

The Bug

By Tommye Blount

lands on my pretty man's forearm. Harmless,
it isn't deadly at all; makes his muscle flutter
— the one that gets his hand to hold mine, or
ball into a fist, or handle a gun. It's a ladybug,
or an Asian lady beetle everyone mistakes
for a ladybug — eating whatever
it lands on. My pretty man is asleep — at ease, or
plotting like the bug. Or maybe the bug
is a blowfly — eating my pretty man's tan
from his pretty arm. My man swats it
without waking, as if he's dreaming of an enemy,
or me. When my pretty man isn't asleep
he's got a temper.

No, he is not
asleep. He's wide awake and wants me to tell you
I'm wrong. Blowflies don't eat skin,
they lay eggs on skin. He knows all about
blowfly larvae. Napoleon used them
to clean war wounds, my cold pretty man
says in that pretty way,
with his cold pretty mouth. He's eaten plenty
of bugs before. On night watch,
over there. Over there, they're everywhere.

Source: *Poetry* (January 2015)