

# The Next Happy Act

by Foster Trecost

Her veil kept most from knowing, but not me. I knew where she hid the holes, and she couldn't hide her cries. It takes strength to maintain the illusion of strength, and she had run out.

We used to smile when we saw the other smile.

We used to laugh just at the sound of our laughter.

Childhood sadness can be overcome by the next happy act, but there were no more happy acts. Her veil had thickened to a hiding place.

\* \* \*

I knew no-one was home, like when we wake in the night, and know it's almost light without having to look at the clock. When I had left that morning, I left her in bed, but the house was already empty.

She hadn't spoken for days.

She hadn't spoken to me for longer than that.

She was gone before she departed, and still I wonder where she went. Maybe she found the place we used to be. I like to think she's again laughing at the sound of someone's laughter.

\* \* \*

When I came upon a smile that made me want to smile, I smiled. Soon after I heard laughter that made me want to laugh, so I laughed. Then I asked if she'd ever been sad, and she said she had been, but only until she found reason not to be. I said me too, and knew the next happy act was happening.

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