

The Feet Must Go

by Shawn Misener

There's something wrong with my feet, if they are my feet at all.

I swear there used to be hair blooming from each crooked toe-knuckle, but now all ten furry groves are barren deserts of smooth unblemished pinkness. And the toenails are suddenly gross and yellow, possessed of their own withering disease.

I consult my magical digi-pad for answers. Apparently this pairing of balding toes and dying toenails has never happened to anybody, ever. Or at least such cases have yet to be documented. Probably because the sufferers of this malaise shrank into little stone balls and died soon after contracting it.

Anxiety rips through my abdomen like lightning blasting a tree into instant petrification. With the frantic and shaky movements of one crippled by fear of death I violently scratch my beard with one hand and unconsciously slide my fingers across the greasy surface of the digi-pad. This behavior goes on for minutes, maybe hours, and I hope nobody is watching.

My neuroses are halted by a video playing on the pad. It is a man's head, talking silently, his hair slicked-back black with distinguished gray tufts above pert and aristocratic ears. His eyes are sea-blue and calming, and his mouth moves with such ease that my eyes are drawn hopelessly to his full and glistening lips. His whole head bleeds confidence, security. Reaching over his cleft chin I toggle the volume up:

“. . .sanctity of this energy. It passes from the core of the earth, through our feet, through our bodies, drawn out by the ether through the crowns of our heads. Fight or flight, it moves us. Refusal to accept the energy does nothing to stop it from entering us from

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the soil beneath. But refusal to accept the energy will twist it in our bodies, and like an angry snake it will lash out, injuring us from the inside out. This angry snake will DEADEN OUR TOENAILS and BALD US FROM THE GROUND UP . . .”

No, he didn't just say that. This is too much like some amateur piece of flash fiction at a free-to-use story sharing website, too coincidental, too poorly written to be convincing. I imagined him, and in fact the video of his majestic head is now a rotating shot of one of those tiny urban cars with tiny wheels and tiny gas tanks.

But my feet still appear weird and wicked. Sighing- and ultimately consenting to my role as a half-baked and worked-upon flash fiction protagonist, man of the really short life span and single dimension of character- I search under the bed for the hacksaw that is surely there, waiting to join me and execute our microscopic fate together.

The feet must go.

