

V.

You are in a dark valley, surrounded by hills. The sky is black and starless. In the distance, you hear waves crashing on the shore, but you cannot see the water. You know that you have been here for some time, but are not sure how long—weeks? Months? Years? You are waiting for the person who left you here and promised to return.

As you wander aimlessly around the valley, you notice dead trees among the hills, reaching upward with bare, twisted limbs, and hung with crumbling briars. Here and there are smaller mounds and you know, in the logic of dreams, that these are burial mounds. Alone among the dead, you try to think of some way to contact your loved one, to ask them when they will come back for you, but it is impossible. The dead trees and the hills loom over you as you walk in endless circles.

You wake just before dawn, loneliness lingering in the air even as the dream fades.