

Heaven for Little Aphids

Anonymous

SOFT black hair, curling on your forehead. . . . A scalloped white cloud behind. . . Just as I'd planned—you, there under the willow, plucking tall grasses with your square-tipped fingers; I, lying looking at you. . . I would have curled up and died if it hadn't come true this afternoon.

I'd already died once today. At nine this morning—when you didn't phone as promised. Five after nine. Ten after. Dusting the dressing table rapidly. Swiping furiously at chair legs. . . A quarter past nine. Giving up and flopping on the bed.

Your soft black hair. . . A scalloped white cloud behind. Just as I'd planned. You stopped picking grasses. I'd planned that, too. You lay down on your back, squirming to get your head nestled just right in your hands.

"Your sunburn's not so red today." I said it because neither of us had said anything for quite awhile. I'd been thinking of several things. But this just came out.

"I never could understand why sunburn has to be red," you murmured. . . "It could just as well be blue."

I smiled out loud.

"It's all in getting used to it," you said.

From there we got onto "east winds" and "west winds." "A wind blowing toward the west should be called a west wind," you observed. "It's much more practical."

That darling whimsical mood. . . But you didn't stay in that mood.

"Don't want to live here all my life," you said. "All the successful engineers are in the East."

"Ned likes his job in New York?" I asked.

"Yes—oh, it's a swell job." You warmed up to the subject. You even sat up, hugging one knee. And you went into detail about the job. "Ned is what I'd call a success," you added. But you lay down again when you started talking about his brother. "Paul's a good sort," you said. "But if somebody's wrong, he's apt to think it's Paul. Just isn't sure of himself."

You are sure of yourself. Why, who else could walk out of class at ten of, while the prof was still talking, and not get a dirty look, much less a docked grade?

You rolled over and lay on your stomach, elbows supporting chin in hands. You felt me smile and you asked me why.

I hadn't planned this—yet. But I couldn't tell you that. So I said, "I was just thinking. . . . A girl in my chem class said she thought you were my twin brother."

You looked at me in the queerest way. "Did you turn around and say something nasty to her?" you asked.

"Silly!" I said, and rolled over.

You told me about hitch-hiking to Des Moines—just for fun. You said, "Don't you wish you were a boy?"

I just smiled.

"I'm sorta glad you're not." You squeezed my hand. I rolled over on my side, my back to you, touching you lightly. You took my right hand in your right and stretched the two above our heads. You took my left in your left, putting our two arms around my waist. I could feel you, warm and living, all the way down my spine and legs.

"The whole world right here in my arms," you whispered. I stirred. "Restless atoms," you said. "Why don't you teach your atoms to behave? Nothing like a good, dependable atom—I always say."

You could see I wasn't going to be able to lie still. You let me turn in your arms till my shoulders were flat on the ground. You brushed my cheek with yours. You kissed me—long and hard.

"Darling, I want to make a habit of this," you said.

Dear God! Was I meant to melt inside like that? Was I in my right mind? Could I go on as if the world hadn't rocked?

You brushed a tiny green insect off my arm. "Was that an aphid?" you asked. Ordinary words.

"I think so." An earthy answer.

. . . I wonder if there's a heaven for little aphids. . . .