

Those Old Bones

The light shafts stood strong through the room and travelled on out of small cracks in the blinds. This minimalist lighting illuminated the otherwise bleak room. The laminate floor was heavily warped into waves which wrapped around the shoddy dining set legs, constructed crudely of galvanized steel. Sharp edges which were attempted to be beaten away at the corners of the table were obvious.

Upon the table a cracked bowl contained an unrecognizable mushy sludge. Parts of the zinc coating on the dented tabletop were chipped away in large clusters. One of these clusters was badly rusted due to the leak directly above it which was attempted to be secured with wooden boards nailed to it, but that rotted through.

Surrounding the amateur repair was a beige roofing, near immaculate in terms of damage, but heavily dusty, which flaked down with every movement. At this moment, the dust was coming down heavily as the house was being shook by a repeated thudding against the wall. *Thud. Thud. Thud.* Near rhythmic. The walls rattled with every shake this caused. The framed painting rattled on their loose fittings, grimy glass resiliently vibrated against the pictures they displayed. Pictures of a family.

A smiling father, with a smile that caused creases to resonate throughout his face. A face of fulfillment. He was accompanied with two young kids, one marginally older than the other, and a woman who hugged the kids with the father. Her brunette hair fell to her breasts, a face wide but gentle, green eyes that matched the grass she knelt on.

Thud. Thud. Thud. The relentless attack on the dwelling continued, the epicenter originating in what could be recognized as a living room, but the only evidence of this is a worn couch, abused and scratched over its entirety, facing a shattered CRT. A man squatted in the corner of this chamber, slamming a hammer against a loose floorboard. His face had creases deeply ingrained throughout, lips so chapped they bled and eyes that glistened in the dark of his home. His hair was unkempt and gray, strong and defiantly black against the frizzy gray towards the ends. A liver spot rested itself on one of the last smooth patches of tough skin.

He checked the floorboard by pressing his oddly small right hand against it. As the flooring creaked, so did his elbow. With a sigh, he admitted to himself that he didn't know how to resolve this.

He stood his body up, against the will of his joints, and heaved his lumbering body down and towards the cushioned seating sitting in the centre of the room. When he was at a distance he felt sufficient, he threw himself onto the couch, a decision he immediately regretted as his body seemed to crumple on contact and rose dust up off into the air and drifting into his lungs without a moment's hesitation. This sent him into a fit of coughing and eventually flinging himself so the ground amidst his convulsions.

His back cracked and his skull whined as his mind whirled. The world spun and his eyes began to strain as he lay helplessly on the ground, each hack and splutter throwing his body up and forcefully back to the

thin carpet covering the wooden floor. Each bark causing the floor to creak and sending searing pain up through his ribcage and around his entire body. Ears popping, pressure building in the nose, abdomen near bursting.

Tears streamed down his face and used his crinkles as canals to the ground, his voice began to desperately call out names of his family, but as regret filled his mind through the static panic he just closed his eyes and let out a last hallow wail.