

# Lovelies on the Last Shore

*by* Catherine Davis

In Sarah's dream, Chlœ races cross-frame, left to right, a large camellia in her mouth. The specimen is a perfect bloom, variegated bright pink and white. Dream-Sarah notes how Chlœ matches her camellia; although in reality Chlœ is a black cat, it's all perfectly normal here. Sarah briefly reflects that Chlœ is taking the flower to the compost collection, but she doesn't feel the need to supervise. She is at ease in her 1 AM dream.

Waking in the strict light of morning, Sarah is full of chinks and cracks — everything is slipping, slipping through. Hours, no — days, weeks — like the proverbial sand. No sooner than she sees the sieve, she sees its structure gaping, saving nothing now. What passes through is already powder, not with even the weight of sand, its pale dust storm swirling briefly, and then gone.

The day's work will be to recover, something at least, patch it back.

In the blue evening, after her run, Sarah gathers camellias again. She swiftly scans below each bush, wondering about what she is doing. Still, she fills her basket, feels the particular stickiness designed to promote life adhering to her palms. She pauses upon a delicate aroma. Who said they have no scent? She imagines that gathering these fallen blooms makes her happy. All of those lovelies, pitched on the ground, ignored and ready to rot.

Sarah doesn't ignore them.

She pushes four shades of pink and red blossoms through the rectangular gaps in the fencing that surrounds her pile, covering more and more over tough brown leaves. Some varieties are durable, others come unpetalled at a touch. As she places an intricately petalled pale pink, Sarah thinks: this is an act of grieving.

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She pushes another blossom, doesn't argue with this thought.

Tomorrow she may think something else.

