

They can see him. If they can see him, there's a problem. A couple of robins on a powerline. A daily reenacting the same limb-twitching routine. Quick flutter of the left wing, followed by a left-leaning neck crack into a 90° head swing to the right. Center the head. A single "twee", followed by a full flap of both wings as the legs shift slightly leftward.

"Motherfuckers."

Everyday around noonish, the window produces a near-perfect reprint of the prior. Today is not much different, besides it being a tad overcast and muggy. Most days he has to wear sunglasses to watch; today he's sucking down the scene unfiltered.

"I hate these damn birds."

Grandma stabs at the T.V remote with a bloated diabetes finger.

*"Don't use Cognex if-*"

*"Babies-*"

*"Bite force-*"

*"Try our all-new-*"

*"Tornado watch in effect-*"

"David!" she hollers through a wall of Marie Callender's, dirty clothes, Beanie Babies and bugs.

"They're back on the wire ma!"

The rightmost bird shits. The left one locks eyes with David – then shits. He ducks below the windowsill, still watching. He can smell something... damp. The T.V quiets.

Grandma lifts herself from a Clifford-red fat person recliner and into her tennis-ball-toed walker. The house groans at her rising, aching as she does while she "badumps" across the floor.

"Motherfuckers." she rasps.

Grandma smells sickeningly flowery today. A pungent mega-bundle of Marigold and sandalwood something-or-another.

"You smell lovely today ma."

"It's the Lord's signature, boy. Let me have a look at the bastards."

He scuttles around her bulk, continuing to peer over her shoulder while spearing the birds with a furious look and a finger-made crucifix. She slams her palms against the glass.

"Git! Git outta here!"

One of them trills and the other flaps for a second but doesn't fly away.

"GIT!"

Nothing happens.

"GOD DAMN YOU!" she wails.

Great-uncle Damien drove his Suzuki at a D.C bike show and died. Grandma swore to him that Japanese shamans cursed that bike. Great-uncle Damien never wore a cross around his neck like Grandma. He never prayed at Pearl Harbor and he kept riding that Japanese bike. He didn't listen and now—

"Get the Jesus statue, David!"

"Which one, ma?"

"Any of 'em!"

In each room of the house there are at least three statuettes of Jesus. Some of them are dirty and discolored, rubbed faceless from years of needed luck. Some are slick with various stinking oils, missing limbs, or lacking craftsmanship. David grabs a mid-sized Christ, slick and dripping with geranium oil. The form is decent. Nothing particularly wrong with this one.

"Hold it up for 'em!"

He grabs the statue by the base, dropping to his knees and holding it up for the birds to see without his body in the frame. Some of the oil begins to drip down his forearm and into the pocket of his elbow.

"How long I gotta do this for?"

She joins her hands together with a meaty clap and pouts while producing a tear. She closes her eyes. Opens. Realizes she can't see God through the mess of clouds outside. Closes.

"Dear God, relieve us of our sins, and of the sins of our lost Damien. He made a mistake that can't be forgiven. The devil had his hand but not mine, Lord."

Clear and runny mucus is flowing from her nose down to her chin.

"Make them stop, please. Tell them folks over at the Oval Office to stop sending these evil drones to our door. They're droppin' toxins into our soil to punish us for Damien's mistake. I beg you, Lord. I beg you for forgiveness. Ame—"

“Ma... MA!”

She opens her eyes to the horrific image of a hummingbird buzzing an inch away from the window, drooling at the sight of the geranium-soaked Jesus.

“OH MY GOD!”

David cradles the statue like a football and sled-pull charges his way outside while grandma cowers and screams into her toenails. The hummingbird flies away before David makes it to the lawn.

“NO, DAVID! THEY’RE GONNA KILL YOU!”

“Enough is enough”, he thought to himself. Nobody, not even the government was going to scare his dear old mama like that.

“MOTHERFUCKERS!”

He’s swinging around that statue of Jesus in the most primal of ways, with every tendon in his arm rippling and angular. He closes his eyes while he spins to the pulsing of his grandma’s dopplered shrieking. David is an impenetrable vortex of pain that no living being would ever dare to touch. Except, the hummingbird must’ve been blind or something because it flew right into him while he was spinning – eviscerated into a scintillating Christmas-cloud of emerald feathers and angry blood.

Grandma is revolted because clearly, that wasn’t a drone. I mean, drones aren’t filled with blood and guts, right? She isn’t just disgusted but completely bewildered and borderline dissociating from a massive pump of cortisol. What even makes sense anymore? Is she dying? She feels like she’s dying.

David continues to swirl, somehow holding onto that statue of Jesus slick with geranium oil and bird soup until — it slips. It slips right out of his hands and launches itself in a perfect spiral, sprinkling oil everywhere. The clouds crack and deliver the delicious golden yolk of UV radiance as Jesus body slams one of the robins. David blinks into the light. Grandma falls to the floor clutching her chest.

There's a hovering mass of film tape, microchip dust, CPU pins and some formless circuitry drifting in the cool breeze. The other bird tweets and flaps its wings for a second.

“THAT ONE’S FOR UNCLE DAMIEN!”

