

REMEMBRANCES TO DISPOSE OF

There the card box was: upon an old wooden table, for all to contemplate. Being a small one, it seemed quite extraordinary to find it filled with things; presents given to him once. Along all those past years, they had been in there concealed and secluded, those ones tending to be damaged more often being shielded by the ones capable of supporting much more stress, arranged very carefully in layers. It was his job now to pick them up, one by one, so that they could be re-arranged upon the wooden table, in a matrix-shape form, with all its rows and columns. They were out of the card box now, for the very first and last time, facing him unconsciously. A beam of light, coming directly from an old incandescent light-bulb attached to a black metallic lamp, was barely illuminating the wooden table and the presents, leaving the rest of the flat in the hands of unmerciful shadows. He loved darkness; it was cheap and ideal for a mask: even when he was making love to a woman he preferred so. *You were the first one, were you not?*, he said aloud, letting his fingers caress the red cover of a book smoothly. It was an old English dictionary he had made use of quite often, allowing him to read Dickens fluently enough; he opened it only to find a hand-written note on a yellow post it, stuck to the very first page, saying: *November, the 8th*. Her birthday; he took that note on their way back home for he did not want to forget. He moved his hands once again in search of more and yet more remembrances; the more his fingers touched, the more his heart pounded painfully in his chest; for there was no cure for that particular illness; yet the years of isolation had ended up in an uneasy state of regretfulness and decay: he, being in that room alone surrounded by darkness and endeavouring the pain of a lonely life, was already dead. *There you are!*, said he, grabbing a silver present from the table. He could not resolve whether that one had been given to him after the dictionary or later on; his recollections were blurry, unfairly covered with a mantle that only the years passing by could knit. He lifted the present using his left hand so that it was right in front of his face. It glowed briefly under the beam of light; one moment of hesitation and there she was once again: a delicate pretty face whose eyes were firmly closed for she was asleep; her long black hair streaming upon her shoulders this time, instead of being captive in a ponytail. A sole tear showed up, quite all of a sudden, but it would not roll down his left cheek: it stood there, glued to his chapped skin. He waved his hand, begging that sad vision to vanish; it would remain for a bit longer before dissolving itself on its own cruelly accord. He deposited the silver present upon the table again, right in the same place where it belonged. They were all harmful and disorienting; too many remembrances stored in every single one of them; a mere touch would be sufficient to trigger painful visions of a past long time ago forsaken and yet, *oh*, how easy would be to be fed on them for years on end! He closed his eyes momentarily: his nostrils were possessed by the sweet fragrance of a joss stick, burning from the far corner of the table. Having his eyes closed, another vision would come upon him: of her getting undressed in a hotel room, her back turned on him, part of her long back hair depositing itself gently upon her shoulders, a bunch of it far from sight for it fell upon her breasts, breasts that he could not see but imagine; a particular night to be remembered for years to come. But it was all over now, if it were not for those objects that had been stored in the card box, some time ago, in a foolish attempt to heal his wounds by means of forgetfulness. How silly! They were due to be burned to ashes. Or just to be thrown away, once and for all, with the same card box that had been taking care of them during all those awful years. He nod, standing up. In no time, all the presents were put inside the card box once again. Then some steps would follow, slow steps, almost baby steps: they were his, of course: no card box upon the old wooden table now, not even the slightest trace that once one had stood there, only the beam of light focussing now on an absolutely empty table no one gave a thought to; maybe once the flat had been emptied of its presence the shadows would have taken advantage of it, because it was a mere beam of light the only thing facing them, quite boldly I daresay. For the best part of a minute it did resist, but then this dim light flicked and receded, until the light-bulb fused; then it would be the chance for the shadows to sink the entire flat in complete darkness.