

One morning I woke up in the middle of the floor. There was a person-shaped stain of sunlight where I'd slept. I returned to my bed but my sheets didn't fit right and my window was too small. I stayed awake for a long time.

A week later, I woke up in the middle of the park. I could hear the trees speaking in their low voices, their leaves shifting in the wind. It was easier to understand them that night, easier than ever.

"You're close," they told me.

I rose from my place in the grass and walked into the pond. The water trickled over the rocks and around my ankles. I didn't mind the cold.

The next evening, I returned to the pond. I wanted to feel as cold as a new day. I lay on my back at the bottom, staring up at the quivering sky and the bubbles rising from my mouth.

"It's not too late to turn around," the pond said.

"But I don't want to go home," I said.

I didn't want to be young anymore. I wanted to be able to lift the sun in my arms.

Yesterday, I woke up outside, my skin wet with dew. My shadow fell next to the flowers planted beside the pavement years ago, sprouting gentle from my solid feet. There was a new weight in my bones. I felt kinder. A sparrow landed briefly on my head and I didn't move an inch.