

The Words Fall Into Ash

by Matt DeBenedictis

I once heard someone say, “God answered the wrong prayer”. A little girl said that. The words kind of just fell out of her mouth unintended to ever be heard, but we all heard them. Fuck. We understood them. The mother tried to capture the words mid syllable but her hands lacked quickness and her yells and pitched noises distracted no one.

The two were huddled in a corner of an alley, joined by some others that I'm sure wandered into the darkness when they realized they were far from alone. That alley was the one off Market Street. I used to steal candy from the corner shop when I was nine, but now that whole damn place is blanketed by rubble and is where the baby wolves get born. The girl's mother looked at me hoping I could console her little one but I said nothing. I just checked the strength of my fingers and palms by making tight fists.

Maybe God answered his own prayer I thought. Maybe His prayer was one to be done with us, we had burdened him for far too long that he just wanted to go be a lonely God and be free to fuck the silence. The mother and daughter nuzzled and cried while I sank my arms into the open heart of the trash piles wondering, will I ever touch something delicious with my mouth ever again.

