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Flower Boy

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FLOWER BOY

I stared into the mirror in front of me. I was terrified because the person looking back at me was not the person I know. The body that stared back at me in that mirror was not the body I recognized.

In many ways, I looked the same as I always did. I was the same height, the same weight, the same brown hair, crooked teeth, freckles. It was the little differences. My skin was pale. My eyes, once a light hazel, were now a deep red, like an apple. The inside of my mouth tasted different. It was faintly sweet, like honey. I even smelled different. I wasn't wearing deodorant, but it wasn't normal body odor. I smelled like mildew.

My arms felt itchy, like something was tugging at them. I took off my hoodie and gasped.

Flowers. There were flowers on my arms. Some were little buds, poking out like ingrown hairs, but some were in full bloom. They had five long, thin petals each, in bright red. They weren't like any flowers I had seen before. They were a unique species. I pulled on one. I plucked it from me, and a stinging pang ran up my arm. The stem was still on me. They were growing out of my arms.

I looked at my hands. The veins that ran blue before were now a deep, dark green, like vines. I staggered back, as a thousand thoughts ran through my head. If I cut myself, what color would come out? Would my blood be red or green or brown like sap?

I stared at my eyes again. Tears were beginning to well up. My eyes were bloodshot: again, green veins. I looked closer at my hair. There, too, I saw flower bulbs beginning to sprout.

I threw my sweatshirt back on and pulled the hood over my sprouting hair. No one could see this. I didn't want to look at it anymore. I didn't want to see this person, this thing that was not me staring back.

It's been two days now. I haven't left the house. I haven't even opened the blinds. I can't let them see me. I have food, and water. But the flowers are starting to wilt, and I'm getting sicker all the time. I need sunlight. Sooner or later, I'm gonna have to go outside.

GEORGE KENNETT