

Two 99's and a 64, or The Next Happy Act

by Foster Trecost

Her veil kept most from knowing, but not me; I knew where she hid the holes, and I could hear her cries. It takes strength to maintain the illusion of strength. It takes strength to know when not to be strong. She had run out of strength.

We used to smile when we saw the other one smile.

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

Sadness in children can be overcome by the next happy act, but there were no happy acts that could bring her back. Her veil had thickened to a hiding place.

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I knew no-one was home, like when we wake in the night, and know it's almost morning without having to glance at the clock. I knew she wasn't there; I didn't need to look. When I left for work, I left her in bed, but the house was already empty.

She hadn't spoken in days.

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

She was gone before her departure, 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.

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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 her 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 had happened.

