

Bumble Bee

by Hobie Anthony

This bumble-bee been following me around all day. Ever since I woke up, it's been with me. I just now smacked it to the ground and then it crawled on my bag and flew up to me again, zooming all around me; it's frightening me, a little. Bee stings made me swell up real bad as a kid growing up.

"Hey Fred, you gotta bee there on ya."

That's Seattle Steve, the dumbass with the newsflash. He hangs around me like that damn bee. Steve never bathes, even when everyone else takes a dip in the Columbia, he just sits in his own stink. He don't have any bugs flying around him, though. Maybe he stinks too bad.

"Fred, you want us to go over behind that Safeway and get us some bread?"

Sometime Steve has a good idea and we end up with some food in our bellies. Sometimes Steve's ideas get us in jail. Like when we stole that television off of that truck. I told that dumbass we needed a car to get away in. Portland Police caught us - popped by the po-po. Still, we did get 90 days of free meals and clean clothes 'til the judge turned us loose on account of we were sorry and the tv didn't get broke or nothing. So, I guess Steve deserves some credit. I still smacked him for it, though.

"Steve, why don't you go and check it out, make sure that manager ain't sneaking around the back there."

I put out my hand and the bee lands in it. I get real close to it and blow on it to make him go away, but not too hard; I don't wanna make him mad since he's in my hand. He just kinda sits there like he's watching me; he's a right handsome fella. Though I guess it could be like a Queen bee or something.

The bee walks on my hand for a bit and it kind of tickles me. I don't get much tickling out here on the street, especially not from no bee. I don't think I've been tickled so much since my sister tickled

me that time we was allowed to visit each other, when we was in different foster homes. That was the best day I can remember.

"That manager been looking out real careful, Freddy. I could get us something if I ran really fast, though."

"It's okay, Steve, don't worry," I say. "That girl's working at the Bakery over on 20th Ave, the pretty one."

"Really? Today?"

"Yes, Steve, she works today and she'll give us bread and maybe soup like last time, ok?" A cool, fresh mist begins to fall and some grime starts to run off of Steve's face; the bee flies away. "So, let's us go. Get your stuff and let's go."

