

Man

Molly McDonald

The man looked at the pie resting on the table. It had crinkled edges that looked like a ring of crusted tongues circling the scene of an accident. The tongues were flaking off and getting tangled in the fiber of the table cloth. Maybe the tongues were more like fall leaves. Maybe the leaves were circling the accident.

The man's mind turned to the accident. He didn't remember any leaves, but then he didn't remember much beyond the thick strawberry syrup pouring out of his groin. The man hated women, he was a misogynist, so he refrained from comparing the clotted flow to that of menstrual blood, the inner lining of the uterus. Uter this he thought to himself and crushed a fly creeping along the corner of his own shiny table.

The man crushed the fly like he himself had been crushed physically and spiritually during the accident. The during had been quite physical, he'd bled enough strawberry jam to fill several pie tins. Maybe between a dozen and twenty. He had Type O blood, the universal donor. The man's mother followed a diet called "The Eat for Your Blood Type Diet." The man thought that this was stupid.

Then again, if he'd been somewhere eating something for his blood type instead of where he'd been at that particular time, he wouldn't have been crushed so physically and spiritually. In fact, in another reality, a better one, he may have been sitting in this particular diner. Maybe he would have been enjoying a slice of strawberry pie, the filling of which he would not associate with his internal workings. Oh, the freedom in that thought! Anxious to make it a reality, he beckoned the waitress over.

She ambled up dutifully, trying not to stare at the scars. "I think I'd like a piece of that strawberry pie," the man spoke with a voice that sounded like the assured ticking of all the Republican boxes on the voter's ballot. "Oh, I'm sorry sir," the waitress angled her voice upward to indicate apology, "What you're lookin' at there is our rhubarb pie." The man gazed at her a moment as if he were stoically passing a kidney stone, then he put his face in his hands and sobbed and sobbed.