved each other in the way of all monsters – with the gentlest of claws, as if the other was the only piece of beauty that ever mattered. The problem was, that kind of love, it's inexcusable, and it never stops being hungry. No matter how deep we would tear into each other, it would never be enough, not until one of us had crushed himself completely into the space taken up by the other. We didn't know any limits, and that was what made us things to be afraid of. You think loving made us human? Our bodies are what made us human. Loving is what made us sick.

We wash the small pink triangles down with cold beer, the soft fuzz of the cheap motel room closing in around us, the light in the air weighed down to the corners of the room. Suddenly, his hand lands on my arm, and he gasps, and then purrs, before sliding it up to my shoulder. Fingertip touches, rain-tender, blood-hungry.

“Oh, you're so soft,” he murmurs, and now both of his hands are on me. “You're so warm, so alive.”

His body is burning up, and he's making these little gasping noises between kisses, as if this is somehow new to him.

I get distracted briefly because the pills are kicking in, and the carpet has suddenly become the most interesting carpet I have ever seen. It's so soft and velvety that it feels almost wet – but then I'm back in the room, and I'm stroking *his* arms this time, ripping off his t-shirt, dragging him down on top of me, pulling his hair, kissing him again, deeply. The noise he makes into my mouth is obscene, and he's gasping for breath now, rolling against me, and even his voice is higher than usual – breathless to the point of being whiny. I'd be lying if I said I didn't like it.

"Jesus Christ," I moan softly as he takes me into his mouth, teeth scraping over my jutting hip bone.

"Jesus isn't here, stupid," he spits. "He can't help you now."

His voice sounds like the haunting echo of a fake laugh in an empty room, but then I let go, and there's nothing but the slow, slick noise between us.

After a while, he stops, his head turning sideways, humming shakily at all the new sensations – so, to distract him, I flip him over, kissing my way down his chest, watching him jump while I make my way over his stomach. When I take his cock into my mouth, he tries to grab my hair with both hands, which doesn't really work, so he huffs and glares down at me, looking amused and annoyed.

"Your hair is too short," he mutters, and I laugh. The darkness swallows the sound.

Pushing him back down onto the bed, his spine feels like a length of knotted ribbon under my palm, and as he stretches out his thin arms, every blue vein shining through his pale skin, I see the straight razor scars gleaming in the inverted darkness.

It's like nothing I've ever felt before. I know that his nails have cut my shoulder blades because I can feel the blood running down my spine, dripping over my bare ass, but I am more distracted with the sight of his pouty lips and pained, blushing face than the assault on my back. A small wound has opened up by his left collarbone where I must have bitten him or something, and I keep digging my tongue into it, biting down on the skin surrounding it so that I can taste his coppery blood running down the sides of my mouth. I've never felt so fucking predatory.

I know for a fact that nobody else has even come close to taking this perfect boy out of his box, and yet, here I am, taking him out, playing with him – ruining him like a chewed-up plaything, and all the while he's trying to look back at me, eyes wide and shining, mouth hanging open, as if he has been waiting for this his whole life.

I can tell when he gets close because for a second, he's quiet, and then it's this crescendo, this repetition of something miraculous. It hits me like a physical blow, lingering, hot and slow as molten lead. I nearly choke. I think I might be dying for a second because I can't seem to catch my breath, but god, what a fucking beautiful way to die.

I've been around for a while, of course, but this feels different. It's not that this boy is innocent, of course he fucking isn't. But underneath all that shivering, naked eeriness, there's a curiosity, a curiosity that I'm guessing is probably why he Fell – and now, his

blood is wet and red just like any boy's from earth, even though when I look up, I can still see the shadows that his wings cast, stretched out across the entire wall.

Much later that night, something in my throat swells until my chest hurts. He's stroking my hair, whispering to me, but I can't hear a word over my own fucking heartbeat.

"Was it that dream again?" the boy says. I'm not sure which one he means.

"I guess?"

"When I have a bad dream, I sometimes try and make patterns with the stars," he says, quite seriously, waving his hands at the heavens. His fingers smell like cum and weed.

"There are no stars, just the ceiling," I say. But he merely smiles.

Something strange and immortal breathes into the silence. Wing shadows slowly fold themselves closed. Like map contours. Or jigsaw pieces.

M. T. Coombe is a queer multidisciplinary artist living in the UK. He is fascinated by the idea of modern fairy-tales. His writings are based on youth / obsession / loss / memory / dreams / addiction / folklore and apocalyptic landscapes. He has been published in XRAY Lit, Misery Tourism, Expat Press, Bear Creek Gazette, SCAB and more. He is currently writing his debut novel. Find him at www.trashprincemusic.com/writing and twitter.com/trashprincemuse.