

Death of an Eikaiwa

by Elizabeth Kate Switaj

When I rolled him under the bed, I thought I would sweep him out later with arms curled up like legs beneath the shells of cicadas I used to gather from the laundry porch and set on the kitchen counter to scare my roommates. At least, I did that until one of them left a note about wanting to kill me because I and the other Amazon bitch (and I hadn't even found out about free shipping yet) were in league with Julius Caesar-- or was it that she'd tried to kill herself but found the kitchen knife too dull even though it could cut tomatoes, and I would've been happy if she'd succeeded?-- and the other one went to Tokyo for the weekend without inviting me after she told me off for not eating healthy-- too many frozen vegetables instead of fresh cake.

Anyway, I moved and even started to start when the dead insects fell from dried plum branches (but really apricot) at the end of their heated buzz. It was how we met, only I'd also just had an earthquake: absinthe, gin, and bourbon in a friend's Starbucks Sakura cup missing cap so that my whole field of vision bounced across the fireflowers in the night. It was love at first twitching sight, and hey the pink bunny with the chicken's beak had just killed itself by bursting its profit skin and fired him, so I let him crash on my tatami mats. He was still there, though sitting, when I returned from jumping, running, and I like ___ lessons, so I took him to the Cuban bar that serves the seaweed nachos and brought him home after pinball.

That became our pattern. His visa expired, but he was doing my shopping, so I didn't care. He even bought us a bed because he said he hated sleeping on the floor. (I actually didn't mind it and enjoyed the ritual of rolling away my sleeping pad, though his love of lie-ins had prevented that for months by then.)

I never should have brought that samurai sword back from Ieyasu's

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grave. I'm sure he killed himself with it, though I never bothered to look for a wound. At least he didn't bleed on the tatami. But I had to go drinking the night after I found him, so I hid him with the dust.

I didn't expect a smell, though if he had cleaned my apartment, it would have made him a holy martyr. No, I had no reason to believe frankincense and myrrh would rise to my nose as I slept over him. And they did not. There was, however, odor, and now I've swept him out to find that the cyan on his lips and fingers has brightened green. I guess he was dull copper.

And all I can think of is the need to wrap him in these sheets and carry him down on the bed to the trash heap, though first I'll have to buy a big trash tag at the convenience store (stop, too, for mochi and Asahi) and find out the next pick-up date.

