

Yellow

Yellow

Yellow

Yellow

Yellow

Yellow

Yellow

Yellow

Yellow

Contents

Life Seen in Yellow
by Laura Popa

Yellow
by Isabella van Berkel

Yellow, jaune, geel, amarillo
by Mika Sastrokarijo

Almost Yellow
by Anonymous

On the theme of the theme of yellow
by Hugh Raggett

A conversation with Maggie
by Anonymous

YELLOW(ISH)
by Federico Arcuri

Yellow feigns innocence to hide cruelty.
by Anonymous

The Perfect Leaf.
by Tess Timmermans

My saviour from the golden yellow
by Ingen

LIFE SEEN IN YELLOW

A lot of my memories are yellow.

Just as almost every kid on this planet I used a yellow pencil to fill the left corner of a blank paper.

Yellow looked like a sun on a silly drawing.

My dad was driving to the sea passing by sunflower fields in the summer.

Yellow looked like bright, daring sunflowers.

The car's speakers were blasting joyful songs and my family was singing along.

Yellow sounded then like them.

A few years went by and I began to appreciate the autumn feeling rather than the summer.

Yellow was less bright and more calming. It sounded raspy, like autumn leaves being crushed by my feet.

On some days yellow tasted like fizzy apple cider. It sounded like friends laughing their hearts out.

At some point yellow smelt like the boy with blonde hair and blue eyes, the smell of woods after it had rained.

Yes, yellow was warm, restless, confident, even charming.

But it tasted bittersweet.

One day yellow looked horrible, like a frightened gaze on a pale face.

For some time, I couldn't even see yellow anymore – it was too bright.

That summer I had to relearn how to accept yellow.

When enough time has passed, yellow came back into my life.

It seemed like hundreds of people were singing their favorite songs together.

Oh, yellow was exciting again. It looked like new people every day, like a sunflower growing when watered.

Occasionally it looked scary and lonely.

A few months ago, it appeared blurred for the first time.

I couldn't recognize this color anymore.

Yellow was all these things for me.

What is yellow like for you?

by Laura Popa

When her hands worked, idly threading and casting and stitching, the sun shone down on them. A soft yellow.

When she would cook, spices and herbs would color my favorite curry. A brownish yellow.

When my first birthday came around, she made me my birthday cake, the icing on it a fruity flavor. A sunny yellow.

When she would tell me stories of the past she would smile and laugh and cry, telling me how her white clothes were so worn that they were no longer white when freedom finally came. A pastel yellow.

When she painted, she did so patiently, carefully, mixing and mixing and mixing colors until they became hers. A mellow yellow.

When she let me draw on her bed, where I sharpened my crayons on her white bedsheets, staining them beyond redemption, she told me she quite liked her newly dyed sheets. Crayola yellow.

When she taught me how to put on lip gloss as a child, she took off my new scarf to make sure I didn't get any gloss on that lovely color. A canary yellow.

When she would wake up and feed the hummingbirds their sugary water, sweet and reminiscent of nectar, their little wings would flutter faster than I could see, their feathers reflecting the daylight. A golden yellow.

When my mother was at work and I spent the afternoons at her house, she would wait on the driveway and smile at me as the brightly colored school bus dropped me off. Safety yellow.

When she taught me how to play cards until dark, the lamp above the dining table illuminated us. A flickering yellow.

When we would spend Christmases at her house, she would laugh and blush as the champagne caught up to her, seated in that old comfortable chair. A dusty yellow.

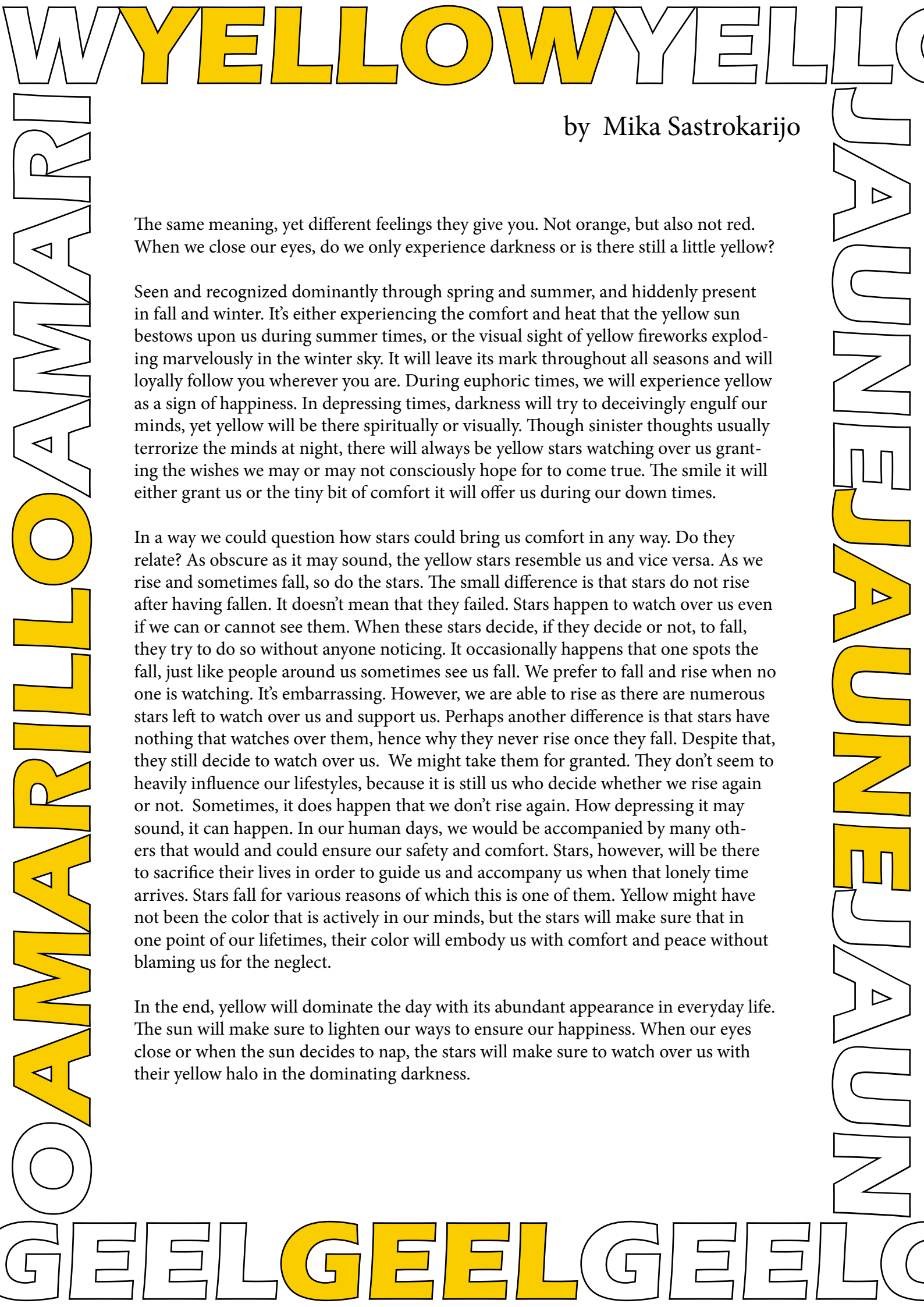
When I saw her for the last time, she smiled brightly my way as we hugged goodbye, the comfort of a home nestling deep within my chest. A warm yellow.

When she died, the autumn sun cast a soft light all over the beautiful white flowers. A sad yellow.



Yellow

by Isabella van Berkel



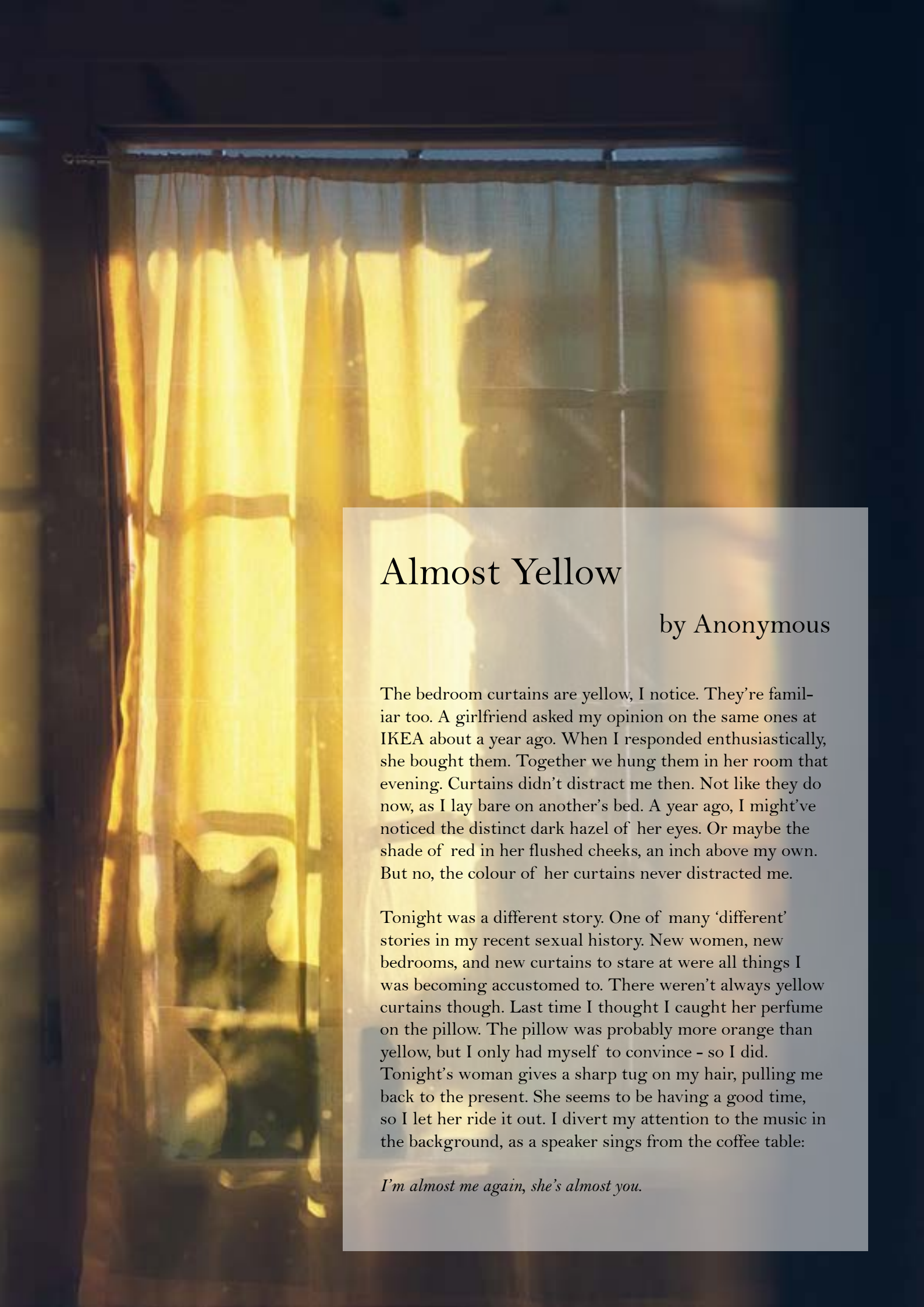
by Mika Sastrokarijo

The same meaning, yet different feelings they give you. Not orange, but also not red. When we close our eyes, do we only experience darkness or is there still a little yellow?

Seen and recognized dominantly through spring and summer, and hiddenly present in fall and winter. It's either experiencing the comfort and heat that the yellow sun bestows upon us during summer times, or the visual sight of yellow fireworks exploding marvelously in the winter sky. It will leave its mark throughout all seasons and will loyally follow you wherever you are. During euphoric times, we will experience yellow as a sign of happiness. In depressing times, darkness will try to deceptively engulf our minds, yet yellow will be there spiritually or visually. Though sinister thoughts usually terrorize the minds at night, there will always be yellow stars watching over us granting the wishes we may or may not consciously hope for to come true. The smile it will either grant us or the tiny bit of comfort it will offer us during our down times.

In a way we could question how stars could bring us comfort in any way. Do they relate? As obscure as it may sound, the yellow stars resemble us and vice versa. As we rise and sometimes fall, so do the stars. The small difference is that stars do not rise after having fallen. It doesn't mean that they failed. Stars happen to watch over us even if we can or cannot see them. When these stars decide, if they decide or not, to fall, they try to do so without anyone noticing. It occasionally happens that one spots the fall, just like people around us sometimes see us fall. We prefer to fall and rise when no one is watching. It's embarrassing. However, we are able to rise as there are numerous stars left to watch over us and support us. Perhaps another difference is that stars have nothing that watches over them, hence why they never rise once they fall. Despite that, they still decide to watch over us. We might take them for granted. They don't seem to heavily influence our lifestyles, because it is still us who decide whether we rise again or not. Sometimes, it does happen that we don't rise again. How depressing it may sound, it can happen. In our human days, we would be accompanied by many others that would and could ensure our safety and comfort. Stars, however, will be there to sacrifice their lives in order to guide us and accompany us when that lonely time arrives. Stars fall for various reasons of which this is one of them. Yellow might have not been the color that is actively in our minds, but the stars will make sure that in one point of our lifetimes, their color will embody us with comfort and peace without blaming us for the neglect.

In the end, yellow will dominate the day with its abundant appearance in everyday life. The sun will make sure to lighten our ways to ensure our happiness. When our eyes close or when the sun decides to nap, the stars will make sure to watch over us with their yellow halo in the dominating darkness.



Almost Yellow

by Anonymous

The bedroom curtains are yellow, I notice. They're familiar too. A girlfriend asked my opinion on the same ones at IKEA about a year ago. When I responded enthusiastically, she bought them. Together we hung them in her room that evening. Curtains didn't distract me then. Not like they do now, as I lay bare on another's bed. A year ago, I might've noticed the distinct dark hazel of her eyes. Or maybe the shade of red in her flushed cheeks, an inch above my own. But no, the colour of her curtains never distracted me.

Tonight was a different story. One of many 'different' stories in my recent sexual history. New women, new bedrooms, and new curtains to stare at were all things I was becoming accustomed to. There weren't always yellow curtains though. Last time I thought I caught her perfume on the pillow. The pillow was probably more orange than yellow, but I only had myself to convince - so I did. Tonight's woman gives a sharp tug on my hair, pulling me back to the present. She seems to be having a good time, so I let her ride it out. I divert my attention to the music in the background, as a speaker sings from the coffee table:

I'm almost me again, she's almost you.

A writer sat in a quiet corner, pencil twirling between their fingers. Their eyes mechanically read and re-read a short list of points scribbled across a sheet ripped from one of their many notebooks. Above the list was the title, Yellow. The points beneath read,

-yellow objects: taxi (not in NL), yellow vest (too political)

-associated tastes/smells: lemon/citrus? ginger?

-symbolic meanings:

The pencil hadn't touched the paper in nearly half an hour and the writer was getting impatient. Just as they began considering tearing the sheet into pieces, the writer was almost blinded as sunlight tumbled through the little window above their desk (the only source of light in the writing room). They looked up through the window to see the morning's grey clouds clearing, dark dreariness replaced with bright radiance. The sudden intensity of the sky's blue stood out to the writer. They glanced down at their now glowing list of notes, looked back up and smiled. "Maybe," they thought, "if I go out for a walk in this sunlight I'll come across something I can write about. Something with all the essence, flavour and meaning of the colour yellow!"

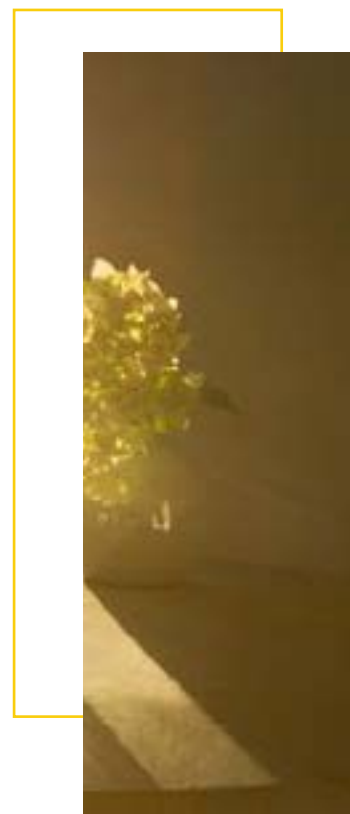


On the theme of the theme of yellow

by Hugh Raggett

Stepping out into the young warmth, they decided to head to the forest at the end of their street, where fallen autumn leaves carpeted well-trodden dirt paths. Wandering aimlessly, they kicked away leaves every few steps, revealing the glistening wet brown underneath. When suddenly a dog yelped from an uncertain location in the trees ahead of them, the writer froze. The sound reminded them of a local dog that had bitten them as a child (a golden retriever, to be precise). With a familiar shudder, they scanned their surroundings for a path that would take them as far as possible from the hound and headed down it – out of the forest and into a field of sunflowers. Forgetting their panic, the writer stopped to admire the view. Alone in the sea of monochrome, a small poppy caught their attention. Despite its size, this flower's colour – a piercing red the writer rarely saw in nature – was striking. "Red," thought the writer, "is a colour I'd write about. A colour that stands out against any other colour. The colour of blood, passion, revolution! A colour that means something wherever it's put." Remembering their task, they sighed. "Yellow... yellow... I have nothing to say about yellow. I feel nothing when I think of the colour yellow. I could write about any other colour! Why in the world did it have to be yellow?"

Back at home, the writer decided to do some schoolwork, hoping to find unexpected inspiration. They played an album in the background – Parachutes by Coldplay, a childhood favourite too familiar to be distracting. They read and took notes for the next day's lecture on political philosophies. The writer became frustrated upon reaching a chapter about the relationship between liberalism and right-libertarian economics – ideologies the writer felt disagreeably predisposed towards – and gave up taking notes. Wanting silence now, they turned off the music just as track four, Sparks, was coming to an end. They left the writing room sulking and plodded into the kitchen for a drink. All they had in their fridge was a carton of orange juice, so they poured themselves some and stared cross-eyed into the bottom of the glass as they drank. With their vision bathed in brightness and their palate washed with the fresh tang of the juice, it struck them: "This is yellow!" They set down the glass and smiled to themselves. "The flavour... it's essence... orange juice is yellow!" Then they sighed. "But it is also orange juice."



‘So, how come you never wear yellow?’ Maggie asked me. It was a rainy day in October and we were sitting on the edge of a bridge with our feet dangling above Oregon’s Rogue River. It was a fair question, since in the five days we’d known each other I’d basically worn every single colour visible to the human eye except yellow, but still it wasn’t a question I’d particularly see coming. It also wasn’t a question I particularly loved answering. After all, it was the reason I decided to start over. I looked at the dirt underneath my Doc Martens and tried picking some off with a stick. ‘Hit a nerve there?’ Maggie looked me in the eyes. I hated it when she gave me that confronting look, though I was too drawn in by her eyes to turn away from her either. ‘No, no, it’s alright,’ I murmured. ‘It’s just... I don’t want you to think of me funny when I’m done explaining.’ Maggie looked puzzled, but nodded.

‘It all started when my great aunt Pandora passed away roughly half a year ago. I have never been close to her, so to be completely honest I wasn’t too sad about it. You should know that my great aunt was rich. Crazy, atrociously, ridiculously rich. She was the stereotypical aunt who wasn’t married, didn’t have kids and every once in a while would show up for Christmas dinner only to vanish again for an indefinite period of time. When she passed, her lawyer told me she left one of her most beloved jewelry pieces to me; the youngest woman in the family. It was a golden-shackled necklace with a yellow diamond attached to it. My aunt had written a note saying it was her dying wish to have me wear that necklace for her and carry on the ‘female grace of the family’, whatever that means. But hey, I’m not one to disrespect the dead, so the next day I wore it to school. That is when everything changed. As it turned out, my English professor was also a semi-professional lapidary and recognized my necklace.’

A conversation with Maggie

by Anonymous

‘My aunt’s necklace once belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots and ever since she’d been imprisoned in 1567 the necklace had been considered destroyed. My professor called it an absolute miracle that the piece had survived and called the local newspaper. He told me the diamond alone was worth millions. From that moment on, the news started snowballing. I got invited to interviews, met the mayor, and went to the most amazing museums. Within the span of days, I became ‘the girl behind the yellow diamond’ and got enormous amounts of attention. At first I thought it was flattering, but soon I started resenting that necklace. Whenever I met new people, I never knew whether the connection was genuine or if people just wanted to take a quick look at that stupid yellow stone. When a couple of months ago, my now ex-boyfriend told me that if it weren’t for that yellow diamond, he probably never would have dated me, I was done. That same day, I threw the necklace away.’

I took a deep breath. I noticed my heart was pounding.

‘It’s the reason I hate sunsets, autumn leaves, my naturally blonde hair, omelettes, everything. The colour yellow is ruined for me, because I was once controlled by it. I won’t let that happen again.’

Maggie put her arm around me and whispered, ‘I’ll make you fall in love with sunsets again, if you let me.’

YELLOW(ISH)

by Federico Arcuri

“Is it still raining?”

“As usual. Why?”

“Shit. I have to go out to print some stuff. And I have to go by bike. Karma, I guess.”

“Can you print something for me too? Only one page.”

“Sure. What is it?”

“Just the self-declaration I’ll be asked about tomorrow at the airport. You know, we live in a Red zone now.”

He already knew that I would be leaving the following day. And I had already told him that I would go back to my country for a few days to attend my aunt’s wedding. “Boring”, he had commented. I was not excited at all, indeed. I didn’t like the idea of going back to the place where all my friends lived without having enough time to see them, only because of this boring wedding. I had been living in a new country for only one month, and I was finally starting to get used to it. It had been a hard and tiring process, but eventually I was creating my own daily routine, which is very important when you are completely alone, far from the place you were used to call home. And, most importantly, I had started to feel attached to a few people, and I needed to know that I could see these people as my new friends. And I felt that this journey back to my home country risked interrupting this process abruptly. The sound of the rain, which had characterized the last few hours, helped me to focus on this flow of thoughts.

In the meanwhile, my roommate already had the time to cycle to the University Library, print his and my copies, and come back, under the chilly rain. Yes, I had been overthinking, and for quite a long time.

“Fuck, I’m soaking wet. Cycling wasn’t the best idea. Here’s your document by the way. I could only print it on this low-quality recycled paper, I’m sorry.”

“Thanks mate! And don’t worry about the paper. It’s actually the first time I’ve seen this kind of yellowish thick paper. We have to try everything at least once, I guess.”

“It’s just yellow paper, stop philosophizing about it.”

It was just paper, indeed. As I started filling the document, I quickly forgot the conversation. In order to take the plane, I had to declare that I had not noticed any suspicious symptom lately. I started to answer the first questions, the ones that are usually supposed to be filled in automatically, without thinking. What is your First name, Family name, Date of birth... the usual. But then, something completely unexpected happened. The next question, which is usually very straightforward too, left me bewildered for a few minutes: “Where is your residence?”. In other words, “Where do you live?”. It was the first time in my life I was not completely sure of how to answer this question, and this made me feel an extremely unusual sensation of emptiness and dismay. Where did I live? Instinctively, I was tempted to write my usual address, the one I had been used to writing for the past 18 years. But now things had changed and, emotionally, I wanted to write my new address. Maybe, the reason was that I felt the necessity to confirm my belonging to this new “home”. However, I was pretty sure that I was still resident in my home country, from a legal point of view. And, since it was a formal document, probably I should have chosen that answer. But, for some reasons, I was blocked, I could not move or speak, I was simply lost in my thoughts, experiencing a confusing sensation that I had never felt in my whole – even if relatively short – life. The pen was firm in my hand, ready to carry out its task, but for some reasons no words came out of it. The yellow paper was to remain yellow.

“Are you ok?”

“Yes.”

“Ready to go out for a beer?”

“Yes.”

Yellow feigns innocence to hide cruelty.

by Anonymous

The Italian sun on your green eyes which gives them a yellow sparkle. The daylight on those early mornings in Rome. The walls of houses throughout the city. The limes in the trees at that cute restaurant. All those yellow signs scream innocence, but are you really? The setting was perfect for love, but it wasn't for me. Because yellow can easily turn into red if you're not careful. That's why they're called red flags, like our camp fires during the summer or the end of your cigarettes. Yellow was my pre-warning sign, like the middle of a stop sign. Those bright yellow lights are charging you with my sleepless nights. You couldn't have known how much I craved to see the yellow tone in your skin up close, to touch it, and most of all, to be touched by it. And yet you're guilty, and even if you're not guilty, you're definitely not innocent. I've come that far. You were yellow, you might've faked your innocence, but you weren't hiding your cruelty, if you even have any. I don't think so. Things are good the way they are, we are good.

However, those yellow signs were there, feigning innocence to hide someone's cruelty. Whose was it? I have a theory. Like I said, the yellow signs were signs of romance, but they weren't for me, and were therefore telling me to give you up. Also, there were others signs, warning me for her betrayal. Like she always used to tell people, her blue eyes could change colors too. I guess they were yellow when she was lying. Her yellow backpack. The sand on that beach, which might've become a bit darker after what happened there. Her manipulative stories, I call them yellow lies now. In my mind, you and her are both yellow. I've learned the hard way that none of you are innocent, but only one's cruel. Yellow feigned both of your innocence to hide her cruelty.

But you, you will always be the Adam to my Eve, my forbidden fruit, my lime.



The Perfect Leaf.

by Tess Timmermans

The sun beats down on the fallen leaves on this unusually warm October afternoon. A little girl skips along the sidewalk. Here and there she stops to examine the leaves. Her red rainboots stomp down in fresh puddles, left by a rain that stopped as suddenly and unexpectedly as the bright sun that followed. A small hand reaches out of a yellow raincoat and picks up a yellow leaf.

“Too orange,” the little girl mutters.

She picks up another.

“Too light,” she says.

She skips along before kneeling down in a pile of leaves. The girl’s blue jeans darken with water, but she doesn’t care. Rummaging through the pile, she carefully picks out a collection in various shades. One by one she studies them extensively.

“Too red.”

“Too many holes.”

“Not enough holes.”

“This isn’t a leaf, this is a piece of paper.”

With a huff the little girl stands up, carelessly throwing the leaves back into the pile. The piece of paper is tucked carefully in her clenched fist. The older brother had taught her all about pollution and she is fairly certain paper also counts. A name is called out from the house on the corner of the street. “Coming!” her small voice rings out. One last look at the pile, then she runs off.

A crow flies off from the opposite sidewalk.

The next day is marked by a slight drizzle. The little girl is joined by her father. Together they walk the paths of the nearby park, the father carrying an empty bag. The bag is gradually filled with acorns and pinecones. A few leaves make it into the bag, but none are the perfect leaf. A crow watches them from the overhead trees.

“Too small,” the little girl says.

“Too big,” the father judges another. “But better than nothing.” The little girl agrees. The leaf is added to the bag.

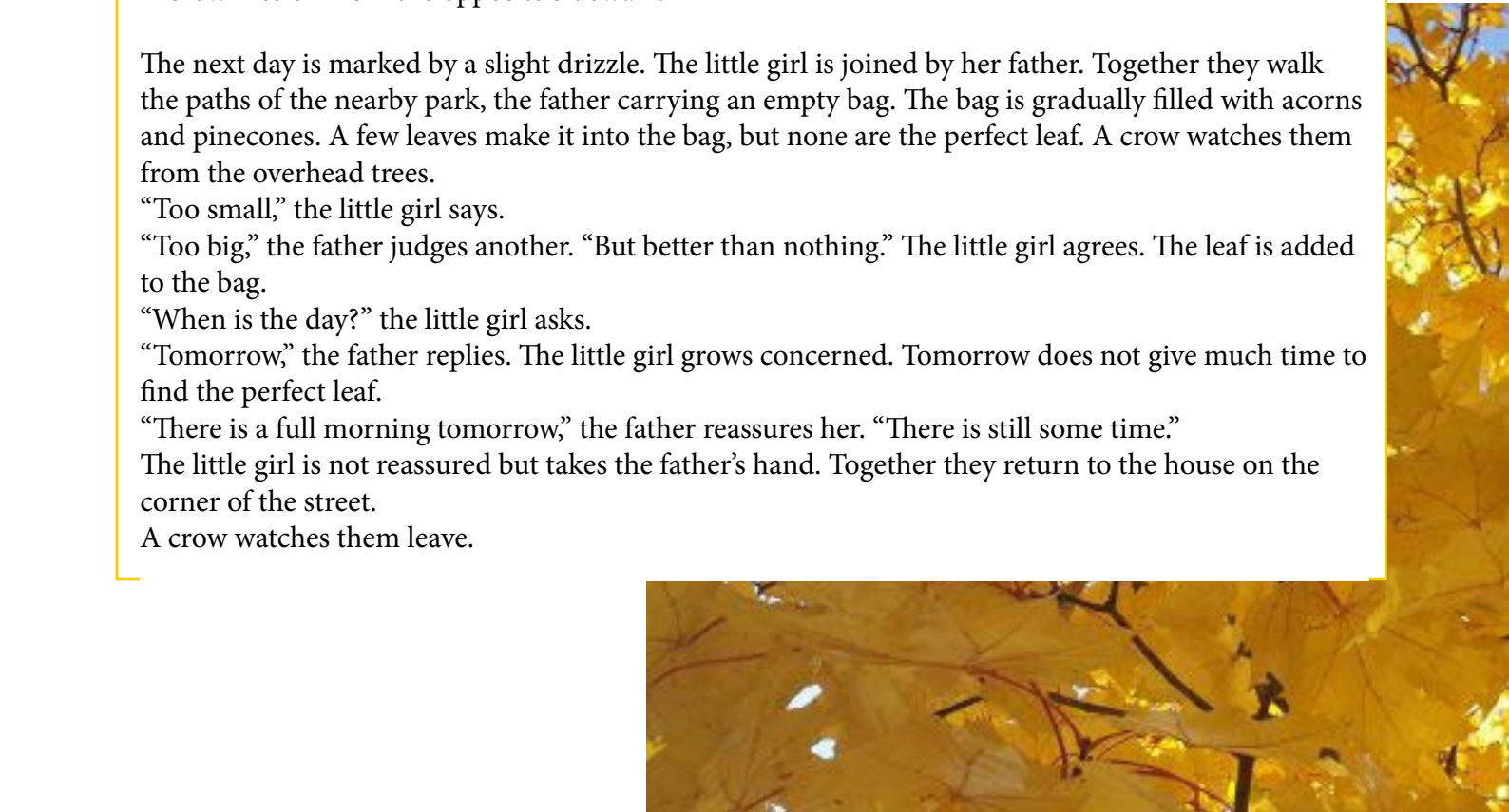
“When is the day?” the little girl asks.

“Tomorrow,” the father replies. The little girl grows concerned. Tomorrow does not give much time to find the perfect leaf.

“There is a full morning tomorrow,” the father reassures her. “There is still some time.”

The little girl is not reassured but takes the father’s hand. Together they return to the house on the corner of the street.

A crow watches them leave.





The next day is marked by a slight drizzle. The little girl is joined by her father. Together they walk the paths of the nearby park, the father carrying an empty bag. The bag is gradually filled with acorns and pinecones. A few leaves make it into the bag, but none are the perfect leaf. A crow watches them from the overhead trees.

“Too small,” the little girl says.

“Too big,” the father judges another. “But better than nothing.” The little girl agrees. The leaf is added to the bag.

“When is the day?” the little girl asks.

“Tomorrow,” the father replies. The little girl grows concerned. Tomorrow does not give much time to find the perfect leaf.

“There is a full morning tomorrow,” the father reassures her. “There is still some time.”

The little girl is not reassured but takes the father’s hand. Together they return to the house on the corner of the street.

A crow watches them leave.

The next day is the day. The sun shines brightly. The little girl wakes early and continues her search for the leaf. She searches in the overgrown garden where she is not allowed to be, but today she doesn’t care. The longer the girl searches, the more desperate she grows. The perfect leaf is nowhere to be found. She throws a rock in frustration, and a crow flies out from under the bushes.

The little girl’s name is called out from the house on the corner of the street. She now knows it is too late; she did not find the leaf.

They take the car. The mother holds the little girl tight. The little girl cries softly.

“I didn’t find the leaf,” she says.

“I know,” the mother replies, and kisses her head.

They enter through the heavy, iron gate. They walk the narrow paths together, mother, father and little girl. Their destination lies underneath a large oak tree. The father holds the mother close, both are crying. The little girl looks up at the crow sitting in the oak tree. When it flies off, a leaf falls down. The little girl smiles as she watches the perfect yellow leaf float down onto her brother’s grave.



My saviour from the golden yellow

by Ingen

After fighting in a dark night in snowy mountains, I had the chance to kill the dragon and fulfil my duty as a knight of the kingdom of New Land attacked by dragons many times recently. They had terrorised our innocent citizens, not leaving alive even the children. At least this was what I had heard.

I had wounded the dragon multiple times with my yellow sword; therefore, it was too exhausted to move its huge body. I stood in front of it, looking into its eyes, and then I took steps towards it, prepared to kill. This fight was coming to its end, to my victory.

“This is the end,” it said. “My thousand years long life ends, being slayed by a knight powerful enough to even beat me, the strongest among dragons. My species’ end is soon, I’m afraid.” I had to stop walking.

“This is fulfilling my duty,” I replied. “As your kind has terrorized the land that rightfully belongs to us.”

It had a very disappointed sound in its voice. “Rightfully? Am I too old to understand what you mean? Your species took that land, cut all trees, took it from its original inhabitants: the innocent animals and plants. Did you own the land? Didn’t it belong to others in the first place?”

The dragon’s point wasn’t new to me as it had come into my mind previously. Humanity had taken that land from others, coldly claimed it as theirs. Without letting the original inhabitants to voice their opinions. Had we taken it without any right, stolen it without having a second thought? After a short pause, the dragon continued: “What we did, we protected our homeland, until you little humans decided to take it from us. There we lived peacefully, without disturbance. But that paradise we lost because of your kind!” Its voice was angry but tired.

I tried to move next to the dragon to end its life, but my legs didn’t move. I felt pity for it, anger towards my species and kingdom. I did not want to damage it anymore, no matter what my sense of duty said. This was strange, as I had taken down dragons many times, but never had I stopped to think, as I was willing to avoid the emotion of regret. “That might be true,” I mumbled.

Suddenly, the morning came with a rising sun. The yellow sunshine came straight to my eyes, blinding me for a short, fateful moment. Then I felt a stabbing pain in my chest. Short time of feeling pity had cost my life: the dragon had pierced my stomach with its sharp nail, causing a fatal wound. “I smell it. You are afraid of death, aren’t you? You want vengeance, perhaps,” the dragon said. “But in the afterlife, you will be thankful.” I knew what it meant. “That blade should be destroyed, just as all golden yellow swords. You are saved, but how many out there will be consumed by those blades?”

All knights received yellow swords due to their power. They could pierce any armour. They gave their wielders power to fight even if the wielder otherwise could not even move, but with a terrible price. Once wielded, they consumed the wielder’s soul little by little, and that consumption could only be stopped by killing the wielder.

“You almost lost your soul; now you will have it back. Dying is better than being eaten by a golden yellow piece of metal,” it said. I managed to say: “You deserve a thank you from me.”