

Fabled

And she is suspended in a world that seems to be suspended itself. Caught in slow time. And she observes every rustle of dying leaves, every lingering glance, every pattern in the wood grain and never forgot the stories they whispered to her. She is moving quickly, quicker than the others around her, yet still seeing more than they. It seems as though they cannot even see her. She told them stories. The stories were of life and the exaggeration of life, and the things she heard. And the tall ones, with the shadowy faces and clipboards and frowning faces kept in jars by their beds, told her to be silent. For this is not how things were to be. No one is to learn from the children.

She took the stories, and molded them into pictures, pictures of word and color and tone. And she showed them to the dark grey people of her village. And they shuddered and averted their eyes, for they did not know how to feel. The pictures had never shown themselves to them, nor had they ever been blessed with whispers in the night. And those few, tired and forgotten, who had once seen the pictures, looked on in envy and quiet unconscious hope, for she might choose right, while they had succumbed.

Leave the pictures, they told the girl. They told her to burn them, and hide the ashes where no one would ever dare look. And so she burned them, but burned them on the inside of her eyes. Only she would find them there, and she was no one.

She left the place. The Ash People did not mourn her. They were only the fragile collection of motions, imaginations burned long ago. With the girl gone, they faded away into nothing more than a forgotten memory, tossed by the wind, uncaring and silent.

She wandered, as the young so often must. There were many empty places. She collected many of her thoughts in jars along the way, leaving them for other travelers to hear. One stuck out in her mind: "Some people are born with the poetry in them. It claws to the surface, and we repeatedly stifle

it, silence it, fearing the nightly scratching we hear in our minds. Our eyes are tempered differently than those of others, our ancient souls more responsive, more searching. The details recounted by the youth of the world will always stick in our minds. When our eyes are closed, weary and near the nightly defeat, they are never shrouded in darkness. We are always seeing, always remembering.”

After much time, she found others. She realized that, while many did not match her own vibrant tones, they lent open ears and hearts, rather than fear and jealousy. And she told them her stories. They did not think the contents of her head were lazy day-dreamings and found beauty in the unseen sight she possessed. The girl’s soul, having imparted its wisdom and insights to others, could finally find peace, even in dreams.