the house, witnesses the deep tunnels dug by carpenter ants, the Kit Cat clock frozen at 8 p.m., the living room with the chartreuse couch, the patchy chair, the husk of an armoire, a long abandoned bed. They enter Meredith’s room and see it entirely gutted with seven years of dust mingling with a week’s layer of snow, both layers in equal measure. And, maybe, they will be so fascinated that it will inspire them to write a poem on the spot. Or maybe they’ll be disgusted and leave. Or curious enough to explore the rest of the house.

Maybe they skip Lucille’s door completely. They walk upstairs and have their foot sink the wood floor to their knee. They spend ten minutes pulling their foot out, scratching it in the process. Maybe it leaves a scar, adds a splash of red to the woodwork and, just maybe, Lucille would have splashed that color on the ground herself if she could move.

Maybe after opening the door to Lucille Sable’s room, they spot her icy statue frozen against a mad portrait. Maybe they write a poem on this spot instead, but with paint thinner, and they lead the poem out the door. The stranger sets the portrait of a house ablaze to free Lucille Sable. Maybe a tired, sick Margaret Sable, tucked in sentimental layers and a checkered dress, will finally feel warm.

Lucille leans her forehead into her painting and sobs. Tears dribble down the side of the painting. She begins to giggle like a child, like a criminal. She knows that the stranger, the arsonist in her hypothetical thought’s center, is her sister.

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