

# Displays Of Aquatic Escape Behavior

by AshleyRose Sullivan

Originally Published In *Wigleaf*

When you died, I took Ellie to Borneo with me. I left your ashes in the garden. Now, my beard is long and my shoulders are suntanned—like they were when we spent all those months in Bahia—when you studied the mating habits of Golden-Bellied Capuchins and I cut my heel open on the rocks and watched my own blood cloud the river water.

Ellie is growing up. Her toes are similar in length and shape to yours. Her second toe is considerably longer than the first—a primate quality. I can't keep up with my papers anymore and I think I am losing focus. Ellie found a picture of you from Tennessee. I'd forgotten how long your hair was. I'm sorry.

Yesterday I was dehydrated. While I was hiking, I walked toward a deep and winding rush of water that cuts through the land here. Ellie is smart and cunning. I think she is tired of Borneo. She complains of sweating and of her inability to purchase Diet Coke. Yesterday, as I walked toward the creek, I saw a little brown thing dart out from under the bush. It was a Mouse Deer.

Spotted or striped; it was a tawny flash in my field of vision.

Ellie misses blue jeans, I think, and Netflix.

The little Mouse Deer dove into the water with abandon. It submerged. I sat on the bank to watch her. Every three or four minutes I saw her snout surface for air, but otherwise, there she lay—her tiny legs tucked under her belly, the cool water rushing over her back, her long fangs bared on my behalf. After a while, she turned and swam gracefully along the silty bottom, to the other bank.