

# Alive

by Marc Lowe

Imagine this: One day you are walking down the street (wearing your protective mask, of course, the cloth one you bought the other day because you liked the color and design) when, by chance, you happen upon a strange sight. Some meters ahead, you espy a glimmering object, glimmering in the light of the sun. You ask yourself whether it is worth crouching down to have a closer look, whether it might seem too odd for you to do so, be too risky should someone notice your queer actions. However, as there are few people about today (it is well past 2 p.m. on a weekday, a Wednesday, in fact, smack right in the middle of the week, and most people must be working, either from their offices or via their computers at home, you assume), you decide to take a chance. What's the worst thing that could happen, after all? It's probably just an everyday object, an empty bottle someone left on the street, a fragment of glass. Better not to touch it, but you can at least have a closer look...

The nearer you get to the object, the stranger you begin to feel. Something just isn't right. What, exactly, you cannot say, but something feels *off* to you, and you generally have a very strong "sixth sense," or so you have been told by ex-wives, ex-friends, and ex-lovers alike. What in the world could be wrong, though? It's just a piece of reflective glass, no?

Crouching down now, shards of refracted sunlight piercing your sensitive light blue eyes behind your sunglasses, you begin to realize just what it is that you are looking at. With a sense of both horror and curiosity, in equal measure, you slowly move your face closer for a better look. Ah, yes... Now it all makes sense, you think to yourself, as, in that instant, you begin to slowly lapse into fragments of memories from your past. As in an old movie reel, images flash through your mind, bringing you through both moments of pleasure and pain, joy and sadness, light and darkness, and then, finally, back here, back into the present moment...

And then, before you know it, you are back at home, sitting at your desk, removing the cloth mask from your face. You exhale. Another day spent alone, contemplating the ghosts that haunt you, another long pause for reflection. The light of the sun has penetrated you, is inside you now. You feel it there, deep within, pulsating. You inhale, look around the room. Lifting your favorite glass to your lips, you drink deeply of its contents, until all that remains is the sound of your quiet breathing.

