

Upon Magic Foil Carpets

I found a piece of shiny tin foil, our magic carpet upon which we'd chased the dragon, the deadly black dragon.

Boiling mad was he; running furiously away from our consuming flame, consistent assistant, a long yellow-orange fire, burning with intensity the sinister dragon.

How euphoric were we, the dragon now burned, scorched to a crisp black shell... nothing more than the blackened crust of a sour pie. A reminder of a disappearing demon in the last ribbons of smoke that swirled about our blissful faces.

Now, reveling in our victory, we dreamily drift far into the clouds, gleaming knights on our shiny tin foil carpets, floating endlessly within the realms of our minds and beyond...

Still, I discover wadded up foil spheres, quietly laying in the marbled rug, guilty souls of the dragon slayer.

Rachel Lewis



"Cute floor!"

NATURAL
BORN QB

NO CAPACITY TO LEARN
A TORUS OF FAILURE
LIFE IS A TRACTRIX
HARD TO FOLLOW
LET THIS ALL ENDS
LET THE NEW BEGIN

- GAP BOY

forgotten dreams

slowly tears will fall
and fill the empty space
left by you who held my love
in dark mysterious embrace

in the avenue of phantoms
that holds forgotten dreams
i'll live in solemn loneliness
forever, so it seems

you came into my life
with a love that was so strong
you promised me "forever"
and forever you are gone

in my heart i'll keep
my treasured memories
of our time together
forever, you and me

and i know

slowly tears will fall...

- By Cori Kargel



Factory Birds

My first day on the job a co-worker took me outside to show me where they kept the barrels of oil and solvent. As we passed through the big double doors of the steel bay, he pointed up to an outside corner of the building. Hanging there was a bird, or at least what remained of it. It dangled from a dirty string that was twisted around it's leg, a ball of feathers and bones. The bird looked dry and mummified, it's beak pointed toward the ground, it's eye sockets were empty. It hung there, outside the door, like a flag at perpetual half mast.

"That thing's been there over four years now" said my co-worker, a note of grim satisfaction in his voice. "Poor sonofabitch musta got tangled up in that string and couldn't get loose." He shook his head that nodded in the direction of the solvent barrels. "Let's get you a bucket of this stuff and get back to work." I followed him to the row of barrels but I kept turning my head to look back at the bird. I didn't want to see it but at the same time I couldn't help myself. I had to

look. A slight breeze caused the dry feathers to flutter, as if it were about to fly. The dirty string attached to it's leg looked as if it came from an apron, similar to the one I was wearing. I listened to the sound of the solvent pouring into my bucket. It smelled sharp and sour, like rotten eggs. I asked why no one had taken the bird down. "Don't know. Guess it's stuck here like the rest of us" was the answer I got.

Other birds, Sparrows I think, build their nests by the big double doors, close to where the dead bird swings. The concrete below is speckled white with their droppings and an occasional bit of fluff or loose feather that might land there. They build their nests with bits of red shop rags, short pieces of wire and ragged bits of Styrofoam cups, the discards of a factory. The nests are oddly shaped, crammed into openings in the steel beams above the door. I wonder at the babies hatched in these nests. They are introduced to a world of grinding, screeching noise and cold steel. There are no trees here, no bushes. There is nothing even remotely natural about this place. The only green is the toxic

scum floating in the waste water tank. I wonder, how do they survive?

One day, as I walked outside to fill up my buckets of oil and solvent, I noticed something lying on the ground near the door. Two baby birds, still naked and wet from the egg, had fallen from their strange nest and were lying on the concrete in the noon sun. One of them was dead but the other was still moving. It opened and closed it's tiny beak weakly, emitting a slight mewling sound. The birds had fallen almost twenty feet from their nest to the ground. I felt guilty somehow, as if I had caused this to happen. My stomach churned at the thought of picking up the slick, bloody creature. I put my buckets down and stood there, watching the bird struggle to breathe. My cheeks were wet, my shoulders shaking as the tiny black eyes became dull and the bird ceased to move.

The forklift driver saw me standing there and shouted at me to move out of his way. I pointed at the birds and he became quiet. He stepped off the forklift and gathered the birds gently in his

big hands. He buried them out behind the rows of barrels. He didn't say anything to me, but later, I watched as he rinsed the blood from the concrete with a bucket of dirty water.

Occasionally, a bird will get inside the factory and not be able to find it's way out. Delicate wings beat furiously to escape the noisy, oily and smoke filled air. Alone or in pairs, the panicked birds will swoop low over the machine I run and then fly suddenly to the ceiling where they collide with electrical conduit and grease coated steel beams. I can hear them crying, I can feel the terrified beating of their hearts as well as if they were in my own chest. My breathing becomes shallow, my muscles tense, as I watch them searching for a way out. I hope against hope, but I know they will soon discover what the rest of us here found out long ago.

Mary Sepulveda