

# Rot

by S.H. Gall

*So on cue, he delivers the ace!*

I'm watching the French Open, men's semifinal. I've forgotten about my gerbil, Maggie. She's rotting from the inside out and I'm drinking to avoid the fact that I'm dying inside.

She never runs in her wheel. She never moves at all, having consumed all my shoe box cardboard with its waxy poison coating. She is silent and boring, like me, except I burst into tears from time to time. She hasn't had a drink of water in two weeks, although I change it every day.

Another shit morning, waking up to my shit job looming, I notice she's not breathing. I pick her body up and guts just spill out. She's literally rotted away, has no flesh underneath. A big gash where everything makes an exit, relieved I suppose, on the cusp of reeking.

In a hurry, I stuff her corpse in the garbage disposal and hit play. The music of her bones being ground to dust is tragic, romantic, conclusive.

The commentators keep repeating meaningless baloney. *Realizing he's got a chance to get ahead here in the third...* Like we, as viewers, can't see that. My glass of vodka demands repeat repletion and the whole world reeks of guilt. I call my father.

*Dad, I quit my job.*

His rage dominates.

*You don't deserve me, you pussy fag. Did you know I'd hate you just as much if you loved women?*

The apartment stinks of death.

