

APT. 34

There are the shapes and murmurs of ghosts down below in Apt. 34. Their luminous trace is vibrant. In one corner, the dark haired woman is making her bed. Oh, the pixilated grace of this mundane Zen. She gets in and sleeps. Her composition is a Vermeer—such beauty I see in each methodical fold and crease and pulsating color of the top sheet. I could become lost in her sleep because I am feeling like a child hiding up safely in the rafters. I am a voyeur of opportunity and wonder. She wakes and breaks the spell of her sleep state. But she is not alone. The typewriter on the desk just directly below has now come to life as well; the carriage with a glow of paper appears to be shifting to the right in response to the fingers dancing on the keys. Someone is writing something but I can't hope to make it out from up here in my observation post. Suddenly she—the dark haired woman is putting something large on the bed. I am again mesmerized by her singularity of motion. She slowly packs a suitcase on the bed. Where is this spirit woman planning on going? Don't leave. I want to watch you some more.

The murmurs are words, distant, but familiar. I can't make out the multiple voices but I shift to see the long table with dinner plates and seated guests on the right side of the apartment. Arms are reaching out at platters of food. The family of ghosts is re/visiting their past. The haunting of place, yes, I have heard of it. But this is a drama of haunting. I am a part of it. I am in the audience of one looking down at the scene. The actors have not had the decency to be themselves in the flesh, so they have left their video ghost understudies to be them. I don't mind really. I don't think they would be as interesting.

But now that I think of it, is it an illusion of deception? Like the prisoner who stuffs his bed blankets to fool the midnight guard patrolling the cells, are these people creating a life that is meant to dupe us who secretly gaze at their lives. Did I maybe get stung? I must tell some one of my suspicions. But I have been watching and enjoying it. How can I explain that to whomever I must tell? Shall I say I was caught off guard and had no way to know that it was a shell game? I can say that I have been plagued by a lot of disturbing dreams about the afterlife lately. I got confused. I thought maybe I was gazing at a family in Purgatory in a dream and at least one of them was planning to move out. Going to heaven, moving up. Oh, and another was sending a letter to someone to pray for his soul I think. And the rest were eating and drinking and making the best of it. In Purgatory, Apt. 34, that is.

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