

Writer's Envy

by Gita M. Smith

A friend sent me a short story he'd written the other day, and a tide of envy roiled up in me like acid reflux, like weasels gnawing at my guts.

You *think* you've tasted writer's envy? Yours was just a sour sip of wine at a civilized wine-tasting.

Mine is bottom-shelf, well-brand gin in a biker bar with leathers and colors and miss-the-urinal piss stains on the floor and churlish fat guys who only ride Norton Commandos or Vincent Black Shadows and would as soon fuck your mother as light her cigarette.

My envy bounds to the fore like a pack of eager Corgis answering Her Majesty's whistle. It barks the letters of the alphabet at me, accusingly. "D is for Dilettante and Derivative (the *worst*). P is for Piker, Poseur, and Pedant," all the things I fear I am as a writer or will become when I cease to write flash and try to break into the Big Leagues with the novelists.

Whereas your envy may prick your side from time to time and give you mild discomfort, my envy is a plague of ass boils.

It is the AIDS of envy. It consumes like a fever and leaves me weak and hopeless about the future of wordcraft (mine) and the success of others (all of you).

And yet, counter-intuitively, I fervently hope my friend gets published. Because if he is *not* published, there is no ghost of a prayer of a hope of a chance that a Piker and Poseur like me will ever be.

