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Flash Fiction - 494 words

The Biting Butterfly

I feel a sharp sting on my arm and look down to see a butterfly biting me. I didn't know butterflies could bite, but this one has sharp teeth. I shake him away and watch as his silvery blue wings fall apart in their descent to the ground. I hope he's not dead, he didn't mean to hurt me I'm sure. But then again, he could be poisonous and I prefer to avoid poison. My head feels heavy when I try to pull it back up so I just let it hang down and watch the ground.

There's a lot on the ground that we don't often see. There's a lot we don't bother to look at. But there are whole worlds right by our feet and all we have to do is pay attention. Sometimes acknowledging something is the greatest thing you can do for it. I draw my eyes ahead to see a golden ant hill. Ants doing their job, marching with a work ethic not quite matched by humans. I appreciate a good hard-working ant. My father was an ant, a hard worker. I still remember every night when he would come home, a little sweaty, tired from his job. He would tuck me into bed and place a kiss on my head.

Remembering puts an icy twinge through my veins. I think the memory of my father is enough to sweeten my insides. I look back at the grass and wonder if it's secretly made of candy. What if I could lick it and it was sweet as sugar with a little lime taste like licorice? What if there are cotton candy clouds above me and gummy tulips around? I think there are a lot of things in

the world that we simply refuse to pay attention to and they become bitter as a result. Maybe if we showed enough attention to the volcanoes they wouldn't need to explode.

I lean my head down further try and lick the grass only to feel a tug on my shoulder. something is holding me and I don't know how to get out. Suddenly I'm wriggling and shimmying and doing everything but screaming. I feel the padding on my arms and remember that there is no butterfly, the coolness in my veins isn't my memories or sugar sweet candy, only the steady drip of their scientific experiment being forced into my body. I look back down and see no more grass, just the checkered floor of a sterile experimental room. White brick walls, and a chemical smell. My wrists begin to burn with the pain of being restricted. I bring my head back up to the heavy mass in front of me and stop thinking of the cuffs as my enemy, instead I let them hug me as friends. I find comfort in what I can as I make eye contact with the bright blue irises and say, "you haven't gotten me yet".

I got a lot of recommendations to add more detail to the end of the story. I didn't want to compromise the intentional mystery of the ending, but added more specifics. The smell of the room and the color of the walls are both additions. I focused heavily on the five senses to tell more of the story and really put the reader in the frightening experimental situation. I also wanted to clarify the intent of the foreshadowing in the beginning of the story, so I referenced the coolness in the veins and candy. The hallucination was so sweet it became bitter.