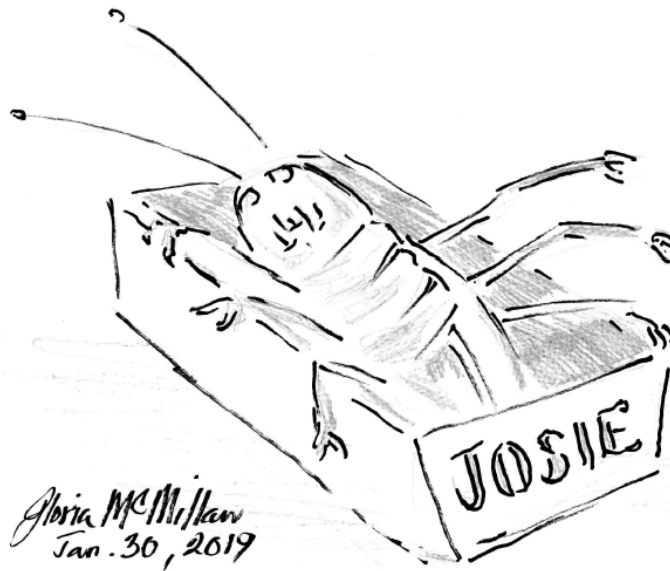


Op-Ed: The Metamorphosis of Josie C.

Gloria McMillan



Josie C. got up as she always did, by rolling out laterally from her matchbox bed, grabbing one edge with two of her sharply-taloned feet. She twitched her fashionably-curved antennae and smacked her mandibles a couple times to get her circulation going.

Her friend Cindy K. came scampering into the drain pipe of the abandoned school that Josie called home to tell her the marvelous news. They greeted each other with a quick flipping back and forth across each other's antennae. "You can't believe our good fortune! Those giant things that have been crushing our people from time immemorial are mostly gone. Just a few sick ones left and they'll be history soon . . . Oh, boy!" Cindy's mandibles clattered because she was so excited. "Almost everybody is out surveying our new domain. It's ours at long last and good riddance to them, those beasts!"

Josie wanted to believe her friend but Cindy sometimes got things a bit mixed up. Josie asked her where she had heard all this and Cindy gave such a rapid fire answer of antennae crossing over land and sea, across continents (whatever those were.) "There was a big heat," said Cindy, "and many of us got done it by it, but we are many, they are few, so we have inherited this wonderful, though smoking, world."

"I have been shredding newspapers all my life, eating some with food bits on them and I never saw anything about this. Not once! Nothing at all!"

Cindy K. snickered, “That’s because they didn’t want to put any news too sad for themselves into the paper. So everybody stayed happy until the happy vaporizing. Most buildings are still there.”

Josie wondered what they would do without all the food that the Stompers used to drop on them, if the Stompers really were gone. “We have some places where there are decaying things . . . the Stompers themselves, for awhile. . . oh, we’ll get by! Always have.” It was a fine day.