They had finally taken the door down. It was already too much of a ramshackle. They didn't think twice about it. The church was left without a door, so it welcomed everyone. They considered this to be an utterly irksome situation and decided to fix it right away. Francesca too, bore in memory her young days, where she trod the grounds of this age-old cathedral, but didn't dwell on the subject as it demanded a very senseless and rather imprudent rumination about the exactitude of her age. She reminisced often about the eternal golden radiance of the cross on top and how this soft luminosity made her feel an elation like no other. Exulted as she was then, now she seemed downcast and cheerless, as if the church itself seemed doleful without its doors, the walls now disconsolate and woebegone had gone a bit askew, as if they were finally letting go. She wondered what it would take for her to feel the same. If she seemed to others a doddery old woman, defenseless like an old building without doors to salvage itself from the disquiet of the outside world. She was over seventy now, and she felt much more decrepit and enfeebled than she envisaged her grandparents to have been when she ridiculed their slow movement, musing that it had been only leisurely strolls and an unhurried way of life. Well, that was until she came to realize the harsh truths of life, the elders apprise one of, but they never appear as plausible forewarnings, solely words of displeasure embellished to loom as candid declarations of pain. She used to say to her grandmother, ‘’come grandmama, walk with me’’ and she used to reply with a faint look in her eyes, deep-set like a muffled voice ‘’Well, sweetheart, I am rather lame now.’’. Francesca always resented her negligence which she imagined was driven by sloth - she deemed her old, poor grandmother to be a woman, idle and remiss in her duties. Now when she got out of bed, it was a different story - still in her lethargy, her bones filled with

slackness, her motion, once so animate, now sluggish, its languidness casting a shadow upon her life, a life filled with the same sort of lameness her grandmother grumbled about. She thought to herself, maybe they wouldn't make new doors to replace the old ones, maybe they will wreck the place instead, demolish the church that had stood long before her time and thought to be immortal. That was the fault with her kind as well, they thought they would never fall out of use, be considered obsolete. Perhaps, they believed to be evergreen, deemed worthy for the life to spare them - hanging on a thread of postponement or a reprieve. Maybe they would make her coffin out of these doors, so they could still come in handy. But then again what will she do or say to refute the life's judgement, to rebut her disuse - maybe she should say that her garden will die without her, overgrow and perturb her neighbors - no that wouldn't do, she supposed. A lot of excuses to fool her mind to convince herself that she was still alive, but none of them compelling enough to rule against the nature. She could only think of the agitated behavior her old grandmama took up when the death came close, as if she couldn't trust the simple fact that she was dying. Francesca always remembered the look of incredulity, of deep-seated doubt that she had in her eyes in her final hour - like she never really thought that this would actually happen. Now she noticed the same disbelief in her own glances - how could life run away from her in such a swift blow? She couldn't reason with herself properly this time - but what would the barkeeper say when she would no longer come for her daily cup of coffee? Maybe he'd never notice anything except the empty chair, or the church left bare, without breaking his head on what came before. Just a placeholder, maybe that's what she was - that's what she was all her life. That was so, but

perhaps until the new wood comes to replace the tainted one, or a baby's cry the life unlived.