

Goodbye

By Leah Symons

My beloved Kath,

I finally made it. You were right, the drive was awful; as if the road were a crumpled piece of paper, all jagged and rough. But I'm here now. The market is beautiful, though it's quite the hive. Aromas from all the exquisite food stalls meld into a jumble of cinnamon, roasted pork, chocolate... You would love it, I know because I don't. The people are like ghosts, oblivious to those around them, pushing through each other without a second glance. It's scary, and lonely. I wish you were here.

Last night, the power went out. The world was a mess of darkness and chaos, people pushing and yelling, stalls falling over. It caused quite the ruckus. But in that moment, she found me. A woman, young and beautiful, dressed in black, only her soft skin and golden hair visible beneath the gauzy robes. She was so familiar. Somehow, I knew every curve and crinkle of her face, though I'm sure we've never met. I wanted her to stay. I needed her to stay. I begged and pleaded just so I wouldn't be so alone. But she was here and gone in an instant, only the cool, somehow familiar, touch of her breath on my neck lingered. And I held on. I held that touch just as I held the words she whispered in that fleeting moment.

"I love you. I'm sorry. Goodbye."

The lanterns came back to life then, as if the wraith-like woman had flicked the lightswitch just to find me. What does it mean Kath? Why do those words cling to me, holding me captive in this unknown city? I want to leave. I want to come home to you! As each day passes, I feel my age. I feel the ache and struggle of bones used too long and the wheeze that never leaves my chest as I hunt these haunted streets. I don't know what I'm looking for, Kath. You told me I would know when I found it, like I just knew I loved you the first time I saw you. But why now? Why, as you are lying, dying in your bed, have you asked me to leave you, my world, for this?

And now I see. That woman was you, wasn't she? You are gone, aren't you? Is that what you sent me to find? Kath, without you I am scared, and lonely. I don't know anything anymore, except this:

I love you. I'm sorry. I miss you. Goodbye.