

A Minute, An Hour, A Day By Lindsay Birrs

It's Dry.

My lips are stuck together and when I peel them apart, I can feel a thick film on my tongue, like a paste forming in my mouth. God what I would give for a drink. Just a sip. Something cold, comforting, refreshing, something revitalizing.

The heat is searing. I can feel beads of sweat dripping down the small of my back and into my underwear. My top is clinging to my body like Sylvester Stallone in Cliffhanger. When will this all be over?

I can't focus. My head is disorientated. When was the last time I talked to someone? When was the last time I saw a human? I haven't seen movement in quite some time. If someone were to appear, I don't know that I would even be able to articulate words.

What is that? That sound. I can hear it, like a faint squeak. Is someone coming? Is there life out there?

"Hello?"

Nothing. Silence.

Wait, there it is. The squeak. I can hear it to my left, towards the ground.

I peel myself out of the setting I'm in, stuck to everything, my thighs ripping apart, having been in the same position for an eternity and I kneel on the disgusting surface below.

I can smell the dirt, the disdain, the horrors this place has seen.

Now where is that sound? I lower my head so my ear is hovering over a stain that looks like the remnants of the last casualty that was occupying this space. Then I see it. A quick scuttle. Something is there. Something is alive!

I slowly move my body, slinking silently, not to startle or scare whatever brute life force is behind that object up ahead. Trying not to breathe so heavily that I scare the poor creature. As I peer my head around the corner, I see it, small, jet-black, unsightly and hideous. Its appendages move in every direction. Spruce Beetles. I hate them. I take my shoe off and bring it down full force onto the insect.

"Sorry buddy, but only one of us is going to live today."

I go back to my position and sit, again, staring into the abyss. Time moves slower here. Every second is a minute, every minute is an hour and every hour is a day. How much longer must I endure this pain and torture?

My eyes become heavy but I resist letting the exhaustion win. My blinks become longer and more difficult to fight but it feels so good. Just to close them for a second. It will be ok, I will be

safe. Just let yourself feel the release of pressure for a moment, there it is, calm, silent, darkness. God this feels good. I can't resist. The weariness is winning; consuming my body the fatigue can have me. My head starts to gradually slump down but gains speed like a massive boulder rolling after Indiana Jones when suddenly SLAM!

I jolt up, my heart racing - I stand straight up having scared myself. I rub my forehead as I realize that the exhaustion is winning. I open my mouth to say, "Owe" but even that seems impossible. Hitting my head is apparently the only thing that will keep me continuous. What time is it? What day is it?

BANG! BANG! BANG!

My body seizes. I look up to see an earthling looking right at me. I am frozen. Heart racing. I cannot move.

Slowly I see the handle to the door turning. My god, they are coming in here. Their eyes locked on mine, I hear the door opening with a gradual screech that pierces my ears. I feel the air from outside hit my face like a moist fog of stale salami. I hold my breath still locking eyes with the life force in front of me and then it speaks:

"Hey, are you heading out for a drink now?"

I look at the clock and see that it is indeed 4:00pm.

I nod.

Gathering my belongings, shutting off my computer and turning out the light, I leave my headquarters thanking the lord above that I have survived yet another day in the office.

I must hydrate and prepare to do this all again tomorrow.