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Decay

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Decay

It started with violets, which Violet herself thought was pretty fitting.

Someone kept leaving dried bouquets of flowers outside her door once a week. The first time she didn't think much of it. Maybe it was just some strange prank by her friends to symbolize the natural death and decay of beauty in the world. Eric and Cassie specifically would be up for that. They were always trying to prank her, but in a philosophical tone, which Violet thought was pretty strange. But no one confessed, in fact, they insisted it wasn't any of them. The next few times it happened, Violet started to get really unnerved. She tried contacting the police, but they said she shouldn't really be afraid of someone delivering dead flowers to her home. That it wasn't really threatening.

So now here she sat in her living room, surrounded by dried up violets, roses, gardenias, baby's breath. She examined her home in the evening light, the dried flowers that filled it, and took a deep breath.

She almost choked on the scent.

It was the sharp sweetness of decay, the kind she remembered smelling in the fall outside her secluded childhood house in Ohio, attempting to play in the damp leaves. But now she was in a city, surrounded by brick and cement, far away from nature. Decidedly, Violet stood up and paced around the room. She would find out who was doing this, mostly just to ask them why the hell they decided on this kind of prank.

Resigned for now, she decided to head to bed, the moon outside bright through her kitchen window. There was nothing she was going to do about it tonight anyways.

In the middle of the night she awoke to rustling. That wouldn't be strange with the many dried flowers now filling her apartment, but it sounded intentional, almost...alive? She put her hand to her chest. Her heart was beating fast.

Quickly, she moved out of bed, swiping away the cold beads of sweat that started to form on her forehead. She cursed herself for not having bought that gun like her dad advised when she first moved off to college.

With hesitant steps, she walked quietly out of the room and made her way through the small yellow kitchen towards the living room. The light was purple coming in through the large window, the moon now covered up by fast-moving clouds. She heard the rustling again, coming from the living room, but all she could see so far were the bunches of dead flowers lining the walls and floor.

She watched as a petal from a drooping yellow rose fell to the floor and noticed something that seemed unnatural.

She shifted, looking around the corner at the out of place beam of soft light across her carpet. The front door was open, and the sound of quiet breathing filled the room. She took a sharp breath but was only filled with the scent of decay.

About Daria Ferguson

Daria Ferguson is a senior at the University of North Dakota pursuing a Bachelor's in English and a Certificate in Writing and Editing. In the fall she will be attending UND as an MA student in the English Department.