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Ghost

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Ghost

by Julia Storch

The sun had been beating down on each plank of wood for fifty years with no repairs, bleaching the entire town. The roofs had rusted, eaten away at by chemistry until the rain could worm its way inside the tin. But the monsoon season had disappointed this year, as each blade of green struggled to break through the dust. The dust lived, it sprung up behind every footprint and every tire that lost its way into the town. When the wind slapped the walls, the dust fought back, creating tornados that engulfed everything. A few years ago, they tried to make the town a tourist attraction, but the town resisted. The wood blinded the visitors and gave them splinters, while the dust nipped at every exposed ankle and the roofs groaned in disapproval. Now the only visitors were the tumbleweeds which gathered at the last section of fence standing, piling up until the snow broke them apart. Even lizards avoided the town, preferring the shade of yucca blades to the abandoned buildings.

Perhaps the town knew that the mountain still harbored a grudge against the past inhabitants and that was why it kept everything away. The mountain had been gutted, desecrated, the town constructed with its innards. The town was the mountain's offspring and the mountain hated the town for that. The mountain would send down months of sunlight, which made the dust multiply, until the mountain sent down five minutes of rain, which would wash everything out of the town except the homes and the last piece of fence remaining. The town could not retaliate, so it hurt the mountain the only way it could; by enduring.

Julia Storch is a proud New Mexican who is currently an M.F.A. candidate in Dramatic Writing at the University of New Mexico. As a child, her father took her family on tours of ghost towns throughout the Southwest, a facet of the region's culture that Storch believes she was unable to fully appreciate until she spent time outside of New Mexico. While most of her time in New Mexico is spent in her hometown of Albuquerque, she is fascinated by how variable^[AJ1] the state can be. She contends that even in New Mexico's most abandoned places, these areas teem with life and vibrancy.