

## ELEANOR

She watched things sometimes. Her eyes would well up with a blue that was both empty and real. She loved to crunch her body around that one point of beauty, to possess it.

And to show that possession off through tragic elegance and the breath of sex, like a wilting tulip. She would look into the mirror, grit appearing to smear away her princess dreams, know she was deeply appreciating just... being, No matter how uncomfortable. Discomfort was a strange blessing. It made her feel full to welcome it as she stared ahead.

Her name was not important and she often forgot it. Alone in her chair, in the unseen night, she sat with thrill beneath her artificial light as she hummed the glory of the world.

Her mind never wanted to give all of itself to anything. There were too many things to take! --There was a light-haired girl she had known once as a child who did everything with such poise and poetry that she could not believe such a wavy interesting thing had existed. A small corduroy insect. Eleanor saw yellow ballerinas on tiny toes, wooden dollhouses, uncracked mirrors. She dreamed all this while drowning in the gloom of her castle. She lived in a castle. Her cardboard box was her castle.

Now she rises from her chair, switching off the air. Downstairs she hears the roaring silence that comes from living alone. Upstairs, her walls are haloed by birds and branches blistering in thunderstorms. She presses her lips together, wondering how cold she has to become before she finds what she is looking for.

She sits. The strains of some unfamiliar man's song stick to the walls, smearing Spanish into the plain beige paint. She smiles, thinking that years ago she would have swooned at that kind of beauty; the kind most found appealing. Like rich royal violets, bleached Greek ruins, pure love or aesthetically pleasing music. She is all alone in her listening.

And the music stops. And she says hello and the world says it back, through its dark shades, laughing like white knives slicing the air. Eleanor bows into herself.

So, of course, she packs away her visions of creamy gowns and babies swathed in bloody butterfly wings and dreams of making love to the earth. She has always known everything is so much bigger than it appears to be.

Love is dying within her – never born, never given breath. All the spangled glory that has already been written, painted, performed – she cannot look at it. Her mind is fading, clutching at inexperienced walls.

She becomes tired.

All she wants is a kiss.