

## The Fairy

As the boy drowned in pillows soaked in sorrows, a fairy appeared at the foot of his bed.

Her long hiss pulled his face from the wet cloth and turned his head.

Bird-like feet on the rail, she hunched over the mattress. Her scythe-shaped spine threatened to tear through her skin. Slimy, peach hair crept down her shoulders, the tips tangling and untangling together, like a bouquet of worms. She grinned needles.

"I can taste your tears in the air, little boy," she said. "I bet I can cheer you up."

Her voice was high, echoed, as if sound bounced against the walls of her throat. She crawled on top of him and tickled his ribs with her elongated nails. The boy recoiled, wriggled.

The fairy returned to her perch. She shoved her hand under the flesh of her stomach and moved the hump like a puppet. Her fingers mimicked a mouth, and every time the skin went up and down, blood spilled out of the wound. A gurgly voice came out her belly.

"He's a tough public, the little boy." She giggled.

The boy made no sound. He gripped the sheets like a safety bar on a wild roller coaster.

The fairy disappeared.

She came back with a bundle on her shoulder. She set it down, opened it, made a spectacle out of her every gesture. She pulled out two viscous, crimson balls. They dripped as she juggled with them. One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. She grinned at the boy the whole time.

Her routine over, she saluted him with a little bow. The boy smiled. The fairy vanished.

In the morning, his pillow was dry and his eyes devoid of red. He gambolled to his parents' room. Both lay in bed, eyes wide open, with a gaping hole where their hearts had been.