

Ginger

by Marcus Speh

Above my head, the swallows flew. High up in the air they were picking their food out of the wind. Down here, I felt poetic in my chair. I spilled sounds, small sounds, to honor the swallows above my head, which was so full of stuff. I felt as if my mind was a prison and I was stuck in a cell with a bunch of faceless bad guys who were my own children but they didn't know it. Slowly, I wrote myself out of this cage. I saw what the birds were doing: they ignored everything around them except the breeze and the bugs. Their freedom came at the price of ignorance. That's all it was, being a bird, I thought. I made swallow sounds or what I thought would be the sounds I'd make if I were a swallow, when suddenly a red-headed woman appeared by the door, asking for a gentleman to accompany her to the gate. I got up and joined her. None of the other dickless dolts had even moved. They had no manners or breeding. The woman took my hand. I avoided looking at her. We walked for a bit since the gate was far off, and she asked me if I thought she was gorgeous and I said of course. She said I should come with her, leave this place, but I refused. "Are you a coward," she asked. I said that I was a coward indeed, but an expert with the pen, which did not seem to impress her. I didn't tell her how deeply a terrible weakness for ginger haired people ran in our family, how fortunes had been lost only because of a red beard, a freckled shoulder of exquisite paleness, or a pink nipple. Instead I left her at the gatehouse and returned to my swallows, which were still circling high above us, looking down at the bald spot walking away from the red dot. I spat cherry pits, scarlet-colored pits, to honor the ginger woman inside my head. I sat down again and felt poetic in my chair. I put the pen on the paper and slowly wrote myself out of my cage.

