

Spring 5-1-2014

Rice

Louisa Parzyk
College of DuPage

Follow this and additional works at: <http://dc.cod.edu/plr>

Recommended Citation

Parzyk, Louisa (2014) "Rice," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 36: No. 2, Article 75.
Available at: <http://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol36/iss2/75>

This Selection is brought to you for free and open access by the College Publications at DigitalCommons@COD. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Prairie Light Review by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@COD. For more information, please contact koteles@cod.edu.

Playing in the sandbox. That's where I found the acorn. I took it as some miracle for little me to have found it in the treeless courtyard of my apartment complex. The acorn with its dark body and caramel cap was for me. I knew, I knew even before I dusted off the sand and cradled it in my palms, I knew in my ever-so-entitled five-year-old mind my divine right to this beautiful seed.

I snuck into the apartment with my prize in my jacket pocket. My parents were screaming at each other about money again, and didn't notice as I tiptoed into my room and closed the door behind me.

Nature chewed through fall with its frost and spat out winter. My disastrous floor sucked up my jacket, swallowing it acorn and all. My parents continued arguing. So I hid out in the peaceful squalor of my room until my mother finally put her foot down--on a Lego. I summoned all the strength of my continually lazy childhood and shoveled once prized Beanie Babies, troll dolls, and begged for birthday gifts into the already clogged recesses of my closet.

I found the jacket under my bed, tugged on the sleeve and tossed it behind me, but before I moved on I heard a hollow thunk. I turned and saw. Remembered and I knelt. Out of the acorn came three grains of rice, and I giggled at the idea of saving them from dinner for later, to eat, or to make swallows explode like my dad told me they would. My mom had snapped at him for that. "Harold, shut your damn mouth. What are you teaching her?" "What are you teaching her, Nadine? Don't swear in front of the kid," he'd said, red-faced and seething.

A nasty shouting match began. I tried to hide in my room, but they were too loud this time. I went to the laundry room to crawl into the dryer and snuggle into a bed of warm towels.

My mind snapped back to the rice. Those grains on the floor. Those grains that then stretched their bodies, and accorded across the hardwood, all steady and dreadful. I didn't know what was happening until I leaned in with hands on the floor to see three pairs of pinprick red eyes staring about my room.

No one could tell me then that the acorn was doomed from the start, being hollowed out by the greedy maggots since the day I first discovered it. In their punishment and in my own penance I plucked the creatures from the ground, shoved them into my mouth where they were engulfed in the deep esophageal abyss, drawn into the great green sea of my belly to die.