



# The Admiral's Cicada

by Nipaporn Baldwin  
The Society On Da Run #41

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## The Admiral's Cicada

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The alarm sounded throughout the halls of the base. Enemy airships were flying about and dropping bombs over the city. The soldiers in the base ran to the helicopters where they were dropped off in at the fortified positions around the perimeter of the dusty city. The remaining soldiers stayed behind to defend the base so the scientists could escape with important files and data. The specimen tank was the eye-candy of the mission and reason for the enemy's bold actions.

Deeper into the base Admiral Connelly fell out of his bed due to the force of the second attack. Everything had fallen off his bookcase, and he thanked God he had nothing important to care for. He had no family, no love, and no home except within the army. The Padania Mafia murdered his wife in Italy some summers back. He never returned to the country and wanted to hear nothing of it. His beautiful little girl, Ally, was killed as well. He could still hear her charming voice ringing in his ear like the sound of a thousand Higurashi singing high in their chorus.

"Daddy, I found another one!" she said long ago while they were still in Tuscany. He wished he had never ventured to Rome for any reason but what is stitched on time's back cannot be removed. The room shook again, and it made him worry.

"Sir!" Admiral Connelly looked at the young soldier at his door. The young man spoke, "They cannot get the specimen out! They are about to close the base, you must leave!"

The ground shook again and the lights in the hall dimmed. Connelly told the young man, "You go on, I'll catch up." It would be a few minutes left before they shut the doors to the base and initiate self-destruct. Again everything shook and a red box fell off the bookcase. The red box caught Connelly's attention. He picked it up and examined the words written on it with a blue Crayola crayon.

"cicadas"

He felt the world pause for him. He sat on the bed and opened the box, he almost cried when he saw the memory his daughter left him. Cicada exuviae, about three of them, lay on the cardboard surface of the little box. He remembered when Ally caught them off the trees and stuck them onto his back every morning before he went to work. He never knew she did that

until the day she confessed. On that day she died. Tears fell onto the dried cicada shells and his heart sunk with overwhelming sadness. The alarm was sounding and in reality time never paused.

“Base lockdown initiated. Self-destruct in 10...9...”

He didn't care. He didn't care. He wanted to see their shining faces again and watch Ally catch more cicadas. He didn't move. He didn't care anymore. He wanted to go.

“...6...5...4...3...2...1...”

The explosion burst into a bright orange fire, erasing everything held inside and collapsing the base upon itself, burying old secrets and dead memories.

Cicadine vistorio nell  
Iz ref'nam quasm Dracheuber  
Zi Oubrous vistorio z'yakfil  
Pi femme ou-mare shirr Est  
Fari tis resporantsa  
Femme fli Est 'yan

La cicala ha visitato oggi  
E 'stato nulla, ma preoccupato Dragon-man  
Un Angeli ha visitato il cortile  
E ha tenuto il suo uovo d'oro  
Dove si spense in rinascita  
Ha preso l'uovo via

The cicada visited today  
It was naught but worried Dragon-man  
An Angeli visited the courtyard  
And she held his golden egg  
When they faded away into rebirth  
She took the egg away



## The Crying Cicadas of Sunset

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Matthew was pushed over the edge  
A recent Facebook fight had caused his anger to boil over  
His so-called friends were fighting, and in an attempt to quell it, Matthew fell into it  
He wished his hands never touched the mouse  
He wanted to erase it from his memories

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**Jacob Cunningham:** who the fuck are you? calling us children? I have a job, did you get a car at 16?  
I don't give a shit what you've done.

**Matthew Broader:** @Jacob stay on Xbox live, you uneducated cockroach.  
I'm high class and have more sense than you.

**Denise Jasmine:** you say you're high class? you seem very immature. like I said earlier, grow up!

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He was also faced with the problems in his house  
His mother was abused by his Father,  
the Father always took the little sister into his room for rape  
and the Father had the nerve to verbally abuse Matthew

So he couldn't take it no more  
He was not going to kill himself, which were the default circumstances most students at Grayvill High faced  
He took his speckled orange-and-red dragon, Penn, and they headed outside to runaway  
They embarked on a quest to the Tree of Singing Sunset Sweet Cicadas

For seventeen days and seventeen nights, Matthew lived off his measly savings

And when they reached the tree, the legend had proven true  
Magicians were singin' and lovin' away  
Matthew sat under the tree and stroked the neck of his orange dragon  
Away from Facebook, away from the cruelty of humans  
Away from foul virtual worlds and insipid minds,  
Matthew found peace under this tree  
And the orange sunset and the forest down the hill made everything better

LA CICALA DI ITALIA  
CICADAS OF WRATH

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## Summer Cicada

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Julius Xanthor, god of the Cicada shifters, crossed the Narrow Sea  
Coming to a small isaland, untouched by human hands, he settled  
In summer light he made a tree his companion  
On summer afternoons he flew over the hills to survey his new kingdom

His children sang their shrill songs  
Most listeners thought of the sounds as bad omens

During orange sunsets, he relied on song to guide him to hi mate  
Purple, orange, blue  
He wanted to see her before darkness

When the earthquakes shook their trees  
They fled higher, higher  
His female fled with them, carrying her voiceless soul with her

By the time of his death, nearly unmated, he let himself fall  
Stuck on the autumn ground, summer was over  
He was nearly run over by a carriage when a female descended by him  
Clicking her wings, promising to continue his bloodline  
He embraced this happy change in events

## Winter Cicada

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“There are no bugs in winter,” said Bridget, “only their exuviae.”  
Dolores withdrew her sheath, examining the harsh reality of winter  
“I think the only fun we’ve ever had was that sleepover,” said Bridget  
Dolores giggled, “I know, right? Yolién was the best!”  
She smiled at the cicada on the tree  
No cicadas lived here  
Only their exuviae remain clinging to the trees  
The only remnant left of cicadas’ time is their song  
that plays over and over in her mind

Dolores rubbed her shoulders, feeling the cold of winter  
Hoping she hasn’t lost her soul  
“Fear not, young child,” she would say to her little brother, “for the cicadas will return.”  
That was so many months ago  
“soon you can run about with your net and  
catch as many as you can.”  
She felt she told a lie  
He was sleeping right now in the tent  
Gently sucking his fingers as he dreamed of a time before the dragons became upset

Dolores’s grandmother would sit on the porch and listen to the cicadas  
The heat, their song, the trees of the South and Dolores herself  
It was a midsummer’s dream for any family, to listen to the cries of ghosts that only  
cicadas can hear

she went back into the tent, turning her eyes away from the ruined land  
she caressed her brother’s soft hair. She whispered in his ear, “just close your eyes and  
sleep, dream of cicadas’ ever sweet,”  
she would rather say, “Or dream of the murders they witness with their six eyes”  
But she kept quiet

Creative drawings bring cicadas alive  
Intuitive songs include the bugs’ shrill cries  
Dolores had no sketching paper, no tape recorder  
Another two months to go before they return alive and anew  
Demanding words desire they return now, but  
Always they will be summer’s June bugs  
She always called them that  
June Bugs  
They will always witness a murder unsung  
A tree bound between power lines, they watch and listen while singing  
They watch the desires of murder unfold  
Dolores’s family, murdered by Crotonians during a roadtrip  
Her brother’s life—her life—was spared



## Spring Cicada

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*Spring is when flowers bloom  
Spring is when snow melts  
Spring is when warm weather begins  
Spring is when tree leaves grow*

Leigh handed the candle to her brother. With the flame at its tip, he lowered the candle to his prey. Strung up, shackled, a freshly caught dragon boy was hung for the observers to view. He was still alive, still kicking. Nimy and her cousins caught this boy strolling the packed streets of the city center. They asked him why an Italian dragon would travel to America.

The boy only replied, "to leave a golden egg that will shine hope on your pitiful lives."

Now he was the one feeling pity. He had been tortured many times in the past, mostly by the sacred owl shifter, Ida.

These teens knew no shame. They were adventurous, boisterous, daring and troubled. They hadn't a clue this boy was a dragon god. All they knew was that he was a dragon.

*Spring is when kites are flown outside  
Spring is when school is still in session  
Cicadas are insects native to summer  
Cicadas are nymphs from when first underground they go asunder  
Cicadas are in the summer's keep, blasting their songs in humid heat  
Spring is for rain while summer is for singing*

He screams painfully, hearing his voice echo. This sadistic ritual reminded him of The Cult of Yansake, and how they mercilessly beat him and other dragon children to please the Crotonian gods. He could still feel the fear, the stink of the cages and the feast of death wiggling inside him.

The candles kept coming, his arms kept burning and healing. When he reached his anger point, he summoned his dragon strength to break free of his bonds. On his knees, gathering his breath, his eyes turned a putrid red. Killing these teenagers would do him no good. They backed away as he gathered his breath and strength. With speed to rival a cheetah, he escaped out the window, shifting forms in mid-air. He left behind a small token of himself to remind these kids that he would be back. A magi cicada lay on its back, shriveled up and unmoving.

*Yet cicadas do not arise until summer catches their eye  
Underground is all they know until it is time to go  
Climbing high with all their efforts, they are wingless bugs until they are shedding  
Spring is for growing rose gardens that shine under the moon  
Spring is for some things, but cicada it is not*

## Gravenight Cicada

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Midnight's dawn bring creatures that yonder beyond  
Cicadas sleep with eyes wide as the moon sweeps by  
The fire swept by and in minutes he died

He lifted the hatchet high in the air  
"Unforgivable," he whispered.

His funeral was short with a few dozen cries  
He lay buried in his coffin, dead and nothing more  
To listen to cicada's song forevermore asounding his dead ears

The blood soaked the tree leaves  
And it covered the bushes  
Chance took the head of his assailant  
And smashed it against the tombstone of Corporal Grey  
"How do you like me now?" he said with scorn, "this is what you created.

Evening and night is when cicadas are might  
And in the graveyard they shed and become sinless adults

He dropped the head onto the patch of dirt  
He covered the body sparsely with dirt

A new moon has signaled a new night  
And cicadas bring it in with midnight songs  
Humidity rises and the dead man is listening  
Male cicadas sing to attract the loveliest girls  
and to find one compatible with his song, and end the night with a strong finale  
the dead man slept when the song was over, until tomorrow evening  
and thus restarting the cicada's midsummer symphony

## Autumn Cicada

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*Trees go yellow as cicadas die-out  
The last female was ovipositing on a tree  
Then one day they were all free*

Zysra was thrown into a heap of dead androids. Quentin screamed for his electronic lady, calling her name constantly. He fell to his knees to plead constantly, his silver tears staining his cape. The royal owl was apprehended by the dragon god's soldiers and taken before him in the high tower.

Quentin pleaded for his beloved android to return, begging for help from the dragon. He was a desperate man.

"I know my past sins cannot change your image of me," he said through sadness.

That much was true. He had become an unknown owl to his hatchlings during his bloodlust. He was defenseless now. He was a rebel without a sword.

*On the ground they lay, their job complete  
No more cicadas until the snows recede*

He could still remember her artificial voice and the streaks of green and red in her hair. He designed her himself. He molded her from the image of his now-dead mother. She was his life packed into an artificial mind. He gave her everything he held dear, including his love and memories.

*The Autumn preps us for winter's coming  
While cicadas remind us of summer's thundering heat*



## Acknowledgements

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FOR MA (Lela),  
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AND FINALLY: MYSELF

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NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE: the deserted city of Iry is about to get a wakeup call from its overlord supercomputer.