

Christina Boul

Lost Love

The ghost that lives in my house drifts through the kitchen as I sit eating my breakfast. Its white sheet sweeps the floor, and the red wagon it's pulling squeaks with every turn of the wheels. A faint weeping comes from under the sheet, and I grimace. I slowly stand up and try to approach the ghost, but it hears me and slips away.

I leave my unfinished cereal on the table and follow the ghost. It wanders down the dusty hallway and stops when it reaches a stuffed elephant lying on the floor. The wagon handle clangs as it hits the ground, and the ghost picks up the elephant. It floats up the stairs and around the corner. I sigh and decide to take a walk.

I amble into the forest behind my house and walk among the trees. It's a breezy day, and the trees sway as if dancing, maybe a waltz. The leaves flutter from side to side and rustle against each other. A pair of red and yellow leaves fall from one tree and swirl around each other in the air. It seems like they are dancing together. These are my favorite days to walk because the trees feel alive, and I feel less alone.

Music starts playing, but I know it's in my head. I copy the leaves and start waltzing across the forest floor, keeping time by counting 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3. I close my eyes and imagine I'm dancing with someone. It's no secret why I do this. I've been dancing in the forest for a long time, but I wasn't always alone.

The music fades and I open my eyes, hoping to see the ghost watching me. It isn't there and my heart sinks. I wish it would follow me out here so it could feel the gentle breeze and see the sunlight poking through the leaves.

I walk back to my house, and I find the ghost in *the* room, looking at old photographs perched on a white dresser. I sneak up behind it and swiftly pull off the sheet before it can run away.

No longer a ghost, she turns to me with tears streaming down her cheeks and on to the photograph in her hands. I take one of her hands and pull her with me toward the forest. I show her all the beautiful things she's been missing since she put that sheet on.

I start to hear the music and ask her if she hears it too. She nods, and I ask her to dance. She turns away and clutches the photograph tightly to her chest. I gently place my hand on her shoulder and pull her to face me. I look her in the eyes, tell her it's okay to move on, and offer her my hand. A deep breath, and she takes it. I twirl her through the wood, and a tiny smile creeps onto her face. As we waltz along with the trees, the photograph flutters to the forest floor and lands next to the red and yellow leaves that had danced together earlier.