

You found it by the side of the road. Yellowed bone and sinew shattered by the cold. Every inch of gore frosted with time and neglect, half buried in driven snow and salted muck. The eyes, though. Brilliant pearls flecked with lily petals. It was waiting for something.

Days came and went; rain, sleet, and snow followed like starving dogs. It wasn't in the same place when you found it again. Street sweepers, maybe. Time passed hard over it: lichen and rot now sat amongst the icy morning dew. Something had gotten into it and made a hasty home, and left just as quickly, leaving tracks you couldn't place. The skin of its face sat loose, stretched tight and relaxed by the winter and the sun. It smiled, still. A gleaming, beautiful thing. Waiting for something.

Calendars turned. Fifteen days passed before you saw it again. Over the river. It wasn't pretending, and neither should you. Damp, dark tunnels left by questing vermin pockmarked its side. The ripe odor of it hung around these raw, rotten holes and the ruin of its body. Heady, intoxicating even. Passion and nausea swirl and battle in your gut. Its extremities are all but gone now, splinters of splinters suffused with decay. A gentle breeze carries its soft, downy locks up and across its face. A tease, an invitation from an old lover. It waits for something.

The whistle of a kettle and the hiss of a radiator. The smell matures and evolves in the heat of your home. Odd, fruiting bodies sprout among the familiar hills and valleys of its form. It reclines on the chaise. The brilliant eyes follow you, the grinning teeth shine in the low firelight. It is waiting for you. You delicately brush the downy locks from its face and time stands still.

You see it from the side of the road. Your simple shoes and sturdy legs. The coat you won in a church raffle and the gloves your mother bought for you. But not your eyes, or your teeth, or your hair. They're strong and beautiful and new now. And now you will wait too.