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Boxcar Bomber

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The power went out a week ago yesterday. The back-up generators never kicked in. Cars won't start. Cell phones won't call, text, or take pictures. Any machine with an electronic pulse has flatlined. At least it looks like that's true. No artificial light as far as I can see. I look out the window at night and there's nothing but bonfires and stars. It's probably the first time anyone alive has seen the stars like this in the city. Without all the light pollution the stars look too close; like they're looming over the city, pressing in on all sides.

Catherine's respirator stopped when the rest of the world did. All the machines she was hooked up to died as well. Without the monitor I couldn't even be sure of when she died. It shouldn't matter—she was dead as soon as the power went out—but it does.

Time of death: Unknown. Never. Forever. Twilight.

The air in the hospital has started to turn.

Those who could get out, did. A few people came back to retrieve their friends and loved ones who could not leave the hospital on their own.

Mostly though, the hospital just transitioned into the largest morgue in the county. Not an entirely smooth transition, but after something approximating a week the dissenters settled down and resigned themselves to the slab.

One of the patients tried to tell me about a doctor who had stayed behind to tend to his patients, but it had been four days since the power went out—no one that could leave was still here. I asked him to quiet down.

A woman in a wheelchair was stuck in the third floor stairwell talking to herself about the undead. It had been five days since the power had gone out and no one had turned. Her face was a mess of bruises and her bandages were streaked a rusty red. Her forearms and hands were similarly damaged. She probably had an infection. When she noticed I was in the stairwell with her she started shrieking. I ran back to Catherine's room, but I could hear her through the floor until she finally quieted.

Later that day I heard a scream and the sound of two heavy objects tumbling down the stairs.

The smell's bad enough now that I have to at least try and do something about it. I go fishing through a supply closet and bring a box of surgical masks back to Catherine's room. It doesn't help all that much but I don't think it'll matter much longer, I'm bound to acclimate sooner or later. I stretch the mask back over my head, pinch the metal strip over my nose, and lay my head in Catherine's lap.