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NADA KNOT

He was a young man. He had gone twelve years without catching a fish on the fly. He had never fished with the fly. Now he had to face the knot of the fly. He had never done the knot. The old man always tied the knot. He wished that the old man were here but he was not.

“Fish,” he said, “You are the friend of the old man and he kills you. It is love, this killing. I can not knot. If you cannot knot, you cannot truly kill your love.”

The young man thought, “If only the old man were here, but he is not.”

He remembered the last words of the old man, “Cuidado los quitos!”

He noticed them first by the sound. You always notice them first by the sound. When you hear the sound, the sound that they make, your insides go all moist and soft.

“Hijos of mothers!” he swore.

They came in a feeding frenzy, lusting for blood; biting, sticking, sucking, defecating. He fought them with the only weapons he had; arms flailed in wild slashing cuts, hands slapped and splattered red tissue, feet stamped great gouges in the good black swamp mud.

They were too much for him. He was a mass of welts and corrupted flesh. He felt defeated. They had taken his blood but he was not destroyed.

Slowly he climbed to his shack. It was a filthy, poorly lit place. He lay down beside his rod, on top of his reel; his head cradled in his creel.

Today was nada. But there would be other days and all tomorrows were not nada.

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