Warm Day, Virus City

by Steven John Horay

From inside the baking hot car we watched our father, nervous in his face mask and gloves, step through the wooden gate into grandma's front garden. She was waiting for him, thin and lonely behind the frilled lace curtain. She held the iPad in her left hand, and she looked almost hopeful.

Sweating in the hot, desperate sun, our father tried his best to instruct grandma how to answer a videocall. He aimed his own iPad at his face and spoke instructions through the paper mask. He slid his finger across the screen. ‘Look mum!' he said. ‘Like this!' she tried to swipe with her long, arthritic fingers, staring down hard at the screen, but she couldn't hold it right, she lost control, the iPad slipped out of her hands, fell away. We yelled and screamed. A soldier marched over and ordered our father back to the car. He tried to protest but our time had run out.

I was in tears as we drove back down the motorway, away from the city, forever.

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