

Reflex Fiction

Quarterly international flash fiction competition.



Yellow Straw, Red Straw

BY [KATHRYN ALDRIDGE-MORRIS](#) - 16 JANUARY 2023

At some point, we'll forget the rabbit's name, how it came to die, the rush we were in to bury it, and when people ask, we'll shrug, and Vince will snarl his upper lip in the way his body's patterned to do since we went into care. But right now, we tip marbles and red and yellow plastic straws onto the kitchen floor of this latest house and lump Nibbles' body, still warm from the tumble dryer, into the Ker Plunk box. I fetch straw from his hutch and pack him in, nice and cosy. It's Vince's idea to bury him under the willow in the back garden, so we take an edge each and carry the Hasbro coffin into the chill autumn air. Vince digs a shallow grave with his scarred hands, and I lay the box in the earth. I give a short speech – you were a good rabbit, you never bit etc. etc. – and Vince pulls a carrot from his back pocket and drops it in. Maybe it was that. The carrot. Maybe that was the moment when we just kinda knew we were good at this. Burying bodies. And killing things. Or maybe it was when we heard our foster mother scream and we ran back into the kitchen to find her lying on her back, legs akimbo like Woody in *Toy Story*, her head bleeding out over the marbles. In years to come they'll say we didn't kill her. They'll say you poor things, write about childhoods lost.

They'll even say we didn't kill the rabbit. But right now, we know we've got to get rid of another body, the branches of the willow whisper us back and we've never felt so vital, so alive.

This story was longlisted in the Winter 2022 Reflex flash fiction competition.

Flash Fiction by Kathryn Aldridge-Morris

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"Powerful writing as strong and inspiring as the writer. Hannah Storm's short stories about little moments reveal far bigger truths about a wider, often wicked, world."

Lyse Doucet, BBC Chief International Correspondent



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