

Reflection

by Rachel Roberts

It was a beautiful night, the stars twinkling around the crested moon. None of that mattered: the whole world was in its place, everyone busy. All for one tiny corner of the city, where the train crossed the canal.

A towering bridge stood at the end of the waterway, the crusty blue paint flaking to show wrought iron nuts and bolts aged from the weather. The water below was still. Circles rippled from the salty tears which dropped into the water. Two red eyes looked back up from the water. Eyes which showed fear, eyes which showed pain, eyes that showed she wanted it to end. Years had amassed to this point. And for what? The wind blew her hair into her face. She didn't care, it didn't matter; in the water, the strawberry blonde hair merged into her skin. A white-ish blob on nothing. You couldn't see her clothes in the dark water. She knelt down, touching it with her long fingers. The cold chilled her right down to her bones. It numbed her but the pain was still there. She didn't think the pain would ever go.

Her sodden clothes stuck to her skin as it started to drizzle. The wet cotton weighed her down. Her boots dangling in the water (as heavy as the barges that dragged along the canal), she sat on the edge of the path. Her feet were blocks of ice. The boots - ruined. She shivered, her teeth chattering into her gnawed, chapped lips.

Wiping her face with her sleeve, she slowly arose, trying to shake some of the water out of her boots. She eventually trudged along the overgrown path, pulling her hood over her head. She was about half way back to the road when her phone rang: she looked at it and then threw it into the far side of the canal. She calmly turned around and walked back to the bridge, checking to see if she could see anyone. Nobody.

She got to the bridge and touched it: she felt the cold stillness of it and its solidity. She found the iron ladder round the side and began to climb it. Soon, there she stood, on top of the bridge. In the water, she could see another version of herself: it was terrified. She didn't really know what to do, but with weak knees she stood up, tall, in the middle of the bridge. She looked up at the moon and stars and looked down at herself.

And then she jumped.