

## Co-workers

He was lost he was. Nice--tasty--lost. He looks around with a worried expression on his morsel of a face. He hasn't started calling out yet: loud--crashing--flutter--flee noises. We like it that way. The soft quiet. Perfect for breeding--hunting--feeding. First Dusting starts the hunt. Little brush--little taste--little sting. Doesn't feel it. No, tasty man doesn't feel a thing.

More brush--more taste--more sting. He slows, feels the worry less. Sleepy-sleep comes brushing his mind--his skin. Our dust holds the heat in the forest. Warm--hazy--sleepy. Soft moss covers our floor. Perfect for lonely man to lay down and rest. Perfect for hiding bones of other lonelies. Powdery wings kiss his exposed neck above the blue T-shirt, sweat-soaked bandana. The sun aids us, slanting in--hitting dust--warming our glowing grove.

He still doesn't see us. He can't. We blend--we hide--we wait. He can't last. His worries vanish. Our lovely venom makes him calm--happy--sleepy--soon paralyzes. But no, does not numb. He finally slopes to his bed, and the mothers take flight; thousands of wings and still silence. They cover every available inch to feed--breed. Nice--tasty--warm flesh is good for incubating young. Clothing is troublesome. Can't reach his feet in bad-smell boots. No matter. Our young will burrow--suck every-last-life giving nutrient. And he will feel it. Feel it all. Feel his life slip away in agonizing, beautiful little morsels. Feel his life lovingly taken by each little mouth.

-Ryan Meer