

The Little Things

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Spinstress

The spinstress ascended her strand of silk with the grace of a trapeze artist. The thread was thoughtfully anchored to both the ceiling and the granite countertop below, providing the beginning structure of her masterful artwork. There was purpose behind her movement. A task that needed to be completed. Her final strand attached; she began working on the inner portions of her silken masterpiece. The spinstress was cream colored, and dime sized while weighing a portion of one. She was working with movements that bordered on feverishness, yet every motion was intentionally commanded. The small strands of hair that stood upon her elegant legs guided the thread from her pumping spinnerets into an angular circle that spun into itself as the gaps in the web became smaller and smaller. She did not notice the warm beams of life cutting through the windows to her left, rising further into the sky. She did not notice the ever-increasing stream of cars and trucks that passed by her domain. All her eyes were trained on her handiwork to ensure that there was no weak link or thin thread. This energy did not leave her body as she settled into place at the center of her work. Patience was her forte and this waiting game left her

time to think. As she awaited dinner, faces that blurred into one another looked up at her on occasion. They crinkled their noses and squinted their eyes as they spied on her in the corner of the ceiling. Some pointed and cried out in disgust or in mockery of fear. Her eyes rested upon those who met her down below and wondered at their judgement.

In a few slow moments, her eyes fell upon something else that was much closer. A rambling housefly was darting about in erratic movements, acting as if they were constantly in danger of being swatted. The feeble fly did not see the sticky thread that reached out with fingers leaden with death. In a fraction of a second, the fly was ensnared within the web, sending waves of vibrations towards the patient predator. The fine hairs upon her legs picked up these waves, communicating the size and location of her victim. No more than thirty seconds had passed before the feeble fly ended its struggles beneath the pillowy embrace of silk, kissed to sleep by the black fangs of paralysis.

Dinner would be ready shortly, but first, her artwork needed repairing. The fly had torn a massive hole when it had struggled to break free. Working with the same speed and intensity as before, she first snipped the loose threads free and promptly ate them. Next, she wove identical lines of thread in place of the now missing ones, filling the hole in minutes. With her dinner nearly liquified, the cream-colored spinstress finally took time to relax. The center of her artwork sagged with their combined weight.

A crinkling noise would have been the only warning she would have gotten before being enveloped in a plastic grip of death. The convenience store cashier was balanced atop a worn stool with three pegs. They crumpled the plastic bag into a wad and threw it into the trash can. Their face brandished disgust as they pumped sanitizer into their hands.

Beedle

Beedle's favorite season was summer. He liked summer because the warm rays of sunshine felt good upon his rounded back and there was never a shortage of food. Usually, he would hang out around the picnic shelter of the park. Toddlers dropped Dorito remnants, grandpas dribbled sweet soda, and teenagers threw away their pizza crust. The picnic shelter in June was a bona-fide buffet. Beedle was a small beetle. He was no bigger than an inch long and had a shiny black exoskeleton that reflected the sun when it hit just right. His morning routine consisted of a one-hour tanning session, breakfast at the southern trash can, and a pre-lunch nap. This morning, his tanning session was cut short by an angular shadow that kept blocking out the sun. Beedle wasn't sure what the shadow was, but he knew it must not be good. Anything outside of the ordinary meant danger. Quickly, he scuttled under the grass for protection. Beedle had two main modes of travel: walking and flying. He preferred to walk as it was more enjoyable for him and not as physically taxing. His walks through the grass forests had their benefits and drawbacks. Along these strolls, he would pass beneath the shade of hundreds of green blades. Sharp rays of sunlight cut through to illuminate the earthen floor and give the vital drink of life to whatever plant that may reside there. They crisscrossed over one another and created intricate tunnels and pathways along the surface of the earth. Beedle knew these pathways like the swirls upon his antennae. The drawback was the incredibly large and noisy monsters that roamed the grass once a week. These monsters moved methodically over the green sea. Large claws spun beneath its body as any and all bugs were sucked into its unrelenting maw. These monsters terrified Beedle and he never knew what he might do if he ever saw one. He had a few close calls in the past, barely making it out of the beasts' path before the forest behind him became close cropped and wet with blood. This trek was turning out to be an enjoyable one. A stroll through the grass forests with pollen thick in the air and soft moss underfoot was sure to brighten anyone's day. Beedle wondered what would be for breakfast. Yesterday's morning meal had been a nearly empty instant noodle cup that was left on top of the trash can, but he could already smell the sweet scent of sugar in the air. His anticipation surged as the concrete pad of the picnic shelter came into

view. Sugar was one of Beedle's favorite foods. Whatever was in the trash can, he was looking forward to it.

The boy ran into the picnic shelter to retrieve the wild throw from his friend. Not a second thought was given to the crunch underneath his well-worn shoe.

Kaleidoscope

The elegant butterfly beat her wings upon the air with aged wisdom. Her body bounced through the sky as her flaps took her up and her velvet body brought her back down. The evening sun glistened across the scales of her wings where spots of rusty orange were perfectly lined with deep black stripes. Colors that were striking against the soft blue of the fading day. The sun was descending deeper into its slumber as the earth cooled without its touch. The spectacular butterfly was not the only beautiful creature flying this warm evening. Hundreds of her companions fluttered through the air behind her on a journey they could not yet comprehend. Something within them that ebbed and flowed compelled them to turn South and fly until their bodies were exhausted and their spirits spent. Until then, a well-deserved night of rest was due. The flock spiraled down in great heaps and descended onto the branches. The maple and boxelder trees creaked under the weight. Soon, the descending sun was no longer illuminating the bright green and rich browns of the trees. Instead, a powerful orange was shining back with streaks of pure black that sliced the rusty hues into elongated sections. Mottled white spots streaked across the ends of their delicate wings. Their sleep came easy as the last signs of day left the horizon.

The outstanding butterfly knew that she could not fly until the sun had warmed her wings, so she enjoyed her morning. They had settled into a shallow valley; into some trees that followed a river flowing South. She thought they could just follow the river to find their resting place, but something within her said there was a faster way. Something that she did not learn from the ones that created her or even the companions that flew by her side. The cool morning sun was slowly giving feeling to her body once more. The river that flowed below her hosted many morning drinks with much accompanied laughter. They were to set off once more for another day of flight. The beautiful butterfly fanned her wings in anticipation alongside her stunning companions. The still and silent morning was filled with the whispers of their wings. The whispers of butterfly wings that send vibrations across the universe. Whispers that fall upon deaf ears or ears too small enough to do anything about it. With a final gust of breath, they took to the sky. The wispy white clouds were blotted out by the collection

of beauty that lives among insects.

Many days later, the magnificent butterfly settled for what she knew was her final night. Miles had been spent under her wings and hundreds of eggs had been left in her wake. The elegant butterfly was beautiful even in her final moments. Not clinging to a rotted log or the underside of a leaf, but instead, upon the sturdy branch of a tree. Looking to the West, a direction she was never supposed to face, at the descending ball of light that had fueled her very existence. She had witnessed this moment dozens of times and yet no two were alike. Some nights boasted deep oranges with red streaks while others proudly carried light yellows and gleaming white. Her number of friends, as she had come to know them, had dwindled with the passing days. Every night left perfect corpses upon the forest floor or among the trees. Statues sculpted by masterful artists of creation. The flawless butterfly was not sad at her departure. Many of her kin would experience the beautiful path she had. These comforting thoughts danced within her as she laid down for a final night of rest.

It was some time before the resplendent butterfly took to the skies once more. Her beauty shone in new wings with vibrant colors. They propelled her forward with powerful beats. A kaleidoscope of her companions flew alongside her with wings that rivaled her beauty and elegance. The flock was taking on the next leg of the journey they were called to make each year. Their generation would fulfill the wishes made by many butterflies before them. Spiraling through the air, the sublime butterfly soaked in the fresh air and bright sun.

The mist from the sprayer wafted over the tops of the long rows of corn. Powerful currents lifted it through the air and dispersed it evenly across the land. A particularly strong gust blew through the kaleidoscope of butterflies that moved forward with persistence. The exquisite butterfly began to choke and gasp for air. The ground surged beneath her with ever increasing speed as she turned her compound eyes skyward to take in the hundreds of wonderful friends who once flew beside her. She thought every one of them was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen.

Brenden Kimpe is a senior double majoring in English and secondary education. He enjoys colorful sunsets, reading until his eyes burn, and napping with his cat, Marcelline.