

## The Last Sufferer

It started slow, such as how one boils a frog. I watched as friends and family fell to an unseen, bleak enemy. The corpses of their ego laid to waste. It came from the east, a weapon that destroys in just a few weeks. Some survive, live a normal life, most disappear leaving for greener pastures. The first sign is a sort of glass look and the spouting of nonsense it's last stage is the loss of the face and subordination to true conformity. They avoid me like the plague, one of my small splutters or coughs clears a room, no doubt hysteria is a common symptom too.

I lost Colin to it not long ago. One day we were sipping a pint and he looked towards the TV and that sickly glassed look overcame him. I tried to grip him with conversation. Wring that awful, eldritch, poisoned thought from the creases of his brain. He has become faceless now.

I had come down with a spot of flu when the true gravity of the outbreak weighed on me. It was a silent, formless wave that had taken loved ones from me one by one so perhaps I hadn't noticed it. I breathed. Those vile, faceless monsters. Sufferers and poor folk who don't know they are sick. The doctors refuse to treat them! I breathed.

Finally I was seen, I gripped the doctor.

“Don't you see!”

I breathed

“I do sir, please settle down.”

I weezed.

“Treat these folks' fir—”

I spluttered.

“please refrain from speaking.” He spoke jargon to his nurses, but my will prevailed.

Silence.

I must tell them.

The truth! I must!

But the blood caught in my mouth, and my truth died with me.