## A BODY UNFURLED

The umbrellas rattle in their bin as I drop my walking cane next to them. The sound echoes in my apartment. It vibrates and reverberates between my ears. Shaking my head, I take off my coat and hang it up neatly. As I hang my hat up, I pause to run my hands over the soft velvet. I stand in the entryway, stroking it back and forth. It grounds me. For a time. My breathing becomes even and my eyes close. I linger for longer than I should.

Blood-white tears form on my fingers, dripping marrow on the dark hardwood floor. My body shudders as my eyes shut. When I open them again, the floor is unstained and my hands are untorn.

forgeI never should have learnt that damnable language.

Fighting my own thoughts, I glide and stumble through the empty halls. Grounding myself has become harder. Still I try. Searching the study, I will myself focus on things I know to be real. The green velvet chair that was my grandfather's, the cherry wood desk that was my father's, the embroidered puppy my mother made.

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I fall into my grandfather's chair. It cradles me like a mother. It holds me like a vice. Taking a deep breath, I steady my racing heartbeat.

ours I will be fine.

I slip into the wet folds of my brain, searching for solace. Like a wounded alley cat, I hide beneath the filthy bins and the rotting waste of my mind. This is my last sanctuary. They have taken my green palace. My red fields. All my cherished memories.

can't hishouldineviele have yearned for that knowledge

Ever since my lips formed the First Syllable, I have started Knowing. I can understand them now. Entities without voices, without souls, have started speaking to me. Even the bones in my body speak to me. And they hate.

		iet us out		
	let us out	let us out	let us out let	t us out
What have I done.	let us out let us	out let us out	let us out	let us out

Beneath my skin, the bones itch. Prisoners of flesh and muscle that thirst for freedom. They call out to fungi and wasps, flies and maggots. They beg the decomposers to pick them clean. To consume this flesh and blood.

	white and clean		
Flies and wasps and fungi and worms.	pick us white and clean	white and clean	
white and clean	white and clean white a	nd clean	

## They have already begun.

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My eyes snap open. Floral motifs swirl on the arsenic green walls. I focus on them until they stop swaying. Until they return to their stationary position as wallpaper. I am back in my study. Back in my apartment. My mind is quiet and still. There are no more visions and no more voices. I hear the clock ticking in the hallway, undisturbed. I feel the velvet of the chair, unchanged.

A laugh bursts out of me. I hear myself cackle as I fall out of the moldysoft chair. Peels of sound bounce off the walls, and I hold my ribs as I gasp for breath. Tears form in my eyes as my body lets out another hysterical howl.

I am alive.

I faced the Knowledge and won. My body is still my own. I gasp as glee runs through me again. My ribs hurt but the pain will subside. Eventually. Pain will fade just as nightmares must end.

Soon this will become an insignificant part of my life. I will become indifferent to these feelings. My mind and body will escape intact.

My involvement in this incident will be infinite.

I will no longer be independent from the Knowledge.

My in sanity will recover.

Soon all that is IN

will be

OUT