

stinking nightgown

by Lore Prior

Frank says if I eat the whole bowl of live crickets he'll give me five dollars and his grandfather's silver bullet from the war. I don't care about the money, I would give it to my sister Lea, but one could always use a silver bullet. When I say okay he leaves for the pet store with Teddy Ratnose all tooth-proud and happy because no kid can eat a whole bowl of bugs, especially not skinny birthmarky pale kids, and if I lost he would get Lea's string of pearls. His request. And when he comes back he's carrying a lot more than a bowl's worth of crickets.

Frank doesn't know about my crazy brain. He doesn't really know that when I'm by myself I can imagine so good that all of a sudden I'm AJ the Iron Pirate, slaughtering aliens with the help of my army of Shrink-Wrapped Thunder Ferrets. He knows about Lea, when she comes home with "retard" in mud on her dress it's him and his friends, but he thinks I'm just puny. "Release the supersonic crazed assassin sloths that live to destroy!" I will shout, and the jumpy bowl of bugs will turn to Watermelon Crackocremes before my eyes.

But at first my power doesn't work, and the crickets don't even taste as good as Swedish Crazy Raisins. They get stuck in my teeth the same way, but they're crunchy and bitter with some kind of greenish guts inside, and the whole time I'm eating them they're buzzing and trying to jump out my mouth. It's because Frank invited lots more boys to watch me lose, and they're were all staring at me as I'm hunched over the kitchen sink. Then right as I'm gonna puke over Frank's mom's newly-washed dishes I concentrate really hard, and I'm fine. Besides the aftertaste and the wings between my molars. I'm in outer-space again, and Frank looks embarrassed and hands over the bullet, and one of his friends even smiles at me when I leave.

Later on I guess Frank got beaten on by his Dad for stealing an heirloom. So while we were eating dinner he ninja-jumped through Lea's window, and he pissed on all her nightgowns.

