

Birdhouse

I stood by your window, though you did not see me. Moving to the garden, I looked through your conservatory doors and saw no one. I waited awhile. Meandering through the trees and bushes, I was stopped by the sight of a bird box and a small bluebird that had flown past me. The creature blinked past your house and I too felt compelled to leave.

Locked in thought and patrolling the town centre, I had no idea what to do. I wanted to knock on your door, to speak to you, though I knew that was one thing I could not do.

The town looked cold; people wore large furred coats and gloves. I felt fine as I was. The busied square distracted me, as did the pigeons meandering into my path. I didn't notice that the clocktower was due to chime. All the people around me pivoted to look up to the church as they heard the sound of its bell. Guided by peoples glances to the distance and the flight of the startled pigeons, my attention was drawn to the church's clocktower. With this, my curiosity guided me to the cemetery.

There were yellow flowers placed in front of a large slab. The last snowfall had covered the surrounding graves, but as I placed my hand onto the clean surface of the slab before me, I felt neither warmth nor the coldness of stone.

In the distance of the white field of the graveyard, a friend lingered on a bench. He appeared with puffed red eyes as if he had wept or the cold had gotten to him. Putting him to the back of my mind, I knelt down and read the gravestone before me. My eyes did not redden or well with tears, they remained passive and wandering. Much like my thoughts, my eyes blurred in and out of focus. With this lack of control came irritation, and I knew I had to return to your home. I walked to the gate of the cemetery and turned to wave my friend farewell, though he did not see me.

I found myself once more stood in your garden. Two cars had pulled up at the front of the house, those of family and friends, and the kitchen had become alive with people preparing a large roast. Still, there was no sign of you. Our children were sat at the dinner table talking to your parents, in the kind of way that exhumes sincerity without the need for sound. I moved closer to the window, unseen.

A bluebird from the birdhouse we built last spring flew down and landed next to me. I pressed my face against the window to feel the warmth from inside: there was nothing. The bluebird began to sing but I heard nothing and then you walked into the kitchen. You had been crying. Your parents embraced you and you sat down with our children. The bird flew onto the windowsill and as you talked with the children, they quickly became distracted by the bird and you smiled.

The yellow flowers eventually grew over the grave in the cemetery and your house eventually emptied. But I would still visit occasionally, despite the vacantness and the half-submerged remains of the birdhouse in our overgrown garden. The place would allow me to cling to the past: to remember you and the children. And, once in a while, a nest would be built in the above trees of the garden and for a moment everything would become fine.