

Nabillera

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The Man Who Became a Flamingo (2)



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.realism

Read “The Man Who Became a Flamingo (1)” (<https://nabillerakorea.wordpress.com/2020/02/28/the-man-who-became-a-flamingo-1/>).

The Man Who Became a Flamingo (2)

Oh Han Ki. Novelist. Analrealist
Translated by Beth Hong and Archana Madhavan

Diary

If anyone is listening, I keep telling the secret. It's a strange experience, but it doesn't make me as apprehensive as I have imagined.

There's another secret. I've been raising a girl in room 109 for some time now. The child is not a flamingo right now, but she may one day become a flamingo without her knowledge. Of course, it is more likely that she will live a life that has nothing to do with a flamingo. And I'm not talking about choice or fate in a tedious way.

May 9

The child is the only one who knows I'm a flamingo. That's a hunch. The moment I saw the child, I had a hunch that it would be in the near future. I don't know if it's right or wrong yet. It was early morning when I met the child. I wondered whether you'd be in a messy nest if it's this early. I was hovering around the reservoir with such hope. In the benevolent nest, however, only a strange, old flamingo was blinking its eyes.

On the way back, I saw a girl I don't know sleeping on the boat. The child was ugly and her clothes were covered with dust. There was a tear on her soft cheeks. I went into the boat. The boat and the child were cold. There was no one around. I held the child in my arms. A delicate scent of a human body. I was instinctively frightened. The child is not a flamingo. This child is different from me and you.

Who are you? I asked.

The child's name was DB. When I asked several times, she rubbed her eyes and woke up. She started to cry. While I was at a loss, she opened her arms as if she wanted a hug. I hugged her right away unwittingly. I let my guard down.

She became slightly warm. Before long, DB stopped crying and started to wiggle. It felt like she was crawling in my arms like a snake.

Who can you be? I whispered.

Has the boat given birth to you?

Why are you sleeping here?

Why do you look so sad?

Why did you hug me?

I bombarded her with questions. The child didn't answer. The child got hot. She was crawling around my neck. My groin and back, between my heart and blood vessels, between my thighs and wrists, between my mouth and eyes and ears, my head and neck, my brain and gut, between my beak and wing joints, between my feathers and feathers.

I'll ask you again. Who are you? I asked.

DB didn't open her mouth. I looked into her eyes and she looked at me vacantly in return.

I'll ask you one last time. Who in the world are you? I asked.

Maybe because I was feeling suffocated, my voice had grown louder before I realized it. DB twitched her lips shortly before she began to wail.

Donkey

Or the mantis

No matter how much I tried to soothe her, DB didn't stop crying. I asked why she was crying. DB did not answer my question but said she wanted to eat a hamburger.

DB: Deluxe Burger

When I bought her a hamburger, DB stopped crying. In a flash, DB ate up a deluxe burger, which was bigger than her own face. That night I stayed in 109 to put the child to sleep.

May 10

I went back and forth between 110 and 109 all day.

the brain of a flamingo ↔ the brain of a human

DB didn't wake up until around dinner time. DB said that she wanted to eat a hamburger as soon as she saw me. I bought a hamburger. She was so shy that we could barely talk while she was eating. When she finished, she shut her mouth and went back to sleep.

Age: 11 years

She is short and has a small chest and butt. She had just entered puberty. There is a lot of time remaining before she's an adult. I figured DB out.

I have to keep this in mind. DB is not a flamingo. Even if she is a flamingo, she's too young to be one.

A human child. A human child that sleeps and eats all day. A cursed creature. Why did DB come to me? I am curious about too many things.

I wrote a few sentences that day.

When I go downstairs, there's a bowling ball
I roll my feet toward my tears

May 11

The Osprey makes a hamburger without resting. Between two buns he puts in ground beef and lettuce. He puts his feathers on them. With loneliness and existence. He sprinkles sauce on birth and fear. Blood. It's sweet and sour.

You come often these days, don't you?

The Osprey pretends to know me well. There is a faint trace of tension. He sniffs, smelling the air as I approach.

I am not a flamingo.

I use my human brain to hide my identity. The Osprey is worrying about how his hamburgers aren't selling, as usual. He deplores the destroyed, chaotic nest which drove all the residents out. I can see hamburgers are piled in layers all over the Osprey's nest.

The hamburgers are bait. There's nothing wrong with a nest in a water bottle. The reason people don't come here is that this is an old and shabby hamburger shop. It's because this place smells musty and there are only three or four menu items. The franchise fast-food restaurant in the city center did much better. There were many items on the menu, and it was cold in summer and hot in winter. Virile young people handed out hamburgers.

There aren't that many people who find the Osprey's hamburger tasty like DB does.

DB, why do you like the hamburgers here?

Simple and firm hamburgers. Round hamburgers. Big and sturdy hamburgers. Absolute hamburgers. Infallible hamburgers. The hamburgers DB likes.

If I ask, DB mumbles in reply with a hamburger in her mouth.

Deluxe burger: Beef, bread, minimal sauce

I order the deluxe burger. The Osprey grins at me and starts making the hamburger.

Round bun
Cheese
Beef patty
Lettuce
Sauce
Round bun

May 12

I'm a flamingo. I sent a telepathic message to DB.

May 13

After waiting a day, I got a reply from DB: *I need a hamburger.*

May 14

Thank you for the burger. Sit next to me, mister. Don't stand there awkwardly. You're shy too, right? I am too. When I first met you, you demanded to know who I was with a scary face. I cried because I thought that you hated me, you know. But then I found out you are a really good person. Buying me hamburgers day after day like this. I'm actually a chatterbox.

I like hamburgers. Before I die, I want to try all of the hamburgers on earth. Munch munch. I can also make them myself. A hamburger is a hamburger no matter what you put into it, right? As long as you put two round buns on the top and bottom, can't you call it a hamburger?

Pollen hamburger. Dead rat hamburger. Lipstick hamburger. Goldbug hamburger. Dandelion hamburger. Encyclopedia hamburger. Diamond hamburger. Ginkgo tree hamburger. Aluminum foil hamburger. Fine sand hamburger. Mole hamburger. Ice hamburger. Blue paint hamburger. Fluffy cloud hamburger. Sunlight hamburger.

I am going to put everything in and eat. Everything that I know. Everything that I remember. Everything that I want. It's possible enough. My dad said so. If you stop imagining, you die.

I look exactly like my dad. My laughing face. Frowning face. Crying face. I heard a lot that we're alike. I like it. I like my dad. Because he also bought me hamburgers every day.

My dad was the security guard at the nuclear power plant you see there. Our house. Our palace-like house. Our house which no one else could have. I pestered my dad to live in that house. Dad grinned and placated me, saying that he would make a lot of money so we could live in that house. My caring dad. I showed off to my friends. One day that big house will be ours.

But one day dad disappeared. He wouldn't disappear like that without a word. He even let me know he was going to the bathroom because I'd be scared alone. Without a word, he didn't come home. He left for work saying he would pick up some hamburgers on his way home. He kissed me and whispered that he loved me. My dad didn't come back to my side. Not the next day, the next day, the next day, nor the next.

When I didn't eat hamburgers for a week, I came out of the house. I looked for my dad myself. I went around the nuclear power plant. I asked the men who worked with my dad. Where's my dad? My dad disappeared. Dad said that he would pick up some hamburgers, but he didn't come home. The men patted my head. You don't have to wait. It's a pity, what should we do? Don't cry, child. That monster ate your dad. Don't show up here again. Who knows if that monster eats you up too. The men said that there was a small accident at the nuclear power plant. Dad died because of that accident. They said it was an unsavory accident that no one else would let me know so that I should keep it to myself. But I know. Those liars. Dad didn't die. Dad isn't the type to leave without saying a word. He's not irresponsible like that. Dad probably lost his way in that giant maze. Or he's working hard to make a lot of money and buy the house. That's right, my dad isn't dead!

I have a secret. Since you're a good person who buys me hamburgers, I will tell you. Actually, I saw my dad. Shh, don't tell anyone. They'll definitely think I'm crazy. Listen carefully. I'll explain it in detail.

After my dad disappeared, in order to remember where he is, I focused all my attention. I suffered for a few days, missing my dad. It was one of those days. I saw my dad in my head. He was inside the nuclear power plant. He kept running on the conveyor belt of a giant machine. It was a machine shaped like a giant insect. From the machine, there were sometimes storms, sometimes thick smoke, and sometimes firecracker explosions. Dad was sweating heavily. He looked lonely and tired. I wanted to get close to him, but my feet wouldn't move because I could only imagine up to that point.

I made an effort to keep imagining. Because it was lonely to eat alone, because it was scary to sleep alone, I used all my energy to imagine dad. I drew his face on a blank paper, and I prayed to see his face in my dreams. After trying like this for a long time, I was finally able to approach him. Dad. I spoke to him. Dad. He saw me. Dad, who resembles me. He gave me an affectionate look as if he recognized me. He moved his lips. But I couldn't hear his voice. I strained my ears to hear what he was saying. What, dad? He kept mumbling. I could barely hear what he was saying. It was frustrating. That's how far I got up to that day. That night I pressed my ear to the ground, the wall, the television, and the telephone, trying to hear what dad was saying. I didn't sleep, I didn't eat, and I only thought of what he was saying. I imagined how his lips moved and concentrated. He's not the type of dad to disappear without a word. You don't know how much he adored me.

The strange thing happened around that time. That day, I was imagining dad all day as usual. A strange man started to whisper to me. It was a low and deep voice, and I was only sure it wasn't my dad's. I kept hearing the indistinguishable babble. I looked around. There was no one. I was the only one at home. I was scared. I begged it to stop, blocked my ears, and even screamed. The man took no notice and kept talking to me. When I came to my senses and listened carefully, it appeared that he was talking from inside my body. I don't remember what he said. I remember vaguely that it had nothing to do with me. After that, I started to hear many different voices. Even if you tilt your head in doubt, I can't help it. Honestly, I don't really understand it either. Would you like to hear it for yourself?

I'm too full. I feel like Shuvalov in love.

Do you hear it? Some middle-aged woman's voice is coming from my mouth, right? She's spinning out some strange stories. You can't hear it because it's too quiet? Wait. I'll make it louder.

I met a gnat while going up the stairs.

Now you can hear it, right? A gentle grandfather's voice. Do you know what I mean? It's not my voice, right? That's right. Someone else's voice. It's just coming out of my throat. Look. My face and body are the same. The voice that used to whisper cautiously to me is now starting to spread out to the world outside me. If I don't mumble I get so itchy that I can't stand it. Now, will you believe me? I could hear the countless voices rolling around somewhere inside my body, and they're now out in the world through me.

No matter how much I think about it, I couldn't fathom who these voices were. People who have nothing to do with me. People who are not next to me. People who are not in this world. When I reflected on it, I felt like they could be dead people's voices. Corpses. Spirits. Souls. Ghosts. I even thought that it could be the supernatural or aliens. The voices of those that do not exist in this world. Who are you? I've asked them before. Though, of course, there was no response.

There was also a time when I heard the voice of someone I know. Hey kid, you should eat rice instead of hamburgers to grow taller. Like that. It was the voice of a security guard who was close to my dad. He said that every time he saw me. That man died last year in an explosion. Since then, every time I heard his voice, my head was filled with ominous thoughts that my dad might have died too.

I decided to think that the owners of these strange voices are cows. The voices of cows. When I thought of it that way, I felt less scared. Because cows are gentle animals. Moo-moo. When I hear the sound of cows, my mind becomes calm. Because we should be grateful to them for giving milk. Even if everyone turns their back on me, they're good friends who'd give me a warm hug. This is also something my dad taught me because he knows everything.

Around that time, I got acne and hair grew around my crotch and armpits. And my breasts also grew. Somehow when I looked at the mirror I saw a stranger. What if maybe my dad came home and couldn't recognize me? Dad. I'm scared. I'm becoming a monster. Cow, cow, hug me.

One month passed, two months passed, and my dad did not return. I got a bit tired, so I temporarily stopped missing my dad. I'm not an idiot. I realized at some moment that no matter how much I missed him, he wouldn't come back. With time, I even got used to the cow. I got so used to her voice and gave dull reactions, and she became so quiet to the point that I could ignore her. When I was hungry, I ate. When I was sleepy, I slept. I read books and watched TV too. I went outside like before and ate the ice cream they gave out at the orphanage. Sometimes, I talked to dad, but I didn't expect any response.

It was one of those days. It was either Christmas or Lunar New Year when the orphanage gave out hamburgers as snacks. The burgers dad used to buy me often. Seeing the burgers for the first time in a while overwhelmed me with sadness. That night, I cried all night thinking about my dad. I talked to him without rest. Where are you, Dad? Talk to me. Then, the cows exploded at me all at once with loud talking. After a little bit, I saw dad's mouth opening, as if he was about to say something. I moved my feet cautiously towards him. I was scared that he would run away. Finally, I got next to him. I put my ear to his mouth. Then I could faintly hear his voice. I remember clearly. I'm dying. Bonfire, bonfire, bonfire. I heard these words. What, Dad? He kept repeating the same thing.

*I'm dying.
Bonfire, bonfire, bonfire.*

Listen quietly to what I'm saying. Even now, if I strain to hear him, I can hear him faintly. This is my dad's voice. Isn't it cool? But even when I could hear his voice, I still felt as troubled as ever. Since I can hear his voice the same way I can hear that dead man's voice, that means that my dad is definitely dead, right? Even if he didn't die, it means that he doesn't exist in this world, right? At least, he doesn't want to come back to my side, right?

To hear what he was saying, I closed my eyes and concentrated. He kept moving his lips inaudibly. I'm dying. Bonfire, bonfire, bonfire. After that, he kept moving his lips as if he had something more to say. But I didn't understand what he was saying next at all because the cows began to interrupt with their whispering, as if they had been waiting for this moment.

Sunlight, fire station, plants on fire. I'm among them.

I'm not Oh Han-ki.

Baden-Baden and a rookie. Have you ever stood guard at the checkpoint under a clear sky?

I'm dying.

Bonfire, bonfire, bonfire.

Chicken and serpent.

I'm a water bottle among them. Cheek to cheek. Ant-like oil.

I thought it was because of the leech.

The cows were mean. If I strained to hear what my dad was saying, the cows raised their voices. As time passed, the symptoms worsened. The cows' voices spilled into my ears. Dad's voice was drowned out by the cows and could barely be heard. I couldn't stand their voices again, so I ended up shouting.

That's right. I'm not only blaming the cows. If dad hadn't died like you said, there would have been no reason he didn't come home. I admit it. But I'm curious. What was the other thing that dad was trying to tell me? What were the last words that he wanted to say to me?

With time, this curiosity also disappeared. All of a sudden, I thought that what dad was saying wasn't so important. Even when I thought of him, I didn't cry anymore. It occurred to me that I may never be able to see him again. It doesn't matter that he died. But it would be nice if he stayed in my imagination. I'd like it if his voice kept hovering around me. I only had these kinds of thoughts. Until I die. No matter what he says, as long as I could hear his voice, I wanted to live.

Around that time, I went a few times a day to the nuclear power plant. I don't know if I just felt like it, but when I was close to the nuclear power plant I could hear my dad's voice more clearly and it calmed down my troubled mind. But when I went out, people pointed at me and said I mutter strange things to myself. It's not me, it's the cows, I said, but people said that I'm insane. They avoided me, saying I'm filthy. They ignored me, saying I've got rotten luck. I was bitter.

Especially the old man at the hamburger store. He especially hated me. I did do something wrong. I ordered a burger and ran away without paying. I felt sorry but I was too hungry. But the old man was a good person. After that, if I loitered around, he gave me a burger for free. A warm and delicious burger. Dad said this. Other places have too many types of burgers so it's complicated and confusing, but here the burgers are just burgers to the point. Buns and meat, a real burger with the least amount of sauce. I didn't really understand what he was saying, but the moment I had a bite of the old man's burger, I realized what he meant.

The old man adored me. He patted my head. He braided my hair. And gave me baths. He touched my body warmly here and there. He hugged me and kissed me on the lips. Raise your skirt. Take off your clothes. Take off your underwear. Turn around once. You want to eat more burgers right? Touch this. Shake this. Lick this. Open it. Put

this in and out. In and out.

It hasn't been long that the old man started to hate me. One day the old man took off his clothes in front of me and shook his shriveled dick. His dick got redder and harder. In the end, semen shot out of his dick. I wasn't scared because this is how far he got every day. But then, he started spreading his semen on the bun. And then he gave me the burger. Eat it. He pushed the burger toward my mouth. I shook my head, but the burger got closer and closer. There was a rotten fish smell, so I struggled and blocked my nose. Fine. I could stand it up to that point. I thought it was the price to pay for the burger. Now, call me dad. You poor thing, I'll be your dad. But the old man started asking for a strange favor. My dad isn't ugly and wrinkled like you! I screamed at him and ran away.

A hunter. A beetle. The old town center. One day, I wanted to die.

I couldn't eat burgers since I was avoiding the old man.

There are five kinds of people in the world. Me. Me. Me. Me. Me.

The old man followed me around peskily. You bitch. You're contaminated with radiation. The old man poured curses at me. When I went to the nuclear power plant to look for my dad, he followed me with other people, swearing and hitting me. They said I'm cursed by that monstrous building, I tell you. That's not a monster! That's not a cursed radioactive mass. That's our house! Our future house! The house where my dad works! This is how I responded. I threw stones at the old man and taunted him. I became good at running because I was always fleeing from him. One day, I hid all day in the grassy thicket and got skin irritations from the grass. Even now, I imagine putting the old man into a hamburger and chewing him up.

Please keep this secret. If the old man knows I'm here, he could kill me. Giant Eyed Frog hamburger. Rudolph hamburger. Apple juice hamburger. Fluorescent light hamburger. Gourd bottle hamburger. Color pencil hamburger. First love hamburger. Emergency stairs hamburger. Sticker hamburger. Larva hamburger.

May 15

I start my day by looking at a nest stuck in a maze. On top of the flu-ridden nest sit several flamingos. Two of them are touching beaks and rubbing each other's faces. One is watching the sight with a languid expression. I don't see you. I close my eyes to find you.

I cautiously approach the pitiful nest. The security guards chat or nap under the shade of the trees. I go past them. They see me but pretend they don't. I don't see the security guard that looks like DB.

I leap over the wall. I can hear the alarm. The colorful nest emits all kinds of colors with a loud sound. I was scared, but I don't hesitate to enter a nest with strong responsibility. The alarm soon gets quieter. I move toward the custodian room. A few employees wearing safety helmets are there, chatting.

*Has the apple tree grown a lot?
As tall as my life.
Sounds like a black and white film.*

I can hear their conversation. I greet them. They greet me. I approach them and ask about your whereabouts. They grin and tell me to go to the nuclear reactor.

*Has a black and white movie grown a lot?
As tall as an apple tree.
Sounds like my life.*

They go back to their conversation. I follow the signs to the nuclear reactor. I hum, thinking about meeting you. People wearing protective clothes steal glances at me. Some even approach and talk to me. It's you. We've heard a lot about you. Why have you come now? We've waited for a long time.

The shy interior of the nest is vast and complicated. We pass the turbine room. We reach the machine room. Inside the machine room, a machine with slender insect leg-like parts is running, as DB described. There's a man running on the conveyor belt. He's wearing a security guard uniform. He's sweating and has a pained expression. A man who resembles DB. I greet him with my eyes. As soon as his eyes meet mine, his lips start moving. I can't hear what he's saying.

DB is doing well! I say.

He moves his lips again. I pass him. I have a lot to say, but before it's too late, I have to meet you. I go up the stairs and go through rooms of various shapes. Every once in a while the people who pass me by are smiling ear to ear, as if they had something to be very happy about.

Finally, I set foot into the room with the nuclear reactor. A giant glass barrier is in front of it.

Where are you? I ask.

There is no response. I flutter about. There's no one around. Then, I hear a bizarre sound. I walk toward it. Beyond the glass, I see you. You're standing tall in the middle of the nuclear reactor. You're crying. I beat my fists against the glass cover. Then you look at me. Blocked by the glass barrier, I cannot get close to you. You move your wings slowly.

You want me to save you? I ask.

You move your wings more vigorously. The wind blows.

You want to die? I yell.

You want me to kill you? I shout.

The wind gets stronger. The glass barrier shatters. My ears are cut. My neck turns around and around. The nuclear reactor spins. I hear an extremely loud noise. You are torn apart. You scream. Your intestines scatter. I jump into the nuclear reactor. You are a nuclear reactor. You are the redness that the nuclear reactor left behind.

The epitaph of a flamingo

I break loose from the window and jot down a note.

May 16

I stand before the mirror. I remove my clothing. I scratch my body. I become reddish. I look at myself in the mirror. I flex my shoulder blades. I unfurl my wings and dip my head. I flap my arms widely. I make sounds of flying with my mouth.

Apartment
Nape of the neck
Burnt business card

I hear the sound of knocking. I become quiet. DB's scent wafts in from beyond the door. Quickly, I put my clothes back on and open the door. DB comes in. DB is shaking all over. DB is crying. DB buries herself in my chest. I pat DB's back.

1. Lock me and my mom up in a tiny room.
2. Insult me.
3. What do I do when I rip out my heart once a day?
4. Be pure like a poppy.
5. It's okay, it is the soul that I loved. Do not have regrets.

1. A frail male voice: 43 years old. Bachelor. Cellist in the philharmonic orchestra. No one knows that he thinks his cello is his mother.
2. A stammering male voice: 79 years old. Former porn star. After filming a sex scene with a pig, his genitals began to rot.
3. A weeping female voice: 34 years old. EMT nurse. Has been dreaming about ripping out her heart and then putting it back in for ten years.
4. A hesitant male voice: 14 years old. Middle-schooler. Pubescent. The first time he masturbated!
5. A wavering female voice: 52 years old. Housewife. Watched *A Woman Under the Influence* when she was 20 and subsequently sent Jon Cassavetes hundreds of letters. She received just one response; inside the envelope, there were several strands of pubic hair.

I try to imagine the cows' true identity. While I do that, DB continues to bring forth the cows, tears flowing.

*Why are you crying? I am curious.
Are you hurt somewhere?
Is someone bothering you?
Do you want a hamburger?
Are you having trouble hearing your father's voice?*

I keep asking her questions, but DB does not answer. She steps away from me and sits on the bed, sniffling.

I open the window. A cool breeze blows in. I see the nest that is refreshing like peppermint. I think I catch the scent of you, too, from somewhere. I look around, trying to find where it is coming from.

This very moment, when the trees jostle against one another!
You tore apart the taut sky and hid away.
I hear the sound of you grasping my hand and letting go.

What do I do? As time passes, Dad's face gets dimmer and dimmer. I miss Dad, but I don't remember him that well. It's because of the cows, but also because of other things that are on my mind these days. I spend a lot of time wondering whether I should be a scientist or a teacher or a florist or a pilot. I can hear Dad's voice and remember his face only if I pull myself together and spend the whole day focusing.

DB is close to tears. I gaze at the nest that is pregnant with triplets. The nest that smells of bread gave birth to DB's father.

*You fell asleep while waiting for me, didn't you, you pig!
I'm sad too.
Good night, good day.*

I gaze at the nest that has come under suspicion. There are eight flamingos loitering around it. They gather in one place and then scatter in different directions. They vanish into the clouds. They reappear and fly toward the nest. They come together and perch upon the nest that is subordinate to time. You are not there.

*Don't leave me and go, safari.
I just want to rest now, in a forest in the north.*

I'm scared. That I won't be able to remember Dad anymore, DB says.

She comes into my arms again. I hold DB tightly.

I know something about you, DB whispers into my chest after some time.

It's not a cow, it's DB's voice. I look down at her. DB stares blankly at me. A pebble. Teacup.

You're not a human or a cow. Right? DB asks.

Your words do not confuse me like those of a cow, DB says softly.

I hear your voice crisply and clearly, without any interference. DB's voice grows louder.

And it doesn't hurt me like human speech does, DB adds.

That's why I like you, DB murmurs into my chest.

I look at DB. DB's eyes gleam as if seducing me. I lose myself in DB's gaze.

Before I know it, DB falls asleep against my chest. Holding her, I look out at the nest that yearn for like a cellmate. In that moment, one of the eight flamingos flies toward the sky. Although I've tried before, I've never been able to properly describe a flamingo's flight toward the sky. The moment I describe it, it is no longer a flamingo.

DB, do you see that flock of flamingos?

I can't believe that your father was at the nest that is brilliant like an aurora, I murmur to myself.

I think of Nick Drake.
I'm five. My death is a ladder in October.

DB, have you been in love too?

Have you ever seen the flamingo whom I love?

DB, DB, DB, DB...

DB...

May 17

Flamingos are pentagons.
 Your heart?
 Somersaulting
 Bull
 DB is not scarlet
 Bull, somersaulting

May 18

I've decided to stay with DB in my room starting tonight.
 Scaredy-cat DB.

They say Quixano died at the hot spring Hells in Yufuin.

Poor DB.

It can still be a masterpiece even if it's written poorly.

May 19

The flamingos' destination: Seoraksan Mountain, Washington

Fog and flamingo
 Dusk and needle
 Water
 The juror is a flamingo!

May 20

His scent. The sound of footsteps. It is the Osprey. I can sense him. He will soon knock on the door. Just as I predicted, not long after, I hear the sound of his knocking. I nod at DB. She hides under the bed. I adjust my clothing and take a deep breath. I fold away the flamingo deep inside my human body.

Don't hide even if you're scared. Be proud and cut off his head. Chop-chop.

Under the bed, DB is huddled in fright.

Snowy fields
 Extinct species

DB, I will protect you.

After whispering to DB, I open the door. Just as I assumed, it is the Osprey. The Osprey is bristling his feathers as if he is very angry. As if it is breeding season, he makes his body large by swelling his shoulders and belly. Though I do not let it show, I am intimidated.

The Osprey sticks his head through the open door. He looks around the flamingo brain, sniffing and smacking his lips. I imagine the Osprey snatching up frail DB and flying through the air. I feel her shaking under the bed. I block him from entering the flamingo brain.

Brain tumor
Glacier
Rice germ

The Osprey stops looking around and rests his gaze on me. With a serious expression, he tells me that in a few days there will be a protest march happening from downtown to the submissive nest. I nod at him. The Osprey tells me to join the protest. I tell him I will think about it. As I am about to close the door, he grabs it. He is stronger than me. I have no choice but to let him into the room. The Osprey glances around, searching. Flustered, I look back and forth from DB to the slender nest outside the window. I catch sight of the flamingos that flee to the backside of the emaciated nest. Hurry, run away. Go further.

Rope writhing knife death by hanging

Lion dance pill funeral hall.

The Osprey looks at the bed, head tilted.

*Last Sunday I did a handstand.
I bought yellow shoes at a department store.
I got a rash on my eyeball I am a rash.*

Don't you hear something? The Osprey asks.
I don't hear anything, I say, pretending not to notice.

So even Virginia Woolf wrote a diary.

Damn cow, keep it down, I mutter.

Don't you hear a human voice? the Osprey asks with a deeply suspicious expression on his face.
It sounds like a man's voice, or a woman's voice, or a child's voice. Or there's more than one person.

The Osprey once again whips his eyes around the flamingo brain.

Not sure, do you need my signature? I say this so I can quickly send the Osprey on his way.

But the Osprey tells me he doesn't need signatures anymore, just that I should join the protest. If we all gather our strength, we can finally get that cursed building demolished, he says in fluent human-speak.
Sly bastard. I'll turn you into fish food. I'll make put you to sleep in front of a fortune-teller. Even in death, I'll make the fortune-teller tell your fate.

Instead of answering, I close the door. I feel the Osprey's piercing glare through the door. I feel DB shaking under the bed.

DB, I don't think you will be able to eat any hamburgers for some time, I whisper in her direction.

May 21

I inferred some facts.

DB calls the nest her dad's will.
DB calls the nest her home.

DB calls the nest a graveyard.

DB calls the nest a phantom.
 DB calls the nest a sailboat.
 DB calls the nest a bracelet.
 DB calls the nest an ammonite.

DB calls the nest a calf.

DB calls the nest a laundromat.
 DB calls the nest fallen leaves.

DB calls the nest an ambulance.

DB says she wants to go to the nest.

May 22

You're in love with someone, aren't you? DB asks.
What is love? I ask back.
An elephant looking at a calendar, DB responds.
A grandma having an eye exam, DB adds.
That someone isn't human, right? DB asks.

Continue to “The Man Who Became a Flamingo (3)”
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