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Fear

By Andy Phillips

I'm afraid it would be hard
for me to prove the superiority
of Western civilization
to an Afghan villager who's
watching TV with me.
I'm afraid to be invited
unexpectedly some day
at friends of friends
and get served fat white
crawling maggots
or fried flying locusts
or baked snake with sauce.
The pain... wakes me up.
It's almost time...
for my medication.
It's... day.
Another day.
It seems cold outside.
Cold and grey.
When I was little, I thought
it was always cold.
We lived in the North,
in the countryside.
There wasn't a living soul to
be found for miles around.
Because I was all alone,
I had to find diversion.
I went to explore the forest.
I was looking for interesting
animals and plants.
And insects.
I was fascinated by insects.
Mom prohibited me to bring my
specimen home.
She found them dirty and disgusting.
Eric, is that you?
Dinner's almost ready!
Yes, mom. I'm coming!
Even though she hated my
collection of insects,
she still encouraged my interest
in science
and let me set up a corner
in my room.

My lab.
That was my refuge.
There I spend hours and hours
experimenting
and studying my specimen.
Eric, come here! Come here!
I'm coming, mom!
Without knowing why,
I hid the goblet under my bed.
Eric!
I probably didn't want my
mother to find it.
After dinner I hurried to my room.
But it was gone.
I looked everywhere, but my
little specimen wasn't to be found.
In the end I gave up.
It was hard to forget.
For years I often heard the
same noise.
Something crawling and itching.
At the back of my bed.
I took the bed with me when I
left for college.
I found a small apartment just for me
close to the campus.
I didn't want a room mate
who would distract me.
All I needed,
was a nice quiet place to work.
After all those years in seclusion
I found it difficult to meet people,
especially girls.
Look at that dickhead!
- Hey you! What's your problem?
You want my photo?
You won't see me for a long time!
They were pretty and charming.
But it was impossible to get
in touch with them.
Excuse me.
That's why I was so surprised
when Laura entered my life.
I don't want to disturb you, but... you're

taking biology with Schermann, don't you?

Eh... yes... I... I...

I've seen you there.

You always look so serious.

You have your nose in a book
and you're taking notes all the time.

I've missed the last lesson.

Can I borrow your notes?

Eh yes. Of course. Here... they are.

You'll get them back soon, OK?

By the way, my name is Laura.

Eh... uhm... Eric. I'm Eric.

Thanks, Eric. I have to go.

Hello, Laura? It's Eric. Ah... no.

Not too fast, not too fast.

Laura? It's Eric.

From the biology class...

No... no.

What am I doing?

Hello?

- Laura? It's Eric...

Eric from the biology class.

- Hello, Eric!

Hey, your notes are great!

Do you want them back already?

Actually I wanted...

Do you want to go to the cinema or...

To the cinema? OK! Cool!

Really? Are you sure?

- Of course I'm sure.

At what time does the movie start?

Do you get it now?

- What?

That you're mine... just mine!

O, Jack... yes... Yes!

- Yeah, that's right.

You're all mine!

- Oh, Jack! What are you doing?

Yes.

- Oh, no!

Leave me be. Leave me be!

I wasn't really watching the film...

...sitting there next to Laura...

...was enough to make me happy.

Oh, no!

- Yes!

Yes!

I think the movie was great!

Very moving and romantic.

It should be like that

in real life too.

Are we getting a drink?

Yummy! Vodka always gives me

a strange feeling!

She was giving me a strange feeling.

When she wanted to kiss me,

I thought I would die.

I think I'll have another one. You?

- Eh, yes... of course.

I wasn't used to bars,

or alcohol.

But I didn't want Laura to think

I'm a sucker.

All right!

I like it when you smile.

I like your dimples.

I had the feeling I was dragged

into a dream.

I wanted that dream to last

for ever.

Wow! Your apartment is nice.

Let's see...

- When she wanted to come along to my apartment...

- What's over there?

...I heard myself respond "Yes".

What a sweet little bed!

But that's a cowboy bed!

Do you want to play cowboys and Indians?

Bang, bang!

I know it's ridiculous, but...

I didn't have money to buy a new one.

But I didn't say it's ridiculous.

I'm teasing you!

You're so serious! Come here.

Let's see if you're as serious

as you look.

Acting like the quiet guy?

Need a little push?

Laura?

Laura, wake up...

You're hurt!

But...!

- You have a cut in your arm!

Good morning.

Don't I get my good morning kiss?

Don't move! I'll be right back!

I'm going to put a bandage on your arm.

Don't worry.

It will be alright.

The cut looked deep and ugly.

I didn't understand how she

could stay so calm.

I'll be careful.

If it hurts

or if it's too tight...

let me know, OK?

There.

That will do the job for a while.

If you get dressed, I can take

you to the campus hospital.

But I don't need a doctor...

I need you.

A kiss and all will be fine.

Come... I won't bite, you know.

You see... that wasn't so bad.

OK... if you're sure you

don't want to see a doctor,

we might attend class.

But it's so nice here with you...

I don't feel like leaving.

That day I got to class far too late.

When I got home in the evening...

I was exhausted.

Good evening!

I was looking forward to you coming home.

Dinner's ready!

After a hard day's work

I bet you have an appetite for a nice meal.

That looks good.

Her behaviour was strange,

but did I really want it to change?

No... finally I had a girlfriend.

And she was sexy...
and she seemed to like me.
It was great for a while...
Really great.
But as the days went by,
something changed.
Laura, I have to finish that chapter.
I have a biology exam tomorrow.
What? Did I say something wrong?
I would like to know
what's more important to you.
me or your stupid books?
Things got worse.
Worse and worse.
She didn't attend classes anymore.
Like nothing mattered to her
anymore, except me.
She only left the apartment
to get food.
It seemed like her only reason
to exist
was to make rich, heavy dishes
for me.
She changed physically as well...
You're mine!
... she got stronger...
You're all mine.
... manlier.
You're my bitch! Eh?
You're mine forever!
Yes!
You're mine...
One day I got home from class
to discover she cut off
her pretty long hair.
Laura?
Then I knew the end was close at hand.
Here, I made you a refreshment.
Thanks, but I'm not thirsty.
I have prepared it for you.
Come drink it up. Now!
OK, don't worry.
Waking up, finally?
Easy.

Don't worry.
It won't take long.
What's keeping them?
The pain is getting worse...
and the heat...
it's much too hot in here.
I just want my medicine.
I just want...
to sleep.
I know things will never be
like before.
That's all over and done with,
forever and ever.
But I would want so much,
she still loved me.
Or at least she pretends to love me.
I'm afraid to die from torture,
cancer, a traffic accident.
Ah, to find the right way?
I'm hesitating.
When making love?
I'll have to find someone then,
Because these days...
If it's OK, I want to start over,
if it's insignificant,
I don't want to end up like that. I refuse.
Dead, the scandal...
I don't want to do it according to the rules.
I don't want to die joyfully.
That after everything, after so little,
nothing, just nothing remains,
no... I can't,
I refuse.
I'm afraid I don't have a
political conscience.
Maybe I'm hiding the truth to myself,
and I belong to the Right? Or worse?
I notice lately that I'm always
looking for reasons not to get involved.
but most of all I'm sensitive
to conservative arguments.
Most things shouldn't change too much,
youth can't stand in our way,
we should be able to reap the benefits

of what we acquired.
I'll become Left from centre.
I'm afraid of mediocrity.
I'd rather be a zero,
than mediocre.
To be unnoticed,
that's not a worthy destiny.
But I don't want to be pure.
The pure threatens us.
A messiah without scruples
will come and launder us.
To the vice. To the bone.
We shall not be able to see
behind the scenes of the big laundry.
Help!
Today we welcome a new student.
Introduce yourself to your class mates.
Ayakawa Sumako. I'll try
to be a good student.
Where do you live, Sumako-san?
- The old house at the waterfalls.
Behind the cemetery?
Yes I live there with my mother.
We used to live abroad,
in London where my father...
"Hajime Hajime, where are you,
here's a stranger..."
Children!
You'll have samurai Hajime
to deal with!
Be silent!
Who is this samurai Hajime?
It's an old story, Sumako-san.
The samurai has been dead for 100 years.
He's buried in the cemetery.
You will see him tonight.
He'll chop strangers to pieces.
That's enough!
Sumako, you can sit down.
Michio, as you're so smart:
why was Hajime executed?
You don't know. Stupid!
Nobody knows?
That will be the lesson for today.

Open your books on page 100.

Sumako, are you reading
the text next to the image?

"Samurai Hajime of the Satsuma-clan
was condemned to commit seppuku, a ritual
suicide, because he had robbed
and chopped to pieces an English officer
on the road to Tokaido
in the year 1865, the Edo era."

We are waiting for you, new one.

We are descendants of
samurai Hajime.

Hajime, you remember?

You are really ridiculous!

Yes? Really?

Do you dare to ridicule us?

You'd better not do that, Sumako.

- That's the way we treat people who aren't from around here!

- Stop it! Have mercy!

Go on, sweeties, go tickle her!

- No!

No!

It doesn't work like that, Sumako-chan!

You can't wake up in the middle of it,
you have to finish your dream until the end.

You have to sleep, Sumako-chan...

Sleep...

sleep...

Is anyone here?

Is anyone here?

Those fools are trying to scare me...

You are silly!

Don't hide yourselves,

I have seen you!

Samurai Hajime's grave!

Leaving already?

The samurai will come.

You don't seem to appreciate
our company.

Stay for a while,

you won't be disappointed.

And the samurai will gladly...

- Stop it!

There, there, don't get excited, Sumako,

you look tensed.
- And you didn't believe in ghosts.
Tomoko? Michio?!
You're going to die!
No! Stop it!
Sumako,
Sumako...
Michio!
Sumako's brains
Is that you, Sumako-chan?
Sumako?
Sumako?!
Has your first day at school gone well?
Now, Sumako-chan,
did you go on until the end?
That's not the way to do it, Sumako.
You have to finish your dream,
if you want to be cured...
cured...
cured...
cured...
I'm afraid to contribute to the
exhaustion of the planet
and not have the courage to do
something about it.
I don't know what to do.
I'm afraid because I'm not doing anything.
And I'm not doing anything because I'm afraid.
I absolutely have to do something!
I'm full of small fears
filling my head,
accompanying and surrounding me
like blunt poles.
They make me cringe!
Exist? Yes, but how?
Inside, outside, up? Down?
I'm afraid of humans.
Humans seem to be like wolves to humans,
but wolves aren't wolves to wolves.
A wolf doesn't devour another wolf.
But a human being... is a dangerous animal.
He exterminates animals. Picks the flowers.
Massacres his own kind.
They all agree to murder, intellectuals

and proletarians, the clean and unclean,
out of free will or forced,
with a pint, or an order,
through the head and forward, mate.
And women nowadays
join in as well, on all levels,
the woman is the future of the man.
Here, a bullet in the head, bastard.
I have the right, it seems,
I protect myself, I anticipate.
By accident I wound up
in the region where I spend
the most summers of my youth.
The great plains.
One of these summers had been
very peculiar.
Everything started with the
disappearance of my uncle.
He was poaching at night,
but his boat ran ashore.
It was empty.
Every night my aunt went to church
to pray for him.
I went along with her.
While she cried, I went outside
to play with my friend.
Often, always around the same time,
the ducks left the swamps.
Their behaviour rose suspicions
of what would occur the next days.
My friend who really didn't have any family
and who passed his time in the fields,
knew a lot of secrets about the animals.
One evening the last duck in the row
passed by with a broken wing.
According to my friend a wild animal which was
sneaking around in the area, was responsible for it.
And maybe one day we would face this
wild animal as well.
That night I slept with my eyes firmly shut
to keep away horrible dreams.
In the morning the police officers fished up
the maimed head of a farmer.
A gruesome crime!

Who could have done a thing like this?

My friend knew:

there are wild animals that descend
straight from the clouds,
and one of them was probably hiding
in the swamp.

That night

not a word was uttered at my aunt's.

And then on some afternoon my friend
disappeared as well.

The whole village went looking for him.

The fog was increasing ever more.

And I got lost...

like in a dream.

His bicycle was found again.

But that discovery didn't put
me at ease at all.

And the night fell.

What I thought I had seen,

was that my friend?

Or was it that monster?

Unless those two...

were one and the same being?

Eventually the game-keeper in charge
was brought in from the city.

To that man, who had crossed the mysterious
jungles of Africa,
it didn't matter if it was a wild animal
or a murderer.

Three days and three nights

he hid himself in the church-tower.

When he came down,

a wild scent was surrounding him.

He asked him to bring the

fattest goose in town,

and he started to set his trap.

Women and children were kept away
from the area.

Nobody was allowed to make any noise.

Since then no one in the region

had disappeared again,

even though my uncle has never returned

and my friend has never been found again.

Now old women are lighting ceremonial
candles for the crocodile in the church,
even though they pretend the candles are
meant for this or that saint.

A while later I woke up in the
middle of the night.

It was my friend, no doubt about it.

I was sure I wasn't mistaken.

We never saw each other again.

The day I visited the place
the crocodile is still hanging around,
I remembered that old story.

I didn't dare to wait for
darkness to fall.

It was like I was afraid to see
my old friend again.

Who knows which other secrets
he might have been hiding.

Maybe he descended from
the clouds as well.

I'm afraid I would contempt all
those who are different too easily.

And because I don't accept myself
as I am, that poses a problem.

Because those who resemble me,
depress me,

and that gives me a negative image.

I'm afraid I would be an
incorrigible bourgeois,

I can't accept that,

how did that get into my head?

The rich irritate me, the poor repel me,
the middle classes get on my nerves.

Help! Hurry, a monastery,
something authentic, peace.

But real peace, not fake.

No rotan furniture,
no Scientologist from Hollywood
declamating in Tibetan.

I'm afraid of indigestion.

We all eat shamelessly like pigs.

Yes!

Like pigs.

Children!

We'll leave you the crusts.
I'm afraid I would blush for
joy if I'd go shopping.
Sometimes it does my heart good
to have a chocolate mousse.
OK, it has been prepared industrially,
but it's tasty.
And all those who don't have the means?
Look, she only chooses super digestible food.
Come on, Simone,
we support the agricultural food complex!
But can't you see it's a fraud?
I'm afraid I won't be really useful
just one time in my life.
For example to make clear to a racist,
to a single racist that it's cowardly,
dumb and mean to be a racist.
But I have tried carefully once or twice.
It's hard to control myself and to
stick to the part
of a democrat who respects the differences,
but is uncompromising about the basic values.
Then the other will look at me in shame,
but I feel like it's slipping away from me.
I can only convince people who
agree from the beginning.
Help! Cicero, Louise Michel, Montesquieu,
Martin Luther King, Benetton!
I'm afraid I would come across
as being sympathetic
It's horrible to be sympathetic.
How was your life?
Sympathetic.