



LAST NIGHT...

Posted on May 1, 2020 by RMK



You entered my life last night, and you left it last night. Did we break up? You never could tell me your name. You were for me but nine numbers and two letters – lying in silent dignity. Your once radiant eyes now dimmed, your once glorious tresses now ruffled; only your manicure remained unscathed. Your new perfume, Eau d'Isopropanol, barely disguising your onsetting putrefaction.

You must once have been stunning, now fallen in bloom. If we had only met in another era, would you have looked at me; would I have let out a quiet sigh, as you passed by in front of me, maybe in one of those spring dresses that French women wear so alluringly.

The ring on your finger, the tattoo on your breast (I never knew your name – but here we have no secrets now, no discretion) – tell me that you loved him passionately. It was just a few days ago that you were a woman, a daughter, a wife, a lover, a mother.

But now, you are condemned to me. I know you never wanted me, yet now you feebly reach for my hand, in this upside-down world.

Behind those tubes (do they come out, or go in?), you let out a shuddering groan, “Hail Mary...please...” A prayer learned long ago, forgotten also long ago... once, in a former life... “I swore she would be my love in this life and for all eternity, the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God...” But where were you, where are you now?

With tender memories, of a time when life was still innocent, my gloved hand gently takes yours, and from behind my visor, from behind my mask, accompanied by the rhythmic beeps of life-support machines vital for the dying, I recite, wearily, the words tattooed onto my brain. How could I refuse you anything?

A spasm, a last attempt to escape destiny, you pull me towards you – you look at me with resigned terror – a weak murmur, a quiet sigh, as your hand slips out of mine. And the machines change their tone to indifferently announce your new status...

I would have liked to have said goodbye, but the door opens at once; underpaid nurses disconnect you, as if in a trance, their eyes bloodshot. Not a tear is shed, not a word said. I never knew your name, but I quickly scribble down your number on the body-bag that now awaits you. Departing without ceremony, you leave, leave forever... but for where?

I barely hear the impassive Flemish matron, in her guttural French, order the cleaners to finish in fifteen minutes, as we conscientiously await your evanescent successor.

Where are you now? Is death what it is supposed to be, or it is just more false advertising? I never knew your name, nor you mine. I did not love you, yet you broke my heart...

Here, you are already forgotten, at best a statistic for those who still have care enough to watch the news. But I cannot forget you... a part of me died with you. Wait for me. I shan't be long.

See you soon, my unknown angel.

With much tenderness,

RMK

Brussels

April 5, 2020

This is a first-hand account by a health professional in Belgium, who witnessed some of the devastation wrought by Covid-19. The original is written in French, of which this is a translation by N.Dass.

The [*image*](#) shows, "The Sleeping Beauty," by John Collier, painted in 1921.

