

Swan Dance

by Sally A. Stephenson

The house stood quietly in its surrounds. Unnerved by the beauty that enveloped it. Green forest trees loomed round the house protecting it from the outside world and in front of it lay a sweeping lake that disappeared into the trees on the horizon. Edith Kaempf looked out to the distance and saw swans dancing along the water in a graceful sweep. She held the urn delicately in her hand as she walked down the jetty. The wood was uneven beneath her feet but she knew where to step and how much weight each plank could take. She nestled down near one of the supporting stumps and she took the lid off the urn. Inside she saw the ashes, more than she had expected, and as she turned it upside down the sandy grey grains floated in the wind before settling on top of the water. Edith waited what felt like an age for the ashes to empty from the urn. It eventually felt lighter and the ashes thinned on the air and they were gone.

Edith sat for a moment looking at the water's surface. She then looked below her and down into the depths as far as her eyes would allow her. She grasped onto the edge of the jetty, she looked down at the unwanted tattoo on her wrist, the sequence of numbers and felt the pain of the years that had passed. All it would take was one roll forward for it to end. One roll and all would be forgotten, quietly gone, forever to swim with the swans.

Edith was never quite sure what made her pull back that day. There was no great answer, no voice in her head yelling her to stop and as she walked back to the cottage she wondered if the feeling she had in her stomach was the elusive notion of hope. If it was it made her feel unsettled and she didn't like it.

